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Editor's Notes

After a long period of absence, the Towson University Philosophy Forum is once again proud to provide the student and faculty body with the *Journal of Philosophical Ideas*. It is our desire to ignite philosophical discussions through the growing ideas of the undergraduate students presented here. The Philosophy Forum hopes to remain a key contribution to the sample of undergraduate journals that Towson University offers. It is with the support and appreciation of both the student body and the faculty members that we will be able to continually produce student writings in the areas of philosophy and religious studies.

If any one is seeking interest in submitting to the *Journal of Philosophical Ideas* there is specific information on the submission procedures and deadlines at the Philosophy Forum website: www.towson.edu/philosophyforum

This journal is just one representation of the hard work put forth by Towson University's Philosophy Forum which hosts weekly meetings and discussions, as well as many annual events and conferences for the enjoyment and academic appreciation of the students and faculty. The Philosophy Forum is always looking for new members and faces to stop by meetings and events. Information on the activities of the Philosophy Forum can be found at the website above.

The Philosophy Forum would like to thank the professors of the Department of Philosophy and Religious Studies for their support on bringing the journal back up and running, helping with events, and all the insight and help they offer to Towson University students. Special thanks go to Dr. Stephen Scales for his help in the reviewing process. Thanks are also due to the Student Government Association for their funding on the production of this journal and to the Printing Services of Towson University for all their guidance and great work in the publication.

We hope that the students, professors and alumni will appreciate the hard work put forth in this journal and find great enjoyment in the readings.

Daniel Michael Murphy

Editor-in-Chief
Philosophy Forum Publishing Chair, 2007-2008

Error and Objectivity: An Inquiry into the Vacuous Nature of Moral Discourse

Paul Joseph Kelly

Introduction

Our moral discourse carries an implication of objectivity. We propose moral claims as universals that are categorically binding regardless of one's personal desires or preferences. Much of recorded human history consists of disputes between warring towns and nations in which both sides viewed themselves as holding the objective moral high ground. Yet, the apparent geographical clustering of differing moral codes, and the queer metaphysical commitments these objective values require, makes their existence quite improbable. Also, recent findings in evolutionary biology have lead many to believe that humanity's moral conscience has been hard-wired into us through the purposeless process of natural selection. Such a finding threatens to further undermine the existence of an objective moral code. Consequently, there does not appear to be any objective moral values, and even if they do exist, it appears that evolution has not provided us with the faculties required to access them.

The First Order / Second Order Distinction

An important distinction relevant to the discussion of moral skepticism is between first order and second order ethical questions.¹ First order questions are those concerned with what is "good" and "right," and how one "ought" to behave. In other words, questions about what actions are "right" and "wrong," what "duties" one has, and in general how one "ought" to behave. Such questions seek to understand the *content* of ethical utterances. Second order questions, on the other hand, are questions about first order questions. Second order questions are concerned with the meanings of ethical terms and what they claim to refer to (i.e. what exactly is being meant when we say something is

¹ Jonathan Harrison, *Our Knowledge of Right and Wrong* (New York: Humanities Press, Inc. 1971), 13-35.

“good” or “right?”). In this way, second order questions seek to understand the *status* of first order ethical utterances, in particular, whether they express *discoveries* or *decisions*; if they claim to refer to something *in* the world, or merely one’s *attitude* toward something in the world.²

From this distinction, one can easily see that there can be two types of moral skeptics: first order moral skeptics and second order moral skeptics. The first order moral skeptic questions whether or not any ethical theory is preferable to any other (i.e. the *content* of ethical utterances). The second order moral skeptic, on the other hand, questions the ontological nature of moral values and how they claim to fit into our understanding of the world (i.e. the *status* of ethical utterances).³ It should be noted that these two views are completely independent from one another. One could be a first order moral skeptic without being a second order one, and conversely, one could be a second order moral skeptic without being a first order moral skeptic. For example, one could hold strong moral views while believing them to merely be his own personal attitudes regarding what is proper behavior, and conversely, one could openly reject all established moral theories, believing it is an objective truth that they are all “sinful” and “evil.”⁴

Arguments for Cognitivist Objectivism

The first issue to be addressed is whether or not moral claims are the types of utterances that can have a truth-value. The cognitivist would argue that moral utterances presuppose the existence of moral facts, and therefore *are* the types of claims that can be true or false. The non-cognitivist, on the other hand, holds the view that moral utterances merely express emotions, prescriptions, or allegiances and consequently are *not* the types of claims that can be true or false. The main problem with the non-cognitivist view is that it is radically disconnected from how we use our moral language. It reinterprets our moral claims to mean things that were not stated by the subject. The non-cognitivist claims that “When people say X, what they are really saying is Y.” Such a semantic reinterpretation of our moral language fails to convey the meaning such

² John Mackie, “The Subjectivity of Values,” in *Ethics: Inventing Right and Wrong* (New York: Penguin Books, 1990), 9.

³ *Ibid.*

⁴ *Ibid.*, 16.

statements have in the social contexts in which they are uttered, and consequently, non-cognitivism fails.⁵

Moral utterances should be interpreted in the way that the speaker intended them to be interpreted, and the best way to understand such an intention is through an analysis of the form and manner in which they are asserted. The following are some linguistic reasons for cognitivism:

- 1.) Moral utterances are expressed in the indicative mood.
- 2.) Moral utterances imply the existence of moral facts and moral knowledge.
- 3.) Moral utterances are normally considered to be true or false.
- 4.) Moral utterances are considered to have an impersonal and objective character.
- 5.) Moral utterances evoke abstract singular terms (e.g. “good”), suggesting they are intended to pick out objective properties.
- 6.) Moral utterances are subject to reasoned debates, similar to factual disagreement.
- 7.) Moral utterances appear as premises in arguments considered valid.⁶

For these reasons, we should not reinterpret our moral assertions for meaning things they were not intended to convey. We should take a speaker’s moral assertions for what they are: assertions of possessing moral knowledge. Any meta-ethical theory which seeks to semantically redefine our moral language is simply missing the point of the moral discourse. If we approach the moral discussion with an unbiased perspective, it seems quite clear that individuals are expressing their moral claims in the same fashion that we report objective facts. The non-cognitivist’s attempt to redefine our moral language without objective prescriptions undermines the very heart of the discourse. Such theories rob moral language of its very purpose: to judge moral and immoral actions with categorical authority.⁷ Consequently, the best interpretation of moral language is a cognitivist-objectivist interpretation (i.e. that moral utterances are objective ethical truth claims).

⁵ Richard Joyce, *The Myth of Morality* (New York: Cambridge, 2001), 10.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 12.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 177.

Moral Error Theory

In our normal ethical discourse, when we say we have moral obligations, we conceive them as categorical imperatives. We do not view them as prudential and conditional; we view them as binding on all, regardless of one's personal preference. We think that an individual is bound to the rules of morality whether he/she accepts them or not. Moral error theory is the view that our moral discourse (as we currently conceive of it) is radically flawed. The moral error theorist claims that at the heart of all our moral judgments is this categorical notion of moral inescapability, which, upon investigation, is non-referential.⁸ They claim that our ordinary moral judgments are asserted in such a way that they presuppose the existence of objective moral facts that simply do not exist, and that consequently, our entire moral discourse is vacuous and devoid of content. The position can be summarized as follows:

- P1) If x has a categorical reason for ϕ ing, then x is morally obligated to ϕ .
- P2) No such categorical reasons exist.
- C) Therefore, x is never morally obligated to ϕ .⁹

The first premise, as previously stated, is simply how we commonly conceive of moral obligations (i.e. that they are universally binding). The second premise, on the other hand, is harder to accept. For that reason I offer the argument from relativity and the argument from queerness.

The Argument from Relativity

It is common knowledge that various cultures believe in different moral codes. This observation has often been presented as an argument for belief in cultural relativism. Advocates of such a position argue that the presence of widespread disagreement over the issue of what is morally "right" and "wrong" is evidence for belief in the absence of an objective moral code. Yet, such an argument from disagreement is in no way convincing. The presence of disagreement concerning a given issue does not logically entail that there is no actual fact of the matter. For example, simply because there have been disagreements in the natural sciences does not lead us to conclude that they are not objective disciplines.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 42.

Many have viewed John Mackie's argument from relativity as merely a reformulation of the previous argument from difference, but this is a mistake. Mackie's argument from relativity is not solely about cultural disagreement, but about the geographical clustering of communities and their corresponding commitments to a given moral code and way of life.¹⁰ Two potential solutions to this geographical clustering are that (1) individuals perceive the objective moral truth differently and then decide to move to a geographical location in which they can participate in that moral code, or (2) people participate in the moral codes that they do, in the geographical areas that they do, because of strong cultural influences. Mackie views the hypothesis of cultural influence, rather than the differing and distorted perceptions of a single objective moral truth, as being a better explanation for the variety of moral codes that people participate in around the world.¹¹ He claims that it is much more plausible that the geographical area, culture, and general way of life that one is born into shapes one's moral outlook and behavior, rather than claiming that individuals with similar distortions of the single objective moral truth tend to move to the same geographical area so that they can live with each other. Put another way, Mackie claims that commitment to a cultural way of life appears to influence one's moral attitude, rather than the other way around.

Objective moral realists, such as David Brink, have objected to Mackie's argument, claiming that the observed variety of moral codes and their relation to commitments to ways of life are in no way an argument for the absence of an objective moral code.¹² Brink claims that the moral realist can admit that cultural assumptions and one's upbringing can radically impact one's personal moral sense, but still claim the existence of objective moral truth. He thinks that Mackie's argument from relativity is essentially a reformulation of the argument from disagreement, and as a result it fails for the same reasons.¹³ Yet, such an objection is simply a misreading of Mackie's argument. Mackie openly admits that disagreement in ethics or the sciences is *not* reason to believe in the absence of a fact of the matter. What he claims is that the

¹⁰ Mackie, "The Subjectivity of Values," 37.

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² David Brink, "Moral Realism and the Skeptical Arguments from Disagreement and Queerness," *Australasian Journal of Philosophy* 62, no. 2 (June 1984): 115.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 117.

observed correlation between variations in moral codes and geographical clustering is better explained by the hypothesis that they reflect ways of life than by the hypothesis that they express inadequate and badly distorted perceptions of a single set of objective moral values.

The Argument from Queerness

Mackie's second argument for moral skepticism is his argument from queerness, which consists of two parts: metaphysical and epistemological. The metaphysical part states that "if there were objective values, then they would be entities or qualities or relations of a very strange sort, utterly different from anything else in the universe."¹⁴ Such values would be the only things in the known universe to be "objectively prescriptive," in that they would determine proper behavior uniformly and categorically.¹⁵ For such entities to be objectively prescriptive, they would need to be woven into the "fabric of the world,"¹⁶ and exist independently of any individual's or group's preferences or desires. Mackie claims that we have no justification for believing in such odd metaphysical entities in a naturalistic ontology, and that consequently we should not believe in the existence of objective moral values.¹⁷

The epistemological portion of his argument states that even if such objectively prescriptive entities do exist, we seem to have no way of coming to know them. Mackie argues that since all our knowledge of the world comes through our senses, our perception of objective moral values "would have to be by some special faculty of moral perception or intuition, utterly different from our ordinary ways of knowing everything else."¹⁸ In other words, since it is possible for two individuals to wholly agree on all the non-moral facts of a given situation and still disagree on their moral assessment of it, this shows that we do not come to know moral facts through our five senses. In order for us to maintain our belief in moral facts, we are forced to posit the existence of some strange new moral intuition or sixth sense. Further still, Mackie claims that even if we *were* able to prove the existence of a unique faculty able to observe moral facts, we would still have to explain the "mysterious consequential

¹⁴ Mackie, "The Subjectivity of Values," 38.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 48.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, 22.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 38.

link” between the natural features of a behavior and the “wrongness” of the action.¹⁹ For these reasons, Mackie claims it would be much less complicated if we simply accepted that moral values do not exist *out in the world*, and are, in fact, *aspects of our perception*.

