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<u>Photograph</u>

Acknowledgments

It is an understatement to say that this has not been an easy year. We are still dealing with the after-effects of the pandemic, and part of the side effect of the pandemic has been spending an entire academic year of fall/winter 2020-2021 with online lectures, labs and in isolation. All I can allow myself to hope for is that going through this ordeal, we have at least managed to develop a thicker skin. So here is to all the students who had to adjust to the new rules of online learning and to the professors who had to give an engaging lecture to a wall of mostly off-camera names on Zoom.

The entirety of this journal was also done remotely. Everything from the cover design, edits and meetings was done either through zoom or emails. It goes without saying that I could not have done this without the support of the staff at Philosophia and the lovely editors.

I would like to thank our editorial staff, Doğa Özden, Chris Moure, Niki Hoveida, Katy Keylis and Ko-Lun Liu, for their superb editing job. It is regrettable that we could not have meet face-to-face, but I am very happy with what we have achieved, and I am very thankful for all their hard work.

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Last but not least, thanks to the Department of Philosophy and Vanier College at York University for not only helping us publish this journal but for, once again, giving the undergrad the opportunity to have a voice and share their thoughts with the world.

Sincerely
Skye S. Javaheri
Editor-In-Chief

A Letter From The Editor

The first philosophy course I took was in high school, and my teacher at the time was going through Socrates' lesson of "The only thing that I know is that I know nothing." At the time, he interpreted it as saying that "philosophy is ultimately bullsh*t!" and while this might anger some, for me, this *was* the reason why I became interested in philosophy in the first place.

I took philosophy in grade 11, and by that time, I got used to hearing why a certain discipline is important to learn or why we should care for it in all the introductory lectures (be it science, sociology, etc.). In my eleven years of study, I had never come across a discipline who looked me in the eyes and said: "Don't bother" as their introductory lecture! And for whatever reason, I took that as a challenge.

This was the first time I have ever come across a discipline that I found to be incredibly honest in its approach. "Here is a road," it said: "You're welcome to take it. You might find something interesting, or you might just be wasting your time". Weirdly enough, by acknowledging its flaw and not taking itself seriously, I was free to enjoy philosophy in whatever way I wanted. That was the first time I studied something purely for myself and my own curiosity, not for any grades nor to prove something to anyone. Philosophy was mine and mine alone. But my path in philosophy has not ended yet, and I do not know where it will lead me still.

In the previous drafts of this letter, I talked about the importance of philosophy and why we should study it, but that didn't seem right. It seemed contradictory to my first official experience of philosophy, and so I want to encourage the reader to decide what philosophy means to them.

So here is a road, I'm not sure where it leads, but you're welcome to take it. Will you?

Now, without further ado, here is the spring 2021 issue 15 of The Oracle!

The Meaning of a Just Existence as understood through the Self, the Soul, and God

An examination of what it means to have a meaningful existence through the lenses of Plato, Shakespeare, Descartes, Pascal, Kierkegaard, The Bible, and the correlation this has with the self and God.

Author: Sidika McNeil
Edited by: Katy Keylis

It can be argued that it is not simply existing that matters, but rather, existing well. But *what* does it mean to exist well, and therefore unwell? *How* can we exist well, and more importantly, *why* does it matter to exist well? These questions have been pondered by various minds through the millennia. Each philosopher and subsequent school of thought had their thoughts on the matter. For Ancient Greek philosophers, there is a difference between the forms – named by other philosophers as the self, the perfect, the Infinite, God, or Heaven - and the appearances – the 'other', the imperfect, the finite, or earth. These differences define specifically what it would mean to live a good life; to come closer to the perfect. Though not every philosopher or school of thought agrees with the Socratic teachings, some directly oppose it as they believe the Greeks reduce themselves to fighting over a hierarchy. Arguably, this is the exact reason why the Greeks will never be able to leave the prison that they create between the forms and the appearances.

In this paper, I will argue what it means to achieve a good life, which cannot be found in the Platonic world but rather in the various schools of thought that have included the principles of love, equality, and freedom. By drawing on the works of Plato, Descartes, and Biblical authors, and with references to Kierkegaard, Pascal, and Shakespeare, I will show that to reach a meaningful existence you must incorporate principles of 'The Self', Equality, the 'Soul', and God. From this, I will demonstrate exactly why these principles are necessary to push past the limiting and hierarchical realm of the finite. Lastly, I will show why it is important to not only recognize the Infinite but *commit* to living by the principles of the Infinite as well.

THE MEANING OF A JUST EXISTENCE AS UNDERSTOOD
THROUGH THE SELF, THE SOUL, AND GOD

The Prison of the Finite

In Plato's work *The Republic,* students inquire about how to find justice in an unjust world. There is a contradictory nature that exists in the Platonic world. Socrates himself illustrates this when he describes the law of contradiction by stating,

> "Clearly, one and the same thing cannot act or be affected in opposite ways at the same time in the same part of it and in relation to the same object; so, if we find these contradictions, we shall know we are dealing with more than one faculty." (Plato, *The Republic*, 436b)

These students ask Socrates about how justice can exist in a contradictory world, where everyone is fighting in a hierarchy. Socrates replies that there is no uniting the opposing factors in this world. It is either the Forms - which in the Platonic world refer to the land of the gods – or the land of appearances, which is the land of ignorance and the imperfect. There is no combining the two. I will be calling the Forms, the Infinite and the realm of appearances, the finite. For Socrates, there is no combining the Infinite and the finite. There is a divided line between the two where we, as humans, who reside in the finite, will never reach the Forms. He states that "[N]othing incomplete is the measure of anything," (Plato, *The Republic*, 504c) so we may deduce that what is incomplete, specifically human knowledge, does not amount to much. Since all of our knowledge is based on sensory perception, everything that we might know, or claim to know, exists in the finite. To Socrates, nothing in the finite can tell you about the Infinite. If it is derived from our senses, it cannot be trusted. This is why Socrates then says,

> "[Y]ou've often heard it said that the form of the good is the most important thing to learn about and that it is by their relation to it that just things and the others become useful and beneficial. You knew very well that I was going to say this and, besides, that we have no adequate knowledge of it," (Plato, *The Republic*, 505a).

You cannot learn about the Infinite in Socrates' world, and therefore there is nothing useful or beneficial about the knowledge that we have now. He states in a previous quote that,

> "Knowledge unqualified is knowledge simply of something learned […]; knowledge of a particular kind is knowledge of a particular kind of object. What I mean is that when the object of knowledge is of a particular kind, […] the knowledge itself must also be of a particular kind." (Plato, *The Republic*, 436d – e)

Thus, the particular kind of knowledge that one has about the Infinite, being no knowledge at all, is meaningless as we can never know about the Infinite. Therefore, Socrates argues that "[…] opinions without knowledge are shameful ugly things, with the best of them being blind," (Plato, *The Republic,* 506c). Without knowledge supporting our opinions, they are truly meaningless because they are just that, opinions. The law of contradiction states that something cannot be itself while also being something else, so knowledge of the Infinite is not obtainable to us who are in the finite (Plato, *The Republic,* 509d) and thus, for Plato, we have no knowledge at all. Knowing *about* the Infinite is not enough to be considered knowledge *of* the Infinite, by Plato's own standards, which is why humans cannot have any knowledge at all.

Plato has written in other works that philosophy is important to learn as this is what will help us in death for our souls to mount to the Infinite, essentially the training for death (Plato, *Phaedo,* 67e). We need knowledge of the Infinite to learn how to ascend. However, it has already been stated that it cannot be done, for humans exist in the finite. Plato's existence, and his understanding of it, is that the soul is imprisoned by the body (Plato, *Phaedo,* 64d-65a). It is only the Gods of the Platonic world that can know of both the Infinite and the Finite. To summarize then Plato sets up knowledge of the Infinite as such:

i. True knowledge (one that is found in the Infinite) is knowledge obtained in the Infinite.
ii. Plato states that it is only the Gods of the Platonic world that can ever have True Knowledge. We as humans can only know about the Infinite but never reach it.

    iii.   We can only have knowledge of a partial kind, as it is one obtained in the finite.

    iv.   Opinions without knowledge are blind (Plato, *The Republic*, 506c)

    v.   Nothing incomplete is the measure of anything (Plato, *The Republic*, 504c), The Law of contradiction states that nothing can be one thing and another at once (Plato, *The Republic,* 509d), and so, knowledge of a particular thing, is simply knowledge of it as a particular kind (Plato, *The Republic*, 436d – e)

    vi.   Therefore, the knowledge we have is meaningless.

The Gods will never be known because they exist in the land of the Infinite, and since we will never reach the Infinite, our entire existence is fruitless. This is the prison that Plato has created and locked himself in, though it is not one that subjects the rest of humanity.

    In one of Shakespeare's most famous works, *Hamlet,* a character is put through an enormous amount of strife in trying not to get trapped in a revenge cycle. The important take away of this play is,"[…] to let love lead fortune or else fortune will lead love," (Hamlet 3.2.187). This quote tells us that one is either subject to their inclinations or one controls them. Since Plato states that the body is a trap for the soul, it is therefore something belonging to the finite, while knowledge remains in the Infinite. Knowledge which can be found in the Infinite, is the only thing that matters as stated by Plato, and thus he is a subject to his own inclination, as he chooses to only focus on the finite, therefore foregoing the Infinite. Knowing that opinions are nothing without knowledge to support them, Plato makes false inclinations of the Infinite devising himself a trap, in which he holds the key, and yet cannot be free.

Freedom in the Infinite

    The Bible begins with, "[i]n the beginning God created," (Genesis 1.1). It must be noted that there is no mention of what there was before the beginning of God's creation. The beginning starts with God creating and that is the only time that is necessary for our understanding. Both the Bible and Plato ask what the quantitative

value of human life is. To begin to answer this question we should start with "God created man in his image," (Genesis 1.27). This passage suggests that both humans and God are one and the same, for God created in their[1] image, which is Perfect. Later in the bible it is spoken more about what 'perfection' looks like, as God says:

> "Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, do good to them which despitefully use you, and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? Do not even the publicans so? Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matthew 5.43-48)

This quote shows us multiple things. Being created in God's image, which is perfection, means that we ourselves have perfection in us. As humans we are equal to God because we are created in his image, but that does not mean we are *equivalent* to God. This image is what Plato would have called knowledge of the Infinite, for as humans we know in Biblical terms what God is. In the quote, "[b]ehold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil," (Genesis 3.22) speaks of what people call the 'fall of Adam', yet I will be referring to it as the second beginning of Adam, though I will speak more on this a bit later. The Good is explained here to mean showing your neighbour, as well as yourself love, despite what they might choose to do, as that is what it means to be 'perfect.' And so, evil is the opposite of this. It is important to note two things here. First, that God is not an omnipotent being, one where they could make us, as humans, do whatever they want, but rather, God's power stops at our own agency, as that is the reason God asks, and not wills, for us to live by their standards of perfection. Due to the law of contradiction, God cannot be omnipotent and yet allow us to have free will. Second, being

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[1] I will be referring to God as they, as gender is a human construct, and any time God is referring to themselves in the Bible it is as 'Us' rather than a specific gender.

perfect or closer to God is not something that is done only after death, but rather in life, and it is through the actions we show each other and ourselves that we can achieve it. That is how heaven is created as "the kingdom of heaven is at hand." (Matthew 4:17)

Now, speaking on the second beginning of Adam and Eve, where God had casted them out, to repent and learn, and "till the ground from whence he was taken" (Genesis 3:23), God is the idea that we all have a beginning that is in nature but not of nature. The meaning of this can be seen as the progression of the things that were made in the Bible, where all things were made before humans, pointing towards humans. Creation, especially in the image of God, is unnatural. Here, unnatural means one that is *of* nature but not *in* nature. Time is a product of the finite, a thing of nature. God and our actions that begin and end with love is the Infinite, there is no time that matters before God. We can have the second beginning within the Infinite, thus, the Infinite is not reducible to it.. In the quote, God has created us as equal to his image from the beginning, and we have been imparted with the knowledge of Good and Evil, so we either choose to live this second beginning of love, or we do not begin at all. We have all the principles of God, but this does not erase our individuality, allowing for us to choose what we want to do. Having this knowledge of acting with love is what gives us the choice to act in freedom, allowing us to walk in the light and establish a relationship through these principles with God, which is what it means to follow God and to walk through the darkness (John 8:12). Evil or sin is treating people in terms of the finite, while the Good is treating people as irreducible to the finite.

