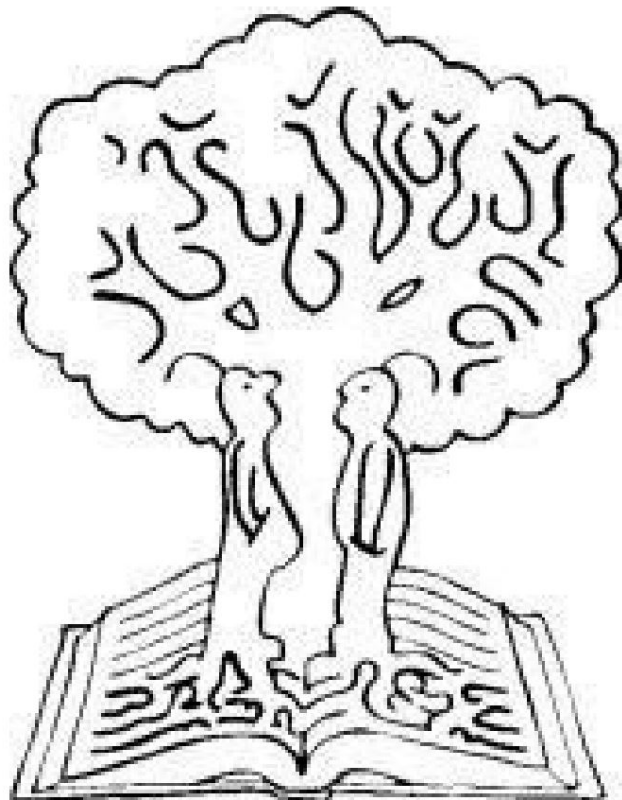


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Letter from the Editor:

Over the course of the 2019/2020 academic year the *University of Edinburgh Philosophy Society* committee's core aim has been to provide a means for students to continue to explore philosophy out with their academic classes. Our reading and discussion groups, along with our lecture series considered a variation of issues and debates over the course of the academic year, and our vision was for this journal to be a natural extension of these discussions and debates, allowing students to explore these ideas in more depth.

We were delighted to receive myriad entries this year, making selecting the featured essays challenging. Ultimately, the essays we decided should take precedence were those that not only were of outstanding academic quality, but explored topics less commonly explored as part of the Philosophy (MA) degree programme. As a result, essays in this issue span a range of topics, not limited to: cognitive science, continental philosophy, philosophy of time travel and philosophy of fiction.

We have declared a winner and a runner up for this issue: Tanuj Raut for the essay 'Ideology and Belief' and Rebecca Stoll for the essay 'Different Kinds of Possibility' – Congratulations!

If, upon reading this issue, a particular essay rouses a strong sentiment within you, please be encouraged to reply to the essay in question and send this in to us next issue (making it clear that the intention of the essay is that of a reply!)

And with that, enjoy issue three!

Yours,

Siena Wotherspoon

Editor-in-chief

Winning Essay:

Ideology and Belief

Tanuj Raut

Introduction

In this essay, I will defend Jason Stanley's notion of 'ideological belief' from the objection that it is a contradiction in terms. Critics of the notion argue that the characteristic features of ideological belief do not align with what we take to belief to be. This essay has two main parts: first I describe what it is for a belief to be ideological, according to Stanley, . In the second part, which is divided into two sections, I will present two objections that try to show that the notion of 'ideological belief' is incoherent, before defending Stanley's notion.

In the first section, I will present Tamar Gendler's objection to the notion of 'ideological belief', which is that it clashes with a norm governing belief. Since beliefs aim at the truth by being open to evidence, and Stanley's notion of ideological beliefs is that they are resistant to evidence, 'ideological belief' is a contradiction in terms. Before responding to this objection, I will discuss what Gendler and Stanley take to be the aim of belief. I will then offer a response claiming that we can favour's Stanley's view about the aim of belief. However, I will also offer another response by introducing the distinction between kinds of belief, due to Annalisa Coliva, and showing that ideological beliefs belong to one such kind, and that this fact about ideological beliefs prevents the threat of incoherence. The second response is available to those who do not share Stanley's view about the aim of belief.

In the next section, I will discuss the second objection: the formation of beliefs is voluntary, but the formation of ideological beliefs is involuntary. This objection assumes that that beliefs are formed voluntarily to (also) conclude that 'ideological belief' is a contradiction in terms. Using Coliva's distinction, I will respond by showing that on Stanley's view, ideological beliefs belong to a species of beliefs that are formed involuntarily, and rightly so. Thus, I will conclude by defending Stanley's notion of ideological belief against the second objection.

1. What is an ideological belief?

The distinctive property of ideological beliefs is that they are not revisable even in the face of evidence that contradicts them. A theory of ideology aims to explain why ideological beliefs

have this distinctive property of being unrevisable. Such a theory may locate the unrevisability of ideological beliefs in cognitive or non-cognitive sources.¹ As a theorist of ideology, Stanley argues that for a belief to be ideological, is to have the distinctive feature of being resistant to evidence, *because* the belief is connected to one's social practices and habits that constitute one's (hard to abandon) social identity.² On Stanley's view, the source of the unrevisability of flawed ideological beliefs is non-cognitive — it is a flawed social structure.³

Unlike other theorists of ideology (like Hume) who identify the ideologue's *flawed psychological properties* as the source of their ideological beliefs' unrevisability, Stanley's focus is features of society, such as economic, gender, racial inequalities between groups. Thus, on his account, being ideological 'is not an intrinsic property of mental states', and that ideological beliefs are only accidentally ideological.⁴ For Stanley, ideology is not a pejorative term — on his view, it is a neutral concept that accounts for why some beliefs are unrevisable. In many cases these beliefs may be true and might be considered to be essential for maintaining social equality in civil society, such as feminist ideological beliefs that men and women are equal, or anti-racist ideological beliefs that race is social construct. The problem lies with ideological beliefs that are false as they distort the nature of social reality. For instance, despite being a member of a society that materially disenfranchised millions through slavery to enrich the lives of others, Boris, a wealthy white man, retains the belief that he is hardworking, and deserves his wealth (though evidence suggests that almost all of it was inherited by his wealthy ancestors).⁵ He accepts falsehoods about the history and nature of racism (accepting claims that he lives in a post-racial world) and thinks one can do well by working hard, as he and many like him (supposedly) did. Boris's belief here is ideological because it is resistant to evidence, and distorts the social reality of racism. These ideological beliefs are about the propositions that the ideologue must at least *take* to be true in order to engage in the practices that make up their identity.⁶ Moreover, the more a belief is connected to one's identity,

¹ Stanley, *How Propaganda works*, 179.

² Ibid. 185.

³ Stanley's larger argument is about how flawed social structures in a liberal democracy cause flawed ideological beliefs that are epistemically defective, since they distort social reality. In his view, epistemically defective beliefs that distort social reality, will eventually lead to demagoguery and undermine democracy.

⁴ Ibid, 186; this is because Stanley takes these inequalities in society to be (metaphysically) contingent facts that nonetheless have socio-historical explanations.

⁵ Though Stanley's larger argument locates the basis of ideology in social and material structures of a society, his specific argument about racist ideology seems to suggest a reductionism regarding the causes of 'racism' as being a result of existing material reality (or class structures) of a racist society. Though collective economic justice will be a necessary feature of collective racial justice, I do not wish to endorse the conclusion of this second (more specific) argument; I merely wish to defend the larger argument that Stanley makes about the basis of ideology.

⁶ Stanley, 185.

the more ideological it will be — that is, it will be more difficult for the ideologue to give up this kind of belief. Thus, ideology is also a matter of degree.

The following properties of ‘ideological belief’ provide the basis for two objections, which aim to conclude that the notion is incoherent: 1. ideological beliefs are unrevisable such that they are resistant to evidence, and 2. the formation of ideological beliefs is involuntary. In the following sections, I will defend the notion against these objections.

2.1. Beliefs are not resistant to evidence.

According to Gendler, since beliefs are based on evidence to aim at the truth, the notion of (ideological) beliefs that are resistant to evidence seems to be a contradiction in terms.⁷ This objection aims to show that the notion is at odds with the aim of belief, and that, insofar as this aim is part of *what it is to be* a belief, ideological beliefs are not beliefs at all.⁸ As such, if the notion of ideological beliefs is a contradiction in terms, then another concept must be offered that explains why certain mental states are resistant to evidence. Gendler offers the notion of ‘alief’ — ‘a mental state that is associative, automatic, and arational’, and it is unrevisable to available evidence in the way the ‘ideological beliefs’ cannot be.⁹ However, my aim in this paper is not to show what can replace the notion of ideological belief, but whether or not it is incoherent (and therefore needs replacement) at all. Hence, I will offer very few remarks on the notion of ‘alief’, and focus more on ‘ideological belief’.

To deal with this supposed problem regarding the concept of ‘ideological belief’, we must turn to the notion of the aim of belief, *and* its relation to the concept of belief. In the following section I will briefly explain what is it to be an aim of belief, and the respective positions of Gendler and Stanley on this issue.

2.1.1. The aim of belief

Our propositional attitudes about the world aim at something, such that some sort of correspondence is established between the propositions and the world. Belief is one such propositional attitude. Thus, the aim of belief is seen to have normative implications since it governs how or what we ought to believe. One popular view about the aim of belief is truth: beliefs

⁷ Gendler, *Intuition, Imagination & Philosophical Methodology*, 296.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid. 288.

are based on available evidence that bears on the truth of the proposition.¹⁰ Since beliefs aim at truth, they must not be resistant to evidence. Thus, truth *also* becomes the norm for belief — Gendler’s objection stems from this view about the aim of belief. For Gendler, the idea that beliefs are revisable ‘in response to changes in evidence’, to aim at truth, is built into the concept of belief itself.¹¹ Thus, on Gendler’s view, a propositional attitude that is not formed in response to the available evidence to aim at truth is not a belief at all.

Another view is the knowledge norm of belief. On this view, which Stanley accepts, beliefs aim at knowledge. Knowledge is considered to be a constitutive norm of assertion, such that knowledge is necessary for assertion, and (roughly) as belief is the inner analogue to assertion, so knowledge is also necessary for belief. Thus, knowledge is the constitutive norm of belief. Those who accept the knowledge norm, including Stanley, take knowledge to be a constitutive *norm* of belief that governs the aim of belief.¹²

2.1.2. ‘Ideological belief’ is coherent.

However, if ‘constitutive rules do not lay down necessary conditions for performing the constituted act’ then knowledge as the constitutive norm of belief does not entail that one’s belief must be rationally revisable, as Gendler argues, to aim at knowledge.¹³ Obeying the knowledge norm of belief, such that our beliefs aim at knowledge that is safe (the belief cannot be easily wrong in a similar case), does not require that one’s beliefs be (constitutively) immediately rationally revisable.¹⁴ Stanley maintains that rational revisability of beliefs may be part of having ‘good overall epistemic character’, but it is not a ‘normative ideal for belief’.¹⁵ And thus, the resistance of ideological beliefs to evidence need not entail that the notion is incoherent. Moreover, on Stanley’s view, though knowledge is the epistemic norm of belief, one can have non-epistemic norms (moral and prudential ones) that also govern the aim of belief. On Stanley’s view, our ideological beliefs are governed by ‘a desire to retain a sense of normalcy, especially when normalcy is pleasant... (leading to) one’s positive self-image’.¹⁶ Thus, ideological beliefs ‘guide our path through the social world’.¹⁷ For instance, as a member of a society that materially disenfranchised millions

¹⁰ Chignell, “The Ethics of Belief”.

¹¹ Gendler, 297.

¹² Williamson, *Knowledge and Its Limits*, 266.

¹³ Williamson, 240.

¹⁴ Stanley, 190.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹⁶ Stanley, 184.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

through slavery, Boris retains the false belief that he is hardworking and deserves his wealth; because retaining this belief would help maintain a positive sense of self. This is what Zira Kunda calls ‘motivated reasoning’, where an agent’s prudential goals motivate cognition to create a resistance to evidence.¹⁸ Since one can have other norms guiding belief, on Stanley’s account, ideological beliefs are resistant to evidence because such resistance serves the prudential aim of retaining a sense of normalcy and avoiding cognitive dissonance. Thus, if one favours Stanley’s account of the aim of belief, one can resist the objection that ‘ideological belief’ is incoherent.

2.1.3 Beliefs as dispositions, and ideology.

However, the coherence of ‘ideological belief’ as a concept does not necessarily depend upon the correctness of the view that beliefs aim at knowledge. Even if one does not accept the knowledge norm of belief (and thereby holds that ‘ideological belief’ is incoherent), another response to Gendler is available. This response requires distinguishing between two species of beliefs: namely, beliefs as dispositions and beliefs as commitments.¹⁹ Beliefs as *dispositions* are (i) not result of rational deliberation or assessment of evidence, (ii) not under one’s control, and (iii) those which one isn’t rationally responsible for holding.²⁰ On the other hand, beliefs as *commitments* are (i’) based on the assessment of the available evidence, (ii’) within one’s control, and (iii’) for which one can be held rationally responsible.²¹ While beliefs as *commitments* can be known in a first-personal way (that is through personal reflection), beliefs as *dispositions* (like biases and prejudices) can only be known in a third-personal way.

Gendler seems to be committed to the view that only beliefs as *commitments* exist, and so ideological beliefs, that do not share the property of being based on assessing evidence in favour of *p*, seem to be incoherent. Thus, Gendler’s proposal of the alternative notion of ‘alief’ seems reasonable. However, if this distinction is correct, ideological beliefs seem to be instances of beliefs as *dispositions* and not as *commitments*. Though Coliva maintains that dispositions and commitments are not mutually exclusive, ideological beliefs belong to the former category.²² Ideological beliefs are not based on evidence and thus do not result from rational deliberation. Their formation is not

¹⁸ Ibid, 230

¹⁹ In response to Gendler, I borrow Annalisa Coliva’s (2016) distinction between beliefs as *dispositions* and beliefs as *commitments*. This distinction is part of her pluralist account of self-knowledge, which is the view that we know about our own mental states in more than one way. Akeel Bilgrami (2006), Tim Scanlon (1998), and Richard Moran (2001), maintain a similar distinction.

²⁰ Coliva, *Varieties of Self-Knowledge*, 28.

²¹ Ibid, 31-2.

²² Ibid, 37.

under one's control since they result from features of society one lives in.²³ Unlike beliefs as *commitments*, beliefs as *dispositions* are not transparent and we lack reflective authority over them.²⁴ Similarly, most agents with ideological beliefs cannot determine that their beliefs are ideological, in this manner. Knowing that one has such beliefs may require more than self-directed deliberation.

Therefore, even if one objects that beliefs don't aim at knowledge, in order to defend Stanley's notion of ideological belief, one can maintain the distinction between two species of beliefs to explain why some beliefs are resistant to evidence. Maintaining this distinction also has the advantage of not positing a new mental state like 'alief', since the species of belief as dispositions accounts for the unrevisability of ideological beliefs.

2.2 Belief formation and ideology

The second objection, that aims to show the incoherence of 'ideological belief', stems from the following assumption: belief formation is voluntary and we can decide to believe propositions.²⁵ The force of this objection will become clear in the context of how members of oppressed groups, according to Stanley, accept the ideological belief about their own inferiority, as propagated by the ruling class.²⁶ In a materially unequal society, the oppressed will often accept that they need to work hard and avoid being 'lazy' or 'incompetent', to deserve basic amenities in life; these (ideological) myths are part of the ruling classes ideology, that perpetuate these beliefs as truths to control the oppressed and keep them from revolting. However, the oppressed, unknowingly, will often retain these myths as accurate descriptions of themselves and their reality. Here, Stanley seems to accept the Marxist understanding of the formation of ideology: ideological beliefs come to 'dominate' individuals or groups.²⁷ On this view, the involuntariness of belief formation explains why ideologues do not know that their beliefs are ideological, and often take them to constitute

²³ In accordance with Coliva's distinction, it seems safe to say that ideological beliefs are those for which the ideologue cannot be held rationally responsible. The fault lies with social structures rather than individuals themselves. This is one reason why Stanley is right to be skeptical of individual remedies for correcting racist ideology: in order to curb racist ideology, one must not place all our faith in fostering niceness in white people, and between individuals with different racial identities, though niceness may be a (superficially) description of behavioral features of non-racist societies. Instead, one must dismantle or undermine social institutions (such as law enforcement, the army, educational boards, corporations, banks, etc.) who dominate social reality to ensure material inequality, and thus foster racist ideologies.