A common objection from objective moral realists, such as David Brink, is that Mackie is misrepresenting the necessary commitments of the moral realist.²⁰ Brink claims that moral realism does not require belief in ontological pluralism and can consequently fit into our naturalistic ontology. Brink argues that objective moral facts “supervene upon physical properties,” in that they are realized materially, but are not reducible to physical interactions.²¹ Consequently, Brink claims that since objective moral facts aren’t ontologically different from physical facts, no moral intuition or sixth sense is required to perceive them. To explain this, Brink attempts to use examples of other instances of supervenience in the sciences to show that their causal relation to the natural world is in no way “queer.” He argues that the facts of biology, psychology, economics, and sociology all supervene onto physical facts, but, even so, they cannot be adequately studied by analyzing sub-atomic particles. They are their own distinct disciplines with their own unique sets of facts.²² However, Brink seems to ignore the peculiar nature of ethics and what separates it from the natural sciences. He argues that ethics is not unique in its supervenience because of other supervenient disciplines; yet, all the examples he gives are *descriptive* in their supervenience, whereas ethics is inherently *prescriptive*. The *facts* of biology, psychology, economics, and sociology are *descriptive* accounts of how something behaves, whereas the *values* of ethics are *prescriptive* accounts of how something *should* behave. For this reason, ethical claims concerning the existence of objective moral values *are* unique, and unlike anything else encountered in a naturalistic ontology.

Another potential objection to Mackie’s argument comes from the functionalist moral realists. They claim that moral properties are merely functional properties of complex social interactions, and consequently, what is moral in any given situation is what functionally

¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 41.

²⁰ Brink, “Moral Realism and the Skeptical Arguments from Disagreement and Queerness,” 112.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 119.

²² *Ibid.*, 120.

leads to “the maintenance and flourishing of human organisms.”²³ Such a realist would argue that using this definition of the “good,” we can speak of objective moral values without violating our naturalistic ontology. While this theory does free us from the “queerness” of metaphysical moral facts, it is still positing the existence of unnecessary hypothetical entities (i.e. objectively prescriptive moral facts). Brink argues that this functionalist theory of moral value might be similar in *content* to the pragmatic moral theory, which Mackie defends, however it would be different in *status* because Brink believes it would be “true.”²⁴ Brink is openly acknowledging that Mackie’s pragmatic moral system (which does *not* require the assumption of objective moral values) would behave identically to the functionalist’s (which *does* require the assumption of objective moral values). Therefore, since the consequences of the theories are the same, Mackie’s non-objective moral theory is preferable because it does not require the unnecessary assumption of objective moral facts to stay coherent. Another objection to this functionalist model is that there could be instances in which individuals agree on the functionalist’s definition of the “good,” and who are both informed of all the non-moral facts of a given situation but still disagree about what would be proper conduct. In other words, individuals sharing the functionalist theory and knowledgeable of the same non-moral facts could still hold differing moral assessments of the same moral dilemma.

Another common objection to Mackie’s argument is that it seems to leave out our understanding of numbers, substance, inertia, causation, etc. Proponents of this view claim that Mackie’s attempt to restrict human knowledge to only what can be empirically observed and verified is much too limiting. They think that perhaps moral facts are similar to numerical facts, in that we are never in causal contact with them, but we can still reasonably accept them into our ontology.²⁵ Put another way, the objection claims that empirical observations have no bearing on the truth of a certain class of facts, and perhaps, this is also the case concerning moral facts. However, empirical observations *do* have a bearing on such facts. For example, the relevance of mathematics to the empirical sciences has been shown on numerous occasions.

²³ *Ibid.*, 121-122.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 122.

²⁵ Nicholas Sturgeon, “Moral Explanations,” in *Moral Philosophy: Selected Readings (Second Edition)*, ed. George Sher (Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace, 1996), 217.

Mathematics often figures into our scientific explanations for phenomena, and consequently, there exists *indirect* observational evidence for their existence. Yet there does *not* seem to be observational evidence, even indirectly, for belief in the existence of moral facts or principles.²⁶

Another objection is that moral facts can (and should) be part of the best possible explanation for certain behaviors. For example, Nicholas Sturgeon argues that the statement “Hitler was morally depraved” includes moral facts concerning Hitler’s character, and must be included into the best possible explanation for Hitler’s immoral behavior. Sturgeon claims that purely descriptive and psychological descriptions of immoral behaviors lack the categorical moral judgment required to adequately describe the behavior. For this reason, Sturgeon states that moral facts *do* exist, and in time “will turn out to belong in our best overall explanatory picture of the world.”²⁷ Yet Sturgeon must admit that someone with exactly the same psychological state, in exactly the same situation as Hitler, would have behaved in exactly the same way. There appears to be nothing gained in the explanatory power of our theory by including moral judgments of an individual’s character. We also lack any reason to prefer one ethical theory’s judgments of what are “morally depraved” psychological dispositions to any other. It is true that moral descriptions of an individual’s character can be part of an explanation, but the question is whether or not they would be part of the *best* explanation. In fact, purely egoistic and psychological descriptions, while being somewhat more complicated, have *much* more explanatory power than the mere black and white moral assessments of “good” and “bad.”²⁸ For example, if you knew every aspect of Hitler’s psychology (i.e. the political climate of his upbringing, his family troubles, the nature of his social encounters with friends, etc.) you would be *much* better prepared to predict his course of action than if you were merely told he was “morally depraved.” The psychological explanation restricts itself to unmysterious items (such as beliefs, intentions, desires, etc.) rather than postulating the existence of “moral depravity” for which we have no justification.²⁹ To sum up, it is not only the case that moral facts appear

²⁶ Gilbert Harman, *The Nature of Morality: An Introduction to Ethics* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1977), 20.

²⁷ Sturgeon, “Moral Explanations,” 220.

²⁸ Joyce, *The Myth of Morality*, 168.

²⁹ *Ibid.*

to be explanatorily irrelevant, but they also appear to cause one's theory to become increasingly unintelligible and untestable. For these reasons, the simpler psychological theory, which provides the superior explanatory power, is preferable, and the moral theory should be discarded.

It also seems that the explanatory chain from *principle* to *observation* is broken in the case of morality in a way that it is not broken in the natural sciences.³⁰ In the sciences, proposed scientific theories are tested through real-experiments out in the real world. Observations during these experiments can verify or falsify the theory to such an extent that it is no longer tenable. In comparison, proposed *moral* theories are tested through thought-experiments, which seek to evoke an individual's moral feelings concerning imagined situations. Observations during these types of experiments cannot verify or falsify a moral theory in the same way they do in the sciences.³¹ Two individuals holding two radically different ethical theories can encounter the same thought-experiment and conclude entirely different moral assessments of it. In this way, ethical theories, unlike scientific theories, are unfalsifiable. An individual can consistently hold any ethical theory one pleases, as long as he/she consistently defends the theory in all proposed thought-experiments, no matter how undesirable the outcome. Simply put, the scientific realm appears to be accessible to experimentation in a way that the moral realm is not.

Potential Explanations for the Error

The reason we use moral language and assume that it is ontologically referential seems to be that natural selection has hardwired humanity to think this way.³² Our tendency to use moral judgments and our belief in their relation to categorical moral obligations appears to be innate. We have evolved to categorize the world using moral concepts for pragmatic reasons, not because such concepts are true. Biological evolution has given humanity the tendency to invest the world with values that it does not contain.³³ Simply put, human morality has emerged not from a top-down moral legislator objectively determining

³⁰ Harman, *The Nature of Morality: An Introduction to Ethics*, 8.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 6.

³² Richard Joyce, "The Evolutionary Debunking of Morality," *The Evolution of Morality* (London: The MIT Press. 2006), 181.

³³ *Ibid.*

proper conduct, but from the bottom-up process of natural selection in which evolutionary fitness pragmatically shaped our moral sense.

Philosopher Richard Joyce argues that the pragmatic benefit of maintaining group allegiance through the implementation of a false sense of categorical “moral requirement” is enormous. He thinks that if an individual believes that cooperating with others is an inescapable requirement he/she will, in certain instances: “serve reproductive fitness more effectively than clear-headed calculations concerning desire-satisfaction, because [it] will enforce cooperative behavior, at the motivational level, more resolutely.”³⁴ He also argues that individuals believing in objective moral requirements will be more likely to criticize and punish those that violate such a code. The illusion of an objective moral system thereby creates a community with aligned desires and an increased survival ability. Joyce argues that:

An individual does better (in the sense of being more reproductively fit) if she has her desires in favor of family members supplemented by a sense of requirement to favor family members. It is not merely that an individual *wants* to help out his sister’s son, but he feels he *ought* to – he feels he *must*. An individual with a sense of requirement – attached, that is, to the appropriate actions – is more reproductively fit than one whom such a sense is lacking, whose cooperative activities depend upon the presence of the right desires.³⁵

There have been numerous empirical studies showing that primates have the capacity to feel guilt, sympathy, and a sense of violating established social codes of their community.³⁶ In some of these studies, it was observed that violations of established social codes would lead to the whole group enacting punishment upon an individual, rather than merely retribution from the individual that was aggressed against.³⁷ Such swift, collective retribution would only be possible in groups with a shared moral sense, the truth-value of which would have little bearing on its effectiveness.

³⁴ Joyce, *The Myth of Morality*, 140.

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 137.

³⁶ Matt Ridley, “Theories of Moral Sentiments.” *The Origins of Virtue: Human Instincts and the Evolution of Cooperation* (New York: Penguin Books, 1998), 125-148.

³⁷ Joyce, *The Myth of Morality*, 146.

Some evolutionary ethical naturalists have objected to Royce's argument that since our moral conscience has an evolutionary origin our morality cannot be objectively prescriptive. They argue that our evolved attitudes towards cooperative behaviors are an empirical foundation for our ethical theories.³⁸ In other words, since evolution has given humans a disposition towards the community's welfare, they categorically "ought" to behave in such a fashion. This is simply false. The fact that previously there were evolutionary selection pressures for communal activities gives no reasonable foundation for an objective morality. Natural selection favored pragmatic benefits that increased reproductive fitness in the state of nature. We have no reason to believe that such a pragmatic benefit is therefore worthy of the title of "good" or "right" that we find referred to in moral discourse.³⁹ The fact that through the blind process of natural selection, humanity has obtained dispositions towards certain moral attitudes, is not sufficient to conclude that such behaviors are objectively morally "good." The fact of the matter is that the innate character of our moral inclinations undermines their objectivity, rather than confirming it. The pragmatic evolutionary benefit of asserting false categorical imperatives has made humanity assert moral statements with empty predicates. Natural selection has hard-wired humans to believe in the existence of objective moral facts for an increase in reproductive fitness. Our moral beliefs are the products of a process that created them irrespective of their truth. This realization forces us to conclude that we have no rational grounds for maintaining these beliefs.