> "The things which God has prepared for those who love Him. […] God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God." (1 Cor. 2.9-10)

The Spirit is the Soul which I will refer to as the Infinite. A human being can search the depths of God which means that we can investigate the principles of God and his teachings, because we know about the Infinite. Everyone is a part of the revelation of the Infinite because we have been created in God's image, and know what Good

and Evil is, therefore we know God and this gift has been imparted to us. God created the gift by saying, "let there be light, and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness," (Genesis 1.3-4). This light in the Bible that God created is treating people according to the principles of God, it is the tool that we need to access the Infinite. It continues with, "[a]nd God made the firmament and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters that were above, […] and God called the firmament Heaven. And let the waters under heaven be gathered […] and God called the dry land Earth," (Genesis 1.7-10) suggesting that heaven is not somewhere far from our reach[2], but rather all around us. We have all the tools needed to reach the Infinite, we would just need to, "[r]epent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand," (Matthew 3:2). Only those who love God can access the Infinite, which is why God says to, "[…] love thy neighbor as thyself," (Matthew 19.19), for we are created in God's image, and if we do not love our neighbor or ourselves, then we do not love God. Repentance is the reclaiming of your consciousness. It is a self-conscious re-creation of your past; it is the statement that we are not just existing in time -- we are in nature, but we are not of nature. It is the statement that we have a history and not just a past. Creation, then, is the redemption of time. Therefore, the Infinite can be seen through the lens of how you live in the eternal, while the finite is how you live in the temporal. In *Hamlet,* people were obsessed with obtaining dignity and honor, but these are themes of the finite. To obtain honor, you obtain dignity, but to obtain honor, you must put yourself above another, thus creating an endless cycle where someone is always first or second. This is letting fortune lead love. The ghost of Hamlet's father tried to warn him of following in this nature for he is in hell "[...] and tormented [by] flames, must render up myself," (Hamlet 1.5.5). He is,

> "[d]oomed for a certain term to walk the night, and for the
> day confined to fast in fires, till the foul crimes done in my

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[2] I would like to clarify that by saying reach I do not mean to imply that Heaven is a place where we might someday ascend to, but rather that it is inside us, and can be found through the relationships we have with our neighbor.

> days of nature are burnt and purged away. [...] From me
> whose love was that of dignity [...] No reckoning was made
> but sent to my account with all my imperfections on my
> head. [...] If thou hast nature in thee, bear it not; [...] Taint
> not thy mind nor let thy soul contrive against thy mother
> aught; leave her to heaven. [...] Adieu, Adieu, Hamlet:
> Remember me," (Hamlet 1.5. 5-95).

His dad is in hell[3] because he did not repent in the days when he was
living. He did not treat people as though they were equals and he will
not be able to find peace until he does. He allowed himself to let
fortune lead his love, thus loving dignity instead of his neighbor. He
warns Hamlet not to let this happen to him, to not get lost in the finite.
He does not want Hamlet's mind to be tainted, but rather he wants him
to leave his mother to her own devices. His dad wants him to
remember him, and remember his mistakes, so Hamlet will not repeat
them. Therefore, there is nothing before the recommitment to living in
terms of the Infinite, what matters is how we live that beginning.
Creation for the Greeks was trying to climb the hierarchical ladder to
create the closest possible formulation of the 'Just City' though they
were doing this without any knowledge of the Infinite; theirs was a
cycle without meaning, as Plato believes justice cannot be maintained
this way. For Pascal, this is what would be called the two infinities,

> "[A] world, or rather an all, in relation to the nothingness
> which one can reach? Whoever will consider himself thus
> will grow frightened of himself, and, considering himself
> suspended in the mass which nature has given him between
> these two abysses of the infinitely great and the infinitely
> small," (Pascal, *Selections from the Thought,* pg. 5).

The infinitely great and small are not really infinite at all but
rather finite and that is why "all infinities are equal," (Pascal,
Selections from the Thought, pg. 7). What is equal is that they are
finite, redundant, nonsense, and equally lost. In the Platonic world, the
hierarchy is important to Socrates as he is frightened by the Infinite

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[3] Should be noted that Hamlet's father's Hell was not in fiery pits, but trapped
in a prison in which he could not escape, on the earth, within reach of Hamlet.

and what it entails. He is focused on living the temporal, since he feels he cannot access the Infinite there would be no need to concern himself with it, thus rejecting to live by the principles of the Infinite. It is not just enough to accept that there *is* an Infinite, we have to consistently work towards maintaining and upholding its principles through the spirit of man, thus "no foundation can anyone lay, that which is laid which is Jesus Christ," (1 Corinthians 3:11). The Spirit is shown through our interactions with the Infinite, your values, dreams, and aspirations, because "[..] what person knows a man's thoughts except for the spirit of the man which is in him?" (1 Corinthians 2.12). Thus it is for a person to decide through their actions and thoughts whether or not they are willing to do the work in receiving the Spirit of God. We can only begin with the love of ourselves, which in turn is the love of God, as we are created in his image and our neighbour – or we do not begin at all. This entails distinguishing between the Spirit of the Lord and the spirit of the world. If you were to receive part of the Infinite, which in the Platonic world would be to realize that there is an Infinite, then you are still in the finite and have only accepted the spirit of the world. You must wholly *commit* to the Infinite, the Spirit of God, or else you do not have anything more than the finite. In the Infinite, everyone is equal, there are no hierarchies created by the finite, thus it is only the Infinite that can eradicate them. This is why "[n]o one comprehends the thoughts of God except for the Spirit of God," (1 Corinthians 2.14) because you must accept the Infinite and all its principles or else you do not know God. Though this is not a task that is forced on you, but rather one that you must freely choose. "[A]nyone who does not do what is right is not a child of God; nor is anyone who does not love his brother. [...] We know that we have passed from death to life because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death," (I John 3:10-14). There is more to life than what is offered to you in the finite once you acknowledge that humans are irreducible to the finite. Once you have come to this realization, then you begin a new beginning, enveloping the Infinite.

> "God is light and in him is no darkness at all, [we can either]
> […] walk in darkness or […] walk in the light as He is in the

> light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of
> Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin," (John 1. 5-7).

The limit of God's infinite power is humanity's freedom.
God can only give the gift of the Infinite to those who receive it
because we have the freedom of choice, whether to turn our backs
against this gift and continue in the finite or to walk in an unnatural
light of the Infinite. Though we cannot forget that we have this gift
that God has bestowed on us, it can be repressed, which is why people
so often choose to continue in the finite. The Bible shows through its
teachings of love, equality and freedom, that to choose the Infinite is
to avoid any hierarchical systems, thus the impossibility of Plato to
reconcile his contradictions.

> "Now we have received the thoughts of God except the
> Spirit of God. And we impart this in words not taught by
> human wisdom but taught by the Spirit, interpreting spiritual
> truths to those who possess the spirit," (1 Corinthians 2.11-
> 3).

Human knowledge is finite, such as putting one above the
other, but there is an Infinite knowledge that can only be known by
accepting the Infinite and knowing God. To see and know God would
mean to know the difference between Good and Evil. It is to know
you have a responsibility to confront evil -- which is to treat others in
terms of the finite, where someone is first or second. The knowledge
of Good and Evil indicates we are all first before the eyes of God and
therefore, our own eyes. This is why Plato could not have reached the
Infinite, as he had not made the commitment to the Infinite in
knowing the difference between Good and Evil, and instead resorted
to treating people in terms of the finite.

The Bible says that we have a second beginning that
remains in nature - which is the realm of the finite – but is not of
nature. That second beginning is the one that we give ourselves when
we accept the responsibilities of the Infinite, that you respect others
and maintain that everyone is equal. The Self is only unified when you
can locate yourself in the finite, to realize you are in nature but not of
nature, and practice the principles of God. Although there is one God
in the Bible, it can be taken as an idol when you read the bible and

take it to its word. The Bible is not meant to be read this way, as you can be led to contradictions which is why we should read, "[…] not of the letter but the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life," (2 Corinthians 3.6). If you read the Bible and only take in the words, then you will be led to contradictions as there are books in the Bible where people add in their own biases. This can be seen in the book of Corinthians when stated that women should cover their hair because it is disgraceful otherwise (1 Corinthians 11.6). But if you read the Bible and look for the messages of God, then you can overcome this. By the law of contradiction, God cannot be loving, just, and charitable while also practicing hateful principles. For the God in the bible is one of love and peace, whose messages can be summed up as loving yourself and loving your neighbor being your second beginning. God is in nature but not of nature and can be confused (i.e. if taken as an idol) with the spirit of the world. One could even say that this is the difference between the finite and the Infinite and coming into existence; you would need to be able to stand in the finite while not getting lost in it, to navigate the Infinite. You cannot let yourself get lost between the words on the page but navigate through the text to be able to draw out messages from God.

Enveloping the Infinite through Thought

I would like to start the discussion on Descartes with the following passage which I will be referencing throughout this section.

> *"But what makes many people become persuaded that it is difficult to know this (i.e. the existence of the perfect being), and also even to know what kind of thing their soul is, is that they never life their minds above sensible things and that they are so much in the habit of thinking about only what they can imagine (which is a particular way of thinking appropriate only for material things), that whatever is not imaginable seems to them to be unintelligible." (Descartes, Discourse on Method, Section 37)*

In his Discourse, Descartes comments on Socrates and the Infinite and his trouble finding it. He states (as is shown by the passage above) that the reason why Socrates was not able to reach the Infinite was not that everyone could not reach the Infinite, but rather

because he did not lift his mind above the sensible things and thus, could not know the full potential of his soul (Descartes, *Discourse on Method,* Section 37). It should be stated that for Plato, trying to recreate the Just City to emulate Justice was done in vain as well, as Justice was a thing of the Infinite, and because of his own reasonings, his opinions on what Justice *should* be are blind. This is not to say that Plato could not identify what sensible things were, but rather thought 'because I cannot know the infinite, I should think/live by it and should only be concerned with life in this sensible world'. To Descartes, the soul is the Infinite which I will use as a reference from now on. Descartes holds the same principles that the Bible does. In stating that all men are equal, and that "[g]ood sense is the best-distributed thing in the world, […] distinguishing the true from the false […] is naturally equal in all men," (Descartes, *Discourse on Method,* Section 2). What is equal in all humans is that we can reason, if we choose to use it to distinguish true from false, right from wrong, the Infinite from the finite. This was what it meant in the Bible that God created us in his image, or that we can attest to their being an Infinite in the Platonic realm. This is the same as saying that the kingdom of heaven is at hand (Matthew 3:2). You have the tools for reaching the Infinite, though it is not enough just to say that men could do this, that is important but, "the main thing is to apply it well," (Descartes, *Discourse on Method,* 2). This is what Descartes means when he states that people believe that it is difficult to know the Infinite because people are not applying the tools that they have, the access to the good sense of distinguishing true from false.

But what does it mean to reason well? One thing that Descartes says is that "[t]hose who take it upon themselves to give precepts must regard themselves as more competent than those to whom they give them," (Descartes, *Discourse on Method,* 4). This means that you cannot force someone to come to the Infinite, you cannot force someone to see things from your eyes, because if you do then you are stating that you are better, or of higher knowledge than another, and thus you fall into a hierarchy where you do not treat people as equal. This is what Kierkegaard meant when he said that, "the transition takes place in freedom," (Kierkegaard, *Philosophical*

Fragments, pg. 75). Freedom is your contribution. No one can make you embrace the Infinite, as its power stops at your autonomy. We begin to engage with the finite seriously when we realize that human beings are equal, which could also be called the light of God. Plato could not see this light and did not believe that everyone was equal. He mentioned allegories of ships where there is a ruler and then underlings and says that underlings could overthrow the ruler and so on in an endless cycle (Plato, *The Republic,* 342e). Thus, getting lost in the finite.

Descartes made a few resolutions; one states that he will "never accept anything as true that is not known to be such," (Descartes, *Discourse on Method,* 18) which is what leads Descartes to question the sensory world. Descartes says that the senses can deceive us, for example, believing that you are awake when you are asleep. We cannot trust everything that comes to us in our senses and thus, we should not rely on them (Descartes, *Discourse on Method,* 39-40). The same can be said about the things that we imagine because they come from our senses which cannot be trusted. Therefore, this is a difference between the finite and the Infinite. This is what it means to raise your mind above sensible things.