²⁴ Coliva, 75.

²⁵ One can believe that belief formation is voluntary without believing that rational revisability is part of the notion of belief itself. Thus, I take myself to be dealing with a different objection in the vicinity.

²⁶ However, the objection concerns the formation and retention of *ideological belief* in general.

²⁷ Althusser, *Lenin and Philosophy and Other Essays*, 158.

knowledge as though they are true beliefs. This Marxist understanding of ideological belief formation shares scepticism about the transparency of ideological beliefs (to ideologues) with the views the likes of Coliva and Bilgrami.²⁸ However, it seems unreasonable to say that one might hold a belief about one's own inferiority: after all, we can decide what we believe and if the formation of belief is voluntary, formation of ideological belief must be voluntary too. Since it is involuntary, the notion of ideological belief must be incoherent.

This objection relies on the false premise that one can (in Bernard Williams' words) 'decide to believe'.²⁹ Thus, in order to dispel the threat of incoherence one may point out that the formation of at least some doxastic states is involuntary — these are, as mentioned earlier, what Coliva calls beliefs as *dispositions*. Ideological beliefs are beliefs as dispositions that are not transparent to the ideologue, and ones over which the ideologue lacks deliberative authority. Therefore, ideological beliefs (unsurprisingly) have the property of being formed involuntarily. One may object that if one can utter one's ideological belief that p, wouldn't that show that the ideological belief is not a belief as disposition, and therefore a voluntary process? Firstly, uttering a belief that p alone doesn't entail that one has a belief that p as commitment — what is necessary for the belief to count as a commitment is that the belief respond to constraints in 'theoretical and practical reasoning', such that 'should countervailing evidence come in' one 'ought to withdraw from holding' that belief.³⁰ However, ideological beliefs are not sensitive to evidence in this manner: one can safely conclude that ideological belief is really a kind of belief (as disposition) that is formed involuntarily. Thus, Stanley's notion resists the threat of incoherence.

Conclusion

In this essay, I have defended Stanley's notion of 'ideological belief' against two objections aiming to show that it is incoherent. Against the first objection that ideological beliefs are incoherent since they are resistant to evidence, I offer two responses: one can maintain that beliefs aim at knowledge, such that immediate rational revisability is not a normative ideal for belief, and that one can have prudential norms governing the aim of ideological beliefs. Another response is to maintain that ideological beliefs are, what Coliva calls, beliefs as *dispositions*, and thus can have the property of unrevisability. Against the second objection that 'ideological belief' is incoherent since

²⁸ This is because the notion of *beliefs as dispositions* that are not known in a first-personal manner by the subject, accommodates the Marxist understanding of ideological beliefs, as non-transparent beliefs manifested in a subject (strictly) due to the subject's social conditions.

²⁹ Stanley, 234.

³⁰ Coliva, 33.

it is formed involuntarily, I (again) use Coliva's notion of beliefs as dispositions (beliefs that are formed involuntarily) to defend Stanley's notion of ideological belief.

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Runner Up:**Different Kinds of Possibility***Did David Lewis successfully establish the logical possibility of backward time travel?*

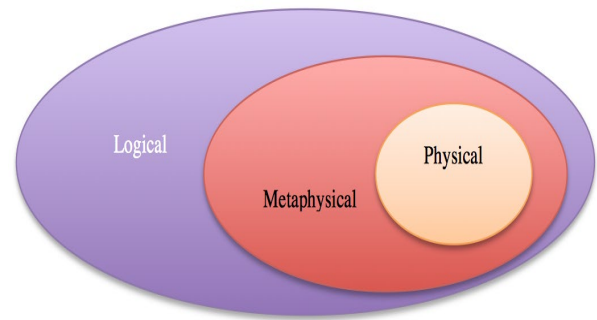
Rebecca Stoll

This essay defends Lewis' argument for the logical possibility of backward time travel. It argues that there are two kinds of objection to Lewis' argument: Nomological and metaphysical objections appeal to our intuitions and laws of nature to suggest that backward time travel has counterintuitive and inconceivable consequences. Logical objections suggest that Lewis' argument leads to a logical inconsistency. As Lewis argues for the logical possibility of time travel, only logical objections have the potential to refute Lewis. The essay aims to delineate a range of arguments which try to attack the logical possibility of time travel but miss their mark as they object on nomological and/or metaphysical grounds. It starts by outlining Lewis' definition of time travel and argues that it neither contains nor causes logical contradictions. It then discusses causal loops and the double occupancy problem as examples of nomological/metaphysical objections. At last, it explains Lewis' response to an objection which attacks the logical possibility of backward time travel.

To Lewis, the necessary and sufficient condition for time travel to be considered as such is that there is a discrepancy between the personal time of the traveller and her external time. The personal time is time as measured by the traveller's pocket watch which travels with her or her biological processes, e.g. aging, digestion. External time is time as measured by the external, non-time-travelling world (Lewis 145). The distinction between personal and external time helps Lewis explain how two events can be separated by different amounts of time. For example, if I travel back from one point in time, $x = 10$ a.m., to another point in time, $y = 5$ a.m., then I travel back by five hours in external time. However, in personal time, the journey may only take me five seconds. So x and y are separated by 5 seconds and 5 hours, which is a logical contradiction unless we distinguish between personal and external time.

Metaphysical Objections – Causal Loops & Double Occupancy

On a traditional view of possibility, we distinguish between nomological (=physical), metaphysical, and logical possibility. Something is nomologically possible at our world if it does not violate the current laws of nature (nomological laws) of our world. Something is metaphysically possible at our world if it is true at a world accessible from ours. Conceivability is generally used as a guide to what is metaphysically possible at our world. At last, something is logically possible if it causes no logical contradictions. As such, the question if time travel is logically possible is the question if time travel causes logical contradictions. The diagram to the right demonstrates how these different kinds of possibility are related (Vaidya, 2017). Physical/nomological possibility entails metaphysical and logical possibility but not vice versa: if it is physically possible for me to go to class at 9 a.m., then it must be metaphysically and logically possible as well; however, although it is logically possible for me to run to class at the speed of light, this is not physically possible. Importantly, time travel can be logically possible without being physically or metaphysically possible. Even so, many objections to Lewis appeal to our intuitions or laws of nature. I suggest that objections of this kind wrongly presuppose that metaphysical or nomological impossibility entails logical impossibility. By denying the metaphysical possibility of time travel, they miss their target and are ineffective against Lewis' argument which merely concerns logical possibility.



A frequent objection to Lewis is that backward time travel can create causal loops, where an event is amongst its own causes or information is passed on without being generated. Consider the following case of a poem without a creator: I travel back in time to hand Elizabeth Bishop a volume of her collected poems before she wrote them. She copies them and publishes them under her own name so that it becomes unclear how the poems were created. This is *prima facie* inconceivable and suggests that the consequences of backward time travel are so strange that we should reject it. Lewis is able to sidestep this issue because this peculiarity does not endanger the logical possibility of backward time travel. That a poem should cause its own existence seems inconceivable, i.e. metaphysically impossible. However, metaphysical possibility does not impact logical possibility. There is only a contradiction if A and not A are true at the same time at the same world, for example if we can both say that Elizabeth Bishop was the creator of her poems and also say that she was not the creator of her poems. However, in this case, her poems were handed to her as a finished product and she did not arrive at these words through her own creative process. It is indeed a mystery how poems can come into existence without an initial author or

creator. However, while this is strange and inconceivable, there is no logical contradiction to be found. Lewis references other oddities, such as how there could be a first cause which brought our universe into existence. However, he does not need to make causal loops more conceivable through reference of other oddities because conceivability does not impact logical possibility.

Grey's double occupancy problem is another objection which aims to attack the logical possibility of backward time travel but fails to do so and instead attacks the metaphysical possibility of Wellsian time travel. In Grey's Wellsian time travel example, a time traveller moves back in time without changing her spatial location. She has been in location x from 10:00–10:10 and at 10:10 she moves back through time to 10:05. From 10:05 to 10:10 two objects occupy the same space, which Grey suggests is logically impossible. The only way out, he argues, is to have the traveller disintegrate, which leads to a major discontinuity and a problem in determining her identity (61). However, it is not clear why it should be logically impossible for two objects to occupy the same space. After all, it is even nomologically possible for an object to be in different locations at the same time according to quantum superposition. As such, it seems wrong to conclude that it is logically impossible for two objects to occupy the same space merely because we cannot conceive of it. It seems at first that Grey objects on logical grounds but in truth, his objection rests on conceivability. As such, we are dealing with a metaphysical rather than a logical objection and objections of this kind cannot refute Lewis regardless of the strength of their argument.

Logical Possibility – The Grandfather Paradox

The Grandfather Paradox is different from the objections considered so far because it suggests that backward time travel leads to logical inconsistencies which are not merely nomological or metaphysical problems “disguised” as logical inconsistencies. It envisages that someone – let's call him Tommy – travels back in time to kill his own grandfather before he fathered any children, thus removing the cause for his own existence. This causes a logical inconsistency because if Tommy's grandfather did not live to father children, Tommy cannot travel back in time to kill his grandfather. The thought experiment suggests that Tommy can cause contradictions through his mere presence in the past:

P1. If one can travel back in time -> one can create contradictions.

P2. One cannot create contradictions.

C. One cannot travel back in time. (*Modus tollens* of P2 and P1.)

Lewis agrees that one cannot create contradictions, but he denies the first premise's claim that the backward time traveller has the ability to create contradictions. Lewis argues that it is impossible to "replacement change" the past (146). Making a replacement change means taking an item and replacing it with a different one. Tommy would be making a replacement change to the past if he travelled back in time and killed his grandfather who does not die until 2010 in 1930. He would take an event of the past and replace it with a different one. This is logically impossible because there is only one version of the past. If Tommy travels to 1930 to kill his grandfather, there is no "original" and "new" 1930 (Lewis 150). It is impossible to kill a man in 1930 who does not die until 2010 according to our one version of history.

This leads to a strange scenario if Tommy travels back in time to kill his grandfather in 1930 and finds himself unable to kill him. Grey argues that there are unexplainable "intolerable restrictions" imposed on Tommy (70). Lewis explains that there is an equivocation when we say "Tommy can kill his grandfather", and that the truth of this proposition is context dependent (150). Tommy both can and cannot kill his grandfather, but this need not be a logical inconsistency: He can kill his grandfather according to one set of facts and cannot kill his grandfather according to another. The first set of facts is that Tommy is fully intent on killing his grandfather, has received extensive training, and is pointing his gun at him. It is "compossible" with this set of facts that Tommy can kill his grandfather (Lewis 150). However, there is another set of facts we failed to consider when we said that Tommy could kill his grandfather: Tommy's grandfather does not die until 2010. This fact is not compossible with Tommy killing his grandfather. It is important to note that Tommy's inability to kill his grandfather has nothing to do with the fact that he is a time traveller and his grandfather's direct descendent. Any non-time traveller would be unable to kill Tommy's grandfather in 1930 because he does not/cannot die until 2010. While they may be strange, action restrictions are not logically inconsistent. Rather, they appeal to our intuitions to suggest that time travel is metaphysically impossible. As I have already argued that intuitions and metaphysical possibility are not a guide to logical possibility, we can safely conclude that Lewis manages to defuse the Grandfather Paradox.

This essay has defended Lewis' argument for the logical possibility of backward time travel. It argued that objections to Lewis which appeal to our intuitions, conceivability, or laws of nature fail because they miss their mark and merely imply that backward time travel is nomologically/metaphysically impossible. It suggested that causal loops and the double occupancy problem seem to attack the logical possibility of backward time travel but really attack its nomological/metaphysical possibility because they fail to reveal a logical inconsistency. Finally, the

essay explained Lewis' response to The Grandfather Paradox, a counterexample that rejects backward time travel on logical grounds. It defended Lewis' resolution to the alleged paradox by explaining that there is only one unchangeable history of the world and we are mistaken to think that we can make replacement changes to the past.

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Cognitive niche construction and ‘hard-wired’ accounts of sex differences: The potentially self-fulfilling neurological effects of ‘hard-wired’ doctrine

Nuala Polo

Introduction

‘Hard-wired’ accounts of sex differences maintain there are innate neurological sex differences that render male and female brains adapted for distinct cognitive tasks: the female brain is suited for empathising, while the male brain is suited for systematising (Baron Cohen et al., 2005, p. 23). Cordelia Fine (2012) suggests the existence of this doctrine (regardless of its validity) has potentially self-fulfilling effects, specifically, it may cause the behavioural sex differences it posits. However, this essay argues re-consideration of Fine’s account with reference to cognitive niche construction suggests she makes too weak a claim, specifically, the existence of ‘hard-wired’ doctrine may cause the behavioural and *neurological* sex differences it posits. Cognitive niche construction (CNC) (Wheeler & Clark, 2008) maintains that humans interact with and shape their environments to lessen cognitive demand on the biological brain. Furthermore, in re-structuring the environment, we re-structure cognition creating a feedback loop. This essay argues, in light of CNC, if hard-wired doctrine re-structures the environment (through propagation of behavioural sex differences), and environments re-structure cognition (through CNC), hard-wired doctrine may cause the neurological sex differences it proposes. Specifically, ‘hard-wired’ doctrine creates behavioural sex differences in social perception of infants, namely: (1) socialisation behaviours and (2) perceived toy preferences, which result in CNC through (1) epistemic engineering and (2) the construction of embedded/extended cognitive systems, re-structuring cognition to reflect neurological sex proposed by the ‘hard-wired’ account. In this essay: Section 1 introduces Cordelia Fine’s (2012) account of the potentially self-fulfilling behavioural effects of ‘hard-wired’ accounts of sex differences; Section 2 details the influential Wheeler & Clark (2008) account of CNC; Section 3 argues that reconsideration of Fine’s account through the lens of CNC implies ‘hard-wired’ doctrine may have self-fulfilling *neurological* effects; Section 4 presents objections and replies; and Section 5 suggests areas for further research.

1: Potentially self-fulfilling behavioural effects of ‘hard-wired’ doctrine

‘Hard-wired’ (from hereon, HW) accounts of sex differences may perpetuate behavioural sex differences in regards to three primary behaviours: social perception, self-perception, and stereotype threat (Fine, 2012, pp.287-8). Social perception refers to perception of the sex and

gender of others, self-perception refers to self-perception of sex and gender, and stereotype threat refers to the effect of negative stereotypes on task performance in a social context. This essay focuses on how HW doctrine may create behavioural sex differences in social perception: specifically, on how social perception of infants perpetuates behavioural sex differences with regards to two primary behaviours: (1) socialisation (parental interaction and engagement), and (2) perceived toy preferences.

In regards to (1), Fine (2012) suggests that as a result of exposure to the HW account, parents tend to exhibit socialisation behaviours that reflect the systematising/empathising hypothesis despite a lack of discernible sex differences in infant behaviour. For example, in one study, Clearfield and Nelson (2006) observed interaction between mother-infant dyads (with infants of 6, 9, and 14 months of age) during a ten-minute play session. They found that sex difference among infants promoted differences in mothers' interaction and level of engagement with their infants. Specifically, mothers spent more time engaged in an activity with female infants than male infants. Moreover, mothers did not actively participate or engage with male infants, but rather watched and attended to their play (Clearfield & Nelson, 2006, p.135). This study suggests that ideas about gender may influence social perception of infants and create sex differences in parents' socialisation behaviours. Namely, mothers may assume that female infants, predisposed to empathic, cooperative behaviour (Baron Cohen et al., 2005, p. 23) require increased parental interaction and engagement, while male infants, predisposed to systematic, independent behaviour (Baron Cohen et al., 2005, p. 23) require less parental attention. It appears that HW doctrine impacts social perception of infants and may create behavioural sex differences in parental socialisation behaviour, perpetuating the behavioural sex differences it posits.