Mackie also addresses how we could have made such a large error in our moral reasoning. He claims that the main reason why we have erred so greatly is because of our innate "tendency to read our feelings into their objects."⁴⁰ Mackie claims that the fact that the word "good" is used both in moral discussions and in reference to personal aesthetic taste is a trace in our language that they were once the same. He thinks that the desire to regulate interpersonal relations in developing social grouping would have lead many to resort to the objectification of moral values. Mackie claims that this objectification came about by removing the conditionals of hypothetical imperatives.⁴¹ Previously, one's actions were contingent on one's desire, whereas after the removal

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 150.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 157.

⁴⁰ Mackie, "The Subjectivity of Values," 42.

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 44.

of the conditional, one's personal desires became inconsequential. For this reason, Mackie calls ethics "a system of law from which the legislator has been removed."⁴² The subjective desires that originally determined the proper mode of behavior for an individual have been removed, and what remains are unjustified categorical commands intended to uniformly govern all.

Another potential explanation for this massive error could come from the overwhelming responsibility that comes with having to determine what is "right" and "wrong." If there were objective moral values, then they would exist independently of one's will and would prescribe the proper behavior, irrespective of one's personal desires. One would not be responsible for deciding what was "right" and "wrong." Such concepts would be built into the "fabric of the world," and one would merely have to adhere to them. In the absence of a knowable objective moral code, individuals are forced to decide which course of action they should pursue for themselves. This burden to *invent* values, rather than *discover* them, could have lead many previous generations to unconsciously imbue their communal social norms with seemingly objective moral authority that appears to be nonexistent.

Conclusion

The history of human thought is littered with instances of individuals and societies believing that they alone held the moral high ground. Hopefully the previous series of arguments have shown such claims to be false. No individual or social grouping's claim to objective moral authority is any more coherent than any other. It appears that the universe simply does not make objective moral requirements. Yet, the lack of objective values inherent in the natural world is not a good reason for abandoning subjective concern, or for concluding that might makes right. The apparent falsity of the moral discourse means that we can no longer *believe* in the categorical authority that moral utterances claim to possess, yet, such falsity does not mean we cannot continue to *use* the moral discourse for pragmatic reasons.⁴³ As a result, we ought to become second order moral skeptics to relieve ourselves of our evolutionarily engrained claims to moral objectivity, while at the same time, continuing to engage in moral discussions for its instrumental benefit. By continuing

⁴² *Ibid.*, 45.

⁴³ Joyce, *The Myth of Morality*, 179.

to use moral utterances without actually believing in the categorical authority that they claim to have, we can gain the benefits of the discourse without the detriment of believing in falsehoods. Many view the apparent absence of an objective moral code as a frightening and pessimistic prospect, but this is simply not the case. The lack of an objective moral code gives humanity the possibility of *choice*. Once we accept the vacuous nature innate to the moral discourse, we can begin the collective process of pragmatically constructing a morality based on the principles and standards of our own ideals.

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The Importance of Questioning:
An Examination of Heidegger's *Introduction to
Metaphysics*

Daniel Michael Murphy

Doctor Murungi of Towson University has said that “to be a good student of philosophy one must learn to question.”¹ When one examines the works of Martin Heidegger, he sees that what is fundamental to his methodology is questioning itself. Before analyzing the key purpose to Heidegger's lecture *Introduction to Metaphysics* one should perhaps examine one of his later works, *Discourse on Thinking*. *Discourse on Thinking* first presents a memorial address from Heidegger in which he states a view that can directly link to his understanding of the purpose of questioning:

The growing thoughtlessness must, therefore, spring from some process that gnaws at the very marrow of man today: man today is in *flight from thinking*. This flight-from-thought is the ground of thoughtlessness. But part of this flight is that man will neither see nor admit it. Man today will even flatly deny this flight from thinking. He will assert the opposite.²

What prevails in all of Heidegger's works is the notion that one should not flee from thought in despair. Thinking is an integral part of examining human existence. But as Heidegger points out, people are losing sight of the importance of thinking and refusing to acknowledge this flight. The latter half of *Discourse on Thinking* presents a discourse on the subject between a scientist, a scholar, and a teacher. In this unique collaboration of what can only be seen as an authentic discussion they arrive at a concept that directly links to thinking; that is waiting. Alongside our experience and our being-in-the-world, it is waiting that is a key to a being's thinking. If we are to examine Heidegger's

¹ John Murungi, “Philosophical Systems: Heidegger,” Towson University. Linthicum Hall, Towson (10 Apr. 2008).

² Martin Heidegger, *Discourse on Thinking*, trans. John M. Anderson and E. Hans Freund (New York: Harper Perennial, 1966), 45.

Introduction to Metaphysics lecture, let us examine it with this concept of waiting and thinking and not with a flight from thinking. For the most important of questions that require careful thinking, one cannot immediately rush into an answer. At times, it is best to wait for the nearness of that answer to approach even if one can never even conclude upon a concrete answer. Heidegger's methodology of questioning proves that the answers are not what are important but a thought process of questioning in one's own understanding is what is key.

The journey that man takes through philosophical thinking is said to begin at home and end at home. The connotations of this statement would imply that there is no real spatial progress made in the realm of philosophy. If one is to begin with himself and he results in ending with his self, what progress has he made? Philosophy, however, is not a form of the humanities that is concerned with any type of true chronological progression. Heidegger also does not place much importance on the chronological history of philosophy. The issues that Heidegger deals with are timeless, and he does not need to nor can he search for any progression of answers made in metaphysics. Philosophers, the lovers of wisdom, do not need to struggle in order to understand the lack of progress. Philosophers have always asked the same questions and have always walked away without definite answers. Likewise, Heidegger is not trying to establish definite answers in his metaphysical questions. Heidegger's work does not fit into a forwarding of philosophical answers; this is never Heidegger's task. One will not even find a historical overview of philosophy's advancements and progressions; this would be filled with contradictions and objections. Scholars instruct generation after generation through the written word. Professors attempt to instill students with the knowledge of historic figures. But the effective method of philosophical learning is not through extensive studies and memorizations of facts or knowledge. The arrival at learning derives from the process of truly questioning. As people question and think out the question, they learn. As people learn and think over their learning, they question. This methodology prevents one from stepping back and examining a doctrine of philosophical answers. Combining all branches of philosophy and all great thinkers yields a collaborative mesh of frustrating contradictions. This point fixates the need for philosophy to always remain at home with the philosopher.

What then remains the use of the works and insights of other philosophers and thinkers? The questions of others can remain to help

put a person on the right path. Simply asking a question can impact others to begin thinking on that question. While some philosophers still claim the ability to “answer” the questions they pose, others simply ask in order to introduce people to the journey of thinking that they must take on for themselves. This purpose for the latter philosopher can be exemplified through the questions posed by Martin Heidegger. Critic after critic, thinker after thinker, asks where Heidegger’s answers to some of his major questions lie. To point out the lack of a clear answer in Heidegger’s works is to miss the purpose to his questioning. When Heidegger poses his fundamental question of metaphysics at the start of his lecture *Introduction to Metaphysics* he is inviting all thinkers on a journey that begins with the most important question: “Why are there beings at all instead of nothing?”³ This philosophical journey begins with this question and ends with this question. For the thinker, this journey begins at home with his thinking over of this question, and ends with his own grasp of this question. By simply posing the fundamental question of metaphysics, Heidegger is leading people towards an understanding of Being which must first be engaged in order to grasp the overall question.

Between the various branches of philosophy, there always remains an enigmatic feeling attached to metaphysics. Different periods of thought reflect on the metaphysics in varying ways; some periods even abolish any thought on the subject at all. Historically, even outside the realm of philosophy, metaphysical questions remain some of the most impervious questions of humankind. Scholarly professor of Western philosophy W.T. Jones examines the importance of this question throughout the ages in his overview of Heidegger’s thought: “But if we think back over the history of culture, we see that positivists, and skeptics generally, have been greatly outnumbered by those who have been concerned by, haunted by, the question of Being, and who have sought, each in his or her own way, to answer it.”⁴ The questions of metaphysics have always been a chief concern for people since the beginning of philosophical thinking. One cannot even pinpoint the true beginning of metaphysical questioning. While the Greeks undoubtedly led the way in the first recordings of these types of questions, the origin of metaphysics could stem from the origin of philosophy and therefore

³ Martin Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, trans. Gregory Fried, and Richard Polt (New Haven: Yale Nota Bene, 2000), 1.

⁴ W.T. Jones and Robert J Fogelin, *The Twentieth Century to Quine and Derrida* (Belmont: Thomson Wadsworth, 1997), 313.

thinking itself. Despite the term ‘metaphysics’ not arriving until the re-titling of Aristotle’s book, the characteristics to this style of thinking are present well before Aristotle. While pre-Socratics such as Parmenides spoke of “being” it is difficult to claim that the Greeks as a whole possessed the origin of either philosophy or metaphysics. This is a philosophical debate that may very well remain unanswered and one that Heidegger does not directly concern himself with. Heidegger, rather, has a less technical standing on origin. Heidegger does not need to pinpoint the origin of metaphysical questioning or philosophy; the origin lies in itself. Heidegger is far less worried over the arrival at “metaphysics” as it arose in Aristotle’s work and much more concerned with the fall of metaphysics as it progressed in Western philosophy.

For Heidegger, an examination of metaphysics begins with the fundamental question. Before one answers this question, any move to more immediate questions seems troublesome. Heidegger determines that “Why are there beings at all instead of nothing?” is not the first question people ask historically but rather the most *important* of all questions and therefore needs to be thought over first. It is bothersome then that many people may never examine this question or proceed to ignore it as a fleeting thought. Heidegger, however, sees that this question need not even be asked in order to remain a part of everyone, even for those who do not think it over: “we are each touched once, maybe even now and then, by the concealed power of this question, without properly grasping what is happening to us.”⁵ Even with the apparent necessity to examine this question, centuries of philosophy and thinking show a sidestep from its examination.