To engage in the finite and not get lost in it would mean that we need to divorce sensible and imagined things and thus, all that would be left through this divorce is, "I think therefore, I am," (Descartes, *Discourse on Method,* 32). Reason is common amongst all, but the ability to reason (seeing everyone as equals) well is not common amongst all (Descartes, *Discourse on Method,* 1). Being able to reason well, is what Descartes means by thinking. Descartes also describes what it means to think after analyzing what should be taken as true or false, as can be seen in the following:

> "I attentively examined what I was and as I observed that I could suppose that I had no body and that there was no world nor any place in which I might be; but that I could not, therefore, suppose that I was not; and that, on the contrary, from the very circumstance that I thought to doubt of the truth of other things, it most clearly and certainly followed that I was; while, on the other hand, if I had only ceased to think, although all the other objects which I had

ever imagined had been in reality existent, I would have had no reason to believe that I existed; I thence concluded that I was a substance whose whole essence or nature consists only in thinking, and which, that it may exist, needs no place, nor is dependent on any material thing; so that "I," that is to say, the mind by which I am what I am, is wholly distinct from the body, and is even more easily known than the latter, and is such, that although the latter were not, it would continue to be all that it is." (Descartes, *Discourse on Meditation,* 32)

You can pretend not to have a body as it falls into the sensible and imagined world and so is easy to replace, but you cannot pretend not to have a Soul, as then you would have something that is not true; that you never existed. The Soul, as stated before, can be understood as the equality of all humans, and thus you cannot pretend as though another person does not have a Soul and that they are not essential to existence, as you would be implying that someone is not equal to another. This is why Descartes states that "[he] have not presumed that [his] mind is in any respect more perfect than that of a ordinary man […] I prefer to believe it exists whole and entire in each of us." (Descartes, *Discourse on Method,* 2). To Descartes, people are already whole, no one is missing anything that they need to reach the Infinite because the ability to reason is equal in all and thus cannot be lost or broken into parts. That is why the "I" is the mind, or in other terms the Soul, cannot be doubted, as one will always know that they exist, because they think, which is equal in all. Descartes further explains thinking as knowing that he cannot doubt a God. This is because, that which is imperfect cannot think of something that is perfect, and therefore, the idea of this perfect being (God) must have put that knowledge inside of us (Descartes, *Discourse on Method,* 82-83). One can indeed wander down the wrong path by not reasoning well, though with the commitment to accepting 'I think I am equal to all through reason, therefore, I am,' as well as 'I think that there is a difference between the finite (what can be experienced through the senses) and the Infinite (God, and treating others well) therefore, I am.' To clarify, 'I am' is not an existence everyone has because not

everyone has the ability to reason well and recognize everyone as equal. To Descartes, this is recognizing true from false. Descartes reasons that there must be a God in the following passage,

> "[R]eflecting upon the fact that I doubted and that, as a consequence, my being was not utterly perfect […]. I decided to search for the source from which I had learned to think of something more perfect than I was, and I knew that this had to be from some more perfect nature," (Descartes, *Discourse on Method,* 34).

Descartes admits that he is not perfect, and if he were, he would never have doubted whether he thinks and therefore, exists. He reasons that he could not have made up a being who was more perfect than himself because of the contradiction it holds, and thus, he could not have gotten it from outside of himself. Therefore, this belief must have been placed in him by a being who is perfect (Descartes, *Discourse on Method,* 34). This is consistent with the passages from the Bible, stating that God has revealed the Infinite to us through The Spirit (1 Corinthians 2.10). Therefore, through this reasoning, God, or at least a perfect being exists to have given us the knowledge of perfection. Thus, to Descartes, elevating from the sensible realm, the finite, means to recognize and treat everyone as equal, and to believe in the existence of the Infinite, thereby establishing his second existence -- not of nature, but within it.

Concluding Comments

After reading and analyzing these authors it is clear to me that based on some of the other authors, Plato does not by any means live what would be known as a good existence. A part of what it means to have a good existence is realizing the difference between the finite and the Infinite. Plato recognized the two realms of being as that of the Forms and the Appearances. The Bible recognized this by stating that we can either choose to walk in darkness or in light, and Descartes recognized the difference between the sensible world and the Soul. Being able to recognize the difference between the finite and the Infinite is important so that you do not get lost in the finite, but rather can navigate it to the Infinite. The other part of a good existence is accepting that all human beings are equal to each other, and thus

deserve the same treatment. For the Bible, equality means that we were all made in God's image, for Descartes, that all humans can reason, but for Plato, there is no sense of equality anywhere. There are only hierarchal standpoints spoken of in the position of the finite.

Plato is concerned with who will rule a city and create a world that can only mimic the Just city but where there will be people above others. He imposes on humankind that no one will be able to reach the Infinite because that requires knowledge about it, though no one is capable of accessing that knowledge and therefore no one can speak of it. Plato is measuring people, as stated by Pascal, on a scale of the infinitely great or small and through this the finite is inescapable allowing him to become lost within it (Pascal, *Selection from the Thought,* #76). Plato then does not have a good existence based on the choices he has made; you cannot have only part of the Infinite, and if you do, you only have the finite. There is no unifying the self in Plato, as he states it will always be in disarray and since we cannot have true knowledge, we can only know about what exists as the appearances. Descartes and the Bible state otherwise, that the Self is already unified and whole, as everyone has what they need to reach the Infinite. No one is divided or empty, as everyone can reason, and everyone is to treat people with equality, where the basis and goal are love (Kierkegaard, *Philosophical Fragments,* pg. 25). God in the Bible, and Descartes, is the realization that we have a beginning that is in nature but is not of nature, meaning that God is supernatural, and we can also have a second beginning when we commit to all the principles of 'I think therefore, I am' (Descartes, *Discourse on Method,* Section 34). Our second beginning begins with a recommitment to the Other. It is choosing to live a life with the basis and goal of being love and thus enveloping the Infinite through thought.

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What Defines Merit with Regards to Equality of Opportunity?

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       A common justification for the selection of candidates to specific positions of advantage is based on concepts such as merit or desert. It is not uncommon to hear explanations such as: "we hired this candidate because they were the most deserving of the job," or "the particular student chosen for this scholarship was the worthiest candidate." However, there is little consensus as to what defines merit or desert in these contexts. In this essay, I will defend Tom Scanlon's argument for the view that for merit to be a valid basis of selection for positions of advantage, it must be defined in the 'institution-dependent sense'. This means that merit or talent must be based on how well an individual fits the goals or aims the institution plans to promote, provided that the institution's aims are normatively justified.

       I will do this by first analysing how institutions generate inequalities in a just fashion. Then, I will move on to show that these inequalities must be distributed according to the institution-dependent definition of merit. After assessing the logical strength of Scanlon's argument, I will perform a real-world analysis of the implications of the institution-dependent definition of merit on equality of opportunity, in the context of affirmative action programs. Lastly, I will look at how Scanlon assesses potential problems with the institution-dependent definition of merit and provide some of my own potential solutions. All of this will cumulatively show that T.M. Scanlon is correct in asserting that for merit to be a valid basis of selection, it must be defined in the institution-dependent sense.

       T.M. Scanlon views equality of opportunity as the effective response to a moral objection to inequalities found in society. This effective response incorporates three levels: institutional justification, procedural fairness, and substantive opportunity; each of which builds upon one another.[1] The goal of this paper is to effectively support the

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[1] Scanlon 54

justification for how individuals are justly selected for positions of advantage (falling under the level of procedural fairness). To achieve this goal, I will begin by first discussing, insofar as it is instrumental to the overarching goal of this essay, how an institution can be justified in creating inequalities.

The scope of this essay will deal primarily with positions of advantage created or provided by a society's institutions (e.g., a country's education system, or an employer's hiring policies). For an institution to generate inequalities in a morally permissible way, it must do so in a way that all members of the society would agree would produce a favourable outcome while stripped of their own personal biases. To do this, individuals would have to be oblivious to what their position[2] in society would be. This idea was first put forth by John Rawls with his conception of the hypothetical *original position.* According to Rawls, the principles of justice will be the principles chosen by any individual while behind the veil of ignorance, where "no one is advantaged or disadvantaged in the choice of principles by the outcome of natural chance or the contingency of social circumstances."[3] In this hypothetical *original position*, individuals make a normative claim about what the principles of a just society *should* contain. From this, it follows that "since all are similarly situated and no one is able to design principles to favor his particular condition, the principles of justice are the result of a fair agreement or bargain."[4]

According to both Rawls and Scanlon, the basis for just institutions is derived from this *original position*. This provides a strong theoretical foundation for the claim that a just institution can generate inequalities, provided that this inequality would be agreed upon by the individuals of a society that are behind the veil of

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[2] "Position" in this sense deals with any sort of characteristic in which an individual's perception of justice is influenced. This includes, but is certainly not limited to economic standing, historical background, physical features/handicaps. This description is found in Rawls, J. *A Theory of Justice [Revised Edition]* P. 11

[3] Rawls J. P. 11

[4] Rawls J. P. 11

ignorance. If unbiased individuals can agree that the inequality created by an institutions goals or aims *should* be part of a just society due to the benefits that it provides, then from a standpoint of justice, this institutional inequality is justified.[5] This is rather intuitive and can be seen when looking at the following example, which will be referred to throughout the text as the *teacher's example*. If a society benefits when the education system employs adequately trained teachers (e.g., by having a more dependable and sophisticated education system resulting in a life prone to enlightenment, as well as improving the stock of human capital in an economy), then due to the benefits brought to society by the occupation, a teacher can be justifiably awarded a higher salary than other occupations which do not provide these benefits to the same extent or do not provide these benefits at all.

When looking deeper into this Rawlsian argument, a more implicit element comes to life. In addition to institutional inequalities being justified based on their benefit to society, inequalities are actually *needed* to incentivize individuals to complete the plethora of work needed to develop their talents and handle difficult and demanding occupations. For this reason, society must be constructed in such a way that provides rewards to these individuals for the work they have put in. If individuals were provided the same financial incentives (wages) for two jobs, one that is incredibly difficult and stressful, and one that is mundane and simplistic, intuitively it seems that the majority of individuals will choose the second option. Using the *teacher's example*: the profession of teaching is an art, which requires the cultivation and refinement of specific skills and talent. This requires a lot of effort and upfront financial costs. For these reasons, society must incentivize the teacher position (which is typically done through providing a financial advantage) to ensure that individuals will indeed develop these talents. Contrast teaching with delivering newspapers and this argument becomes clear. This provides another level of moral justification for unequal positions of advantage.

It therefore follows that if institutions creating certain inequalities are justified or even vital, given that they provide society

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[5] Although this claim is not explicitly stated, this idea is easily deduced from the statements made on Rawls J. P. 11-12 and Scanlon, T. M. P. 56

with particular benefits, then it must be the case that these unequal positions are filled in a way that actually results in these benefits.[6] This is the core concept for what Scanlon defines as *the institutional account of procedural fairness*.[7] This is seen intuitively as necessary conditions within an argument are transitive.[8] Using a continuation of the *teacher's example*, we can verify this concept. It has already been morally justified for a teacher to be provided an unequal (economic) benefit as a result of their specific position.[9] Now, according to Scanlon, for these positions of advantage to be justifiably fulfilled, society must actually reap the benefits (to the fullest extent possible) that provide the basis for the position of economic advantage to teachers. Without choosing teachers that provide society with the benefits of having a more dependable and sophisticated education system (along with the further benefits resulting from this), there is no justification for teachers to be awarded a position of unequal advantage.

Scanlon is then able to assert that if the unequal positions of advantage are only justified when individuals with the relevant talent fill these positions, then rejecting those who are untalented is completely justified.[10] This relies on the rationale provided in the previous three paragraphs. If an individual fails to possess the relevant talent necessary to fill a certain position of advantage, the benefits to creating this unequal position will not be realized, and thus there is no longer justification for the position of advantage. Returning to the *teacher's example*, if the educational institutions of a society were to select individuals without the talent or training to be an adequate teacher, then society would not benefit from the education being

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[6] Scanlon, T. M. P. 56

[7] Scanlon, T. M. P. 56

[8] This is the basis for the proof of the valid argument form "Hypothetical Symbolism" in formal logic. This argument's validity is proven with formal logic in the appendix at the end of the essay.

[9] There is much debate on whether both teachers in primary and secondary education, as well as post-secondary professors really do possess a position of economic advantage in current Western societies, but this goes beyond the scope of this essay.

[10] Scanlon, T. M. P. 58

provided, and teachers being awarded a position of advantage would no longer be justified.

Now that it has been proven that unequal positions of advantage are justified only if talented individuals are selected for these positions, all that is left is to define exactly what talent is in this context. An important corollary resulting from the previous paragraph is that talent in the relevant sense for selection does not only regard the specific goals of the institution, but also the ways in which the institution is organized with regards to its means of achieving these goals.[11] Without the dimension of institutional organization, the premise of talent is no longer effectively defined, and the argument justifying positions of advantage based on merit no longer holds. Using the *teacher's example* to further highlight this point, imagine a teaching position where one is required to teach the French language. For this position, talent would require an understanding and proficiency of French. However, if this course was only taught in English, then French proficiency or understanding are no longer relevant attributes of talent in this context. Without taking into account the means in which an institution achieves its goals, a position of advantage could be awarded to an individual who will systematically fail the goals of the institution, which then results in the position of advantage being unjustifiable.