In regards to (2), cognitive psychology research suggests that parents perceptions of toy preferences may also have self-fulfilling results. HW doctrine claims there are inherent sex differences in toy preferences. It is supposed that female infants are attracted to reddish-pink colors and rounded forms (advantageous for infant-nurturing skills) and prefer toys that exhibit these characteristics (e.g., dolls, cosmetics etc.). Alternatively, it is supposed that male infants are attracted to movement (advantageous for evolutionary hunting skills) and prefer toys that allow for active play (e.g., cars, balls etc.) (Alexander, 2003). Fine (2015) suggests, as a result of exposure to the HW account, parents perceive infant toy-preferences in line with these stereotypes and present infants with sex-typical toys. For example, in their 'Baby X' study, Sidorowicz & Lunney (1980) presented the same infant as male or female in order to see how perceived sex affected parental behaviour concerning toy choice. In this study, the same infant was presented as either male, female, or given no designated sex. Sex-stereotypical toys (e.g., football, doll, and teething

ring (gender neutral)) were available for use during the interaction. Sidorowicz and Lunney found that gender labels resulted in highly sex-stereotyped toy choice. Participants employed male-typical toys when interacting with infants labelled “male”, and female-typical toys when interacting with the same infant labelled “female” despite a lack of noticeable sex differences in infants toy preferences themselves (Sidorowicz & Lunney, 1980, p.69). This study suggests sex stereotypes, as proposed by HW doctrine, may influence perceived toy preferences. It may be that mothers assume female infants, suited for nurturing behaviours, have an affinity for female-typical toys, while male infants, suited for active play, have an affinity for male-typical toys. It appears that HW doctrine impacts social perception of infants and may create behavioural sex differences in perceived toy preferences, instantiating the behavioural sex differences it proposes.

2: Cognitive niche construction

Before reconsidering Fine’s account through the lens of Cognitive Niche Construction (CNC) it is helpful to briefly outline this framework. CNC is proposed by the cultural evolutionary (CE) framework of cognitive evolution. CE maintains cognitive evolution is caused in large part by non-neural structures (physical body; linguistic code; local, physical, and social environments) that transform the problem-solving activities of the brain (Wheeler & Clark, 2008, p. 3564). CE relies primarily on CNC, the process by which humans restructure the environment to lessen cognitive demand on the biological brain.

There are three primary methods of CNC: (1) spatial arrangement, (2) epistemic engineering, and (3) the construction of embedded/extended cognitive systems (Wheeler & Clark, 2008, pp. 3564-6). First, spatial arrangement exploits space to reduce the descriptive complexity of the environment. Spatial arrangement can simplify choice (e.g., laying out cooking ingredients in the order you need them), simplify perception (e.g., sorting vegetables into washed and unwashed piles), or simplify internal computation (e.g., reordering scrabble pieces to encourage word recognition) (Wheeler & Clark, 2008, p.3564). Second, epistemic engineering modifies learning environments, in which, “culturally and artefactually scaffolded training regimes [are] applied to young humans minds” (Wheeler & Clark, 2008, p.3566). Re-structuring the environment through deliberate design re-structures the cognitive development of future generations. Third, the construction of embedded/extended cognitive systems recruits external tools in the environment to scaffold cognition through the creation of cognitive feedback loops spanning mind, body, and world and/or to re-define the constitutive elements of cognitive architecture.

CNC maintains that through spatial arrangement, epistemic engineering, and the construction of embedded/extended systems, humans interact with and shape their environments

in order to lessen cognitive demand on the biological brain. The remainder of this essay considers how re-structuring the environment may re-structure cognition with reference to Fine's account of HW doctrine. Specifically, this essay argues if hard-wired doctrine re-structures the environment (through propagation of behavioural sex differences), and environments re-structure cognition (through CNC), hard-wired doctrine may cause the neurological sex differences it proposes.

3: CNC and HW accounts of sex differences: how doctrine may instantiate neurological change

Reconsideration of Fine's previous examples through the lens of CNC suggests that if HW accounts of sex differences propagate behavioural sex differences, and re-structuring the environment re-structures cognition, it can be concluded that HW accounts of sex differences may create the neurological sex differences it posits. Specifically: (1) socialisation behaviour affects epistemic engineering, and (2) perceived toy-preferences affect the construction of embedded and extended cognitive systems.

First, HW doctrine may create neurological sex differences in that sex differences in socialisation behaviours affect epistemic engineering. HW doctrine perpetuates behavioural sex differences in the way in which parents engage and interact with their infants (Fine, 2012). Male and female infants are exposed to distinct socialisation behaviours that constitute gendered epistemic environments in which infants cognitively develop. Clearfield and Nelson (2006) explain:

Because the mothers were actively engaged with their girls more frequently than with their boys, they may have contributed to the development of the idea that it is acceptable for girls to seek help, but boys should remain independent (p.136)

Increased interaction and engagement with female infants encourages cooperative play behaviour, while decreased interaction with male infants encourages independent play behaviour. It may be that female infants (exposed to more interaction and engagement) are more likely to develop cognitive tools for cooperation and empathy, while male infants (exposed to less interaction and engagement) are more likely to develop cognitive independence and systematicity. Behavioural sex differences in socialisation re-structure male and female learning environments (through epistemic engineering) and in turn, re-structure cognitive development to reflect these environments.

Second, the HW account may create the neurological sex differences it suggests in that perceived sex-differences in toy-preferences transform the construction of embedded and extended cognitive systems. HW accounts of sex differences encourage parents to select and purchase toys that reflect sex-stereotypes (Sidorowicz & Lunney, 1980, p.7). As a result, male and

female infants are provided with distinct sets of toys, that is, distinct sets of tools with which to construct embedded and extended cognitive systems. Sidorowicz and Lunney (1980) elaborate, “After being presented with “gender appropriate” toys, children spend more time playing with them, develop competence in their use and gradually perform better, in general, at tasks and play labeled as gender appropriate” (p. 67). Children will interact with the toys with which they are presented and incorporate these sets of toys/tools into their construction of embedded cognitive feedback loops, spanning mind, body, and world. Moreover, exposure to and incorporation of these distinct sets of cognitive tools may result in the construction of distinct cognitive architectures. Behavioural sex differences in perceived toy preferences (perpetuated by HW accounts) re-structure the construction of embedded cognitive systems and extended cognitive architectures to reflect the neurological differences proposed by HW doctrine.

4: Objections and Replies

One might object that HW doctrine does not create neurological sex differences, but rather reflects real neurological sex differences. However, contemporary research in cognitive psychology reveals that hard-wired sex differences are not present in either: (1) infant behaviour, or (2) infant toy preferences.

One could maintain the HW account reflects inherent sex differences in infant behaviour. However, in their study on infant socialisation (2006), Clearfield and Nelson report that behavioural sex differences are not manifested in infant behaviour. They contend:

No sex differences were found in the infants’ behaviour ... [moreover], the lack of sex differences in the infants’ behaviour strengthens our claim that the differences in maternal behaviour stem from the mother. Thus, it is not the case that mothers simply respond to different infant behaviours (pp.127-134).

Male and female infants do not demonstrate empathising or systematising behaviours reflective of their sex. Rather, behavioural sex differences are only found in the way in which parents engage with their infants. Without discernable sex differences in infant behaviour, it can be concluded that observed behavioural and neurological sex differences in parents’ socialisation behaviours are instantiated, rather than revealed, by the HW account.

Similarly, one could maintain that HW doctrine reflects inherent sex differences in toy preferences. However, in her study, Fine (2015) reports that there are no inherent sex differences in infant toy preferences. Rather, perceived infant toy preferences are the result of sex-stereotypes. Fine considers four arguments for neurological sex differences in toy preferences: (1) male and

female infants have distinct visual interests, (2) female infants with congenital adrenal hyperplasia (high levels of foetal testosterone (fT)) demonstrate male-typical toy preferences, (3) there are inter-species sex differences in toy-preferences (e.g., sex differences in toy preferences of vervet monkeys), and (4) there is a relationship between fT levels and play preferences (Fine, 2015, p.4). However, she demonstrates the insufficiency of these arguments for inherent sex differences in toy-preferences as a result of methodological flaws, problematic interpretation, inconsistent toy selection and questionable measurement techniques. Fine demonstrates that there is not sufficient empirical evidence to support the hypothesis of inherent sex-differences in toy preferences. Without evidence to support HW neurological sex differences in toy preferences, it can be concluded that these are instantiated, rather than revealed by HW doctrine.

5. Further research

This essay argues that as a result of cognitive niche construction (specifically, epistemic engineering and the construction of embedded/extended cognitive systems) HW accounts of sex differences have potentially self-fulfilling behavioural and neurological effects. It should be noted that this exposition does not provide empirical evidence linking parental attitude to gender differences in parental behaviour, or parental behaviour with later gender-typical development. There is a need for further empirical research to conclusively demonstrate that HW doctrine creates neurological sex differences. Specifically, a longitudinal study to see how much parental-guided gender-specific behaviour affects: (1) self-perception of gender in adults, and 2) the degree to which one's brain conforms to HW stereotypes. However, despite a lack of conclusive empirical evidence, reconsideration of HW accounts of sex differences through the lens of CNC provides a compelling conceptual argument for the potentially self-fulfilling behavioural and neurological effects of HW doctrine.

Conclusion

In her essay, Cordelia Fine (2012) suggests HW accounts of sex differences have potentially self-fulfilling behavioural implications. By virtue of these potentially self-fulfilling effects, Fine implores scientists to consider the ethical ramifications of their work. That is, to recognize the potential implications of their research on society. Fine is correct in asserting the dangers of exposure to HW doctrine and the subsequent ethical responsibility cast upon contemporary scientists. However, she underestimates the danger of this doctrine and the urgency in assigning ethical responsibility to its authors. Re-consideration of the HW account, through the lens of cognitive niche construction, reveals the potentially self-fulfilling behavioural and neurological

implications of HW doctrine. Thus, unless concrete evidence is found to support the HW claim, it is of the utmost importance to minimize the dissemination of HW accounts of sex differences, so as to ensure these scientific biases are not borne out into cognitive architecture.

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Christian Theism and Induction

Henry Viall

Introduction

Every time the sun has risen in the past, it has come from the East, setting in the West. Short of a major catastrophe, the sun will set from the West again tonight, rising from the East next morning. Inferring this future state of events from past experience is a fairly standard use of inductive reasoning. Here, induction means to infer that because something has happened consistently, it will continue to be so. Induction then tries to discover the unobserved from observed consistencies. While this is reasonable practically speaking, explaining why the future actually will turn out to be like the past is not easy. Not only is it hard to prove exactly why these inferences should work, but we are often mistaken in making them.

The Problem

David Hume argued that inferences based on induction must either be derived from ‘demonstrative’ or ‘probable reasoning.’ Demonstrative reasoning is roughly what can be known a priori or through logic alone, while ‘probable reasoning’ is what is known through experience of some kind. (Henderson, 2019) He claimed that induction cannot be known a priori because its negation does not create a contradiction, while justifying it empirically is circular:

When we say that “negating induction does not create a contradiction,” we mean that there is no logical need for uniformity in the world. Certainly, it is a fact that the sun has risen in the east. However, there is no law of logic to say that it must continue indefinitely. Laws of logic pertain to rules known before and outside of observation: that something cannot both be true and false in the same way at the same time, that if something is true it is true, etc. No law of logic dictates physical behaviors: the variables for gravity or any other similar thing could be entirely different so far as logic is concerned. There was a time before there was a sun, and there will be a time where it no longer exists. Further, the sun is a star, and nothing in being a star requires it to give us daylight at any given time. All of these things *are* the case, not because logic requires it, but because they happen to be so. As such, logic cannot be why we accept uniformity.

On the other hand, one might say that because we observe the rising and setting of the sun, we observe a law behind it, thus justifying induction through observation. However, all we observe in these cases is a behavior. A behavior need not continue for any period longer than it has already done. Any real empirical justification would ultimately have to rely on some form of induction itself, and because induction is what is being proven, it does little to help.

The problem then is not whether or not induction can be a reliable tool. That the sun has always been observed to set in the West is great proof that inductive inferences work. The problem is whether or not inferences built on induction can be justified in themselves, and how we can account for their utility. If they work, it is sensible to think that they correspond to reality, but if they do, what is that reality? I will not deal with inductive skepticism in very much detail here, nor the specific workings of the many naturalistic justifications of induction. Instead, I will briefly look at one naturalistic account of induction that claims to give *a priori* support, then argue that it is not able to give the certainty that induction deserves. From this, I will mostly focus on the main point, which is the relationship between Christian theism and the possibility of induction. I will not argue that induction is always justified, just that Christian theism creates a coherent framework for inductive inferences, one where physical laws are not contingent behaviors, but true laws properly understood.

Naturalistic Solutions

Few, if any answers to Hume's argument claim to give deductive or 'demonstrative' certainty. At best, an answer can give probabilistic *a priori* reasons. More modest proposals will only try to give inductive inferences a high degree of probability. Granting even the strong arguments, they cannot give true certainty to inductive inferences. It is better to have a solid *a priori* reason to accept uniformity in nature than none. However, when we think of the sun rising in the future, we think of this as a real fact, not something we should believe for probable reasons.

One such response claiming to give *a priori* support is the "Nomological-Explanatory" response. Laurence Bonjour and other defenders of this view argue that we clearly perceive certain regularities, and that it is likelier than not that said regularities have an explanation. Bonjour summarized the first point as follows: "In a situation in which a standard inductive premise obtains, it is highly likely that there is some explanation (other than mere chance or coincidence)

for the convergence and constancy of the observed proportion (and the more likely, the larger and more varied the number of cases in question).” (Bonjour, 1986) Having argued this, Bonjour suggests that the best explanation for such perceived regularities is not a coincidence, but an objective truth about the world: “The best explanation, i.e. the most likely to be true, for the truth of a standard inductive premise is the straight inductive explanation, namely that the observed proportion m/n accurately reflects (within a reasonable degree of approximation) a corresponding objective regularity in the world (and this likelihood increases as the number of observations and the variety of the collateral circumstances of observation increases.” (Bonjour, 1986)

In dealing with only one naturalistic answer, my hope is to give more space for discussion of theistic responses. Bonjour’s answer has a similar problem to other naturalistic solutions, and so dealing with it alone is still useful. To establish a probability behind inductive inferences, we must begin with a framework and standard with which to assess what is likely or not. This would include a set of events that are more or less likely, and this would be impossible without inductive inferences of some kind. More specifically, how would we know that an event is improbable and not simply rare? We can say with some confidence that the sun will rise in the east, but giving any particular probability to it would have to be arbitrary. What would be the baseline for the most probable? How could we say it is more or less probable than said baseline? Further, Leah Henderson points out that even if we grant regularities, saying they extend beyond where they have been observed itself requires warrant. (Henderson, 2019)

Theism, Teleology, Uniformity

To justify induction a priori, there must be some concept of ‘law’ involved, otherwise regularities are simply contingent behaviors, granting Hume’s objection implicitly. If the regularity in nature is made up of purely contingent behaviors, there is no necessary connection between individual events that make up the regularity. For this reason, Bonjour is rightly interested in defending induction a priori through appeal to some form of regular laws. However, such laws raise metaphysical issues for explaining their grounding, what they are, and how they operate.