For many philosophers, it is not that the fundamental question is unimportant, but rather that it is impossible to answer. Instead of spending a life’s work on the meaning of Being, many people prefer to analyze more concrete and narrower topics. As Richard Kearney and Mara Rainwater point out, any understandings that bypass the question of Being cannot be upheld; they explain Heidegger’s objective as:

an attempt to revive the question of the meaning of Being, which has been concealed and ignored by the Western philosophical tradition as represented by Plato, Descartes, Kant and Husserl. The tradition has relied on an ontology privileging ‘substance’, which in turn has led to a ‘metaphysics of presence’ that,

⁵ Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 1.

according to Heidegger, has resulted in an unfortunate mind/matter duality. He maintains that any efforts to understand 'reality' along that path are doomed from the start.⁶

The "revival" that Heidegger is looking to accomplish would revert to the understandings of Being through the minds of the Greeks. Heidegger connects his term for Being with the Greek's word *phusis*: "In the age of the first and definitive unfolding of Western philosophy among the Greeks, when questioning about beings as such and as a whole received its true inception, beings were called *phusis*."⁷ Like many of Heidegger's Greek translations, he differentiates his derived meanings from traditional understandings. It is also important to note here that Heidegger believed Greek and German were the only true languages of philosophy. One gets a sense of an analytic side to Heidegger approaching through his critique on other understandings of *phusis*; Heidegger says that "We use the Latin translation *natura*, which really means 'to be born,' 'birth.' But with this Latin translation, the originary content of the Greek word *phusis* is already thrust aside, the authentic philosophical naming force of the Greek word is destroyed."⁸ If Heidegger is indeed correct in matching his own term for Being alongside the Greek's *phusis*, then the problems surrounding language explain the descent of the Greek's understanding of Being and the need for a revival.

The periods of philosophy after the Greeks have then deterred from the path that questions Being. The topics of some of these thinkers may still consist of Being, but with a different arrival than Heidegger. The understanding of Being, for Heidegger, always comes through the questioning of Being. John M. Anderson compares Heidegger's method with others:

What he does is to present an illuminating criticism of European philosophy. In this criticism, he shows how the tradition of European philosophy has concerned itself with an analysis of the opposites of Being, such as becoming, appearance, and so on,

⁶ Richard Kearney and Mara Rainwater, *The Continental Philosophy Reader*, (New York: Routledge, 1996), 24.

⁷ Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 14.

⁸ *Ibid.*

and then has tried to transcend these opposites to arrive at Being.⁹

Heidegger sees Being as something that transcends all else. The origins of everything should be directly concerned with Being. How can anyone move on to examining political philosophy, ethics, philosophy of mind, or even science, without first having a grasp on the question of Being? But the negation of the question of Being is consistent throughout generations of Western thought. The philosophical fields in politics, ethics and science have an overwhelming presence in contemporary philosophy. The move away from metaphysics and towards these other branches is most likely the direct application these branches can have. For most people, the study of being does not have nearly as much practical use as the studies in biology, chemistry and physics. In these types of sciences, progression is found; information can be stated as truth and applied to in everyday life. Each day there are issues concerning social and political questions, ethical situations and an application of science to improve life and end disease. But where is the presence of metaphysics? For Heidegger, it is not that the other branches of philosophy should be negated in favor of just studying metaphysics. But Heidegger does take issue with metaphysics being thrust aside in favor of the more readily applicable studies. These other areas inherently work towards solving problems and questions that concern human life in the world. Heidegger too is concerned with this idea, but he addresses it through metaphysics and the study into Being. Heidegger sees that by questioning “Being” one gets a better understanding of what it is to be a being-in-the-world.¹⁰ If Heidegger’s concept of Dasein, which he states is constituted by being-in-the-world, is viewed as human existence, then the goals of Heidegger’s metaphysics and those of the other areas of philosophy are chiefly the same. These other fields, and mainly science, may question the point of Heidegger’s work and the reason for inquiring into Being. The reason Heidegger places so much importance on the study of Being coming before the other fields in philosophy is that metaphysics will lead to a better understanding of what it is to be a being-in-the-world, and this understanding is necessary in order to

⁹ John M. Anderson, Introduction, *Discourse on Thinking*, by Martin Heidegger (New York: Harper Perennial, 1966), 19.

¹⁰ Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (San Francisco: Harper & Row, 1962), 78.

address the other studies in philosophy. Jean T. Wilde and William Kluback address the unique process Heidegger has taken here in his task: Heidegger struggles with the question which each man must struggle with—what is the meaning of *Dasein* or the human reality? The question, and its possible answer, is the responsibility of all philosophy. Heidegger has posed the question and he has pointed a path where an awareness of Being is to be found. They are new dimensions for us and in these dimensions the limitations of our own traditions are loosened and we are led to deeper questioning. This reaffirmation of the very nature of philosophy is the unique and original achievement of Martin Heidegger.¹¹

It is clear that Heidegger has a different outlook on philosophy than that of his contemporaries.

But how does one resist the pull of jumping into the more applicable fields? This is the same as resisting the chronology of Western traditions and instead, reverting back to the Greeks and the beginnings of philosophy. It is Heidegger's understanding that truth, and understanding of Being, does not originate in the proceedings of Western thought, but in the beginning of thinking itself.¹² Heidegger avoids the misinterpretations of many Western philosophers' hold on Being, by negating their sentiments and allowing himself to examine Being through his own questioning. The beginning to Heidegger's journey with "Why are there beings at all instead of nothing?" requires a comprehension of the question at its roots.

While there is an understanding, or some sort of origin derived feeling, associated with Heidegger's fundamental question of metaphysics, the clarity of the language must be further examined. Heidegger proceeds to dissect this central question, first distinguishing the being aspect from the nothing aspect. Looking at the latter part offers an interesting argument. Can one question or examine nothing? Heidegger sees this question under two different lights. The first takes the question of nothing as a scientific and logical approach, therefore making any discussion of nothing both unscientific and illogical:

For what more are we supposed to ask about Nothing? Nothing is simply nothing. Questioning has nothing more to seek here.

¹¹ Jean T. Wilde and William Kluback, Introduction, *What is Philosophy?* by Martin Heidegger (New York: Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 16.

¹² Anderson, Introduction, *Discourse on Thinking*, 34-35.

Above all, by bringing up Nothing we do not gain the slightest thing for the knowledge of beings... Talking about Nothing is illogical. Whoever talks and thinks illogically is an unscientific person. Now whoever goes so far as to talk about Nothing within philosophy, which after all is the home of logic, deserves all the more to be accused of offending against the fundamental rule of all thinking.¹³

This suddenly harsh tone, screaming of the necessity of logic for philosophy, which is prevailing from Heidegger is of course countered by his *actual* metaphysical standpoint. First, Heidegger re-examines his fundamental question without considering the part of nothing, “Why are there beings at all?”¹⁴ But if only being is considered in the question, then the thought process of that question already begins with the notion of the Being of beings. Without the notion of nothing, there is no possibility of any form of non-being in the thought process. Beings will have to be a given and therefore there remains nothing to consider as to why they are. But still the pressing issue of whether one can still even discuss nothing remains. Heidegger now looks at nothing under a more metaphysical light when he claims “Philosophy never arises from or through science. Philosophy can never belong to the same order as the sciences. It belongs to a higher order.”¹⁵ Heidegger is perfectly content with allowing philosophers to discuss nothing alongside the poets who also belong to the higher order.¹⁶ Looking at the question without the scolding eye of a logician, the question as a whole stands out. Without separating Being from Nothing, the “why” part now questions beings and their stance above Nothing.¹⁷ With the importance of the fundamental question firmly established the dissection must continue with a full understanding of what is meant by Being.

Up until now, the words being and Being have both been used in their respective manners; a bit of clarity on these words is due. The lowercase “being” is defined as “*what* at any time is in being, in particular this grayish-white, light, breakable mass, formed in such and such a way.”¹⁸ The other form, the uppercase “Being,” is distinguished as

¹³ Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 25.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 26.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 28.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 33.

“that which, as it were, ‘makes’ this be a being instead of nonbeing, that which makes up the Being in the being, if it is a being... ‘the in-being,’ beingness, to be in being, Being.”¹⁹ In German, the terms ‘being’ and ‘Being’ are written as *Das Seiende*, “what is,” and *Das Sein*, “the to be,” respectively.²⁰ Heidegger’s question is how a “being” comes into “Being.” Wilde and Kluback address man, as the being, in accordance with Being:

Man must seek himself in the ground of life, the *Ungrund*, the Being of beings. In man’s seeking and his grasping of the nature of Being the structure of his meaning and the nature of human reality become clearer. Man is a being whose Being is the source of his creativity and singularity as man.²¹

Heidegger formulates the relationship of “being” and “Being” with the question “How does it stand with Being?”²²

It is the standing or grounding here that Heidegger is in wonder over. If Being is not any “thing” then to bring it up creates problems in language such as those that were involved in the term “nothing.” In language, Being is perhaps best viewed as the “is”: “How does it stand with the Being of this being? A state—it is.”²³ This use of the word “is” must be seen not as the state that something is, or the possession the being has in the state, but rather as the coming to be. Truly identifying this term is a task beyond the capabilities of language. Words are mere tangible representations and can only approach a symbolic meaning for “Being.” Heidegger wishes to separate his questioning from the practices of ontology which he sees as “the development of the traditional doctrine of beings into a philosophical discipline and a branch of the philosophical system... the effort to put Being into words, and to do so by passing through the question of how it stands with Being”²⁴ Being, however, is well beyond words. The examination of Being is so essential to humankind that merely thinking it over becomes a step towards its meaning. The methodology of Heidegger’s philosophy and that of science come back in the understanding of Being. Like “Nothing,” Being

¹⁹ *Ibid.*

²⁰ Gregory Fried and Richard Polt, Introduction, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, by Martin Heidegger (New Haven: Yale Nota Bene, 2000), x-xi.

²¹ Wilde and Kluback, Introduction, *What is Philosophy?* 9.

²² Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 35.

²³ *Ibid.*, 37.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 43.

is part of something higher than logical analysis allows for. Science's failure to express Being for beings makes it a question of metaphysics and philosophy; Wilde and Kluback claim that "Philosophy is listened to; it speaks to man. Philosophy is therefore the dialogue between Being and being, between groundless ground and man."²⁵ The meaning of Being then, can only be seen in its questioning.

In the process of questioning Being, a chief concern arises for Heidegger. Is Being a definite or indefinite term? We cannot see or point to Being. The analytic philosophers, particularly the Logical Positivists, would suggest that this makes Being something that must be indefinite. For Heidegger, however, he sees a sense of dualism in the word, "The word 'Being' is thus indefinite in its meaning, and nevertheless we understand it definitely. 'Being' proves to be extremely definite and completely indefinite."²⁶ Heidegger finds that everything other than Being can be comparable; Being however, has nothing to be compared with.²⁷ But when closely examining what makes up the Being, and looking at it as both a "to be" and an "is," many meanings arrive that offer comparability. Heidegger offers various meanings for Being which he finds to have an overall definite connection with each other; he overviews that what "The 'to be' said in the 'is' signifies: [is] 'actually present,' 'constantly present at hand,' 'take place,' 'come from,' 'consist of,' 'stay,' 'belong,' 'succumb to,' 'stand for,' 'come about,' 'prevail,' 'have entered upon,' 'come forth.'"²⁸ Heidegger has again taken his question of Being to the higher order of thinking. Similar to his treatment of nothing, Heidegger negates the methods for how logicians and analytic philosophers view the concept of indefinite and definite, and he allows an indefinite term to hold a definite meaning.

Even with a form of clarity on the word Being, the term cannot be limited to an understanding just in language. Heidegger's examination invokes a concept of Being that cannot fully be expressed in mere words. It is this sense of Being that helps identify what Being is. The man who asks "how it stands with Being?" and goes on the path of questioning this will know Being in a higher order than language allows. Being expressed as "the is" cannot be further explained. How can one use words to describe the state of "is?" If the questions cannot be fully understood in

²⁵ Wilde and Kluback, Introduction, *What is Philosophy?*, 10.