By relying on the notion of Rawls' difference principle, Scanlon is able to create the institutional account of procedural fairness that is theoretically and intuitively valid. From this, Scanlon is able to conclude that "what counts as talent (i.e. a valid basis for selection) depends on the justification for the institution in question, and the nature of the position [of advantage] within it for which individuals are being selected."[12] This means that the definition of merit or talent that is relevant as a basis of selection for positions of advantage is dependent on how well an individual fits the aims that the institution plans to promote, given the way the institution is assembled to achieve its aims. All of this is only true provided that the institution's aims are justified from a normative perspective. This is

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[11] Scanlon, T. M. P. 60
[12] Scanlon T. M. 59

what Scanlon defines as the institution-dependent definition of merit.[13]

Although the conclusion above is justifiable on the grounds of both logic and intuition, the conclusion has very strong implications for the procedural fairness subsection of equality of opportunity. With commonly known applications of procedural fairness in today's society being university admissions or hiring procedures, there is a clear reason as to why this idea is not simply agreed upon by philosophers and non-philosophers alike. Given that Scanlon's account of institution-dependent procedural fairness coincides with the description of formal equality of opportunity[14], there exist few intuitive objections associated with it in much of Western thought; some of which will be discussed below.[15]

The first and most obvious objection to institution-dependent procedural fairness and thus to the institution-dependent notion of merit, in my opinion, is that both rely too heavily on the aims of the institution in question. This objection proposes that an institution with normatively justified goals could act in accordance with Scanlon's institutional-dependant notion of procedural fairness, while simultaneously disfavouring a group of people in a morally unjustifiable way. This idea is exemplified by Ronald Dworkin, with his example of a law school in the time of segregation. Dworkin states

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[13] Scanlon T. M. 59

[14] According to the Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, "Formal equality of opportunity requires that positions and posts that confer superior advantages should be open to all applicants" (Arneson, R. *Equality of Opportunity* § 1 Paragraph 3). Given that "Applications are assessed on their merits, and the applicant deemed most qualified according to appropriate criteria is offered the position" (Arneson, R. *Equality of Opportunity* § 1 Paragraph 3), it is clear that Scanlon's account of institution-dependent procedural fairness is consistent with this definition.

[15] The concept of "all positions open to all applicants" and "careers open to talents" are ideals grounded in formal equality of opportunity (Arneson, R. *Equality of Opportunity* § 1 Paragraph 3). These ideals also underpin most of Western capitalist societies (Yang, Z. 2012. *Capitalism and Equal Opportunity)*. Therefore, it seems that there is not an abundance of intuitive refutations of the concept of formal equality of opportunity, and thus Scanlon's institution-dependent procedural fairness, in Western thought.

that a law school in the 1940s could have argued that "its purpose is to provide lawyers who would contribute to the state's economy, and that admitting black students would not contribute to this aim, since no law firm would hire them."[16] This claim puts a lot of pressure on the ramifications of Scanlon's theoretical framework for merit-based selection as the aim of the institution. The law school providing lawyers that will contribute to the American economy is justified and choosing to only admit students that will fulfil this aim is also justified according to Scanlon's institution-dependent notion of procedural fairness. Dworkin then presses the argument that according to Scanlon's definition of merit, all applicants of colour would be justifiably rejected on the grounds that they do not possess the relevant characteristics (talent) to contribute to the goals of the institution. Goals which have been deemed to be normatively justified.

However, Scanlon points out that Dworkin seems to miss the mark. According to the argument for institution-dependent procedural fairness, the institution's aims *must* be justified from a normative perspective. This means that a society must believe that the institution's goals should be implemented, and this belief would be derived from the *original position,* where no personal biases of any kind exist to contaminate this normative judgement.[17] If this is not the case, then a position of advantage cannot be justified.[18] Scanlon then concludes that it is simply impossible to argue that an institution's goals can justify exclusion based on the presumption of social inferiority.[19]

After Scanlon refutes the idea that heavy reliance on the aims of the institution in question provides a basis for unjust discrimination, he goes further to provide a positive argument that the institution-dependent account of procedural fairness can actually "open up the possibility of some flexibility in the criteria for selection that are compatible with formal equality of opportunity, pushing

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[16] Dworkin R. *Taking Rights Seriously* P. 230 Found in Scanlon T. M. P. 62.
[17] Refer back to page 4 of this essay for further discussion of the *original position*.
[18] Scanlon, T. M. P. 62
[19] Scanlon, T. M. P. 63

beyond a narrow understanding of merit."[20] Scanlon is then able to show that certain affirmative action policies in hiring and education can actually help further the legitimate goals of these institutions in a just and effective way while following the institution-dependent notion of procedural fairness and merit. Take the example of hiring university teachers. The aim of the educational institution is to hire teachers which will foster the intellectual development of their students. Students are open to attend schools regardless of their race, gender, or origin, and thus schools are multicultural and gender diverse places of learning.[21] Beliefs about who can succeed in particular roles is heavily dependent on who typically occupies these roles.[22] It is clear that a multicultural and gender diverse school with only white male teachers will be failing to foster beliefs that all cultures and genders are indeed capable of succeeding in these positions of advantage. This will result in the inability to foster the intellectual development of the students at the school to their fullest extent. In situations like this, it is shown that affirmative action programs which put individuals from previously (or even still) excluded groups into certain positions of advantage will actually further justify institutional aims, using the institution-dependent notion of procedural fairness and merit.[23]

When deciding between hiring two teaching candidates: a white male (the historic majority placeholder for this position[24]) or a black woman (historically excluded group based on false presumptions of social inferiority[25]) with nearly identical resumés, Scanlon's account of institution-dependent procedural fairness would suggest that the most talented individual would be the one to succeed

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[20] Ibid

[21] This can be grounds for debate but lies beyond the scope of this essay. I use this as an assumption in the particular example.

[22] Scanlon, T. M. P. 63

[23] Howard, J. *The Value of Ethnic Diversity in the Teaching Profession: A New Zealand Case Study P.* 5

[24] University Affairs [Canada]. 2020. *A History of Canada's Full-time Faculty in Six Charts.*

[25] University Affairs [Canada]. 2010. *Racism in the Academy.*

most in fostering the intellectual development of the students at the school. It has been proven in numerous empirical case studies that teacher diversity fosters an environment more conducive to learning for all students.[26] Therefore, according to the institution-dependent notion of merit, the black woman should be the candidate hired for the teaching position.

However, there are limits to the reach of these affirmative-action policies. According to the institution-dependent notion of procedural fairness, affirmative action is only justified as a transitional measure.[27] This is shown through the hiring example above. If the school follows the hiring policy to systematically always hire women or individuals of racial minority groups, there becomes a point where no white or male teachers are employed at the school. When this point is reached, the affirmative action program has overshot its goal, and now the same issue that enacted the affirmative action in the first place (a lack of teacher diversity) has been caused by its overuse. There are also cases in which the affirmative action policy in fact does not help the institution better fulfil its aims. In either case, according to the institution-dependent notion of procedural fairness, the hiring policy is actually not justified.

This example shows not only that the institution-dependent notion of procedural fairness fails to contribute to the perpetuation of exclusion or presupposition of social inferiority for any given group, but as a matter of fact does the opposite. The institution-dependent notion of procedural fairness provides a valid foundation for affirmative action policies, proving further that T. M. Scanlon is correct in asserting that for merit to be a valid basis of selection, it must be defined in the institution-dependent sense.

The last objection to the institution-dependent definition of procedural fairness and merit discussed in this paper deals with pragmatics. The pragmatic objection asks what constitutes the adequate amount of effort in the selection process according to the institution-dependent definition of merit and procedural fairness. What

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[26] Howard, J. *The Value of Ethnic Diversity in the Teaching Profession: A New Zealand Case Study P.* 5

[27] Scanlon, T. M. P. 67

is the minimum amount of candidate research needed for the institution-dependent justifications to hold? This is a very difficult question to answer, and in fact Scanlon does not provide a definitive answer. Scanlon states that due consideration must not be determined on the grounds of economic efficiency alone.[28] The rationale that additional effort in the selection processes is justified up until the point where the marginal cost of more effort exceeds the marginal benefit that would be realized by the institution by providing this extra consideration is not enough for Scanlon. Where to draw the line, I believe cannot be an industry-standard, but instead a floating range dependent on how crucial the position is to furthering the institution's aims. My rationale for this is simple: there must be a direct correlation between the minimum level of consideration for a position of advantage and the amount of control the position has with regards to the institution's aims.

Using the hiring example applied many times in this essay, one of the main aims of the educational institution is to foster the intellectual development of the students at the school. The teachers hired by the school will have a very high level of control over this, and thus the level of effort in selection for teachers must be very high. However, for janitorial staff who will have little to no control over this aim, the level of acceptable consideration can be lowered proportionately to their level of control. Although I will not provide an equation to satisfy this proposal, I believe this argument can be used to spark further analysis and development of this topic.

An issue associated with this line of reasoning deals with the fact that in most institutions, each selected position fills a specific institutional aim, and thus it is very difficult to rank these varying goals of an institution, especially if they all work together to provide a common overarching goal. For example, there is much to argue that janitors indeed contribute greatly to the overarching institutional goal of fostering intellectual development of the students at the school, as students will be more successful in a clean and safe school environment. It seems that janitors then have quite a bit of control over the aims of the educational institution. Now it seems that the

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[28] Scanlon, T. M. P. 67

selection process for the janitorial position must be very thorough as well. The same can be said about the contribution of workplace organization that secretaries provide for schools. It is now very hard to assess exactly which position deserves more consideration and effort put forth in the selection process.

Another concern of this nature is the determination of the *ceteris paribus* effect of different positions on the overarching goals of the institution. It is almost impossible to determine the control secretaries alone have on the institutional goal of fostering intellectual development of the students at the school. An untalented secretary adversely affects the janitorial staff and teachers, who also contribute to how well the institution is able to fulfil its goals (the opposite also being true). All of this makes for a difficult description of what determines due consideration with regards to the institution-dependent notion of procedural fairness and merit.

By relying on the notion of Rawls' difference principle, Scanlon is able to create the institution-dependent definition of procedural fairness and merit which is both intuitively appealing and deductively valid from a position of sentential logic. After assessing potential objections, Scanlon is able to show that the institution-dependent notion of procedural fairness does not contribute to the perpetuation of exclusion or presupposition of social inferiority for groups, but indeed it does the opposite. All of this allows me to conclude that Scanlon is correct in asserting that for merit to be a valid basis of selection, it must be defined in the institution-dependent sense. The last section of this work is designed to spark further discussion and analysis to the unanswered question of what constitutes due consideration for selection when dealing with candidates for a position of advantage.

Appendix A:
Logical Form of the Argument for the Institutional-Account of Procedural Fairness

Based on the argument found on page 4 of the text, we can display the logical form using sentence constants.

I = Unequal positions of advantage (inequalities) are justified

B = Providing society with benefits

T = Selecting talented individuals for the positions of advantage

We can then symbolize the argument as follows:

Unequal positions of advantage are justified only if society is provided with benefits:

I ⊃ B

And, providing society with benefits occurs only if talented individuals are selected for these positions of advantage:

B ⊃ T

Therefore, the generation of unequal positions of advantage are justified only if talented individuals are selected for these positions:

I ⊃ T

Logically, then:

    1.   **I ⊃ B**
    2.   <u>**B ⊃ T**   </u>
    ∴ **I ⊃ T**

This is further symbolized by the following logical form:

    3.   **p ⊃ q**
    4.   <u>**q ⊃ r**   </u>
    ∴ **p ⊃ r**

This (and all arguments) can be set in the form of an if-then statement, named the *conditional form*. By assessing the truth-value of this conditional form, it is possible to determine the validity of the argument.

[(p ⊃ q) ·(q ⊃ r)] ⊃ (p ⊃ r)

Logical theory states that for an argument to be valid, it's conditional form must yield a tautology, which is defined as a statement that is

true, and will always be true on the basis of its logical form.[29] This means, when trying to set the conditional form to be false, a logical contradiction must arise. To test whether this is the case, the analysis of the conditional form is completed as follows:

The only way for a conditional argument form is false is when it follows the form $T \supset F$.[30] This means that the conditional form must have the following assigned truth values:

$[(p \supset q) \cdot (q \supset r)] \supset (p \supset r)$

```
|_____| |_____|
        T             F
```

This implies:

$[(p \supset q) \cdot (q \supset r)] \supset (p \supset r)$

```
                       T   F
|_____| |_____|
        T             F
```

The truth-table for · states that a conjunction is only true if both component parts are true.[31] This implies:

$[(p \supset q) \cdot (q \supset r)] \supset (p \supset r)$

```
  T           F    T   F
 |_____|  |____|
    T        T
 |_____| |_____|
        T             F
```

For $(q \supset r)$ to be true, it must follow the form $F \supset F$, therefore, q is false. However, this forces $(p \supset q)$ to then be false. This proves that trying to make this argument's conditional form false forces a contradiction. Therefore, by the rules of formal logic, this argument is indeed valid.