Teleology, meaning purpose or goal-directedness, seems to be a good solution. If the regularity in nature is derived from purpose or goal-directedness of some sort (purpose in the way that a mug

is designed for containing water), laws become real and tangible, and worth working from. The sun would not rise because it happens to do so, but because that is a goal it is directed towards.

Certainly, that the sun rises is not simply because of teleology. There are natural laws behind this, such as gravity, dictating the earth's orbit. However, even if we can reduce the day-night cycle to certain natural laws behind gravity, there will be a point after which no new law can be an explanation. At that point, at least those base laws will need an explanation. Here, the question is not one of infinite regresses, but whether physical law has any explanatory power to begin with. If we ask why the sun rises and the answer is gravity, that explanation can be reduced ad infinitum, no explanation has actually been given. Laws on their own are therefore not sound explanations.

Christianity proposes a God who is in no way part of creation and is entirely absolute (Genesis 1:1, John 1:1-3). While the gods of polytheistic religions are ultimately reflections of things in nature (Romans 1), the God of Christianity is entirely above and beyond any created things. He spoke *everything* into existence effortlessly (Genesis 1:3-27). Further, instead of being capricious, like in ancient Greek religion, He does not lie or change His mind, He set the laws of nature, and they do not change (as in Numbers 23:19 and Jeremiah 33:25). All of this is to say that on the Christian view, God is able to create real regularity in nature, and if He does so, He will not let it fail.

A god who is either part of creation as in polytheism, or one that is completely silent and withdrawn like in deism, cannot give us both regularity-causing laws and ways knowing them to exist. If a god is under nature, it is subject to the regularity, and cannot cause it. Certainly, the God of the Philosophers (the God of deism) can create regular laws, but it has never spoken or revealed itself, and has no interest in doing so. As far as us knowing the regular workings of nature, it is no help.

Objections

I am arguing that the God of Christianity is necessary for justifying uniform laws of nature, and that atheism, polytheism, or deism are unable to do so. There are three main objections to deal with. First, that assuming Christianity would be question-begging. Second, that Christianity's eschatology and acceptance of miracles would fundamentally undermine belief in the uniformity of nature. Third, that failed inductive inferences demonstrate that nature should not be seen as uniform.

Is the assumption question-begging?

If induction itself can be assumed or can be justified in some other way, presupposing theism seems unnecessary. Further, if we are required to assume Christian theism, is it not also possible to assume uniformity in nature without Christianity? It is true that many people happily assume induction without explicitly being theists, and it would be very counterintuitive to say that they are not justified in that belief.

Ultimately, assuming things to be true is necessary. Without assumptions, knowledge is not possible. As such, even assuming induction would not be a problem in of itself. However, certain beliefs being assumed in isolation create an incoherent picture. To assume that one will fly in an airplane tomorrow at a certain time makes little sense without the added assumption that airplanes exist, or that one has a ticket. In a similar way, assuming induction is in itself possible, however, without theism as an axiom, it is not coherent.

An extension of this objection is that certain beliefs about Christianity have nothing to do with induction, and are therefore not necessary. For example, it would be absurd to say that King David dying at 70 years old (2 Samuel 5:4), as opposed to 71, is a necessary presupposition to justify induction. Here, we may say that some things are true of Christian theism by their very nature (such as God's omnipotence), while others are derivatively true. Clearly, God's existence and attributes *are* central doctrines. On the other hand, that David was 70 years old is not. However, the Bible being inspired by God *is* foundational, and it is from *this* that Christians should commit to accepting the Biblical number for David's age. However, it is not necessary for justified inductive statements in of itself. Further, Christian revelation ended in the 1st Century AD, while great figures like Moses lived in the 15th century BC. It would be hard to say that Moses was not justified in using induction. What can be said is that all people who followed the God as revealed from Sinai to the time of Christ believed in the same God, and so had the same epistemic foundation. While Revelation was given at numerous times and the later clarifies the earlier, fidelity to what has been revealed at the given time is sufficient.

Miracles and Uniformity

The second objection is that miracles violate regularity in nature, and that this undermines the very thing Christianity would be solving. Certainly, Christianity is built on miracles, such as the Parting of the Red Sea or the Resurrection. If a miracle is anything, it is a violation of the way things normally behave: if people rose from the dead constantly in a reproducible way, a Resurrection would not be a great feat. Further, Christians believe the world as we know it will end in the future, as is found in the Nicene Creed: *“I look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come.”* This being the case, key points of Christian doctrine could undermine belief in the regularity of nature.

The problem, however, is not with miracles, but with the understanding of regularity this objection assumes. When cups fall to the ground, they break. However, if someone drops a cup, and something else cushions its fall, the cup will not break. It is no problem for physical laws that this is true: though a cup will break if it is dropped, a sufficient impediment can prevent it. That the dead remain dead is true if nothing intervenes, however, God can raise someone from the dead if He so pleases. That does not eliminate the regularity itself, it just assumes that nature is not a closed system. Theologians distinguish between General and Particular Revelation. While Particular Revelation (Scripture, the content of the Creeds, etc) was revealed at specific times in history, General Revelation (nature, the human conscience, etc) is available at all times and places. Particular Revelation corrects our understanding of General Revelation, and that includes giving knowledge of miracles that happened at specific times in the past. The end of the world is not a past event, but even here, it does not challenge the existence of a regularity, it is just a known future impediment to said regularity.

Failed Induction

The third objection is that inferences about the natural world often do fail, and that this undermines God’s truthfulness. If teleology underlying nature is a result of divine creation, and creation reflects God’s nature, the world having deceitful qualities certainly is troublesome. Not all such failed inferences do cause problems, however, such as being temporarily deceived by water reflecting in ponds. On the other hand, history is a great museum of false beliefs about the natural world: whether it is Zeus as the cause of thunder, spontaneous generation of life, or the flat earth. If something intrinsic to nature is the cause for these things, the objection carries much weight - God would seem to deceive us with the very fabric of creation.

With the example of Zeus causing thunder, the fault is not in God or the natural world, but in people having a very active imagination. It would be one thing to say that there is agency behind thunder. However, adding qualities to that agency such as white hair or the ability to throw lightning rods is not an inference from the natural world, but speculation. God should not be held responsible for such faulty speculation.

Ancient Greeks like the Pythagoreans were able to show that the earth is spherical quite early (Copleston, 1993), however, many ancient Near Eastern Civilizations had a flat-earth cosmology. Without any knowledge of geometry or planets, there certainly is reason to believe that the earth is flat; it at least looks that way from where we stand. It is not pure speculation to infer that because the earth looks flat, it is flat. However, while the earth looks flat from below, there are many available ways to show that it is round. It was not necessary to develop much technology before the Greeks could learn this, and even here, the deceit is not in nature, but in inferences we make about it. Seeing as one can know the earth to be spherical through sight, we cannot think of our faculties as the problem. In this way, even such a long held false belief about science is similar to an optical illusion in water, as in both cases, new observation corrects past faulty observations.

Conclusion

If the argument has been successful, I have shown that Christian theism is able to account for inductive inferences, while other worldviews cannot do so consistently. Having briefly looked at secular attempts to justify induction, I hope to have shown that they cannot give a sufficient degree of certainty to be of much worth, and that Christian theism is a necessary alternative. If Christian theism *is* necessary, one may either adopt it as a presupposition or make inductive inferences without justification or consistency. In both cases, truths only justified within a Christian framework are being assumed. While the non-Christian in this case is able to avoid making extra assumptions, he must commit to an instrumental view of natural laws, not a realist one.

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Incipit Tragoedia: *Mayeda's Unsung Challenge to Nietzscheanism*

Kenneth Novis

§1: Introduction

The contemporary ethical hegemony of so-called continental philosophy is broadly characterised by two prevailing tendencies: Marxist social collectivism, and Nietzschean ethics of power. In these, ethics isn't understood as the formulaic study of moral actions but is an attempt to model how a life ought to be lived, thereby establishing which values are central to human life (like solidarity and freedom). Opposing this, Mayeda proposes a novel alternative to Nietzscheanism which takes Nietzsche's very own starting point: the thought of eternal recurrence. This essay will therefore narrate the orthodox Nietzschean view and Mayeda's alternative, before providing evaluation of the latter in terms of the former's aims, to conclude that Nietzsche and Mayeda both embrace different features of the existential nihilism to which they respond – Nietzsche, the reformulation of the subject, and Mayeda, the elimination thereof. Between the tremendous voices of Nietzsche and Marx, Mayeda's resonance is esoteric and quiet, unlikely to disturb the stalwart paradigm of continental ethics; yet few alternatives can claim to follow either of these great thinkers in all of their premises to derive so radically different a conclusion – such a possibility ought to give us serious pause in our engagements with nihilism and the contemporary language of power that has become 'normative, all too normative'.

§2: Nietzsche – “There is no being behind [...] becoming.”³¹

An understanding of Nietzsche for the purposes adumbrated earlier demands of us explication of his ethics, through the will-to-power, the transvaluation of values, and the eternal recurrence of the same. An effective entry into such a discussion is his *On the Three Transformations*.³² According to Nietzsche, the final and ultimate state of being lies beyond the destruction of any-and-all absolutes, within the creation enabled in the wake of the metaphysical wreck – a concept popularly referred to as 'creative destruction'. Such an apocalyptic emancipation must first transpire, for Nietzsche, since the world as-is consigns the Will to an impure and inauthentic configuration, where it is expected to affirm death rather than life.³³ This is eminently imbricated within his greater critique of religion which renders its practitioners “afterworldsmen”, who, in

³¹ Nietzsche, F. (1956) Pp. 178-9.

³² Nietzsche, F. (2005) Pp. 23-24.

³³ Nietzsche (1998) Pg. 23.

living, are already dead (in their uncontrollable dismay over life, and adulation of the afterlife which becomes their cynosure).³⁴ Therefore, the authenticity of the Will is attainable only through realisation of those structures whose emergence is authentic to the Will unconstrained by (religious) dogmatism. Such a project chronologically situates his thought post-Schopenhauer, since after the German Pessimists the very liveability of atheistic life was called into question, and so the Nietzschean project is, loosely: to understand how life without absolutes is at all liveable.

The *will-to-power* can be glossed by us as the mode of being of the Superman, or one who is capable of affirming life, not only despite, but *because of* its blemishes and tragedies, and who therefore exists within being as authentic to the being of life (a thing replete with unimaginable woes). In short, if we are to affirm life without appeal to higher powers and metaphysical absolutes, we must openly confront the unmistakable reality of suffering; a love of life isn't only a love of joy, but the affirmation of all pain and conflict as well. Such a move demands that we take seriously the metaphysical activities of nihilism: if there are no absolutes, we confront a world 'Beyond Good and Evil' where to say that 'pain is bad' or 'pleasure is good' is to utter a lie, since nothing, at this stage at least, is good or bad. This act of levelling which reduces all phenomena to total equality (in the absence of any possible measurement, which would of course require presupposition of some absolutes between which evaluation occurs) is the *transvaluation of values*.³⁵ Life beyond good and evil, after the transvaluation of values, requires resumption of the will-to-power; but what would such a willing as to will a life of suffering look like? In answering this, Nietzsche posits his thought of the *eternal recurrence of the same*, first appearing in *The Gay Science*.³⁶ There is some debate over the scope of this, the "thought of thoughts"; deliberation upon both the metaphysical and psychological interpretations will aid in clarifying the interpretation most conducive to comparison with Mayeda and Buddhism.

The essential question underlying interpretation of the eternal recurrence of the same is: what is it that is willed to recur? In the aphorism *On the Vision and the Riddle of Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, willing eternal recurrence takes on a psychological quality, where the eponymous Zarathustra relives a painful but formative memory. Accordingly, the eternal recurrence may be the repetition in memory of all things which bring us suffering and joy. Such a reading is the more common-sense of the two, since it applies no metaphysical presumption whatsoever, posing the eternal recurrence of the same as the fact that one must exist in, and love, a world where they will be forced to not only undergo any experience once, but innumerable times (in memory). Such a

³⁴ Nietzsche, F. (2005) Pp. 27-29.

³⁵ Brassier, R. (2007) Pg. 207.

³⁶ Heidegger, M. (1991) Pg. 14.

reading of Nietzsche can also be found in Freud and is fundamental to his development of the ‘death drive’.³⁷ Ultimately, this suggestion must be rejected by us since it depends still upon the Self/World dichotomy which Nietzsche overturns in his metaphysics of perspectivism. That is to say, neither the world nor the self may be absolutes, and so we lose the schema of their disparity; according to perspectivism, the world in-itself (and all things-in-themselves) does not exist.³⁸ The world is literally only an appearance, without any reality hidden from perception. When an event occurs in the hypostasis of consciousness (in memory), we are no longer permitted to regard this as a phenomenon apart from the material operations of the world in-itself, and so the eternal recurrence of pain in memory becomes the eternal recurrence of pain *in reality*. Thus, the will-to-power which wills eternal recurrence after the transvaluation of values performs *amor fati*, or a love of all things irrespective of the obsolete pain-bad/pleasure-good dichotomy.

The willing of all things in its ultimate state is a willing of all things eternally as well, and this can be understood in terms of degrees of ‘power’. To accept that one will relive troubling memories, provided that that is all which one must bear, is no laudable feat. To confront the entirety of being alongside the prospect of the recurrence of all suffering even once is impressive, but still insufficient since one remains burdened by ‘the spirit of gravity’ – regarding suffering still as a weight, and thus willing the cessation of life eventually. Only one who has relinquished the weight of the spirit of gravity possesses the strength to turn over ‘the hourglass of being’ *evermore* and unconditionally – Deleuze’s brief exegetical remarks on Nietzsche in *Difference and Repetition* are especially elucidatory on precisely this account. For Deleuze, the power that one wills is the ability to will the recurrence of being according to mathematical powers.³⁹ The eternal recurrence of the same is the metaphysical return of all being to the *nth* power. Therefore, the will-to-power announces *amor fati* in willing metaphysical return indefinitely, achievable only by total embrace of the transvaluation of values. The ethical message which Nietzsche transmits in this is profound: the will-to-power being a willing of recurrence in a way determines the being of the world, and so authenticity is the total exercise of the Will in its ultimate form.⁴⁰ More simply, one revokes all meta-narratives which grant respite from suffering, and shapes reality according to their Will, which may now operate beyond the insipid delusions of absolutes which continue to proclaim good and evil.

³⁷ Freud, S. (2003) Pg. 60.

³⁸ Nietzsche, F. (1968) Pg. 267.

³⁹ Deleuze, G. (1994) Pg. 9.

⁴⁰ Heidegger, M. (1991) Pg. 129.

With Nietzsche's full metaphysics prepared, we can explore the ethical ramifications of his metaphysics more fully. Superficially his ethics seems to be one of total egoism. Perspectivism, according to which there is no reality hiding behind appearances (appearances *are* the total reality) may consign us to extreme solipsism by revocation of all things-in-themselves, and so his ethics becomes the infliction of one's own Will (i.e. desires) upon reality. However, since Kant the Self too is a thing-in-itself as a transcendental unity which organises, and is therefore exterior to, perceptions and appearances.⁴¹ So, without a Self, what is it that one authentically wills as a will-to-power? Heidegger describes the function of the will-to-power thus: "becoming-a-being becomes a being that comes-to-be",⁴² meaning: the being that one becomes in being-authentic is, itself, a becoming without identity. Accordingly, Nietzschean ethics are neither solipsistic nor collectivistic. Embracing the authentic form of the Will is to become-becoming and internalise the unremitting impermanence or flux of being. The Subject isn't lost according to this model, but is displaced from hypostasis and assigned an identity of non-identity, incapable of internal repetition but asserting its own wilful mastery as an incessantly becoming thing, or something within the immanent and material reality of tragic impermanence. Good for Nietzsche is the name given to all things 'noble' in life which are unconditionally life-affirming, whilst evil is the performance of the 'nay-sayers' who commit us to death in life and fail to will recurrence.⁴³

§3: Mayeda – Undoing Repetition

In this section, we will seek to understand the novel response to Nietzscheanism which Mayeda prepares in his close reading of Kuki. The key to Mayeda's opposition to Nietzsche's interpretation of what ethics becomes in the face of eternal recurrence is the difference between the ethics of bushidō and of Buddhism. However, the understanding of eternal recurrence which he applies (Saṃsāra) is notably different than the Nietzschean variant thereof. Rather than confronting the repetition of history, Mayeda considers the conditions of the repetition of the Self as a willing-thing. When I express my willing of something, this same expression is also a self-positing, in the sense that I, as something with a Will (or that is a Will) come-to-be. Any recurrence of the Self under this model is simply the recurrence of a willing of anything, which is simultaneously a self-positing. The thought of the eternal recurrence of the same is altered quite substantially by this interpretation, but I believe that Mayeda's conclusion may be retrofitted to represent a genuine

⁴¹ Kant, I. (2007) Pg. 318.