²⁶ Heidegger, *Introduction to Metaphysics*, 82.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 83.

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 96.

language, then clearly answers could not simply be expressed with words either.

The concerns over the questioning of Being represent the first true example of answering by questioning. Heidegger does not offer a perfected explanation of “how it stands with Being.” The answering of the question is simply the *questioning* that lies in the journey. Heidegger has already alluded to the analytical problems surrounding language. Unlike many of his contemporaries, Heidegger does not address language as an analytic philosopher using a systematic approach to solve a pseudo problem; Heidegger is far different than Wittgenstein or Russell. Heidegger never attempts to systemize language into a universal structure that will clarify language’s problems. Instead, Heidegger already understands that language will always have ambiguous problems in expression; Heidegger views language on his own terms and in his own means of comprehension. The very matter that Heidegger provides many of his own translations of Greek words shows his refusal to rely on the analytic language of others. By asking himself the questions and using his language to grasp the questions, Heidegger gives himself an understanding in his own means of comprehension. If Heidegger were to revert to the term meanings of others, his question would not be “at home.” Science, and more specifically logic as a process of science, tries to universalize everything. The philosopher however, must remain on his own individualized journey. John M. Anderson presents the hailing view of many Heidegger critics when he says that “It is often claimed that Heidegger in *Being and Time* failed to accomplish what he intended. But what did he intend?”²⁹ *Being and Time* offers a further examination into the questioning of Being, but again as he presents Being in *Introduction to Metaphysics*, there is no answer that lies in language’s terms or any terms for that matter.³⁰ *Being and Time* offers a very technical approach to the study of Being. Heidegger carefully articulated a plan for what he wanted to set out for in *Being and Time*, and he tried to follow an

²⁹ Anderson, Introduction, *Discourse on Thinking*, 15.

³⁰ It may be important to note here that Heidegger’s *Being and Time* was never fully finished. Heidegger had meant to publish six parts to this work, as he outlines in his introduction, but he only published the first two. We can only ponder what he would have done if he had gone further, but Heidegger abandoned the remainder of this work as his views began to shift.

outlined schema to complete his task.³¹ It is not until Heidegger's later works that one sees the change from the technical writing to the more poetic style. *Discourse on Thinking*, which has the chief concern of questioning, offers the far more poetic style to Heidegger's approach. Heidegger appears much more comfortable and at home with his writing in his later works. *Introduction to Metaphysics* seems to show the middle ground of Heidegger's shift. It is clear that Heidegger was changing from the technical approach to one more involved in the importance of questioning itself. But *Introduction to Metaphysics* still contains a technical characteristic alongside its deep questioning that may give one the false impression that a technical answer could still be found.

But no matter what approach Heidegger uses, it is hard to imagine him being able to fully define "Being" in language's terms. And Heidegger never really makes mention of an answer on any terms, which helps anticipate the outrage of some of his critics; many critics and readers alike want answers in order to try and establish a progress to Heidegger's philosophy. But to see the purpose of Heidegger's work as an attempt to provide direct answers to these questions is not to understand philosophy's role at home with the thinker. Unlike his teacher Edmund Husserl, Heidegger is not looking for absolute certainty nor does he imply that we can have absolute certainty. Heidegger presents in his lecture the question of what Being is and then proceeds to outline his own understanding of Being. This process allows thinkers to understand what Heidegger is trying to ask and then to begin their own journey of the question on their own terms. If Heidegger were to try and offer a "solution" to his questions, they would be in his language, not the language of onlookers who would not be able to fully share in his personal insight. One must look to Heidegger to grasp the importance of questioning, and the need to address the question of Being, then one can pursue his own journey of thinking.

³¹ *Being and Time* could perhaps remain systematic because of the still lingering influence Edmund Husserl and the school of phenomenology had over Heidegger. But Heidegger would soon move away from these influences in his later works.

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Implications of Abdominal and Thoracic Neuronal Emotive Responses on Philosophy of Mind

Mitch Roberts

Introduction

My greatest influences in philosophy of mind have been Patricia and Paul Churchland, and I consider myself a materialist in studies of mind and all other things. Eliminative materialism, the Churchland camp, asserts that mental states and brain states are identical, therefore concluding on the mind-brain. While I mostly agree with this, the work of Antonio Damasio has pushed me into a different type of materialism of mind.¹

A New Theory of Mind

As the neurosciences unfold and I find myself digging more into the anatomy of the human body, I find that neurons, those cells that make up our nervous system and consciousness, extend beyond the brain more so than I expected. The simplest way to understand our nervous system is to think of the neurons in the brain mostly and most importantly as processors in parallel distribution. The neurons that are found throughout the rest of the body can be thought of as transmitters, or messengers. However, I find the connection of these neurons, via long nerves throughout the body that meet together in the brain, to be a very compelling reason to extend a theory of mind beyond the brain.

I cite the somatosensory system found in the human brain, and its function that lets humans know their visceral sensations. In ordinary language, change in the environment inside the body of a person can be recognized and made aware to this person in their mind. In technical jargon, a visceral sensation caused by a change in the internal milieu can be recognized and transmitted through the body's nerves to the somatosensory system in the brain, where this information is brought into

¹ I must give credit to Dr. Stephen Scales for pointing out the discrepancies between eliminativism and empirical neuroscience in his currently unpublished paper.

awareness and possibly attention. The most commonplace occasion of this happening is when a person experiences hunger.

The somatosensory system does the most organizing and unifying among neuronal messaging from outside of the brain. The nature of neurons is basically similar; the differences are minor enough to ignore for my purpose. I propose that the mind is identical with the nervous system of the organism. I claim this because it has been difficult to make the clear distinction of when the mind-brain begins and ends. The nervous system approach to mind eliminates this difficulty by incorporating more of the organism beyond the brain, rather than excluding other potential bases of mind.

It is easy and safe to assume the brain as the “seat of the soul” because we see, hear, smell, and taste right next to the brain. We are accustomed to remembering objects of experience by recreating images or recalling psychoacoustic echoes. This is commonsense and it is understandable that this would lead to eliminative materialism. I challenge this by citing another type of memory: tactile. We can just as easily, although not as commonly, recall in our mind the sensation of touch, perhaps petting a dog, your first kiss, scratching through soil while gardening, or having to flee rain drops as you find yourself caught in a sudden downpour.

An example that fits more with Damasio’s line of study would be the memory of emotions. Damasio states that emotions are identical with unconscious biological responses to stimuli that are brought into consciousness essentially the same way that hunger is brought into consciousness. One can remember the sinking feeling of guilt the first time being caught stealing from the cookie jar, becoming stressed over the demands of school, jealousy over a friend dating a long time crush of one’s own, and, perhaps remembering the most clearly, the first kiss shared with that long time crush, although distinctively different from the raw sensation of lips touching lips during tactile sensation. These emotions, biologically founded, are not images or sounds that are recalled in the mind-brain, although the associated events of them could be. The feeling of the emotions is recalled in the brain, and then the emotions are felt in mainly the thorax and abdomen, just as many direct visceral sensations of emotions are. An example of this is the feeling of guilt. The visceral change has already been described as a “sinking feeling.” The observable behavior, one I take from personal experience, associated with this is the recoil. Getting caught breaking a rule makes

one turn inward, not necessarily introspectively, but the body tends to shrink, posture begins to hunch, the arms come inward with elbows bent, and the head bobs down. These observable behaviors may be less imprinted in one's memory, but the feeling of guilt, as felt in the lower thorax and upper and middle abdomen, is stamped on one's mind for life. Hence, mental activity, that of a recalled visceral sensation, extends beyond the brain. The feeling is recalled, which is purely a recall via brain memory. The emotion that is recalled, however, is outside the brain. The observable behavior, which could have involved images or sounds, is for the most part not remembered, but the feeling of the emotion is remembered. This would mean, as Damasio states, that the actual emotion, which is the cause of the observable behavior, lies within the body but outside the brain, and the plan, or mental map, for the reaction to this emotion lies in the somatosensory system of the brain.²

Possible Objections

I now want to expound my theory by addressing possible objections to it, thereby revealing its strengths by guarding against potential attacks.

The immediate objection that could occur here is that humans can have the biological emotional response, but we also have to be conscious of it, and therefore, emotions cannot be evidence that the mind extends outside of the brain. In short, this argument states that emotions are stimulated, sent to the brain to become a brain-based mental state, and finally, there is an awareness of a visceral change as being elsewhere in the body. This contention is incorrect based on Damasio's sequence for levels of consciousness. Wakefulness is the most fundamental state of consciousness. At this level, the most basic sensory stimulation will be accounted for as such but not necessarily causing any sort of mental activity. In other words, when one has just woken from sleep it takes him a moment to "align" himself, and until then he cannot direct his mental states. The next level of consciousness is the background emotions. These can be thought of as long-term emotional dispositions. It could be said that there is a neutral-background emotion state, but this would only be for practical purposes. The background emotions are not identical to the specific emotions, but there are major parallels. Next is low level

² Antonio Damasio, *The Feeling of What Happens* (New York: Harcourt, 1999), 184. Also note that the mental map for this reaction could also lie within the sensorimotor cortex as well.

attention, which is where intentional mental states are. Note that attention comes after background emotions. In terms of our current discussion, this means that intentional mental states are founded on the background emotional states, which are identical with visceral states and a presupposing mental awareness of them.³ So this counter argument falls short because it fails to show that intentional mental states require biologically based levels of consciousness found exclusively in the brain. The actual account shows that both the brain and the biological states found elsewhere in the body are needed for intentional mental states. In Damasio's framework, intentional mental states have a dual foundation: wakefulness and background emotion. In materialist terms, mental states need a brain *and* a body to exist.

A possible objection to my overall account of mind as body is that the research I cite is somewhat based on the lack of evidence for mental states to exist exclusively in the brain, and therefore I might as well be in the same camp as David Chalmers. I can sympathize with this view, but I cannot agree. I am ignorant of the existence of any research concerning fMRI or EEG readings of nerves and neuron clusters outside the brain, or any similar tests. I also would not speculate at this point that these tests would necessarily yield results in my favor. However, I can perhaps address this with an analogy. One would not say that an electron in the valence shell of an atom is not part of the atom simply because it is not found in the nucleus. Just as the brain can be compared with the nucleus of an atom, the far reaching nerves within the body would be the electrons.

Another objection to be raised could be by Damasio himself. He states that emotions are dependent on brain devices.⁴ This is obviously a strong argument against my formulation of mind. I address this issue, which troubled me for some time, by using Damasio's own argument against him. Damasio's possible objection runs as follows. Since emotions are neuronal and chemical responses outside of the brain and dependent on brain devices, the brain is actually identical with the mind. The premises are true, but his conclusion is false. His argument, to be valid, would have to conclude that *specific brain devices are identical with the mind*, not the brain in its entirety. I make this claim because although the brain is a parallel distributed processor, there still is some

³ *Ibid.*, 89.

⁴ *Ibid.*, 51.

sequence found in the processing. For example, sensory systems need first to be stimulated for there to be a planned reaction or change in mental state. I need to see the cookie jar at least once in my lifetime before I can decide to steal the cookie. Therefore, if this objection holds true, the mind is identical with sensory cortices or even just optic nerves.