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[29] Housman et al. *Logic and Philosophy: A Modern Introduction*. P. 73

[30] Housman et al. P. 55

[31] Ibid

[(p ⊃ q) ·(q ⊃ r)] ⊃ (p ⊃ r)
  T F   F F   T F
 |_____| |____|
  T X   T
|_____| |_____|
     T X   F

It is also important to note that the argument form [(p ⊃ q) ·(q ⊃ r)] ⊃ (p ⊃ r) is a valid argument form defined as "hypothetical syllogism" in the formal logic literature. This provides further evidence supporting the validity of this argument (provided that the premises are true).

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Why is there a growing authoritarianism in 21th century?

An analysis of neoliberal making of new authoritarian leaders, Frankfurt School revisited

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INTRODUCTION

In our neoliberal world, we are experiencing the rise of authoritarian regimes on a global scale. The USA elected Donald Trump, Turkey elected Erdogan, and the list goes on. According to the mainstream approach, this is caused by the growing inequality and eradication of the middle class due to neoliberal policies. This approach treats neoliberalism in a very reductionist way and assesses it solely as a new economic relationship in the world. These accounts, however, cannot provide insight on how neoliberalism sparks the tendency to chant for authoritarianism in "ordinary" people. The reductionist approaches cannot answer questions such as what the reasons are behind new authoritarianism other than inequality, and is the new authoritarianism an unlucky anomaly of 21th century or a phenomenon that is caused by the conditions of 21th century. In this paper, I will first discuss the accounts of Lowenthal and Guterman in order to explain what causes people to obey and chant for authoritarian leaders. Unlike the mainstream approach of today and the approach of their times, Lowenthal and Guterman did not perceive the fascism of their times as an anomaly of society. Instead, they tried to understand how the daily relationships in a society produce fascist and authoritarian tendencies as such an understanding can help us understand authoritarian leaders independent of time and space. In their famous "Prophets of Deceits" Lowenthal and Guterman state five reasons that cause people to obey authoritarian leaders, namely: "Eternal Dupes", "Conspiracy", "Forbidden Fruit", "Disaffection", and "Charade of doom" (Lowenthal & Guterman, 1949). In the second part of this paper I will show how the same tactics described by Lowenthal and Guterman are used by the new authoritarian leaders. In the third part of this paper I will assess neoliberalism, the dominant

superstructure of today, in terms of the ways it recreated and fueled the underlying reasons behind the authoritarian tendencies that Lowenthal and Guterman argued. Unlike the mainstream approach, I will argue that neoliberalism cannot be analyzed solely in terms of the economic relationship as it is a specific governing rationale that includes phenomena such as discipline through debt, depoliticization of social problems, and individualization of economic security. I posit this governing rationale fuels and reproduces the reasons for authoritarian tendencies described by Lowenthal and Guterman.

PROPHETS OF DECEIT

Lowenthal and Guternman wrote their influential book Prophets of Deceit during the era of European fascism. The pair analyze the tactics of agitators and the psychology of listeners. They argue agitators tried to create an image wherein they are genuine about solving social problems. What they really tried to do, however, is manipulate and increase the audience's feelings of discomfort in order to take advantage of these feelings. Lowenthal and Guterman argue for the existence of five themes (eternal dupes, conspiracy, forbidden fruit, disaffection, charade of doom) in order to understand how the aforementioned agitators exploit feelings and distort reality (Lowenthal & Guterman, 1949).

Lowenthal and Guterman argue agitators attempt to persuade ordinary people to the fact that they are duped by enemies of society constantly. In order to persuade a person, there has to be an intellectual or emotional distance between the speaker and listener; the audience should accept their inadequacy to deal with their problem (Lowenthal & Guterman, 1949). The agitator cannot persuade an individual without showing, often through means of humiliation, that said individual is inferior and needs the agitator more than the agitator needs the individual. The agitator insists that he possesses superior knowledge through his virtuous and special character. He asserts that his followers will be enlightened, understand the world, and become brave members of society (Lowenthal & Guterman, 1949). He instills fear in his listeners by convincing them that the problems they face are permanent and cannot be solved by their self-endeavor. He increases

the audience's insecurity by insisting that they are constantly cheated. Starting from childhood, a man suppresses instinctual actions due to social pressure presented through values of civilization (Lowenthal & Guterman, 1949). To live in accordance with these values, he makes sacrifices because of his belief that ultimately, he will be rewarded. Unfortunately, at one point in his life, the man discovers an ugly truth; he shall never fulfill his dreams, he shall never be rewarded. For nothing, he sacrificed his life because of the assumption that pursuit of moral values is superior that pursuit of material gain. (Lowenthal & Guterman, 1949). He has been manipulated by the people who praise the values that he embraced. He starts to think the whole world is against him in an almost paranoid state of mind. This creates a huge desire in dupes to have facile explanations and they become individuals who are more than happy to give control of their fate to someone who understands their helplessness (Lowenthal & Guterman, 1949).

The agitator depicted the dupes as cheated and fooled, however, they are not only cheated and fooled. They are cheated and fooled systematically, consistently, and consciously. The reason behind the failure is caused by a comprehensive and planned conspiracy (Lowenthal & Guterman, 1949). Those who have suffered failure tend to attribute their discomfort to an external, secret enemy; an agitator exploits this feeling. When agitators tell listeners that they are vulnerable because of bankers, "interest lobby" and the "West", the agitator exploits a preexisting feeling (Lowenthal & Guterman, 1949). Even though they are vague and limited in terms of factual qualities, these claims could be a topic of analysis. For example, the reason for underdevelopment in Turkey could really be related to a trading scheme between Turkey and the USA. The agitator, however, facilitates popular conspiracies only to enhance the resentment they create (Lowenthal & Guterman, 1949).Agitator does not believe conspiracy agents have rational motives or can be analyzed within a rational context. Instead, conspiracy agents are against people by default without any rational motivation. The agitator also depicts a blurry picture of the group deemed to be conspirators. The agents which involve uneven power relationships such as economic elites, regional hegemon countries now melted in the same pot and referred

as agents of demonic secret international organization. This blurriness of enemies increases the paranoias of people (Lowenthal & Guterman, 1949).

Lowenthal and Guterman argue that if the dupes are cheated by the external and evil enemy, agitators would emphasize the presence of forbidden fruit to them. While "Evil" enjoys the lavish life, the audience of the agitators cannot and live like foreigners in their own land (Lowenthal & Guterman, 1949). Evil distorts the moral base of society and live an extraordinarily lavish life. Even though the agitator gives the impression of advocating for redistribution policies, as I have stated, the agitator does not address the issues that he raised; he does not problematize them in a coherent way. Rather than offering a pathway to the redistribution of wealth, the agitator only increases the resentment against the excesses of luxury (Lowenthal & Guterman, 1949). Also, the agitator accuses "outsiders" such as refugees and immigrants by saying they are stealing the jobs and the wealth from the "real" people of that land (Lowenthal & Guterman, 1949).

According to Lowenthal and Guterman, creating the disaffection of ideals, values, and institutions are an important part of the agitator's tactics. To be able to increase disillusion on values, the agitator slanders and praises the values at the same time. On the one hand, he supports the values of civilization; on the other, he fuels the audience's mistrust about those values. When he confuses his audiences with his uncertain rhetoric, he implies he is neither a supporter nor a denier of those values. Even though the discourse of the agitator is a contradiction in and of itself, it is not a problem (Lowenthal & Guterman, 1949). This is because he already knows his almost caricature-like statements would not be believed by most of the audience. The purpose of the caricature-like statements is not to persuade the audience but to give the impression that the differences between values such as democracy and fascism are not important as many people believe and in turn, values do not matter (Lowenthal & Guterman, 1949). The agitator constantly seeks to blur the difference between values. He takes advantage of his audience's sense of disillusion by increasing their doubts about the validity of the

justification for social coercion that "enemies" use (Lowenthal & Guterman, 1949). Since the values are not important and fake, the agitator embraces amoral opportunism and justifies it. Through unseriousness, transformation of meaning, and anti-universality, he achieves the following opportunist doctrine. The agitator approaches values ambiguously through the unseriousness in his statements which try to depict values as lies and hogwash. The agitator alters the meaning of values in a way to exploit them according to his benefit. The agitator explicitly rejects the idea of universality. He argues tolerance is a way to suppress the truth and create coercion. With said three tactics, the agitator tries to show his listeners that values are nothing more than advertising slogans; basic lies for cheating them. (Lowenthal & Guterman, 1949).

The agitator scares his audience with the possibility of an unavoidable and inexorable total doom. He states that chaos, murder, rape, and war are everywhere in our world. In order to control and stimulate social thought and action, agitators spread fear. This fear is not the fear used in psychological stimulation to canalize specific danger. Similarly, to conspiracy, agitators create an eternal fear. When people terrified, agitator point a historical or universal event as the source of problem to relieve peoples' fear. Individual and personal failures are disguised as national, international, or even cosmic failure (Lowenthal & Guterman, 1949). The audience of agitators start to understand the causes of their failure; they no longer need to cope with unimportant problems of daily life such as tax laws, and unions. All these problems are explained by a common evil enemy as all problems are part of the corrupt and ruthless world. The inability to address problems no longer makes audiences dread the future as said problems become smaller when one deals with cosmic causes.

LOWENTHAL AND GUTERMAN AFTER 50 YEARS

As I have stated in the introduction, Lowenthal and Guterman did not perceive the authoritarianism of their times as an anomaly. I believe their analysis is helpful to understand the tactics and psychology of new authoritarian leaders and their listeners. In this part, I will analyze the speeches of new authoritarian leaders to show how they facilitate the tactics described by Lowenthal and Guterman.

WHY IS THERE A GROWING AUTHORITARIANISM IN 21TH CENTURY?

For example, similarly to Lowenthal and Gutermans' depiction of the agitator's eternal dupes, followers of Trump embrace social and economic marginalization and create an identity based on those problems. The "eternal dupes" described by Lowenthal and Guterman are referred to as the silent majority in Trump's America (Clavey, 2020).

Similar to the role of an agitator in Lowenthal and Guterman's conceptualization, conspiracies are the main source of fear in the discourse of the newly authoritarian leaders. In Turkey, the public dissent rose in the last years due to economic problems. As an example of the humiliation of his listeners, President Erdogan repeatedly said people do not understand that they are in a war; an economic war. As an example of a conspiracy theory in which the conspirator is blurry and unidentified, the "West", never further identified, were said to be trying to sabotage Turkey. He stated "we are giving a new independence war against those who are trying to blockade our country" (Ekonomik Kurtulus Savasi, 2020).

The accusation of "forbidding the fruit" toward both elites and refugees is very prevalent in the discourse of new authoritarian leaders. For example, on 1 January 2021 when President Erdogan undemocratically appointed a rector to Bogazici University, students started to protest against him. The response of the media was to picture the students of Bogazici as the elite Turks that make a lot of money and betray the land which provides them with plentiful opportunities (Kaplan, 2021). They live like foreigners in their land and live lavish life which become possible only through the hard work of "real" people of country. The Bogazici students exploit the hard work of people (an example of the demonization of elites). While Trump was campaigning in 2017, he read a poem called "The Snake" in one of his rallies. The poem is about a woman who feeds a snake and is eventually killed by it. As an example of the demonization of refugees, Trump likens refugees to said snake (Clavey, 2020).

The leaders also create disaffection through what Lowenthal and Guterman called transform of meaning, unseriousness, and anti-universality. To serve as an example of transforming the meaning, when Erdogan was accused of being undemocratic, he repeatedly

stated the fact that he received 50 percent of the votes is a clear example of democracy. How dare anyone speak about democracy with the leader who got the support of half of his nation? He distorts the meaning of democracy and equates it solely with an electoral win. He stated that "in other places, you cannot find genuine democracy like Turkey's" ("Baska Yerde Turkiye gibi Samimi Demokrasi", 2020). As an example of unseriousness, in the 2011 Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, when the French counselor asks Erdogan questions about religious freedom in Turkey, instead of addressing the question properly, Erdogan said that "I assume my friend is French. But French to Turkey too." ("Bu Fransiz Arkadas", 2011). President Erdogan also embraces an anti-universal sentiment in his speech. He stated that "Europe cannot teach Turkey humanism, in the name of democracy, we won't allow terrorism" ("Bati Terore destek", 2016). Human rights should not camouflage terrorism, he says. He pointed out that tolerance of the universal values is to open space for terrorism.