⁴² Heidegger, M. (1991) Pg. 200.

⁴³ Nietzsche, F. (1998) Pg. 21.

opposition to Nietzschean orthodoxy. Prior to such a manoeuvre, we must be clear on what Mayeda's thoughts on the matter are, and how he contrasts his own view against that of Kuki.

As Mayeda explains, Kuki, from this new interpretation of eternal recurrence (Saṃsāra) derives two ethical "figures": that of the Buddhist monk, and that of the Samurai warrior. Either figure is characterised in accordance with how they respond to the reality of the Self's recurrence in every act of willing. The Buddhist aspires to Nirvana, or an escape from the reality of a Self which recurs eternally.⁴⁴ Such an escape is attainable only through the negation of any-and-all acts of willing – to escape from the eternal recurrence of the same is to obliterate the very thing that recurs: the Self (the Will). The Samurai, on the other hand, accedes to bushidō – a demanding ethical code comparable to Nietzsche's amor fati. The Samurai will resign him/herself to the insurmountable reality of being a willing-thing, and thus accept his/her eternal recurrence and all that it entails (from joy to suffering).⁴⁵ The two predominant Buddhist theological readings of bodhisattva ('Buddha-hood') seemingly express different opinions as to the possibility of either of these options.⁴⁶ According to Theravada Buddhism, the path of the Buddha is accessible to only an elite few. Such a view implies that 1) only those destined to become Buddhas may live ethically, and 2) everyone else must either embrace repetition (as does the Samurai) or fail to live authentically at all, unable both to confront their ontological substance and transcend it. Mahayana Buddhism, on the other hand, maintains that anyone exercising the right practices may attain bodhisattva. Let us assume that bodhisattva is a possibility for anyone sufficiently devoted, following the Mahayana tradition.

Kuki proposes that the ethics of bushidō is superior to that of Buddhism, principally on account of plausibility.⁴⁷ Fundamentally, it should seem unclear to us how one is supposed to escape willing apart from through an act of the Will; thus, denying the Will appears to be an exercise which is self-defeating (in both senses of the word). Although Schopenhauer maintained the possibility of such an endeavour, Nietzsche later recognises precisely this criticism, entitling the Schopenhauerian world-view a 'will-to-nothingness', suggesting that one does not escape the putative matrix of willing, but mutilates it by forcing it to will its own demise *as an act of willing*.⁴⁸ For Mayeda, this is not the case. The ethics of bushidō and of Buddhism in his analysis are examined according to the encounter with the Other. The Other, as it appears to me (phenomenologically speaking) does so in a manner that endears me towards them with intuitive

⁴⁴ Mayeda, G. (2012) pg. 114. I've heard it said before that this method of escape Smells like Teen Spirit.

⁴⁵ Ibid, pg. 115.

⁴⁶ Samuels, J. (1997).

⁴⁷ Mayeda, G. (2012) Pg. 116.

⁴⁸ Nietzsche, F. (1956) Pg. 299.

ethical implications – the mere presence of them throws me outside of my-Self and renders me accountable for my actions.⁴⁹ In other words, a demand is placed on me in response to which I may succeed or fail. Furthermore, the Other for Kuki represents a sort of necessity in what we might call the ‘fateful encounter’: meeting with the Other emphasises the apparent dimension of *contingency* within our every action, but since (for Kuki) the contingent exists between the impossible and the necessary, such an occasion gives rise to the thought of its possible *necessity* as well.⁵⁰ Importantly, the revealed necessity is not one which I can make my own, but evokes a transcendence which is both the transcendence of the Other and of history, understood here as destiny.⁵¹

It is this analysis of transcendence that grants Mayeda access to his positive conception of Buddhist ethics. The impossibility of escaping the matrix of willing which the Samurai resignedly accepts is embodied in the subject’s inability to sufficiently rise to the demand placed upon them by the Other, where one must act as one-Self, enthralled by desire. In this model, one cannot but will, yet one may choose to “will well”. However, Mayeda prophetically notes that such an impossible demand arises only from the interruption of the synchrony or ‘internal time’ of a Will that cannot but will and desire; but what if “the appearance of the other is not an interruption or a disruptive surprise” at all?⁵² To attain these new conditions of the encounter with the Other, we must not only escape the matrix of desire, but suppress the very conditions according to which a Will arises in the first place: from a belief in one’s own mastery over reality, or from the subject-oriented generation of synchrony as the interpretative field of experience. The role of destiny here, as the necessity of temporality, is thus one according to which neither I *nor the Other* are proprietors over any perceptual dominion – the world is neither mine nor theirs, but is, in a way, *its own*, understood through the lens of the fateful eventuality of everything.

§4: Necessity – The Mutual Axiom

The appropriation of Mayeda’s phenomenological ethics to any possible application in Nietzschean thought should appear unclear at this stage, given not only the fundamentally different conceptions of eternal recurrence appraised by Mayeda and Nietzsche, but also on account of the authors’ antipathy towards each other’s domains. Nietzsche throughout his career made repeated disparaging remarks about Buddhist asceticism⁵³ (although in later life he came to appreciate

⁴⁹ Mayeda, G. (2012) Pg. 119.

⁵⁰ Mayeda, G. (2001) pg. 290-2.

⁵¹ Mayeda, G. (2012) pp. 117-8.

⁵² Ibid, pg. 122.

⁵³ For example, Nietzsche, F. (1974) Pg. 154-5.

Buddhism as “the only genuinely *positive* religion”⁵⁴, and Mayeda is explicit of the inverse: “Kuki’s ethics is not Nietzschean.”⁵⁵ However, such a move as we propose can be made sense of when we consider either philosopher in the context of their confrontations with necessity. We will first need to clarify precisely what is meant by this, since even if both *use* the word ‘necessity’, or allude to its thematic importance for their conclusions, it is not in any way apparent that the meaning of ‘necessity’ is continuous between their works, or that the role it occupies is sufficiently mutual.

As we have seen, for Mayeda necessity occurs in the transcendence and fatefulness of a time which can never become wholly ‘mine’. It is in the formulation of time’s fatefulness or inevitability that a thematic similarity can be identified that acts as grounds for comparison of the two thinkers, since Nietzschean eternal recurrence also invokes the fatefulness or necessity of everything (every action, joy, and pain). As Nietzsche expresses in *On the Vision and Riddle*, the present lies indeterminately between an eternal past and an eternal future within which the present moment is merely a point in the infinite repetition – all of time will recur, and has already done so.⁵⁶ Accordingly, the fatefulness of time can be read not inauthentically into Nietzsche’s thought of eternal recurrence. With this as our point of comparison between the two, what do Nietzsche and Mayeda offer as responses to the fatefulness of time? Nietzsche proposes a love of the pointless suffering of existence and of the changefulness of everything real – that we must become subjects suited to the thought of recurrence, achieved through the will-to-power, referred to us earlier as to ‘become-becoming’. In Mayeda’s Buddhist ethics, however, a love of time renders this time ‘my own’, as something into whose every dimension I can intervene with my affirmation of it. Nietzscheanism sacrifices the transcendence of time as something which arrives at and interrupts the dominion of the Self as something beyond ‘my’ control. Making time un-affirmable by the Self, without lapsing into the atheistic pessimism which Nietzsche seeks to avoid, occurs through denying a place to the subject instead of reconstituting it, such that any willing is understood not as of my Will, but as the unfolding of time in its utter fatefulness.

§5: Conclusion

In this paper, I have argued for the possibility of a comparison between Mayeda and Nietzsche from their confrontations with the necessity of time (eternal recurrence). While Nietzsche proposes to solve atheistic ennui by the will-to-power, resultant of which the Subject is reconstituted and internalises the impermanence of reality, Mayeda denies a place to the willing

⁵⁴ Nietzsche, F. (1924) pg. 69.

⁵⁵ Mayeda, G. (2008) Pg. 9.

⁵⁶Nietzsche, F. (2005) Pg. 136.

Subject by subordinating it to the world in which it occurs. This is more than an arbitrary change. Under the Nietzschean orthodoxy, every event in the world becomes an activity of the Subject who masters it with affirmation or amor fati. For Mayeda, however, the event of willing (the occurrence of the Subject) becomes an activity of the world, which is understood in terms of its transcendence and fatefulness. Accordingly, his is a proposal to reverse the main conceptual flow of Nietzsche's metaphysics, which ordinarily runs from Subject (Will) to world by an affirmation of the world 'beyond good and evil'. This reversal produces a current that runs from the world to the Subject who is no longer understood as real and masterful, but as artificial and mastered by a destiny by which they find themselves always moved.

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On Understanding

Cezar Mihalcea

The aim of this essay is to provide an account of human understanding and its limits. However, we should be careful in our pursuit to avoid reducing understanding to mere representation, since understanding itself comes to define and ‘frame’ its own results. We distinguish between more than one mode of understanding, each with its own framework and constraints, leading to different interpretations of the world.

In acknowledging more than one domain of knowledge in which understanding takes place we would be unwise to try and give an explication for all of them. We will, however, attempt to give a description for an originary mode of understanding, from which all other modes arise, and upon which they are, at all points, grounded. Such a description is found in Phenomenology, most notably, in the work of Martin Heidegger. On the basis of the framework developed in his book, “Being and Time”, we will give a description of the most fundamental form of understanding as an existential constraint, following to account for both its grounds and the way in which it defines our grasp on Being. In what follows, I will argue for a shift in perspective, towards an acceptance of the limits of Understanding (as we will describe it), as opposed to the more dogmatic views held by such doctrines as scientific realism (which holds that the scientific representation of the world is real and defining, irregardless of interpretation).

The Worldhood. Readiness-to-hand and Presence-at-hand

It would best be suited to start with one of Heidegger’s main claims, precisely, that human existence is existence ‘in the world’ (2013, p. 24-28). As such, the name he gives this particular mode of Being is *Dasein*, meaning “Being-there”. Throughout his work, ‘Dasein’ signifies human existence, both in terms of agency and simple existence in the world. More explicitly, Dasein understands its own actual existence and possibility of existing partially in terms of the world, which is always already present as something that is spatially ‘there’ to grasp and act upon. Moreover, the world is never empty spatio-temporality, since “Being is always the Being of an entity” (Heidegger, 2013, p. 29). The world is always encountered as a totality of beings and their relations which, in accordance with a theme (an overarching ‘idea’ that defines things in a context), become a unitary domain in which Dasein exists. This theme, as being ‘already there’, directs Dasein towards beings in such-and-such a manner. The directedness of Dasein gives its

phenomenon of the world, as a 'spatial context' in which understanding can happen. The ontological concept of this phenomenon we call "the worldhood" (2013, p. 91-93).

In order to clarify the concepts above, a better grasp on the Being of things is needed. Heidegger distinguishes between two modes for this Being: the ready-to-hand and the present-at-hand. Things are first encountered as 'ready-to-hand' tools, as ontologically belonging to a series of relations to other things and to Dasein itself, relations which come to define their phenomenal characteristic. This is perhaps best illustrated in Heidegger's example of the hammer: in using the hammer, one comes to grasp its practical qualities in a pre-rational (non-explicit) manner, which make up its 'manipulability' (2013, p. 98). Things are initially grasped on the basis of their qualities with which Dasein is concerned; these qualities are determined by the context in which the object is encountered, i.e. the hammer being found in the workshop. The tool is seen as 'tool' in virtue of Dasein's practical involvement with it.

If readiness-to-hand is the mode of Being in which things are adequate to Dasein's concern, then presence-at-hand emerges when things are inadequate to that concern. Heidegger notes that "the presence-at-hand of entities is thrust to the fore by the possible breaks in that referential totality in which circumspection operates." (2013, p. 107). In other words, when an object is inadequate to Dasein's concern, it is perceived as a 'deficiency' in the unity of the context; thus, its qualities become apprehensible, as something 'missing'. The 'referential totality' denotes the context with which the ready-to-hand thing was previously involved. Presence-at-hand is the ontic (meaning individual, non-contextual) basis on which readiness-to-hand is grasped (Heidegger, 2013, p. 101). Furthermore, the present-at-hand thing arises as a dialectical opposite to its readiness-to-hand (Harman, 2007, p. 62). For example, it is when the hammer is missing from the workshop that it does not satisfy Dasein's concern; and, in this, the hammer's relation to its context is exposed. However, the hammer is not exposed 'as it is'; it always maintains its relationship to its ready-to-hand counterpart. In other words, when the relationships of the thing to the context 'break', Dasein comes to see these relationships clearly, and, in doing so, grasps the definite characteristics of the thing which made it part of the context in the first place. This totality of now clearly-defined features constitutes the Being of presence-at-hand.

On the basis of readiness-to-hand and presence-at-hand, we can now make sense of the concept of worldhood. Precisely, the worldhood is the totality of ready-to-hand objects and their relations (Harman, 2002, p. 25). These relations become apparent as things are individually abstracted away, as present-at-hand. We will refer back to this point later on, when analyzing the structure of speaking. Nonetheless, Dasein becomes involved in such-and-such context as part of a worldhood, based on its concerns. The worldhood, as such, grounds 'significance' for Dasein,

insofar as Dasein ‘cares’ for certain contexts. We will elucidate the meaning of significance and care in the following section.

Thrownness and circumspection. The state of mind

We have so far clarified part of the structure of the world as a totality of significations for Dasein (the worldhood). However, the question of how Dasein is involved is left unanswered. In what we have discussed so far, one aspect of the worldhood stands out: throughout Dasein’s existence, the world is always ‘there’ as a phenomenon. Dasein is therefore ‘thrust’ into this already-present totality of ‘meanings’, which serve as its existential grounding. On these grounds Dasein directs itself towards particular domains of knowledge, and, in this, comes to understand itself (Heidegger, 2013, p. 36-38). Furthermore, in understanding itself, Dasein also comes to ontologically (in terms of its totality of meanings) grasp the world, since “If one should want to identify the world in general with entities within-the-world, one would have to say that Dasein too is ‘world’” (Heidegger, 2013, p. 154). Before we can account for the particularities of Dasein’s Being-in-the-world, though, we are faced with the problem of Dasein’s simple existence in the world. Heidegger calls this ‘thrownness’.

The ontological meaning of thrownness is not a complex one, but it nonetheless stands as the foundation for the other determinations of Dasein’s Being. Heidegger uses it to signify the facticity of Dasein’s existence. Facticity is the experience of thrownness, a necessary quality of Dasein’s being, even in spite of Dasein’s awareness of it. Thrownness is, for our purposes, understood as the simple fact of being ‘thrown’ into the world, where meaning is already present. The world directs Dasein towards its significations, and Dasein understands and ‘chooses’ itself in its possibilities (to be in such-and-such a way) on the grounds of these significations. The manner in which Dasein is directed towards significations is based on Dasein’s ‘State-of-Mind’.