Beyond Emotion

Emotions are not the only evidence for the *integral materialism* approach to mind. Another instance that I consider evidence for integral materialism is the development and treatment of Parkinson's disease (PD). PD is caused by the decreased stimulation of the motor cortex by the basal ganglia due to decreased production of dopamine, resulting in bradykinesia and sometimes akinesia. A treatment option for PD is dopamine supplements, in the form of L-DOPA.⁵ This dopamine supplement is necessary because the brain has a membrane that protects it from chemicals in the blood, called the blood-brain barrier (BBB). Dopamine itself cannot cross the BBB, but L-DOPA can. However, the BBB does not protect the remainder of the nervous system, i.e. the neurons found outside the brain. Dopamine can affect these clusters of neurons, although it has little consequence because there are very few clusters that have the organizational economy to function as neural systems.

This supports the integral materialism approach to mind because it shows that the same neurotransmitters can affect neurons throughout the body if we disregard the inconsequential nature of this chemical behavior outside the brain. In any case, this fact supports more than refutes the integral materialist approach.

Epileptic Automatism

Patients with epileptic automatism are another example of support for integral materialism. Epileptic automatism are seizures where consciousness is suspended but motor functioning and sensation are not.

Damasio has worked with many epileptic automatism patients in the past and has much experience with them. The way that this neurological disorder helps the argument for integral materialism is that

⁵ J. Jankovic, "Parkinson's disease: clinical features and diagnosis," *J. Neurol. Neurosurg. Psychiatr* 79, no. 4 (April 2008): 368–76.

the motor and sensorimotor cortices and the exoencephalonic neurons of the nervous system remain in communication with each other during the suspension of consciousness. This could possibly be an argument for property dualism, but I think it supports integral materialism more. The communication between the brain and the rest of the nervous system remains. The mind, however, is not present in this situation. Rather than concluding that dualism is the only possible consequence of this analysis, I think it is more appropriate to state that the entire nervous system is the basis for the mind, and that brain lesions or neurological disorders may impair the functioning of mind as taking place in the nervous system. In other words, instead of having the triad of mind, brain, and exoencephalonic neurons (thus dividing the nervous system into two distinct parts), there should be a dyad of nervous system and mind. This progresses our understanding of the mind.

Strengths

The mind and mental states are found in areas outside the brain. The *integral materialism* approach to mind has many advantages. First, it is appealing. I think it sits well with philosophers of both the Analytic and Continental traditions. Second, and stronger, it is well aligned with empirical neuroscience. Third, this theory provides more opportunity to do research that might help demystify the hard problem of consciousness and mind problems overall.

Conclusion

While I still mark much of my own thinking as stemming from the Churchlands' thinking, I feel that this divergence will only help studies of mind. Perhaps further research will support the integral materialist thesis. Perhaps the integral materialism thesis will guide future research. The nervous system holds many surprises for humanity to discover and exploit for the world's benefit.

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Evolutionary Pessimism vs. Evolutionary Optimism: A Comparison of Dawkins and Peirce

Rocky Ronayne

It is interesting to see two philosophers separated by centuries discover the same phenomenon and yet attribute to it contradictory values. This is exactly what Richard Dawkins and Charles Peirce have accomplished. Both have discovered and addressed the phenomenon of the spreading of ideas across a community of individuals. Dawkins sees this phenomenon as a plague of ideas. He stresses that an idea attaches and intertwines itself with an individual's mind as part of the particular idea's competitive survival. The more minds it acquires the greater its potential longevity. For Dawkins, all genes, ideas, and people are in a constant state of competitive survival. Peirce takes a far more optimistic view of the spreading of ideas and evolution as a whole. For Peirce, the spreading of ideas as a phenomenon is a perpetual event of unity and continuity of individuals as community. There is no necessary competitive survival; instead, a concept he dubs 'evolutionary love' is the real drive of social growth. The essential difference is that Dawkins sees evolution as an exclusive system, while Peirce sees evolution as a unifying and inclusive system. Even though Dawkins' theory of evolution seems more grounded in contemporary social and scientific ideologies of evolution, it is the undeniable altruism and love for humanity that exists throughout individuals and the community of humanity that allows one to more easily participate in Peirce's social theory of evolution.

Richard Dawkins' famous book and theory *The Selfish Gene* is a cynical approach to evolution. The theory suggests that genes, on the biological level, are subject to the same process of natural selection that species are, as in Darwin's *The Origin of Species*. The general idea is that the body is just a host for genes that are in competition with other genes. If one gene (e.g. one that promotes long tongues in anteaters) provides a better function and success for its host than alternative genes (e.g. ones that promote shorter or wider tongues) it is more likely to succeed whereas the alternate gene will often die out. The selection pressure is placed on the genealogical level. The concept of the selfish

gene is just that: a gene that is in constant competition for survival. In this way bodies are described as mere vehicles of genes.

Eventually, Dawkins creates a parallel between the drive and survival of genes and that of cultural ideas. Dawkins' theory applies his same concept of a gene *telos* and competitive survival on the more macro level of social and cultural information. The same principles and theory behind the concept of a selfish gene can also be applied to units of culture. Cultural information includes anything from metaphysical, socially accepted concepts gathered from such abilities like throwing a ball (which provides the information that objects can be manipulated and handled), to cultural opinions and beliefs even as simple as a style of haircut or a t-shirt pocket.

Dawkins sees units of culture as active entities; his theory of Memetics dubs these entities memes.¹ The mind is a vehicle for memes in the same way the body is a vehicle for genes. The human mind is merely a canvas of blank memory known as a *noosphere*.² This is essentially a biological hard drive that stores aggregates of cultural information. Memes are what make up an individual's mental world. The mind is the host for the viruses and parasites that are memes. This is not saying that memes are necessarily good or bad but that it does not make a difference to the meme itself. Memes participate in the same system of competitive survival as every other entity. According to Dawkins, everything wants to spread and survive.

While Peirce's evolutionary theory of ideas and the movement of ideas as a phenomenon are very similar to Dawkins' theory of Memetics, Peirce attributes unity, growth of humanity, and a positive fluidity of ideas to the phenomenon. Peirce starts in "The Law of Mind":

"ideas tend to spread continuously and to affect certain others which stand to them in a peculiar relation of affectability. In this spreading they lose intensity, and especially the power of affecting others, but gain generality and become welded with other ideas."³

¹ Richard Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene* (New York: Oxford, 1976), 192.

² David Hales, "An Open Mind is not an Empty Mind: Experiments in the Meta-Noosphere." *Journal of Artificial Societies and Social Simulation* 1, no. 4 (1998).

³ Charles Peirce, "The Law of Mind," *The Monist* 533, no. 59 (1892): 313.

Ideas spread from person to person in a connective, or as Dawkins would label it, viral, manner. Whereas Dawkins sees this spreading of ideas, and specifically “the power of affecting others,” as a competitive aspect of the phenomenon, Peirce sees a necessary and virtuous unity of people through ideas. Without the essential spreading, diluting, and welding of ideas, there can be no growth, no direction, and no betterment of civilization, thought, or even humanity as a concept. Humanity would be reduced to a static, repetitive human existence.

The difference between these two thinkers really becomes evident in Peirce’s section titled “Individuality of Ideas.” It seems that Peirce knows what Dawkins is going to write a hundred years later when Peirce states his first sentence: “We are accustomed to speak of ideas as reproduced, as passed from mind to mind, as similar or dissimilar to one another, and in short, as if they were substantial things; nor can any reasonable objection be raised to such expressions.”⁴ It is here that the epitome of their differences rest. Whereas Dawkins puts no emphasis on the individual consciousness and places all emphasis on the notion that ideas actually are “substantial things,” Peirce sees the opposite. It is the individual consciousness that creates the ideas that then passively participate in the mental phenomena of spreading to individuals; minds are active, creative, judging, and moral entities, not the supposed *noosphere* of Dawkins’ theory.

Peirce emphasizes the individual consciousness as he leads into the optimistic theory of evolution expressed in the final article of his series in *The Monist*, “Evolutionary Love.” This radical theory of evolution denounces the concept of competitive evolution. “Evolutionary Love” employs a concept of consciousness that participates in an overarching and metaphysical love as a necessary principle to ensure the perpetual betterment of humanity. Evolutionary love is an innate thing within all individuals causing them to care for one another, to strive for humanity’s growth, and to promote the unity of people.⁵ It is this love that all of humanity participates in that drives humanity forward. This love is what connects the individual to the community of humanity.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Matthew Hartman, “Utopian Evolution: The Sentimental Critique of Social Darwinism in Bellamy and Peirce,” *Utopian Studies* (1999), <http://www.encyclopedia.com/doc/1G1-56061945.html>.

Peirce labels his optimistic theory of evolution *Agapasm*. This is the idea that all unity and growth are the result of evolutionary love.⁶

In Matthew Hartman's article, "Utopian Evolution: The Sentimental Critique of Social Darwinism in Bellamy and Peirce," he shows a connection between Peirce's concept of spreading ideas and evolutionary love. Hartman brings these concepts together in stark contrast to the ideas of Dawkins:

Peirce claims that greed is incompatible with inquiry: "Suppose, for example, that I have an idea that interests me. It is my creation. It is my creature... it is a little person. I love it and I will sink myself in perfecting it. It is not by dealing out cold justice to the circle of my ideas that I can make them grow, but by cherishing and tending them as I would the flowers in my garden." Peirce presents us with a unique view of the Scientist-Philosopher. In contrast to the conventional view of the coldly dispassionate positivist, Peirce gives us a scientist who loves, a person who cherishes his ideas, and in so doing causes them to grow.⁷

It is not that there are deceiving or malicious ideas that manipulate and promote their own spreading. Instead it is the individual that participates in the creating, cherishing, and perpetuating of ideas out of love. Ideas are not entities in themselves; they do not hold the same importance and power that Dawkins wants to attribute to them. It is we as individuals who choose what ideas we will and will not participate in. It is the individual who will create an idea carefully and "out of love." This means it is necessarily in accordance with promoting humanity. An idea can therefore only grow and perpetuate if it is cherished and created out of love. Ideas are not the viruses that use people to promote their own ends but tools used by people to ensure the growth and unity of humanity.

The twelfth chapter of *The Selfish Gene*, "Nice Guys Finish First," presents an argument that can be seen as a rebuttal to Peirce's theory. Dawkins appeals to a type of game theory (people will cooperate with others in order to promote their own self-interest and survival) as an explanation for the sense of altruism that seems to exist in humanity. Dawkins' game theory sets values to what he calls Defect and

⁶ *Ibid.*

⁷ *Ibid.*

Cooperate.⁸ He presents a grid with intersections of two subjects as they consider participation in either Defection or Cooperation in a particular act. Dawkins' example from the chapter is the act of birds removing ticks from one another. The grid shows that if one cooperates and another defects, then the bird that defects will be participating in the "very good" result of "temptation" (has ticks removed but does not pay the cost of removing ticks) while the other bird participates in the "very bad" result of "suckers payoff" (removes ticks but does not get benefit of having ticks removed).⁹ If both birds participate in Defect, they fall in the "fairly bad" sector of "punishment;" neither reaps benefits nor has to pay costs.¹⁰ The final situation is where both birds participate in Cooperation in the "fairly good" sector labeled "reward."¹¹ Both birds have to pay costs of removing ticks yet also have their ticks removed. It is this final situation that provides the best altogether result. While there are costs paid, both subjects are also rewarded equally due to their cooperation. The cases where one defects and the other cooperates will certainly lead to mistrust and the inevitable punishment of the defector. Dawkins' concept is that cooperation with others results in higher rates of needs met and therefore higher rates of survival. This then leads to the survival of cooperation. Cooperation as a concept has survived because it promotes individual survival. Dawkins argues that while it seems that we appear to innately care for others and the progress of humanity, it is really this trait of cooperation manifesting itself under the cloak of altruism. Therefore, the sense of altruism that seems to exist in people is not humanity participating in some higher metaphysical love and unity but rather another convoluted tool that has not only competitively evolved in itself but also promotes individual survival. This shows why we value selfless acts and idealize selfless people. We want to pass on all traits of survival to our offspring including cooperative "altruism."