NEOLIBERALISM

We are experiencing the rise of authoritarian leaders in the late 21st century who embrace the tactics that Lowenthal and Guterman attributed to fascist leaders of their times. So, how does neoliberalism contribute to the emergence of those leaders? Contrary to the common assessment that neoliberalism is merely a new form of an economic system, I argue neoliberalism is governing rationality. According to Wendy Brown, neoliberal rationality is a governance rationale that creates political and social spheres that are dominated by market concerns and organized by market rationality (Brown, 2006). Brown emphasizes this organization of governance is not just a reflection of economics to other areas, it is also the explicit construction of specific market rationality in specific areas. In the construction of this governance, the state actively engages in it. The state embraces policies and spreads a political culture aimed at encouraging citizens to be rational economic actors in every area of life. It creates entrepreneurs and consumer citizens whose value is measured by their capacity to be self-sufficient (Brown, 2006). This

general rationale of neoliberalism produces phenomena unique to neoliberalism.

In the neoliberal era, the world has experienced a huge wave of financialization of everyday life. The mainstream argument posits that financialization of everyday life occurs due to the shift from production capitalism to coupon pool capitalism. Paul Langley, however, argues that it is not a shift in paradigm but a conscious and deliberate creation of a new paradigm (Langley, 2017). Langley argues that by changing the role of the investment as a fundamental guarantor of future security and freedom, everyday life is financialized. Similar to Brown, Langley argues that neoliberalism tried to create self-sufficient, self-responsible citizens through entrepreneurship in the market, Langley notes, particularly in the financial market (Langley, 2017) Citizens started to perceive the practices of the financial market as fundamental for their future freedom and security. Investment is completely different from the old phenomenon of security, namely insurance. In insurance, the risk is something that everyone can face such as accidents, poverty, health conditions, and so on (Langley, 2017). The risk is collectively shared. This risk is a negative risk, insurance is a preventive mechanism. In the case of investment, however, risk is a positive risk; the risk is something that you can reap the benefits of through rational decisions in the financial market (Langley, 2007). Langley states that the possibility of the advantageous use of investment makes the individualization of responsibility of security and freedom not something dangerous but even cheered by people (Langley, 2007). Yet, Langley shows that through finance, adequate security generally cannot be achieved. Langley argues that this is mostly due to the uncertain nature of financial markets.

Financial literacy suggests the money for private pensions should be diversified in the portfolio. When the retirement time comes, however, private pensions push individuals to invest in a single financial instrument, for the annual payback until death. Since the annual rates of returns depend on the interest rates and therefore fluctuate vastly, retirement investors are finding themselves in uncertainty as there is no way for a person to calculate and

"rationally" act according to general interest rates. It is clear that ensuring secure retirement is not about one's wisdom or intellect but rather is simply a result of luck and timing. As a result of this uncertainty, people generally cannot invest sufficiently to ensure their security (Langley, 2007). For example, in the United Kingdom, the saving ratio (the amount of savings divided by gross income) stood at 4.8 percent in 2002, the lowest of all time. The pension commission declared that more than 45 percent of the working-class people in the United Kingdom do not have a sufficient level of savings to secure retirement (Langley, 2017).

Another important phenomenon that shapes the citizens is the creation of debt in the neoliberal era. Lazzarato (2012) states that a huge amount of wealth is transferred from the population, business, and the welfare state to creditors by interest mechanism. This huge amount of wealth transfer creates a power mechanism of exploitation between creditor and debtor. Lazzarato argues that in the neoliberal era through monetary policies, wage deflation policies, and fiscal policies, an enormous public and private debt is created (Lazzarato, 2012). He states that the creditor-debtor relationship becomes central to neoliberal governance. The creditor-debtor relationship builds through the integration of people to the monetary banking and financial system. In neoliberalism what is identified as financialization is the representation of the enhanced force of the creditor debtor relationship, he argues. Lazzarato argues this newly created relationship creates subjects who experience debt at every moment of life, everywhere in the world (Lazzarato, 2012). Everyone has debt because even a poor person who does not have access to credit must pay the interest to creditors through the reimbursement of public debt that grows enormously in the neoliberal era. The debt is not only universal but also lifelong. Lazzarato states that every French child is born with a 22,000-euro debt. He argues that people are exposed to creditor-debtor power relations throughout life, from birth to death. This spreading power relationship effectively creates a particular form of homo economicus, the indebted man. Lazzarato argues that debt disciplines its subjects and it produces a new morality (Lazzarato, 2012). In the neoliberal era, paying a debt is a fulfillment of a moral promise, and having entered into debt is perceived as a failure

(Lazzarato, 2012). Lazzarato also states that the moral attributions to debt moralize unemployment, social service, and public help. If one does not have a job or relies on social service for a living, he is accused of having low self-discipline, low motivation, and being lazy. The debtor fails in his duty to be self-sufficient.

How Neoliberalism Helps Authoritarian Tactics?

After the discussion of what neoliberalism is and what its effects are, in this section, I will show the ways in which neoliberal rationality fueled and reproduced the tactics that Lowenthal and Guterman posit. Lowenthal argues agitators insist their listeners are in an eternal loop that makes them suckers. The only way to escape from this loop is to follow the superior leader. As I have stated, an agitator shows the listener that the values they obey do not bring prosperity, and at some point in life, the dupe will realize that he ruins his life for the meaningless pursuit of moral values. He could not achieve prosperity. He accepts that he is a sucker for all his life. For addressing an enemy for this failure, an agitator creates conspiracy theories and tells listeners they are constantly manipulated and failed. He claims that while you are suffering, someone is enjoying life to increase resentment and anxiety in the audience. In neoliberal rationality, the notion of "finance as the future security" (Langley) and "creation of indebted man" (Lazzarato) serve as the fueler of such emotions and help agitator to exploit them. As I argued above, Langley suggests the future of individuals who try to secure a pension through financial instruments depends on the macro political environment, no matter how they rationally behave in the financial market. Therefore, statistically, people generally failed to secure their pension money (Langley, 2017). Also, as Lazaarro argues, the neoliberal logic that tries to expand the creditor-debtor relationship to every aspect of life creates individuals who are born in debt (Lazzarato, 2012). This uncertainty of life (people cannot know if they can secure their future or not) and eternal debt (people born into debt and die in debt) makes people more paranoid and devastated. Also, as Lazzarato discusses, the newly created homoeconemicos "indebted man" attributes moral values to debt. It is a moral duty to pay the debt

and if a person fails to pay, he should feel morally inferior (Lazzarato, 2012). One will always try to minimize their debt and will likely fail at one point in life and start to feel morally inferior. The increased paranoia, devastation, and moral inferiority in the neoliberal era makes people vulnerable to any explanation of their failure more than ever. Consequently, it helps agitators to claim they are a sucker for life because of an external enemy, and while they are suffering someone having fun of life.

The rationale of neoliberalism makes the market rational dominate and organizes the political and social arena which allows for the disillusion of values. Brown argues that neoliberal political rationality knows no value or ideology, its concerns are solely dominated by market rationale. She argues that this rationale eradicates the meaning of values. While analyzing how the completely incompatible ideologies of neoconservatism and neoliberalism exist together, she stated "Neoconservatism sewn in the soil prepared by neoliberalism breeds a new political form, a specific modality of governance and citizenship, one whose incompatibly with even formal democratic practices and institutions does not spur a legitimation crisis because of the neoliberal devaluation of these practices and institutions that neoconservatism then consecrates." (Brown, 2006, p.702) In the neoliberal era, opposite values can exist together, and the meaning of values can be distorted because neoliberalism already deviated the meaning of values. For example, in the case of an agitator, agitators easily claim that human rights are merely a façade since the meaning of rights in neoliberalism reduces to a right to exist in the market. Therefore, the meaning of it is eroded and defined by market terms.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, in the neoliberal era world, we have witnessed a rise of authoritarian leaders all over the globe. Before neoliberalism 50 years ago during the era of rising fascism, two scholars of the Frankfurt School, Lowenthal and Guterman, analyzed the psychology and tactics of agitators and their audiences. They argue agitators insist to their listeners that their suffering is eternal and cannot be solved by themselves because they are being constantly

cheated. They are cheated as a result of a planned conspiracy. Also, while they are sabotaged, agitators say some people are living their beautiful life. Moreover, the agitator says to their listeners that the values you obey for the sake of civilization are a mere façade and illusions for social coercion. They are meaningless. By saying so, agitators create fear and resentment in listeners and exploit them.

Today when we analyze the discourses of new authoritarian leaders such as Erdogan and Trump, we can clearly see they are facilitating the same tactics of the agitators described by Lowenthal and Guterman. In my paper, I have shown that neoliberal rationality helps the new authoritarian leaders facilitate those tactics and exploit the subsequent emotions. This is because, firstly, the neoliberal rationale forms people who tried to secure their future through the financial market. Secondly, the neoliberal rationale forms agents who are constantly in a debtor creditor relationship. As a result, people in debt visualize an unsecure future and become devastated and paranoid about their lives.

As Langley shows, the financial market is uncertain and no action can secure a future return with 100 percent certainty. As Lazzarato shows, expansion of the creditor-debtor relationship in the neoliberal era creates citizens who are born into and die in debt. Therefore, people are more paranoid and are more likely to fail in the neoliberal world. As a result, agitators effectively exploit those feelings. Also, in the neoliberal era, it is easier for the agitator to distort and exploit values because as Brown argues, values are already deviated by the creation of a social and political sphere which is predominantly occupied by market rationality (Brown, 2006). In order to prevent the further increase of the authoritarian trend all around the world, the governing rationalities of neoliberalism that increase anxiety and paranoia in people should be abolished. We should create an inclusive system, not just in terms of the redistribution of wealth but also in terms of power relations.

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WHY IS THERE A GROWING AUTHORITARIANISM IN 21TH CENTURY?

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Why Explaining Religion Is Not Sufficient to Explain Away Religion

An argumentative exploration of the leading evolutionary explanatory accounts of religion to demonstrate the inability of science to explain *away* religious belief

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1. Introduction

While science continues to make significant progressive strides, religion has yet to add to its historically established doctrines. Not only has the rapid expansion of science brought into question the validity and necessity of religion, part of scientific inquiry now focuses on how 'counterintuitive' notions of religion came to be. 'Counterintuitive' ideas of religion posit religious beliefs to go against or violate empirically verified facts or knowledge. Some argue that we can utilize the knowledge attained from advancements in science to explain away religion. One particular aspect of science that is used to explain away religion are evolutionary theories. In this paper, I will argue that while evolutionary accounts can explain our affinity towards religion, it has yet to explain *away* religion. I will explicate and refute the three different argument for evolutionary accounts of religion, including the socio-evolutionary, bio-evolutionary and cultural-evolutionary, to demonstrate how science has not succeeded in explaining away religion.

2. Why Does Science Try to Explain Away Religion?

There is a prominent assumption in academia that science and religion are two separate and distinct fields which fundamentally do not, and (for some) cannot overlap. Both science and theism attempt to answer the central questions concerning the design and function of natural phenomena (i.e., evolution, questions of the universe, life etc). The answers posited by both disciplines are commonly thought to be extremely contrary to one another, leading to a vivid and polarizing divide between proponents of these two disciplines which over time has come to be referred to as the conflict model (De Cruz, 2017). In order to have knowledge of something or

to truly know something, one must have a *true justified belief*. Religion, while based in belief, has not been demonstrated to be indefinitely true by empirical justification. To demonstrate that religious belief does not constitute as knowledge, science has attempted to explain *away* religion by appealing to evolutionary principles.

3. Why Does Religion Go Against the Theory of Evolution

Given the breadth of religion (and religious variety), it is important to define the exact conceptualization of 'religion' that I will be utilising for my argument. In this paper, I will be using the definition of 'religion' put forth by Scott Atran. His definition of 'religion' is widely applicable, generalizable and encompasses the aspects of religion that are claimed by most to go against evolutionary principles. He notes that religion is (1) the widespread *counterfactual and counterintuitive* beliefs in supernatural agents; (2) a community's hard-to-fake expressions of *costly material* commitments to those agents; (3) engagements with those agents in ways that master people's existential anxieties about death, disease etc.; and (4) ritualized rhythmic sensory coordination of (1)(2) and (3) in ways that enrich unity with the group (Atran, 2002). As per my analysis, (4) functions more so as a byproduct of religion. As such, I will not integrate (4) as a stand-alone function of religion in my paper. Further, to aid with the structure of my argument, I will be incorporating a general conception of religion which is sometimes referred to as theistic belief. By doing so, my arguments will focus on religion as a whole than attempting to argue under the doctrine of a particular religion.