The State-of-Mind, as described by Heidegger, is “our mood, our Being-attuned”; “a mood makes manifest ‘how one is, and how one is faring’” (2013, p. 172-173). Precisely, the State-of-Mind is the disclosure of Dasein in its thrownness, in its ‘being-there’ as it is there. In order to give a clearer structure for the notion of ‘mood’, we make use of Heidegger’s example of fear as a determinate ‘state-of-mind’ (2013, p.179-182).

Fear as a phenomenon is seen from three perspectives: ‘the fearsome’, ‘fearing’ and ‘that about which we fear’. The fearsome is something which is encountered in the world, with ‘detrimentality’ as its involvement in the context in which it is found, i.e. it is detrimental to a definite range of entities to which it relates. In addition, there is ‘fear itself’, as a mode of disclosure.

Fearing, as a mode of Being for Dasein, discloses the fearsome in its detrimentality, exposing the possibility of Dasein being involved with the fearsome thing. Since Dasein experiences itself as 'in-the-world', it becomes concerned with the possibility of encountering the fearsome, this concern being the mood which is fear. Lastly, that about which we fear is Dasein itself, as fearing discloses it as part of the context in which the fearsome could be encountered. For instance, if I were to be walking on a street at night, and hear a rustling movement, I would gradually start to experience things differently. My pace would pick up, and I would start noticing things I hadn't noticed before (as, for instance, a side alley as a possible escape route). Subsequently, things that were previously of concern to me fall out of sight. I now experience the world in a different manner, and things have different significations (Wrathall, 2005, p. 33).

In virtue of the above, we can take the notion of 'State-of-Mind' to signify the mode of Dasein's being among entities as related to them. And it is precisely this that gives Dasein's direction towards entities. As Heidegger would note, the State-of-Mind is not an internal or psychological quality of Dasein, but an existential disclosure of Dasein's thrownness (simple existence) and being-in-the-world, its existence among other entities (2013, p. 175-176). Furthermore, the State-of-Mind is also the basis on which Dasein encounters things as part of a certain framework of meaning firsthand, as opposed to simple presence-at-hand. And, since Dasein can be 'affected' by the things encountered, it is concerned with them. This concern is what we call 'circumspection'. Wrathall explains this thusly: If I were to lay floor tiles in a room, I would do so with other things in view. I would regard these things in relation to the other things around, but, most importantly, in relation to my activity, as possible means to help me fulfill it (2005, p. 36-37).

In summary, Dasein finds itself existing in a world, among things with their already-given significations. This existence is captured in the State-of-Mind, which is a determination of Dasein's Being-in-the-world. Namely, the State-of-Mind makes evident three aspects of Dasein's Being-in-the-world: its thrownness (Dasein as simply existing, for itself), the ready-to-hand objects among which it exists, and Dasein's concern with the ready-to-hand, as the possibility of being contextually directed towards things. It is noteworthy, however, that the State-of-Mind is not actively built on these elements. Rather, the State-of-Mind is precisely the ground on which these modes of Being are disclosed to Dasein, as particular meanings. It necessarily precedes the perceived worldhood, and Dasein (knowingly or unknowingly) interprets things on its basis.

We thus see the State-of-Mind as Dasein's grounds for grasping the ready-to-hand. It has been previously noted that, on this basis, Dasein also comes to grasp things in their present-at-hand determinations. In our attempt to give a definite picture for Understanding, we must also

consider the present-at-hand, since it is a necessary element of interpretation; particularly, we are concerned with its role in Discourse.

Discourse

Heidegger considers Discourse as an articulation of intelligibility; essentially, it expresses meaning as the totality of significations that make up the worldhood, which are “put into words” (Heidegger, 2013, p. 204). In this, Discourse serves as another mode of disclosing the world, one that is, however, different to the more ‘pragmatic’ mode which is circumspective apprehension. Discourse achieves this by means of ‘asserting’.

Assertion (as an expression of judgements) is a derivative mode of interpretation (which is the product of understanding), Heidegger notes (2013, p. 196-197). By this, we mean that asserting as such requires a ‘step away’ from the things spoken of in order to ‘point out’ their meaning. However, the worldhood with its State-of-Mind do not altogether disappear, but are rather left in the background, as grounds for the assertion. In order to better grasp the nature of asserting, we will give a brief explanation of its structure:

Assertion exhibits three significations (Heidegger, 2013, p. 196-199): firstly, there is the ‘pointing out’ of an entity in its ready-to-hand determination (in its context). Any assertion references a thing within its totality of significations. The focus shifts from the ready-to-hand towards the present-at-hand in ‘predicating’ something of the entity. In this, we take a step away from the (contextual) phenomenon, in order to let the entity be seen in its definite, present-at-hand character, so ‘as’ something in particular (Heidegger, 2013, 197), thus allowing one to draw connections and inferences and subsequently understand the thing ‘as it is’. We are thus brought to ‘communication’, as letting another grasp what has been pointed out; communication is, essentially, ‘sharing’ the worldhood.

It is now evident how, through asserting, the ready-to-hand that has initially been concealed is brought to surface and made ‘visible’ to another. Furthermore, we have to keep in mind that discourse is not built upon signs; this would imply a certain subjectivism. Discourse is, rather, founded on the phenomenon itself, which is brought into the foreground by means of asserting something of it. Assertions do not represent, they “give rise to an anticipation” of the state of affairs (Wrathall, 2006, p. 245-246). In turn, anything that explicitly points something out can be thought of as form of assertive discourse.

We have given, so far, an explication for the grounds on which Understanding happens (the State-of-Mind, as directing Dasein towards the ready-to-hand), as well as the way in which

Understanding is brought to light and made common through Discourse. We now turn towards the meaning of Understanding itself, in order to unveil its implications.

The limit of Understanding

Heidegger takes Understanding to be an existential state of Dasein, much like the State-of-Mind is. Precisely, Understanding happens 'equiprimordially' (on the same inceptive grounds) with the State-of-Mind: A mood always brings Dasein to some Understanding, and any Understanding is built upon a mood (Heidegger, 2013, p. 182). What is Understanding, then? In the above, we have discussed the ways in which the world is disclosed to Dasein. We have also pointed out that, through the world made clear, Dasein comes to be disclosed itself on its grounds. It is precisely this second disclosure that is Understanding. We seek to clarify:

Given that the State-of-Mind unveils both the thematic world and Dasein as part of it, Dasein attains awareness of its implication. Namely, in seeing the world in such and such way, Dasein also sees the latent possibilities for the world (the way in which it could be, based on what it is), and sees itself as that who can make these possibilities real. Understanding is, essentially, Dasein's projection unto the possibilities of the world. Understanding 'sheds light' on how the world 'is' and 'could be' on the basis of Dasein's involvement in it. In addition, that which is understood is not grasped thematically (as with the State-of-Mind), but is rather given a definite character; Dasein understands thing as they are and as they could be in their non-contextual determinations (Heidegger, 2013, p.184-185). If the State-of-Mind discloses the immediate world to Dasein as ready-to-hand, then Understanding lets Dasein 'see' the definite, present-at-hand possibilities of the world. In this, Dasein is 'free' to choose from among these possibilities and act towards them. We also say that Dasein comes to grasp itself through understanding because, in virtue of its thrownness, Dasein defines itself in terms of its current and possible world; Dasein interprets itself as such and such if the world allows for this interpretation.

We now come to terms with Understanding as something more than representation. It is a projective mode of Being of Dasein, which brings about the definite potentialities of the world that could arise from Dasein's existence. And, in being necessarily grounded on Dasein's State-of-Mind, Understanding is limited its scope. We see how different States-of-Mind reflect different context, and as such give rise in Understanding to different systems of interpretation for the world. However, in this, the world is grasped as worldhood, whether simply encountered as ready-to-hand actuality or understood as present-at-hand potentiality for Dasein. The world 'as such and such' always serves as a phenomenal basis for this; but the world 'as it is' in itself is never grasped,

since Dasein never escapes its own thrownness, and its only means of encountering things unfamiliar to him are through Discourse.

Return to existence

As much as the State-of-Mind and Discourse lay the fundament for human understanding, they also set an abrupt horizon for it. What lies beyond this horizon is ‘the One General World’, or ‘Encompassing’, as Karl Jaspers identifies it: “[...] my own world is *particular*, but in relation to one that is *general* or *entire*, thought *indefinite*.” (1971, p. 104-105). In spite of being able to grasp multiple worldhoods, I can only ‘think’ that there is a common world that serves as their foundation; the world as a whole is entirely transcendental. Furthermore, if one were to turn to means of observing the world in terms of abstract data and absolute spatio-temporality, the world would become mere representation; in doing this, I would strip away its particular reality and significations on which this pursuit was built upon in the first place. All knowledge (scientific or otherwise) is grounded in Discourse, and, in attempting to eliminate the discursive layer of significations that discloses the world, it would only fail in its own aims.

In spite of all this, we do not need to take Understanding as a meaningless act with no possibility of achieving the ‘end-goal’ of knowledge. Rather, in being aware of the ineffability of the world as such, we are turned towards that which is accessible to us in a different manner. “The world, now without an objective center, centers everywhere; and I am once more in the middle of it, though no longer objectively in a sense that applies identically to everyone else. The only center is the one I occupy as an existing individual.” (Jaspers, 1971, p. 106). In other words, Dasein’s Being-in-the-World only becomes ‘clear’ when grasped as necessarily built upon the inconceivability of the Encompassing; it becomes clear precisely as ‘pure potentiality’ – any signification for the world might come to be if Dasein ‘sheds light’ on it. With this, Understanding of the world also grasps the limits of Understanding itself, and as such it is ‘authentic’ Understanding.

Where does this conception of ‘authentic’ Understanding lead us? In acknowledging the world as an ineffable objectivity that lies at the base of existence, Dasein is also aware of the fact that the world is, essentially, pure potentiality. By this we mean that, in virtue of the fact that the world is indeterminate in itself, Dasein can project any signification on the basis of the worldhood that it finds itself in. Dasein is also able to establish the link between the actual worldhood and the potential one, thus making the potential signification real and actual. (Jaspers, 1971, p. 108-110) In simpler terms, in acknowledging the world as wholly un-graspable, the worldhood is seen as a contingency that can be surpassed through individual discovery and discourse, and built towards

any other signification that Dasein claims. This is an existential form of Understanding, since the meaning of the world is now based on Dasein's interpretation of it, and on its goals and involvement; the ways in which the world is grounded in human knowledge arises solely on Dasein's factual existence. Lastly, we claim 'authentic' Understanding to be Dasein's existential freedom: Dasein, having understood its own existence as limited in already-existing significations, can now surpass this limit in favor of building new significations from the pure potentiality that is the world. In this, Dasein develops a meaning for the world that is his own, and, doing so, it shapes its own existence as something more than that which was 'already there' – in choosing meaning for the world, Dasein chooses to 'choose itself'.

Throughout what we have so far discussed, we hope to have brought some important points to light; firstly, we have considered human knowledge in its inceptive determinations, as contextually grounded and discursively shared with others. Next, we have discussed the possibility for human knowledge to project itself into multiple possibilities, and, on this basis, disclosing these possibilities as definable. We have then considered the transcendence of the world in itself, and how no framework could ever grasp a complete and universal determination of the world. Finally, on this basis, we have presented a suggestion for how this issue might be positively gazed upon: instead of human understanding collapsing before transcendence, we choose to continue pursuing new and original interpretations for the world as they are discovered in their possibility, thus letting human existence be existence for its own, not for a seemingly absolute truth that is devoid of meaning. What this essay set out to achieve was a shift in perspective; as such, we hope to have provided a ground for the turn towards active interpretation and existential self-reflection, while also speculating on the possibility of how these might come to be achieved.

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Can novels be a source of testimonial knowledge about empirical claims?

Violet Tinnion

Introduction

If novels can contain proper testimony, this can provide us with a justification for the beliefs we acquire from fiction and thus allow us to gain knowledge. This essay will advocate for the view that novels can indeed be a source of testimonial knowledge. I will first define what constitutes knowledge and testimony respectively. Next, I argue that novels can meet both criteria necessary for proper testimony: that the author has the intention for the reader to believe and that the author can be considered a reliable testifier. Finally, I will consider and refute the challenge that even if novels can be a source of proper testimony, this does not mean we can gain testimonial knowledge from fiction. Therefore, I conclude that novels can be a source of testimonial knowledge.

Defining Knowledge

According to the standard definition of knowledge, to have knowledge of a proposition p , p must be true, we must believe that p and we must have a justification for believing that p (Pritchard, 2014, p.23). Many novels contain true empirical claims such as “optimum sea temperatures for the salmon and its natural food sources are between 5 and 10 degrees Celsius” (Torday, 2007, p.3). When encountering this claim in a novel, we may form a true belief about the optimal conditions for salmon. However, because novels contain a large amount of falsehoods and are not vetted for accuracy (Friend, 2017, p.227), it seems we lack justification for forming this true belief and are thus unable to acquire knowledge. Yet, if there can be cases of proper testimony in fiction, this will provide readers with an adequate justification for their beliefs and consequently allow them to gain knowledge.

Defining Testimony

Having explained the significance of having testimony in novels, I will now explain what constitutes proper testimony. The production of testimony is an intentional speech act in which “for some proposition p , the utterer of p intends to transfer the belief that p to the hearer” (Stock, 2017a, p.107. For example, when I tell my manager that I will not be coming to work because I am ill, I intend to produce the belief in him that I am ill. If I did not have the intention to make my manager believe me, I would not be producing testimony. Thus, the first criterion for proper testimony is for the utterer to intend belief.

O'Brien suggests a second criterion for the production of proper testimony is that a background assumption of reliability must be met (2017, p.139). So, even if my manager recognises my intention to make him believe my claim that I am ill, he must also be concerned with whether I consistently produce truthful testimony. If, in the past, I have lied about being ill, or if I have somehow been confused and thought I was ill when I was well, my manager has reason to doubt the reliability of my testimony. Accordingly, the second criterion of proper testimony is that the utterer is a reliable testifier.

For the purpose of this essay, I will assume that both of the above criteria are necessary and, when taken together, sufficient to constitute proper testimony. Additionally, I will only focus on whether novels can be a source of testimony about empirical claims. These are facts about history, biology, geography and so on (Friend, 2017, p.227). Hence, to evaluate whether we can gain testimonial knowledge from novels, I will examine whether novels can meet both criteria for proper testimony.

First Criterion

Violet Tinnion

Firstly I will consider whether the author can have the intention for us to believe what is written in their novels. Davies argues we have reason to doubt this, as the business of the author is to get us to imagine their work. Authors may include propositions that are true in their work, but “that proposition being true is not the *reason* for its inclusion in the narrative” (Davies, 2007, p.46, his emphasis).

However, I think Davies is mistaken in arguing authors do not have the intention to get their readers to believe. It is true that authors want us to imagine, but there are lots of cases where belief is compatible with imagining. For example, in *Shantaram*, Roberts describes slums in Bombay: “the miserable shelters were patched together from rags, scraps of plastic and paper, reed mats and bamboo sticks” (2003, p.7). Here, Roberts is inviting us to imagine the scene he is describing, but it also seems he wants us to believe the effects poverty has had on the population of Bombay. Thus, in this example, belief and imagination are compatible.

Moreover, we often accept that many authors want us to believe moral messages in their novels. For example, we think George Orwell wanted us to finish *Nineteen Eighty-Four* with the belief that

totalitarianism is an unacceptable form of governance. If it is the case that we accept authors can have the intention for us to believe moral messages, then it is not clear why they cannot also have the intention for us to believe empirical claims (Stock, 2017b, p.23).

Finally, some authors go to a considerable amount of effort to ensure the information they include in their novels is factually accurate. For example, Hilary Mantel is praised for how well-researched her historical novels are (*ibid*, p.24). This directly clashes with Davies' idea, instead suggesting that in some cases, the fact that a proposition is true *is* the reason for its inclusion within a narrative. If authors truly had no intention for us to believe their claims, then the "elaborate research and factual accuracy would hardly be explicable" (Konrad, 2017, p.43). This suggests the author had another purpose than to simply invite imagining, namely to get the reader to believe their claims. Therefore, authors of novels can indeed meet the first criterion of testimony.