It is hard to deny the contemporary ethical foundations and logic of Dawkins' theory and concepts, yet it is even harder to deny the love and compassion that so obviously exists in humanity. Peirce is not promoting mere cooperation; Peirce is promoting an authentic, unifying, growth promoting, transcendental love of humanity. It is hard to see the likes of great humanitarians such as Gandhi or Mother Theresa as

⁸ Dawkins, *The Selfish Gene*, 203.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 204.

¹⁰ *Ibid.*

¹¹ *Ibid.*

cooperative beings. They do not just cooperate with humanity, but they love humanity. They do not desire to spread their genes; on the contrary, the proverbial humanitarian is often a martyr for what Peirce sees as love and growth.

During the cold war, at any point a nuclear holocaust had the potential to erupt; yet it did not. There is documentary after documentary where either an American or a Russian analyst indicates whoever fired first would win. The power-driven officials of either government would have most certainly survived in the super-bunkers created deep within the Rocky Mountains, Appalachian Mountains, and undisclosed locations of the Soviet Union. Therefore either side had the potential of winning and surviving. All the winning country had to do was be the first to push the button. While it seems that this is a prime case of Dawkins' concept of cooperation, it is not. Both sides *knew* what it would take to win and knew they could win necessarily. For the individual with his or her finger on the button, to destroy the other is to ensure the survival of the self. Yet this is unthinkable. The reason that this notion of survival is unthinkable at all is because of the love of humanity, the goal for unity, and the yearning for growth that exists in everyone. In this case, it is not cooperation that leads to the survival of humanity but Peirce's concept of Evolutionary Love that *then* leads to cooperation in arms reductions, cooperation in treaties, equal participation in the World Olympics, and ping-pong tournaments in Maoist China.

In the modern science-driven world it seems incredibly easy to discredit evolutionary love based on its lack of foundation in science. I propose that evolutionary love has a deeper and more meaningful foundation than that provided by the exclusive and dogmatic sciences. This foundation can simply be found in the disgusting taste left in one's mouth by Dawkins' theory of evolution. It is Peirce who says that all ideas and concepts are built out of love and the nurturing of ideas; the notion of humanity itself is included as a nurtured idea. It is the optimistic concept of humanity built out of the evolutionary love that makes Dawkins' theory seem so obtuse and shallow. It is difficult to believe that an idea holds greater influence than the mind that creates and molds the idea. It is an even harder pill to swallow that the striving for the growth and unity of humanity are nothing more than the result of competitive survival. If humanity as a whole believes in the principles behind the unifying necessity of "The Law of Mind" and the optimistic growth promoted by "Evolutionary Love" as opposed to the pessimistic,

self-promotion of *The Selfish Gene*, it is humanity that has shone the greatest possible light on the truth that is Peirce's theory of social evolution.

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work of those philosophers who followed and further developed this method have influenced a number of fields of knowledge, including psychology. Jean-Paul Sartre laid out an outline for a phenomenological approach to understanding human emotions, which I suspect is part of the bridge connecting to Alphonso Lingis' critique of Sartre's theory of radical freedom and the development of Lingis' theory of imperatives.

In his ontology, Sartre speaks of hate and anger as doomed enterprises of our being, in our attempt to recover our ontological foundations. In his outline of emotions, he only occasionally refers to anger as an example. Lingis sporadically mentions hate and rage, but these are usually used to contrast with love and other more positive emotions or when speaking about injustice. Our task, then, in seeking a phenomenological perspective on anger, hatred, and rage, will be to examine what these thinkers have already illuminated, and then decide if this has been sufficient in satisfying our curiosity. It will aid us to initially lay some phenomenological groundwork on the confrontation with the Other as described first by Husserl, then by Sartre and Lingis.

The Other

In his fifth meditation, Husserl begins to give an account of the Other founded on the basis of a world constituted by perceptions of a transcendental ego, as described through a phenomenological reduction. A problem is revealed when we realize we cannot have any direct experience of the perceptions of another. Do we constitute this person's subjectivity? Then we are solipsistic, and they have no real subjectivity to speak of. We can only reach this person's subjective existence through analogy; according to Husserl "Whatever . . . is experienced in that founded manner which characterizes a primordially unfulfillable experience . . . is 'other' . . . conceivable only as an analogue of something included in my peculiar ownness."⁴ In this understanding, the Other is given inductively as a *possible* subject through repeated observations of consistently comparable behaviors. He adroitly defines how the phenomenon of the Other presents itself to us:

The Other is appresentatively apperceived as the 'Ego' of a primordial world . . . wherein his animate organism is originally

⁴ *Ibid.*, 114-115.

constituted and experienced in the mode of the absolute Here, precisely as the functional center for his governing.⁵

We can reason that anger at another human is often caused by an inability to understand that person's motives. This is commonly the result of cultural differences—a new world perceived as alien. In his descriptions on the confrontation with the Other, Husserl makes a few remarks that, while not directly concerning any affective results, comment on the process of cultural exposure in such a way as to hint at the potential for hostility: “An individual necessarily understands men of the alien world as generically men, and men of a ‘certain’ cultural world. Starting from there, he must first produce for himself, step by step, the possibilities of further understanding.”⁶ Remember that Husserl is trying to work through an understanding of the phenomenon of the Other as it appears to us, not necessarily attempting to give any sort of therapeutic ‘brotherly love for mankind’ advice. He continues:

I and my culture are primordial, over against every alien culture. To me and to those who share in my culture, an alien culture is accessible only by a kind of ‘experience of someone else’, a kind of ‘empathy’, by which we project ourselves into the alien cultural community and its culture.⁷

From this, the phrase ‘standing in someone else’s shoes’ comes to mind, but again, Husserl is not being prescriptive. The most relevant aspect of his meditation to our investigation is most likely the insight that “this empathy also calls for intentional investigations.”⁸ This implies an effort, one which will be met with opposition or obstacles. We will understand the significance of this as we move into Sartre.

Husserl, in addition to ‘clearing a path’ for much of Heidegger’s work, introduces an underlying psychological framework:

Human existence . . . is always related consciously to an existent practical world as a surrounding world already endowed with humanly significant predicates, and this relationship presupposes a psychological constitution of such predicates.⁹

While relatively vague, we will soon see how such a psychological constitution can provoke our emotions in an immediate way through

⁵ *Ibid.*, 117.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 133.

⁷ *Ibid.*, 134-135.

⁸ *Ibid.*, 135.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 135.

Sartre's theory of emotions and Lingis' theory of imperatives. Our line of thought must go beyond the psychological, however, as Husserl insists:

Daily practical living is naïve. It is immersion in the already-given world, whether it be experiencing, or thinking, or valuing, or acting. . . . [The positive sciences, including psychology] are naïvetés of a higher level. . . . There is only one *radical* self-investigation, and it is phenomenological.¹⁰

It is through such a radical self-investigation that Sartre will ontologically confront the problem with the other.

Having already laid out the dual structure of human consciousness as *l'être-en-soi* (being-in-itself) and *l'être-pour-soi* (being-for-itself), Sartre is presented with the existence of others. Through shame, he discovers an aspect of his being but realizes that this is shame in the presence of others—that this is an aspect of his being which appears to the Other.¹¹ The experience of the Other as a subject distinct from one's self is given “by diverse series of phenomena in their very flow.”¹² He elaborates in a vein similar to Husserl's:

We can never apprehend the relation of that *Other* to me and he is never given, but gradually we constitute him as a concrete object. . . . What I constantly aim at *across* my experiences are the Other's feelings, the Other's ideas, the Other's volitions, the Other's character. This is because the Other is not only the one whom I see but the one *who sees me*. I aim at the Other in so far as he is a connected system of experiences out of reach in which I figure as one object among others. . . . I am concerned with a series of phenomena which on principle can never be accessible to my intuition, and consequently I exceed the lawful limits of my knowledge. . . . The Other . . . is presented in a certain sense as the radical negation of my experience, since he is the one for whom I am not subject but object. Therefore as the subject of knowledge I strive to determine as object the subject who denies my character as subject and who himself determines me as object.¹³

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 152-153.

¹¹ Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: A Phenomenological Essay on Ontology*, 1943, trans. Hazel E. Barnes (New York: Washington Square, 1984), 301-302.

¹² *Ibid.*, 309.

¹³ *Ibid.*, 309-310.

This sets up the relation to the Other as one of conflict. One loses his or her ontological foundation in the look of the Other: “I have my foundation outside myself. I am for myself only as I am a pure reference to the Other.”¹⁴ The look of the Other transcends one’s own transcendence, alienating one from one’s own possibilities.¹⁵

According to Lingis, our perceptions are neither “reactions to physical causality nor adjustments to physical pressures, nor free and spontaneous impositions of order on amorphous data, but responses to directives.”¹⁶ We are neither locked in determinism nor radically free. We are immersed in a world of imperatives, which we must respond to one way or another. A question from another, a look from another’s eyes, demands something of us.¹⁷ To respond to an imperative is to accept one’s responsibility.¹⁸ This is what individuates us.

The Emotion

Before Sartre develops his phenomenological theory of emotion, he describes hate as an ontological attitude toward the Other, belonging in a category with indifference, desire, and sadism, which is opposite of a category of attitudes composed of love, language, and masochism. These attitudes are attempts to recover one’s *l’être-en-soi* through *l’être-pour-autrui* (being-for-others). Either of these categories can be the first response toward the other, but they both inevitably fail and lead to an attitude of the opposite category. The category to which hate belongs is arbitrarily named the second attitude. He describes how the first attitude can lead to the second:

It can happen . . . that due to the very impossibility of my identifying myself with the Other’s consciousness through the intermediacy of my object-ness for him [the first attitude toward others], I am led to turn deliberately toward the Other and *look* at him. In this case to look at the Other’s look is to posit oneself in one’s own freedom and to attempt on the ground of this freedom to confront the Other’s freedom.¹⁹

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 349.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 352.

¹⁶ Alphonso Lingis, *The Imperative* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1998), 3.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 132-133.

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 139.

¹⁹ Sartre, *Being and Nothingness*, 494.