While Atran's definition of religion can be controversial to some, it is important to note that it was created to effectively demonstrate how religion is logically counterproductive from an evolutionary perspective. From an evolutionary perspective, religious practice is considered to be counterintuitive and counterproductive due to its 'costly' nature as mentioned in (2). The costly material sacrifices made by humans to pious agents have been noted throughout history. Some examples of materials that were sacrificed in the name of religion include goods, time, animals and even human life

(Winzler, 2012). In ancient Mayan times, human life was often sacrificed to honour their respective religious deities (Owen, 2017). However, from an evolutionary lens, humans are programmed to behave in ways that enhance our fitness. As such, engaging in costly sacrificial practices would be counterproductive and go against our evolutionary programming. The Darwinian theory of evolution stipulates that characteristics evolve to propagate the frequency of an organism's genes in future successive generations (Murray & Goldberg, 2009). This propagation is maintained through the reproduction and survival of these organisms. In natural selection, advantageous traits are favoured and subsequently enhanced to increase the frequency of such traits through future generations allowing populations to become better adapted to flourish in their environment over time (Ratner, 2019). Costly evolutionary traits will only propagate in species through natural selection if the benefits of maintaining such a costly trait is greater than the potential costs of the maintenance of such a trait. Therefore, the natural affinity of humans to embrace religion seems to be contrary to the Darwinian theory of evolution as practicing religion does not seem to sufficiently enhance human fitness enough to explain its propagation as a costly trait.

4. Exposition - Evolutionary Accounts of Religion

All evolutionary accounts adopt a *Standard Model* in which all accounts concur that the human mind contains certain cognitive structures that "collaborate in specific and predictable ways to perpetuate religious ideas pan-culturally" (Murray & Goldberg, 2009). The evolutionary accounts of religion used by science to explain away religion are presented through a socio-evolutionary lens, a bio-evolutionary analysis, and a cultural-evolutionary account.

Socio-evolutionary Account of Religion

A socio-evolutionary explanation of religion argues that religion should be considered be a 'spandrel' trait since it is a non-adaptive by-product of other mechanisms that are adaptive (Murray & Goldberg, 2009). Evolutionary theorists argue that while religion is spandrel, it arose from group-based mechanisms that have been

proven to be adaptive. According to the Darwinian theory of evolution, the preservation of costly beliefs should have an adaptive benefit towards increasing one's fitness, specifically one's reproductive success. It can be argued that engaging in religious practice could increase one's fitness as participating in cross-cultural religious practices helps promote group cohesiveness and allows us to benefit from such group dynamics (Murray & Goldberg, 2009). This type of group-cohesiveness increases the overall fitness of the group while deterring possible attempts of sabotage by members of the group. By engaging in overt religious practice, members of a community can demonstrate their commitment to the values of the group and the group as a whole (Murray & Goldberg, 2009). Further, religious practice can help predict the behaviors of group members which can allow for the cultivation of strategies to further group prosperity. Since certain strategies produced by religious practice enhance reciprocal cooperation between group members, it increases the likelihood of our cognitive structures to accept religious beliefs. As such, religion itself is not considered to be directly adaptive in this model since it is evidentially more costly to humans in terms of how expensive the maintenance of religious belief is (specifically concerning resource allocation of time, food, goods, etc.). However, science attempts to explain away religious belief as a non-adaptive by-product of fitness enhancing adaptive traits.

Bio-evolutionary account of Religion and Characteristics of Religion

The bio-evolutionary account of religion incorporates our understanding of our cognitive structures to explain away religion. Our cognitive structures contain the faculties of memory, perception, and intuition. The faculties help us derive and recognize truth while facilitating our ability to perceive connections among propositions (Plantinga, 2011). The bio-evolutionary account of religion states that we possess these cognitive structures, which are structured in way to support and perpetuate our affinity to accept religious ideas, due to the specific associated characteristics of religion. Religious characteristics are (1) counterintuitive and optimized for recall and transmission, (2) they must generate beliefs about agents and agency, (3) must be

inference rich, and (4) represent religious entities as agents who aim to benefit us (Murray & Goldberg, 2009). Folk ontology finds that the design of our cognitive structures helps us attribute agency to objects/disturbances in our environment as a defense mechanism. The cognitive mechanisms that allow us to perform the aforementioned function are called 'hypersensitive agency detection devices' (HADD) (Jong, 2012; Murray & Goldberg, 2009). This highly sensitive defense mechanism enhances fitness by helping us classify objects in our immediate environment which in turn heightens our chances for survival. When our cognitive structures detect patterns in our environment that can hinder our survival but do not have any familiar or known causes, our HADD structures are triggered to designate unidentified agents to be the causes of these patterns. Since these mechanisms are highly sensitive, they tend to overly attribute agency to stimuli in our environment. It is argued that the hyper-sensitivity of our cognitive structures paired with our tendency to anthropomorphize concepts make us more likely to form strong beliefs of goal-oriented religious agents (Murray & Goldberg, 2009).

Our tendency to anthropomorphize phenomena allows us to create and perpetuate ideas of religious agents (i.e Gods), through communities and generations. Religious ideas are strange and minimally counterintuitive (MCI) making such ideas extremely memorable and consequently more likely to be transmissible to other members of a community (Murray & Goldberg, 2009). Since religious ideas are *minimally* counterintuitive (MCI), they must also be inference rich to maintain belief in such an idea. The inference rich nature of these ideas triggers the HADD mechanisms and makes us engage with these ideas to develop ritualistic commitments. Overtime, we begin to associate these ritualistic commitments as a form of interacting with these divine agents. Appeasement of these agents through such interactions, reduce our anxieties about life thus fulfilling a component of Atran's account of religion. Since the characteristics of religion trigger our natural cognitive mechanisms, many argue that a bio-evolutionary account explains away religion (Murray & Goldberg, 2009).

Cultural-evolutionary account of Religion and Mimetics

The cultural-evolutionary account of religion attempts to explain away religion using *memes*. In the theory of cultural evolution as posited by Richard Dawkins, he uses mimetics to demonstrate the effects of inheriting culturally significant ideas (Ratcliffe, 2003). Memes are cultural units that, like genetic traits, are transmissible through generations due to their ability to make copies of themselves through mind-to-mind replication (Lewens, 2018). An idea can become a meme if it is culturally significant enough to aid in the evolution of said culture. While memes only live in the 'mind' of man, this theory of mimetics aims to show how ideas can be transmitted cross culturally and through generations thus aiding the societal organization of mankind (Ratcliffe, 2003). Religion is said to be a 'meme' since religious ideas have the ability and the necessary characteristics to be propagated through the mimetic theory of evolution. Since the transmission of memes are a product of our cognitive structures, costly religious ideas would have been propagated due to its ability to trigger our HADD structures. However, in this conceptualization of religion, religious ideas must be passed on through generations through imitation usually from parent to child. Often in this view of explaining away religion, religious ideas are compared to a parasite to explain away how religion has managed to exist for centuries. Similar to how a viral parasite 'parasitizes', religious ideas tend to take over once they are planted in one's mind (Ratner, 2019).

5. Evaluation - Why Evolutionary Accounts Don't Explain Away Religion

The three forms of evolutionary accounts of religion can help explain our tendency to adopt religious belief and maintain such beliefs cross-culturally but it does not explain *away* religion. For science to explain *away* religion, it must do more than merely explaining the dynamics that make us more likely to embrace religion. It needs to remove the necessity of religion and disprove associated religious beliefs such as the existence of divine agents (Pargament, 2002). Moreover, for science to explain away religion, it has to posit a singular universally accepted explanation of religion. Having

scientific explanations of religion that can be countered by similarly likely theistic explanations of religion does not constitute as explaining away. As such, I will demonstrate the gaps in the evolutionary accounts' attempt to 'explain away' religion, to show that while these reductive interpretations of religion in an evolutionary perspective can help *explain* religion, but it does not 'explain away' religion.

The socio-evolutionary account of religion claims that religion is a spandrel trait in that it is a non-adaptive by product of adaptive traits that make us more likely to promote group-cohesiveness for enhancing fitness. Such an account of religion is short-sighted as it is not proven that religion only emerges in communal groups. Some argue that the ability to develop ideas of a greater power, a designer, or other theistic ideals, can arise in a singular person. Furthermore, religious belief being evolutionary advantageous can be contested using Atheism. Atheism is the disbelief in the existence of any religious doctrines or divine beings (typically religious deities) (Oxford, 2020). Studies show that atheism can be noted throughout history similar to how religious belief can (Johnson, 2012). While the standard model attempts to explain religion using evolutionary models, the emergence and transmission of atheistic belief seems to counter all their posited explanations. For instance, if participating in religious belief increases fitness, then one could argue that a belief in atheism would have been selected out via evolution as it would have caused fitness to decline. However, we know that this is not the case. From an evolutionary angle, it would have made more sense to practice atheism as it would have been less costly and could have perpetuated the same group cohesiveness as members of a community could have been connected via their lack of belief. If members of religious societies can override their cognitive mechanisms that make them more likely to accept religion similar to atheists, then one could argue that costly religious beliefs should have been factored out to enhance fitness. As such, atheism demonstrates that religious belief cannot merely be explained away using an evolutionary account.

As mentioned previously, the bio-evolutionary account attempts to explain away religion by appealing to the design of our cognitive mechanisms to adopt beliefs that will help enhance our survival. This conceptualization of religion is not incompatible with contrasting religious beliefs that attribute the designation of such cognitive structures as God's doing. Similar to Locke's famous argument, the function of our cognitive structures to conceptualize and appreciate God may have been God's design itself. Locke argued that our capacity to understand religious ideas and to utilize reason to arrive at such ideas were given to us by God (Uzgalis, 2018). The conceptualization of HADD structures as an evolutionary adaptation to increase fitness is compatible with such a theory as we could conceptualize this cognitive development was given by God to mankind to embrace religious activity. In fact, we might need hypersensitive structures for agent attribution to make us aware of the divinity of our existence. While our tendency to attribute agency to stimuli that may have been produced by other means, it does not follow that there is not an agent there at all times. Since a core component of religion are its associated 'agents' (aka Gods), for science to explain away religion, it must disprove the existence of divine entities. We know that the evolutionary account of religion as posited by science does not functionally disprove the existence of such agents. Moreover, this hypersensitivity does not imply that the mechanism is *always* faulty. It is likely that there may be a divine agent behind divine experiences and phenomena. As such the bio-evolutionary attempt to explain away religion fails as theists can argue that having such cognitive structures that able to lead us to ideas of religion and to embrace a divine being can have been designed and given to us by God.

The cultural-evolutionary account posits religion to follow a mimetic theory in which it is transmitted cross-culturally similar to a viral parasite. Such an account of religion attempts to explain away religion by reducing it to a contagious thought. I argue that this is false due to our ability reason and engage in critical thinking. The transmission of memes are dependent on having someone to teach future generations about these memes to propagate them. However, the cognitive structure of humans has the faculty for reason

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(Plantinga, 2011). Our ability to reason and rationalize beliefs would allow us to reason against unlikely ideas or beliefs that seemingly serve no beneficial purpose. This faculty to reason is rudimentary in children and there are conflicting studies regarding whether children are not born with any innate bias towards religious belief (Ambrosino, 2014). Those who state that children are not born with any innate bias for religion state that their adopted religious beliefs often taught by their parents. However, children's mental faculties are a lot more susceptible to believing falsities as demonstrated by the likelihood of small children to have imaginary friends. As the cognitive faculties of children begin to develop, they abandon these minimally counterintuitive ideas as they are more aware of their own personhood and do not have the same need to maintain such ideas (Volpe, 2019). However, religious ideas of divine agents are carried throughout adulthood. Since it has been established that children will abandon ideas that are contrary to reason, it does not make sense to view the transmission of religion as memes. While children may be indoctrinated by their parents to adopt religious beliefs, eventually they will be able to use their capacity for reason to develop their own ideas of religious truth (or lack thereof). In fact, many religious doctrines utilize doubt to encourages members of faith to confront the strength of their religious belief. If maintaining religious belief was important, such a practice would not logically be practiced as it would provide members of a community with a viable opportunity to abandon religion. There must be a greater reason that has perpetuated the transmission of such costly and 'counterintuitive' religious practices that science has yet to explain away. Moreover, note that for a meme to be transmitted pan-culturally, it must have high copying fidelity (Dennett ,2007) Even if small details of religious memes are wrongly transmitted, it is unlikely to attribute this error in copying fidelity to account for the emergence of such a vast variety of religions, each with their own unique practices and doctrines. As such, I argue that the inability of the cultural-evolutionary explanation of religion to account of our faculty of reason and the variety of religious belief shows that science has not succeeded in explaining away religion.