Second Criterion

The second criterion for proper testimony is that the author must be considered a reliable testifier. We have reason to doubt this is the case in novels because they are not constrained by the truth. Authors have an "almost unconstrained licence to make things up" (O'Brien, 2017, p.135) and their works are "typically not vetted for accuracy" (Friend, 2017, p.227). The amount of fictional content included in the novel gives us reason to think that, even if we recognise the intentions of the author, we cannot accept their claim because the number of falsehoods they include in their work calls their reliability into question.

Despite this, I argue that authors can be considered reliable. Fictional works can contain both factual and fictive utterances (Konrad, 2017, p.42). Currie suggests two conditions that make an utterance, *p*, fictive. Firstly, the intention behind *p* must be that a potential audience should, on encountering, make-believe that *p*. That is to say, we should believe *p* is true in the fictional world, but not in the real world. Secondly, *p* should not be true in the real world, or, if true, true only by accident (Sainsbury, 2010, p.7). So, descriptions of Harry Potter's lightning bolt scar are fictive. It was not Rowling's intention for us to believe that there really is a person called Harry Potter who has a lightning bolt scar. There is no real wizard called Harry Potter, so it would seem strange if Rowling genuinely intended us to believe facts about his appearance. But, it seems descriptions about Kings Cross train station being in London are factual as they refer to real existents. Given that the statements in fiction that are factually untrue are fictive utterances, they are different in kind from testimonial claims. The author did not intend for them to be interpreted as true, and

thus we should not call the author's reliability into question. Therefore, the number of falsehoods in a fictional work should not cause us to be concerned about the author's reliability.

Furthermore, having a certain amount of background information about the author can give us a good indication of their reliability. For example, if I know that Hilary Mantel researches her books well in order to make them factually accurate, I can infer from this that she is a reliable testifier about Thomas Cromwell. If I know that Roberts' book was inspired by his own experiences in Bombay, I can infer he is able to offer a good first-hand account of the conditions of slums in India. Conversely, Dan Brown's *The Da Vinci Code* has been criticised by religious scholars and historians alike for its factual inaccuracy. To an epistemically responsible agent, this should act as counter-evidence to the reliability of Brown's testimony.

However, we should not be concerned that we require some background knowledge to determine whether an author is reliable or not, as we also need to do this for nonfiction (Friend, 2017, p.230). For example, I could look at the famous 1939 Nazi poster 'Dein KdF Wagen' which advertises the benefits of saving for a Volkswagen car and infer that Nazi Germany was a place where there were lots of happy people driving nice cars. However, in order to obtain any evidence about life in Nazi Germany from the poster, I must be aware that it was produced as propaganda to push for a particular political agenda. Thus, we should not be concerned when we must also have prior knowledge about the conditions under which a fictional work was produced in order to make a judgement about the author's reliability. Therefore, authors can meet the second criterion for proper testimony. Given that I have now shown novels can meet both criteria for proper testimony, we can conclude that readers can gain testimonial knowledge from fiction.

Possible Objection

Nevertheless, it could be argued that, even if we can have cases of proper testimony in fiction, this does not necessarily mean that we can gain testimonial knowledge from fiction. Testimony would provide us with a justification for the beliefs we acquire from fiction, but in order for us to obtain this justification, we must be able to recognise where there are proper instances of testimony. However, it is not the case that testimony is always explicit in fiction. Testimonial claims are surrounded by so many fictive utterances that it is hard for us to determine which statements the author intended us to believe and which statements they intended for us to simply imagine (Friend, 2017, p.231).

Friend argues that this entails a further problem. Even if we are able to correctly identify a piece of testimony, the belief we take from this will be too unsafe to constitute proper knowledge. Friend defines safety as “one’s true belief that p is unsafe if there are nearby possible worlds in which either one’s belief that p is false, or the same belief-forming mechanisms lead one to believe falsely that q ” (2017, p.233). Accordingly, I may form the true belief that ‘Kings Cross Station is in London’ from the *Harry Potter* books, but there is a very close possible world where I did not form that belief because I did not recognise it as testimony. I could very easily go wrong when forming that belief and form a different, false belief instead, like ‘Hogwarts is a school for wizards in the UK’. Thus, we cannot gain testimonial knowledge from fiction because it is too hard for us to identify instances of proper testimony, and even if we do manage that, our belief is too unsafe to constitute knowledge.

A Reply

Nonetheless, I argue that we can identify instances of true testimony in fiction in a safe way. Stock argues there are a number of conventions which can alert the reader to an instance of testimony. For example, the utterance should be in the declarative mood, it should draw on real existents and, if true, would contain information of relevance to the reader (Stock, 2017a, p.117). These conventions only apply to testimonial claims, and alert the reader that the author is inviting belief rather than make-belief. Thus, we can clearly identify instances of testimony in fiction and should not be concerned that this identification is unsafe.

Even if testimony is not always explicit in the way described above, Friend’s notion of fictional competence could make it easier for a reader to identify cases of proper testimony. We are a competent reader of fiction when we have a familiarity with the genre and knowledge of the author’s background (Friend, 2017, p.241). For example, when reading *A Brave New World*, the more I know about dystopian fiction and the more I know about Huxley’s desire to parody utopian fiction, the less likely I will be to take any empirical claims in his novel as testimony. Contrastingly, if, when reading *Oliver Twist*, I know that Dickens wanted to raise awareness about poverty in 19th century Britain, then I am more able I am to identify instances of testimony.

Not only will this competence allow me to better identify cases of testimony, but it will also help me to form safer beliefs. For example, if I am driving a car through ice, although the road conditions might be hostile, if I am a competent driver I will be able to drive safely (Friend, 2017, p.240). Similarly with fiction, although there might be lots of fictive utterances in the novel, if I

am a competent reader, I will be able to navigate around these and correctly identify pieces of proper testimony. The more competent I am, the further away the possible world where I would have formed a false belief is, and consequently the safer my belief is. So, the more competent I am at reading Dickens, the less likely I am to make mistakes when forming beliefs based on his novel's testimony. Whilst this notion of fictional competence does require the reader to have more background knowledge than might normally be required when accepting testimony in non-fictional scenarios, this is only to be expected as the epistemic conditions in novels are much more hostile. Since it is riskier to form beliefs from fiction as they are more likely to be false, we therefore need more background information about the author and the genre to mitigate these risks. If we have a sufficient amount of background information, we can safely identify instances of proper testimony in fiction and thus gain testimonial knowledge.

Conclusion

This essay has shown that there can be instances of proper testimony in fiction. This is because the author can invite us to believe a statement and can meet the necessary requirements of reliability. It can be argued that, even if there are instances of proper testimony in fiction, it is not possible to identify these in a safe way. However, I have shown that this worry can be overcome because fictional competence can allow us to safely identify instances of proper testimony within novels. Therefore, we can conclude that novels can indeed be a source of testimonial knowledge about empirical claims.

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Strategies for Responding to the Make-Believe Challenge

Ben Jenkins

Introduction

Sophie-Grace Chappell (2018) writes that at every point in the political spectrum, trans-women (women who were deemed men at birth) are viewed as, above all, “impostors” – *pretend* women. I take the make-believe challenge to be that of explaining precisely how gender-identity determines one’s actual gender. My thesis is twofold: first, that the explanation we’re looking for must compromise on its account of either gender, or gender-identity; and second, that both approaches could be useful, depending upon whether the discussion is lay or academic in nature.

In this essay I use the term ‘trans-people’ to refer to anyone whose gender differs from that which they were assigned at birth, including non-binary people – people who reject both woman and man identities. It is a presupposition of this paper that the marginalising and misgendering of trans-people constitutes both theoretical and moral failures. In sections one and two I consider arguments from Bettcher (2014b) and Jenkins (2016) which demonstrate, respectively, how to account for gender and gender-identity *whilst avoiding these failures*. In section three, I spell out the potential tension between these accounts and the difficulty this presents when addressing the make-believe challenge.

1: Gender Properties

I now present the commitments of ‘gender-realism’ and ‘gender-nominalism’. I will follow Talia Bettcher (2014b) in arguing that gender-nominalism runs the risk of illegitimizing the identities of trans-people. The subsequent appeal of gender-realism plays a key role in the make-believe challenge, as I present it in section 3.

1a: Realism and Nominalism

Terms such as ‘men’ and ‘women’ can be used to parse people into groups. On the standard account, the people in these groups are supposed to exhibit shared properties such as ‘manhood’ and ‘womanhood’. The question that gender-realists are concerned with, in Haslanger’s (2013) terms, is whether the conceptual distinction between gender groups is underpinned by robust ontological differences. The negative response to this question is given by *gender-nominalists*; they hold that gender is the arbitrary product of conceptual gerrymandering. Conversely, people who give a positive response to this question hold that ‘womanhood’ and ‘manhood’ are *real* properties with boundaries that correspond to differences in the world; these people are *gender-realists*.

The realist is going to claim that the property shared by members of the same gender is akin to ‘green-ness’, ‘dog-ness’ or something else that clearly corresponds to differences *in the world*. On the other hand, the nominalist will claim that men/women don’t really share a property. They do have something in common, but this commonality is less clear and significant than the realist has

claimed. To illustrate, the gender-nominalist might draw an analogy with ‘coolness’ (in the fashionable sense). We cannot point to any one property which makes something cool, but cool things nonetheless have some commonality. On this account, the distinction between manhood and womanhood (like ‘cool’ and ‘uncool’) are only nominal. This is the sense in which gender properties are arbitrary under nominalism.

1b: How Can Gender Realism Help?

It may seem that gender-nominalism is best placed for a trans-friendly account of gender. However, Bettcher (2014b) notes that some trans-people view their gender as a real property, holding that they were assigned the wrong gender at birth. In doing so, these people presuppose that the boundaries of gender categories are matters of fact, corresponding to robust ontological differences. Gender-nominalism invalidates the genders of these people (and people in general) by making the boundaries of gender categories arbitrary (ibid). This is far from the only trade-off to be made between gender-nominalism and gender-realism with respect to trans issues. Minimally, however, we should see the potential lack of theoretical accommodation for such trans-people as posing a problem for the gender-nominalist. This makes gender-realism appealing to philosophers insofar as it allows them to avoid this problem.

Having presented the appeal of gender-realism when accounting for the genders of trans-people (not that trans-people are in particular need of ‘accounting for’), I now turn to gender-identity.

2: Gender-Identity

In 2016, Katharine Jenkins spelt out the extent of the inclusion problem and argued that an appeal to gender-identity helps solve it. In this section, I present this argument and demonstrate the appeal of gender-identity. In the next section, this appeal will prove problematic because, whilst gender-identity is the natural companion of gender-nominalism, it is at odds with gender-realism. The unfortunate choice between gender-realism and gender-identity is, I argue, the crux of make-believe challenges.

2a: The Inclusion Problem

The inclusion problem is an issue encountered when trying to define ‘womanhood’ and other gender-properties; here I focus exclusively on womanhood. Put simply, the inclusion problem is that, no matter which properties we use to distinguish women from other gender categories, we run the risk of excluding and marginalising people that are *prima facie* women.

The inclusion problem is of particular relevance to trans-people, not least because some philosophers persist in misgendering them (Bettcher, 2014a). In her seminal work on

intersectionality, Crenshaw (1989) argues that – contrary to excluding trans-women – we are morally obliged to place the experiences of oppressed people at the centre of our theoretical and activist efforts. That is, we should not prioritise the most privileged members of any social group. Trans-women can experience oppression both as women *and trans-people*. Consequently, and in line with Crenshaw’s reasoning, trans-women ought to have full primacy in our theoretical considerations of womanhood.

Haslanger (2000) offers a particularly inclusive account of womanhood, but even this encounters the inclusion problem (Jenkins, 2016). A basic reading of Haslanger’s account would look something like this: *X is a woman iff X is oppressed as a woman*. Jenkins (ibid) argues that this account fails to include all women. Some trans-women, for instance, are not viewed as women in their societies and, as such, are not oppressed *as women* (in fact, some trans-people do not present their genders at all and so cannot be oppressed as women in their societies). Consequently, Haslanger is thought to fall foul of the inclusion problem by misgendering trans-women.

A potential solution for Haslanger, and philosophers in general, is to posit multiple meanings of terms like ‘womanhood’. These meanings would allow us to include trans-women within some secondary sense of womanhood. This, however, will be not acceptable (Jenkins, 2016). As mentioned, not only would the marginalisation of trans-people constitute a theoretical and moral failure, but there is good reason to put trans-women at the centre of our theoretical work. For these reasons, I refer to gender in its primary sense for the duration of this paper.

2b: How can Gender Identity Help?

One way we can address the inclusion problem is with an appeal to gender-identity (Jenkins, 2016). The prospective definition of womanhood looks something like this: *X is a woman iff X identifies as a woman*. The difficulty here is saying precisely what gender-identity involves.

Jenkins (ibid) argues that identifying as something involves feeling that at least some of the norms associated with the given category are applicable to oneself. For example, people that are women might feel like they are meant to wear makeup or shave their bodily hair. This does not mean that the individual must adhere to these norms. In fact, a woman could consciously rebel against these norms (e.g. by not wearing makeup) and in doing so they would establish their gender-identity as a woman. This is because, to rebel against any such norm one must acknowledge that the norm is (in some sense) applicable to oneself.

This appeal to gender-identity includes the trans-women which Haslanger excluded because, whilst their genders may not be acknowledged or presented, they will nonetheless feel as if some of the norms related to their gender are supposed to apply to them. It is in this way that gender-identity can help us to avoid the failures of transphobia.

It is important for what follows that under the gender-identity definition of womanhood the boundaries of gender categories are arbitrary. That is, these boundaries are determined by the dispositions of agents. More specifically, their feeling that some of the norms associated with their gender are applicable to them. I have now presented the appeal of both gender-identity and gender-realism. In the next section, I spell out the make-believe challenge and the tension it highlights between gender-realism and the significance of gender-identity.

3: The Make-Believe Challenge

One could advance the make-believe challenge by asking how identifying as a woman is supposed to qualify one as a woman, whilst identifying cannot qualify one as a member of categories such as ‘dogs’ or ‘green things’. The latent comparisons in these questions point to the reality of gender and the supposed insignificance of gender-identity. They tell us that identifying as a gender we were not assigned at birth is no different than playing make-believe and that this cannot determine the boundaries of gender-categories.

Some answers to this challenge will take womanhood as different to the candidate categories offered by these replies (dogs, for example). To establish this we could adopt gender-nominalism, under which womanhood lacks the robust ontological basis that these other categories have – its boundaries are not matters of fact. On this account, womanhood is a category more like ‘being a Christian’, than ‘being a dog’. It is plausible, for example, that one can be Christian just in virtue of feeling like one ought to uphold the Ten Commandments or celebrate Christmas vis., on Jenkins’ account, *by identifying as a Christian*. Analogies such as these, coupled with gender-nominalism, give us an explanation for how gender-identity determines the boundaries of gender categories, dispelling the difficulties of the make-believe challenge.

The problem with this approach is, as I argued in section one, that gender-realism has certain appeals to it. Further, make-believe challenges are sometimes made by interlocutors who will not accept the revisionism of gender-nominalism; this is particularly true of lay dialogues in which we nonetheless want to challenge transphobia. One difficulty presented by the make-believe challenge, then, is that gender-realism makes the boundaries of properties like ‘womanhood’ matters of fact, whilst appeals to gender-identity make these boundaries arbitrary. Both gender-realism and gender-identity are appealing, but we must choose between the two or face a contradiction: that the boundaries of genders both are and are not arbitrary.