This is an attempt to dominate the Other's freedom with one's own, but fails because it transcends the Other's transcendence, making him an object.²⁰

Hate as a specific attitude is adopted when one realizes the futility of previous attempts to regain being-in-itself through being-for-others:

[Hate] pursue[s] the death of the Other. . . . It implies a fundamental resignation; the for-itself abandons its claim to realize any union with the Other; it gives up using the Other as an instrument to recover its own being-in-itself. It wishes simply to rediscover a freedom without factual limits; that is, to get rid of its own inapprehensible being-as-object-for-the-Other and to abolish its dimension of alienation.²¹

This hate recognizes the freedom of the other and seeks to destroy it; it is distinguished from mere despising, which hates specific attributes about the Other.²² Hatred of one is hatred of all:

My project of suppressing [the Other whom I hate] is a project of suppressing others in general; that is, recapturing my non-substantial freedom as for-itself. In hate there is given an understanding of the fact that my dimension of being-alienated is a *real* enslavement which comes to me through others.²³

If the goal of hatred would succeed, it would still fail, and return one back into the circle of the two attitudes. Once the Other is out of the picture, one is still being-for-others because one once was being-for-others and thus forever contaminated: "The Other's death constitutes me as an irremediable object exactly as my own death would do."²⁴

So far Sartre has been using emotions as examples to work out a phenomenological ontology. Years later he eventually outlined a theory of emotions from a phenomenological approach. In contrast to the usual psychology of the time, Sartre asserted that "Emotional consciousness is, at first, unreflective . . . consciousness *of* the world. . . . Emotion is set in motion by a perception, a representation-signal, etc. . . . The emotion returns to the object at every moment and is fed there."²⁵ Our anger,

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ *Ibid.*, 532.

²² *Ibid.*, 532-533.

²³ *Ibid.*, 533.

²⁴ *Ibid.*, 534.

²⁵ Sartre, *Emotions*, 50-51.

whether provoked by a person, action, situation, or thing, continuously reorients itself toward the instigation to maintain itself. We can reflect on the emotion, or reflect on our actions inspired by the anger, but reflection is unnecessary for both the affect and the action: “There can be a continuous passage from the unreflective consciousness ‘world-acted’ (action) to the unreflective consciousness ‘world-hateful’ (anger). The second is a transformation of the other.”²⁶

Sartre describes a connection between the object of anger and the anger itself that reveals emotion as a transformative power: “The affected subject and the affective object are bound in an indissoluble synthesis. Emotion is a certain way of apprehending the world.”²⁷ The transformation is an attitude that creates ‘magical behavior’ in the world of the affected:

[An emotion] is a transformation of the world. When the paths traced out become too difficult, or when we see no path, we can no longer live in so urgent and difficult a world. All the ways are barred. However, we must act. So we try to change the world, that is, to live as if the connection between things and their potentialities were not ruled by deterministic processes, but by magic.²⁸

The obstacles we encounter on the path to understanding the Other as described by Husserl provide fruit ripe for instigating this unreflective magical attitude. When something blocks us:

We are driven against a wall, and we throw ourselves into this new attitude with all the strength we can muster. ... Before anything else [such as reflection], it is the seizure of new connections and new [exigencies]. The seizure of an object being impossible or giving rise to a tension which cannot be sustained, consciousness simply seizes it or tries to seize it otherwise.²⁹

We can infer at this point that Sartre is using hate in a different manner than before. Here hate and anger are affects, relating to the perceived world, instead of attitudes referring to fundamental ontological structures of consciousness as being-in-the-world.

The shift to the emotion of anger allows the individual to perceive the world in a different way, in the hope of discovering a

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 52.

²⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁸ *Ibid.*, 58-59.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 59.

solution to a previously unsolvable situation.³⁰ The new emotion is altered in quality depending on what previous emotion was held. There are numerous types of emotions, and quite the manifold of distinctions may be made if these are also colored by the transitions between them:

If the fear of the timid person is suddenly moved to anger (a change of behavior motivated by a change of situation), this is not an ordinary type of anger; it is *fear* which has been *surpassed*. This does not at all mean that it is in some way reducible to fear. It simply retains the antecedent fear and makes it enter its own structure.³¹

In good phenomenological form, Sartre relates the phenomena of emotions to the phenomenon of the body, since it is the body through which we perceive and act upon the world:

Emotive behavior is not on the same plane as the other behaviors; it is not *effective*. Its end is not really to act upon the object as such through the agency of particular means. It seeks by itself to confer upon the object, and without modifying it in its actual structure, another quality . . . In emotion it is the body which, directed by consciousness, changes its relations with the world in order that the world may change its qualities.³²

This quality conferred is a magical or emotional one. The world *becomes* magical, and the ‘emoter’ a magician; “[The variety of emotions] all are tantamount to setting up a magical world by using the body as a means of incantation.”³³ The actions which follow our emotions, the pounding of the fist against the wall in anger or the slaying of our enemy in hatred, reveal our belief in the world we have created with them:

The qualities conferred upon objects are taken as true qualities. . . . The emotion is undergone. One cannot abandon it at will; it exhausts itself, but we cannot stop it . . . the behavior which boils down to itself alone does nothing else than sketch upon the object the emotional quality which we confer upon it.³⁴

This belief is a result of the body being in the world as a lived-in body:

The body . . . is, on the one hand, an object in the world and, on the other, something directly *lived* by consciousness . . . emotion

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 60.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 71.

³² *Ibid.*, 60-61.

³³ *Ibid.*, 70.

³⁴ *Ibid.*, 73.

is a phenomenon of belief. Consciousness does not limit itself to projecting affective signification upon the world around it. It *lives* the new world which it has just established. It lives it directly; it is interested in it; it endures the qualities which behavior has set up. This signifies that when, with all paths blocked, consciousness precipitates itself into the magical world of emotion, it does so by degrading itself; it is a new consciousness facing the new world, and it established this new world with the deepest and most inward part of itself, with this point of view on the world present to itself without distance.³⁵

We can sometimes go through the usual behaviors of an emotion, perhaps to convince someone else of our feeling, such as feigning excitement to go to the opera or pretending righteous anger at a cause we really care nothing for, but these are ‘false emotions.’ The feeling may even flicker through us through the act, but as soon as our pretence is quit, the false emotion flees. The false emotion confers no true quality to the world or its objects; no new world is entered.³⁶ In a true fit of rage, the body itself changes—the body is placed on the level of behavior and acts in accordance with the new perceptions; the person in the rage incomprehensibly and gutturally yells, flying against perceived enemies. The rage is enacted on the new world through the new body.³⁷ The screaming and flailing of fists are not themselves the emotion of rage, nor is the realization or reflection of the action part of the rage.³⁸ They are still all intertwined with the emotion, however:

Purely physiological phenomena . . . represent the *seriousness* of the emotion; they are phenomena of belief. . . . They finally enter with the behavior into a total synthetic form and cannot be studied by themselves . . . they are not reducible to behavior.³⁹

This presents us with another distinction, that of the actions from uncontrollable physical symptoms. The person who becomes so angry that he is about to fly into a rage can, before he commits any act, suppress the behavior, but he will still be visibly shaking and his skin will be bright red; these things he is unable to control.⁴⁰

³⁵ *Ibid.*, 75-76.

³⁶ *Ibid.*, 71-73.

³⁷ *Ibid.*, 76.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, 71.

³⁹ *Ibid.*, 74.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 74-75.

The ‘magical world’ is a mode of being-in-the-world distinct from Heidegger’s system of instruments that refer to each other and to the totality of references:⁴¹ “There is emotion when the world of instruments abruptly vanishes and the magical world appears in its place.”⁴² Things take on the magical qualities posited in them and denote the presence of such a quality in the new world. The quality of ‘the hated’ is within the thing and constitutes it; there is ‘the hated’ in the world: “The emotion ceases to be itself; it transcends itself; it is not a trivial episode of our daily life; it is intuition of the absolute.”⁴³ The new magical world perpetuates the original emotion. The world in which ‘the hated’ exists feeds the anger:

The magical world is . . . compressed against the emotion and clasps it; the emotion does not wish to escape; it can attempt to flee the magical object, but to flee it is to give it a still stronger magical reality. And as for this very character of *captivity*—consciousness does not realize it in itself; it perceives it on objects; the objects are captivating, enchaining; they seize upon consciousness. Freedom has to come from a purifying reflection or a total disappearance of the affecting situation.⁴⁴

We become unwitting slaves to the people and things we hate. The way out as a purifying reflection is distinguished from a normal reflection. The normal reflection would be that ‘I am angry *because* it is hateful,’ whereas the reflection that purifies understands that ‘I find it hateful *because* I am angry.’⁴⁵

Sartre provides us with a possible lead-in to Lingis’ theory of imperatives, saying, “It is [rational superstructures] which cave in when the magical aspect of faces, of gestures, and of human situations, is too strong.”⁴⁶ Faces and gestures are commands for us to respond.⁴⁷ Our emotions respond to these directives; according to Lingis:

An emotion is not just a movement of intentionality generated in the subject that hurls itself against the given and inert reality. We laugh with the sunlight, feel buoyant with the exuberance of

⁴¹ *Ibid.*, 89-90.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 90.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, 80-81.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 79.

⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 91.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, 84.

⁴⁷ Lingis, *Imperative*, 131-132.

springtime, languid with the sultry ardor of the night. . . .
 [Emotions] do not only discharge their forces on the outside
 environment; the outside is also the source of their forces. Rage
 does not come from the overheating of the organism itself . . .
 Outside forces surge into us and drive our rage . . .⁴⁸

Lingis often speaks of anger as a response to injustice, but what he says seems to be still applicable to other types of anger: “Anger marks what is inadmissible, intolerable. Anger marks a refusal, a resistance beyond what resistance itself can reasonably accomplish. Anger empowers an intractable vigilance.”⁴⁹ Echoing what Sartre has said about ‘undergoing’ emotion and being-in-the-world without a system of referential instruments, Lingis asserts that “Every emotion is a letting go of the supports and the implements, a giving way of the ground under our feet, a vertigo.”⁵⁰

Conclusion

Sartre has certainly laid a good phenomenological foundation to understanding emotion in his outline, but it is still only an outline. Lingis seems to have been influenced some by this work, but he has tended not to speak too much on anger or hatred, seeming to prefer other emotions to elucidate his phenomenological ideas. This may be because, as Sartre has written, “Anger . . . of all the emotions, is perhaps the one whose functional role is most evident.”⁵¹ Existential and phenomenological psychology has used Sartre’s ideas on occasions but relatively few compared to how often Heidegger’s theories of angst and being-towards-death are. Likely, the most fruitful thing to do would be to give further phenomenological accounts of the various types and instigations of anger, hatred, and rage, as delineated by the emotive attitudes that preceded them. This ontological undertaking could also then be used to supplement the ontic practices of the neurological sciences to give a more complete psychology of human emotions.

⁴⁸ Lingis, *Imperative*, 121-122.

⁴⁹ Alphonso Lingis, “Love Your Enemies,” *Dangerous Emotions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 188.

⁵⁰ Alphonso Lingis, “Blessings and Curses,” *Dangerous Emotions* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000), 81.

⁵¹ Sartre, *Emotions*, 68.

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*Magic is the art of bringing about changes in consciousness in conformity with the will.*⁵²

—Dion Fortune

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⁵² Attributed to Dion Fortune, occultist.