4: Replying to the Make-Believe Challenge

There are two primary options which would allow us to reap the benefits of both gender-realism and gender-identity, thereby solving the make-believe challenge. Here I lay out the advantages of each and argue that both options could have their time and place, but that an arbitrary gender-realism offers the best solution.

4a: Arbitrary Gender-Realism.

Our first option is to adopt a form of gender-realism which admits the arbitrary nature of gender-boundaries – that is, to compromise our account of realism by bringing it in line with our use of gender-identity. To do this without illegitimizing the identities of trans-people (in the ways I discussed in section 1) we will need gender-boundaries to be no more arbitrary than the boundaries of other categories. We might achieve this by taking gender as a *social construct*, in the manner proposed below by Chappell (2018), and adopting a *critical realism* about social constructs.

Chappell accounts for gender-categories in terms of scripts. The term ‘script’ refers to a sort of protocol for acting, being and feeling. Scripts are *socially constructed*, which is to say that their protocols are set by the intersubjective agreement of the relevant society. For example, we might think there is a script for cleaning: one should scrub one’s plates with water and soap, one should expect co-habitants to do the same and feel resentment for their flouting of this script. Roles such as ‘being a flatmate’ involve lots of smaller scripts. ‘Cleaning’ might be one such script, ‘paying rent’ could be another, so could ‘sleeping in the flat’. Womanhood is like being a flatmate in that it is a role comprised of lots of smaller scripts and, insofar as scripts are socially constructed, so are roles like womanhood.

Under Haslanger’s (2013) critical realism, all properties are arbitrary *to the same extent as social constructs*. They are arbitrary because the qualities we attribute to entities are a product of our mind’s interactions with the world. The complexity of Haslanger’s theory evades all but the lengthiest and most technical discussions (a point I will return to shortly). It is enough for my purpose, that Haslanger’s work on social constructs, if successful, would allow theorists to addressing the inclusion problem by appealing to gender-identity whilst reaping the benefits of gender-realism. In academic dialogues, then, the make-believe challenge could be addressed by abandoning (basic) realism in favour of critically-realist strategies and social-constructivism.

Turning to lay dialogues, we will need a different approach because if our interlocutor is unhappy with gender-nominalism, then the complexity and revisionism of Haslanger’s realism is unlikely to help. In the following section I identify a practical approach which could serve as an alternative.

4b: Non-Arbitrary Gender-Identity.

One understanding of gender-identity, is that it is not determined by our mental states and, crucially, that it is beyond our control. The suggestion, it seems, is that gender-identity is determined by biological or hereditary disposition. Now, we may have academic reasons to be sceptical of this suggestion. However, the application of this suggestion is intuitive and already has parallels in lay dialogues so it might be a helpful counterpart to critical realism.

The application of this suggestion is best shown with analogy. As homosexuality was legalised, both the legal and popular dialogues took sexual orientation as matters of fact – gay people, it was thought, were simply ‘born-this-way’ (Bruni, 2012). This allowed people to object to homosexuality whilst accepting that the individuals involved in it weren’t culpable.

Now we have reached a point where we don’t need the ‘born-this-way’ narrative to combat homophobia; now we can challenge the supposed immorality of homosexuality directly. Analogously, if gender-identity were understood as beyond our control, it could be interpreted as a matter of fact. This would disarm lay-proponents of the make-believe challenge, precluding the possibility that trans-gender people are responsible for their trans-identities. This offers a lay-alternative to the complexity and revisionism involved in critically realist strategies.

It should be noted that this alternative provides, at best, a temporary stepping stone towards a more gender wise, less transphobic society. The limitation of this strategy is that the narrative it presents, marginalises trans-people who do not relate to the ‘born-this-way’ narrative and it fails to refute the supposed problems of trans-identities. Anyone appealing to such a strategy should first consider the potential harm they might cause by way of this marginalisation. Further care should be taken by non-trans people to avoid the paternalism of pinning other people with specific narratives. The academic-approach I outlined in section 4a avoids these failures, surpassing the lay-strategy on a moral and theoretical level.

Conclusion

In this essay I have argued that make-believe challenges require philosophers to make a genuine concession. They must give up either (basic) gender-realism, which makes the boundaries of gender-categories matters of fact, or appeals to gender-identity which make these boundaries arbitrary. It is my conclusion that either strategy could be appropriate as determined by the nature of the dialogue – lay or academic – but that the academic strategy is ultimately preferable.

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Epistemic Sceptic Pragmatic Contextualism

Nicolien Janssens

I Introduction

According to scepticism, we cannot have knowledge about the external world. In the course of history, various ways to refute scepticism have been put forward, but none of them seemed satisfactory. Therefore, semantic contextualists have proposed a new way to respond to scepticism, based on the claim that ‘knows’ is context-sensitive. I will elaborate on this proposal in section II. Many have objected, however, to the intelligibility of this last claim. Therefore, Stainton (2010) and Pynn (2015) invoked another approach, which I will discuss in section III. This approach is called ‘moderate pragmatic contextualism’ and argues that ‘knows’ itself is not context-sensitive, but knowledge assertions are. I will show, however, that to refute scepticism, moderate pragmatic contextualism rests on unjustified and implausible assumptions as well.

It will be my aim in this essay to show that since no form of contextualism seems to work as a response against scepticism, even though this was according to contextualists themselves seen as the most promising response to scepticism, we should consider accepting scepticism more seriously. Therefore, in section IV, I will finally propose a third kind of contextualism, namely sceptic pragmatic contextualism, according to which knowledge assertions are again context-sensitive, but ‘knows’ refer to a high demanding epistemic relation. Sceptic pragmatic contextualism can offer a plausible explanation of why we have the intuition that our ordinary knowledge claims are true, even though they are not. I will conclude, therefore, that sceptic pragmatic contextualism, of all kinds of contextualism at least, offers the most plausible response to scepticism.

II Semantic contextualism and scepticism

According to scepticism, we cannot have knowledge about the external world. This thesis is supported by the brain in a vat thought-experiment, according to which we are disembodied brains in vats. Our brains are connected to a supercomputer that stimulate our brains in the same way that our actual brains are stimulated when perceiving the external world. As a result, our evidence about the external world is the same even though there is no external world, which means that we have no way to tell whether we are brains in a vat or not. Based on this thought-experiment, sceptics argue that there are many common-sense beliefs that we think we know, but in fact do not know. One such belief is that we think we know that we have hands. The sceptic shows that this belief is inconsistent with the possibility of being a brain in a vat and thus false:

- P1 I do not know I am not a brain in a vat
 P2 If I do not know I am not a brain in a vat, then I do not know that I have hands
 C I do not know I have hands

Both premises seem true, yet the conclusion is not one we are keen to accept. Therefore, contextualists try to explain how the conclusion, in a sense, can be false, even though we do not know that we are not brains in vat (Lewis 1996, DeRose 2018, amongst others). The reason, according to contextualists, is that the word ‘knows’ is context-sensitive. Sentences of the form ‘S knows that p’ are not objectively true or false, rather the truth-conditions of these kinds of sentences depend on the context of utterance. This kind of contextualism is called ‘semantic contextualism’, because it makes a claim about the semantics of the word ‘knows’.

Based on the context-sensitivity of ‘knows’, semantic contextualists offer a response to the sceptical argument. They argue that uttering something such as premise 1 changes the context in such a way that knowledge becomes harder to get. However, normally we do not think about sceptical scenarios and for that reason, the standards for knowledge are normally not that high. Thus, semantic contextualists argue that both our ordinary knowledge claims and sceptic claims are, in a sense, true. When I say ‘I know I have hands’, I am right, while at the same time the sceptic is right who says that we cannot know that we are not brains in vats. The crux is that the word ‘knows’ picks out different relations in different contexts.

Essential to the semantic contextualist response to scepticism is the claim that ‘knows’ is context-sensitive. However, this is far from obvious. Early semantic contextualists have tried to argue for the context-sensitivity of ‘knows’ by drawing an analogy with gradable adjectives (Hambourger 1987, for example). In response, Stanley has pointed out that gradable adjectives permit degree modifiers (2004: 123). We can say, for example, that a certain elephant is small, though not *really* small. The word ‘knows’, however, does not permit degree modifiers (Stanley 2004: 125). We cannot say ‘I *very know* that the elephant is small’. Moreover, gradable adjectives all have a comparative form, whereas ‘knows’ does not have this (Stanley 2004: 124-125). We can say that something is *smaller*, but we cannot say ‘I *know more* that the elephant is small’. Since ‘knows’ does not behave like a gradable adjective, Stanley concludes that we should be very suspicious of the claim that ‘knows’ is context-sensitive (2004: 130).

In response to this objection, later semantic contextualists have tried to justify the context-sensitivity of ‘knows’ in other ways. Some have tried to compare it with indexicals (Cohen 1988), others with ternary relational terms, such as ‘prefers’ (Schaffer 2004). However, linguistic

differences kept occurring. Thus, there seems to be no linguistic category that exactly matches with 'knows'. Some have argued that 'knows' is a context-sensitive category on its own (Kompa 2002). This is not impossible, but one needs good reasons to explain why 'knows' would be such an exceptional category and such reasons seem not available. Finally, apart from the fact that there is no clear context-sensitive category for 'knows', intuitively, we have the feeling that 'knows' means one thing. As Conee points out, there may be an explanation of why we never thought of 'knows' as a context sensitive word, though it is difficult to understand this grasp (2014: 68). Therefore, given that there is no obvious semantical evidence plus the fact that our intuition tell us the opposite, semantic contextualism does look rather implausible.

III Moderate pragmatic contextualism

Pynn (2015) and Stainton (2010) argue that there is a different kind of contextualism, namely pragmatic contextualism, that can give a similar response to scepticism, without requiring that 'knows' is context-sensitive. Instead, pragmatic contextualists argue that what is asserted by knowledge claims can be context-sensitive. Namely, there is a distinction between what a sentence semantically expresses and what a speaker tries to assert with a certain sentence (Pynn 2015: 29). The former is determined by the rules of language, thus by the meaning of the word 'knows', and determines the truth conditions of the sentence. The latter is determined by the intention of the speaker. The point is that some knowledge claims assert something different than they semantically express. This clarifies why both the sceptic, when she utters that we cannot know that we are not brains in vats, and our daily life knowledge claims, like 'I know I have hands' can be, in a sense, true: one is semantically true, the other pragmatically.

Now the important question is: which one is semantically true? Pynn argues that it is our ordinary knowledge claim, as he hold that 'knows' refers to a low demanding epistemic relation that is relatively easy to achieve (2015: 34). This kind of contextualism is called 'moderate pragmatic contextualism' (Pynn 2015: 34). Thus, when I utter 'I know I have hands' I am saying something semantically true. In contrast, when I utter 'I do not know that I am not a brain in a vat', I am saying something semantically false.

If true, moderate pragmatic contextualism would be able to refute scepticism, without the relying on the implausible assumption that 'knows' is context-sensitive. Moderate pragmatic contextualism, however, has problems of its own. Firstly, it seems implausible that I only *assert* something true, and not semantically express something true by saying 'I do not know that I am not a brain in a vat'. When there is a difference between what a sentence semantically expresses

and what is asserted by a sentence, we can always respond ‘Literally that is false’, whereupon the speaker will say ‘If you want to be that precise, you are right. I meant to say something different’. For example, if I say ‘I ate a plate of pasta’ someone might respond ‘That is false, because you did not eat the plate itself’ upon which I will answer ‘True, I mean I ate a portion of pasta as big as a normal plate’. Back to our brains in a vat example, would a similar scenario happen when I utter that I do not know that I am not a brain in a vat? Probably not. If someone answered me saying ‘Literally, that is false. Maybe you mean something else?’ I cannot imagine I would answer ‘You are right. I meant that *if* knowledge was a high demanding epistemic relation, then I would not know that I am not a brain in a vat’. No, I would answer ‘No I do not mean something else. I think we literally cannot know that we are not brains in vats’.

The whole point of the brain in vat hypothesis is to show that we can never know that the external world exists. So we cannot just assume that knowledge is a low demanding epistemic relation, and then use this as an argument against scepticism. Pynn and Stainton are basically just assuming in this way that we *can* know that we are not brains in vats. But how can we know this? An extra argument would be needed to show that knowledge is a relatively low demanding epistemic relation, so that we can know that we are not brains in vats. As neither Pynn nor Stainton give one, they are simply begging the question.

Finally, moderate pragmatic contextualism seems to imply a rejection of the closure principle. According to the closure principle, if S knows P and P entails Q then S knows Q. The second premise of the sceptical argument is an instance of this principle, because that I do not know that I am not a brain in a vat entails that I do not know that I have hands. According to moderate pragmatic contextualism ‘I know I have hands’ is literally true, whereas ‘I know I am not a brain in a vat’ is literally false. As such, they thus must reject the closure principle, since they argue that it is possible to know that you have hands without knowing that you are not a brain in vat. It is possible to reject the closure principle to refute scepticism (Dretske: 2014). However, it is precisely because contextualists found this move implausible, that they came up with another way to answer scepticism. The fact that moderate pragmatic contextualism still implies a rejection of the closure principle shows that something has gone profoundly wrong with this proposal.

In sum, the aim of moderate pragmatic contextualism was to overcome the linguistic problems of semantic contextualism. I have shown, however, that moderate pragmatic contextualism has its own problems. Firstly, it seems implausible that we only assert something true by saying that we do not know that we are not brains in vats. Secondly, they are unjustified to assume that knowledge is a low demanding epistemic relation. Finally, it implies a rejection of the

closure principle. Hence, moderate pragmatic contextualism does not seem able to give an appealing response to scepticism either.

IV Sceptic pragmatic contextualism

We have seen that both semantic contextualism and moderate pragmatic contextualism rest on implausible and unjustified assumptions to refute scepticism. Yet, we do need to give an answer to the sceptic: do I know that I have hands or not? If there is no satisfactory way to reject scepticism, maybe we should accept it. Thus, it would turn out we cannot have any knowledge about the external world, thereby admitting that it is literally false that I know that I have hands, and literally true that I do not know that I am not a brain in a vat.

If so, then sceptic pragmatic contextualism is still able to explain why we do seem to have knowledge about various ordinary things. Sceptic pragmatic contextualism differs from moderate pragmatic contextualism only in holding that ‘knows’ semantically refers to a high demanding epistemic relation. So it remains the case that what is asserted by knowledge claims can be context-sensitive. Therefore, sceptic pragmatic contextualism is able to explain why, although our ordinary knowledge claims are all literally false, they all can *assert* something true. Thus, the assertion ‘I know I have hands’ seems intuitively true to us, because I do not intend to say that I am one hundred percent sure that I have hands, but rather that I am 99 percent sure that I have hands. When we have the feeling that we have knowledge about the external world, we are thus confusing the semantical meaning of ‘knows’ with what we mean by uttering knowledge claims.

It might seem implausible at the first sight that we are using ‘knows’ all the time in a lenient way. However, if we take a closer look at our ordinary talk, it turns out that we speak loosely about not only knowledge, but about many things. I also say that I do not drink, which is literally false, when I mean to say that I do not drink alcohol. When I say that my phone is empty, this is literally false, as my phone is not hollow from the inside. In this vein, Unger (1975) has argued that our knowledge claims are idealizations, just as speaking about ‘flatness’ and ‘circularity’ is an idealization. After all, nothing in the world is perfectly flat or circular. Thus, it is not so strange at all to admit that we are literally making false knowledge claims all the time. Rather, it would be strange if knowledge claims were an exception to this. Overall, I think sceptic pragmatic contextualism offers the most appealing response to scepticism.

V Conclusion

In this essay, I have shown that there is a straightforward argument available for sceptic pragmatic contextualism on which it turns out that it is not strange at all that our ordinary knowledge claims are literally false. When making a knowledge claim in daily life, we are just talking loosely, just as we are talking loosely about countless things in our daily lives. Therefore, I conclude that sceptic pragmatic contextualism offers the most appealing response to scepticism.

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