Conclusion

Science can only utilize the evolutionary accounts of religion to evalute how religious beliefs can contribute to our fitness to ultimately explain what gives us the ability to embrace religious belief. However, it is general knowledge that religion is significant part of historic and present-day human life. As such, religious belief must contribute more to humanity than just an evolutionary advantage. As such, science is unsuccessful in its attempt to utilize our cognitive structures through the standard model of evolutionary accounts of religion to explain away religion. Of the three main evolutionary accounts discussed in this paper, the bio-evolutionary model argues that we are susceptible to religious belief due to the design of our cognitive structures while the cultural-evolutionary finds religious belief to follow a mimetic theory of transmission. In the socio-evolutionary theory, religious belief is said to enhance group-cohesiveness which aids in our survival resulting in the evolution of our cognitive structures to embrace such beliefs in order to enhance fitness. However, science fails to explain *away* religion as the evolutionary accounts of religion seem to mirror theistic ideas of the acquisition of our cognitive structures. Moreover, the posited evolutionary accounts fail to explain the emergence and propagation of varieties of religious belief and atheism making it ultimately incompatible with our faculty of reason. Since explaining does not imply explaining away, the role and value religion is yet to successfully be disproven by science. Therefore, it is evident that science does not explain *away* religion but rather clarifies our predisposition towards embracing religious belief.

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An Argument for the Censorship of Hate Speech

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Here it will be argued that censoring the expression of what I will call hateful beliefs is justified. I will present the framework and position of John Stuart Mill on the freedom of expression, which posits that no censorship is justifiable, and then present an argument against Mill's view. I will begin by discussing Mill's utilitarianism, his concepts of the harm principle and the tyranny of the majority, and then explain his arguments for total freedom of expression. Afterwards, I will argue that Mill's reasoning, while generally correct, does not apply in cases of hate speech. Following this I will argue hate speech is gravely harmful, and so should be censored on the basis of Mill's own stance on utilitarianism and the harm principle.

Mill's argument for total freedom of expression is rooted in his version of utilitarianism, from which he derives what is often called the harm principle. For Mill, utilitarianism means that the only thing which is good in and of itself is pleasure and the only thing which is bad in and of itself is pain, both understood in the broadest possible senses. The harm principle states that all institutions of government, including democratic ones, only have the right to interfere with an individual's action for the protection of others. In other words, a governmental body can never force someone to do something for the benefit of that person, only to protect others from harm. This usually means prohibiting harmful actions, though in some rare cases this can mean forcing a particular action, so as to prevent harm caused by inaction. In Mill's view, any democratic encroachment of this principle would constitute a "tyranny of the majority", wherein the majority of the political community would be, through collective action, oppressing a minority. According to Mill, this needs to be guarded against just like any other form of tyranny. He gives several utilitarian arguments for the harm principle, which are not necessary to recount here. It is sufficient to say I am in agreement with this principle, along with Mill's view that the collective action of the majority, at least in principle, can unjustly

limit the freedom of a minority, such that we might call this action a kind of "tyranny" (Mill & Veltman, 2013).

With these basic concepts in mind, Mill argues for total freedom of expression on the basis that any censorship whatsoever is unjust. He provides several arguments for this view, which will be reviewed here. To begin with, Mill considers three possibilities. Firstly, the censored opinion may be correct. In this case, censorship deprives society of a truth and in turn, all the benefits the truth has the potential to provide, whether the benefits are scientific, moral, political, and so on. Therefore, censorship in this case is unjust. Secondly, the censored opinion may be incorrect. In this case, censorship robs us of the debate between truth and falsity. According to Mill, if a true opinion is never in opposition to a false one, and its adherents never engage with their opponents, they will lose the meaning of their view. After all, our knowledge that a position is correct is often derived from how it may be defended against objections, and why it is preferable to other positions. Furthermore, the absence of opposition to a belief gives less reason for the basic justifications for said belief to be remembered, threatening even our most basic understanding of the view's logical basis. For these reasons, the basis of the truth would be forgotten when falsity is censored, leading to the truth being held dogmatically. In Mill's view, however, our opinions are only genuinely truthful if we understand their justifications - we only understand truth if we understand why it is true. Thus, when we censor falsity we also lose truth. In fact, Mill goes so far as to say the words we use to express the true opinion become meaningless, and any good the truth results in is lost (Mill & Veltman, 2013).

The third possibility he considers, which he thinks is the most likely to happen in reality, is that both the accepted and the censored view contain an element of the truth, and that the correct view contains elements of both. Mill says that this collision and debate among different partially correct positions is how society progresses, and to censor a partially correct view is therefore not only to deprive society of its element of the truth and the good it would bring, but also of the fundamental social progress it makes possible. (Mill & Veltman, 2013) Mill argues moreover that censoring an opinion

requires the censorer to assume they are infallible in their judging the suppressed opinion to be false. Yet, infallible judgement does not exist. In addition, a fallible authority, in Mill's view, has no right to prevent others from commenting on any subject (Mill & Veltman, 2013).

Mill considers the possibility that even if a false opinion is censored, it may be taught in schools along with refutations. Nonetheless, he finds this inadequate. In his view, it is essential that a false view be presented as persuasively and rationally as possible. If a position is only presented by a teacher in terms of what the position is and why it is false, the best possible arguments for the position will not be given. As such, the strongest, and therefore most important, counter arguments will also not be given. Consequently, an important piece of the truth will be absent (Mill & Veltman, 2013).

These problems are made worse, Mill says, because censorship can never fully succeed, and so the incorrect view we are trying to suppress, will eventually be espoused. When it is, we will be ill prepared to argue against and defeat it, as we would lack knowledge of both its strongest points and those of our own (Mill & Veltman, 2013).

I will now argue that while the above arguments generally hold, they do not apply in the case of the expression of hateful beliefs. For the purposes of this essay, I will define hateful beliefs as those which, 1. claim that some human beings are in some fundamental way - be it biologically, culturally, due to their sexuality, or any other reason - inferior or lesser than others, 2. that this difference entails their lives are less valuable than those of others, 3. that they are in this fundamental way a danger to others, and 4. that this legitimizes violence against them. Exactly which beliefs would fall into this category will be a subject of much debate. To clarify, I do not hold that it is hateful to say that some cultural beliefs and practices are morally wrong, such that some cultures can be said to be morally superior to others. I would in fact argue that Canadian culture one hundred years ago was inferior to its current state as it was far more racist, sexist and homophobic than it is now. It is, however, hateful to say people belonging to another cultural group are themselves inferior, and not just morally flawed for their participation in such beliefs and

practices, to the extent that they do participate. Regardless, what is important for the purposes of this paper, is not which groups or beliefs are hateful, but whether we ought to censor those that are. To this question I answer in the affirmative.

Here I will argue Mill's basis for rejecting censorship does not hold in regards to the expressions of hateful beliefs, as defined above. First of all, we do not assume complete certainty when we censor a view. We might ban the expression of a view, for instance, because we think the potential harm the belief could cause if false outweighs any potential benefit it might bring if true meaning censorship is worth the risk.

Hateful beliefs have no logical value whatsoever so society does not lose logical content through censorship. I agree with Mill in that the more plausible a view is, the more it is valuable and the less justification there is for censoring it. This does not mean, however, we should not censor any positions. Mill's argument supposes that there is some logical strength in all arguments which we lose access to when we censor. Furthermore, he argues censoring a position also robs us of the corresponding logic in the counter argument to said position. Mill does not consider, however, the possibility that some positions have no logical strength. Consider the propositions "cupcakes are the essential substance of the universe", "ingesting excrement is the key to a long life", and "bombing cities is the solution to crime". All of these propositions are absurd, and have no supporting evidence. Nonetheless, they are not inherently logically contradictory, and so we cannot be certain they are false. Should we then conclude that these absurd propositions have some logical basis, refutation of which is essential for understanding the truth, and that they are therefore important for intellectual debate? Of course not. Engaging in good faith with someone who truly believes one of these propositions would be a waste of time. The same is true of hateful beliefs. The lack of scientific evidence to support ideas of the biological inferiority of some groups of people is overwhelming, as is the plentiful evidence that people from all cultures are capable of great intellectual, artistic, and humanitarian achievement, among many potential achievements. Hateful beliefs do not have any logical basis to grant such beliefs value. Just as we cannot be absolutely certain that

the aforementioned absurd propositions are false, we cannot be absolutely certain that hateful beliefs are wrong because they are not necessarily self contradictory. Despite this, we have virtual certainty in both cases, which is sufficient.

Next, I will argue teaching the arguments and failings of hateful beliefs is sufficient for understanding why a hateful belief is wrong, and that a problem is not presented if an advocate of a hateful belief evades censorship. I believe the arguments and history of hateful beliefs should be taught, along with their refutations. From what has already been said, it follows that debate with someone who genuinely holds a hateful belief is not necessary, since they have nothing truly worthwhile to say. Similarly, we can see how a problem is not presented if the advocate of a hateful belief gets passed censorship. If such a person's only real weapon is rhetoric, it will only require rhetoric to defeat.

I will now argue that hate speech should be censored for utilitarian reasons and in accordance with the harm principle. Firstly, hate speech causes significant harm to those it is hateful towards. Our society is plagued by systemic racism, sexism, homophobia, and other problematic phenomena, a thorough account of which is beyond the scope of this paper. As only two examples of the many social inequities, women, racially marginalized groups, LGBTQ+ people, and so on, suffer the consequences of an unfair pay gap in comparison to people who are straight, cis, white or male, and are also presented in media less often, and less favourably. Given the pervasiveness of these forms of discrimination and injustice, claims that members of these groups are inferior can cause psychological harm and undermine the dignity and self respect of these individuals. Secondly, if hateful groups gain the power they so often seek, hateful beliefs encourage and lead directly to violence against its targets, in terms of both violence done by individuals and small groups, and State violence. The rise of fascism in Europe leading to the second World War has shown us how hateful beliefs are capable of establishing power and committing horrific harm. Moreover, the efficacy of deNazification policies in Germany following World War II, which included thorough censorship, show the usefulness of such censorship in preventing further harm.

In this essay, I have argued for the censorship of hate speech, defined as the expression of beliefs which, 1. posits a group of human beings as inferior, dangerous, and less valuable, and 2. legitimizes violence against them. I have summarized the arguments of John Stuart Mill against any form of censorship, beginning with his basis in utilitarianism and what he calls the harm principle, followed by his use of these concepts to oppose all censorship. I then argued that Mill's arguments do not apply in the case of hateful beliefs and their expression. Ultimately, hate speech does significant harm and so should be censored on utilitarian grounds, in accordance with the harm principle.

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Commensurability of Science During Paradigm Shifts And Standards Of Progress

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In this essay, I will talk about the development of scientific theories in the philosophy of science. I will explain the way in which science is thought to be created by Thomas Kuhn in "The Structure of Scientific Revolutions". As a result of the Kuhn's description of science as a framework consisting of paradigms, Kuhn contends that scientific advancement is noncumulative. For Kuhn, an old paradigm must be supplanted irrationally in entire by a new and incommensurable alternative paradigm through the process of a scientific revolution (Kuhn, 12). However, I will argue that Kuhn's position on this matter is entirely not correct. Instead, I argue that, within the paradigmatic structure of science that Kuhn advances, progress within the paradigms of science can be shown to be cumulative and rational. Examples of this can be found in the various ways in which scientists continually reference and operate with the work of the old paradigm despite their adherence to the new. After my argument, a reaction from Kuhn is imagined on the alleged correspondence between paradigms. I show that Kuhn would find that although paradigms may communicate among one another the standards by which they communicate and ultimately compare among one another is inherently irrational and cannot be justified. At last, I attempt to explain away Kuhn's imagined reaction by arguing that rational discussion and judgement among paradigms is possible using experience in our epistemological pursuits.

Description of Normal Science

In his paper, Kuhn illustrates that in its normal functions' science is considered to be a 'puzzle-solving' enterprise (Kuhn, 35). Science, in this 'normal' status, is distinguished by its adherence to concrete foundational principles and intentionally operates with distinct and delineated disciplines. Under these conditions, science also follows a specific methodology for research by way of

streamlining a strategy for directing analyses and a streamlining a way for accepting beliefs. In 'normal' science, researchers are intentionally not educated to scrutinize these foundational principles and methodologies by which science has been accepted to abide by. Instead, issues that are discovered while within this 'normal' science that conflict with the foundational principles of the scientific community is hidden or masked, usually not included, or addressed when scientists attempt to tackle riddles, until they begin to pile up enough to become apparent in the eyes of the scientific community. As a result, the foundational principles that constitute a paradigm are occasionally *forcibly* tested.

In 'normal' science the shared foundational values across all disciplines create a community of researchers which is oriented towards the identical goal of progress. As such, they are left to face dilemmas in identical ways and develop solutions to dilemma in a similar fashion to one another. Dilemmas may be things such as deciding between important issues that should be settled (which riddles merit unraveling). It because of this routine exercise that 'normal' science mimics a 'puzzle-solving' approach to dilemmas. Notably, it is *only* during this standard period of 'puzzle-solving' that researchers and science can be said to be acting in a rational and progressively manner. "Puzzle-solving" remains progressive until researchers are left with a stack of riddles that they cannot illuminate, a situation which is described as a 'scientific crisis' (Kuhn, 66). Only in situations of 'scientific crisis' are researchers willing to consider a complete amendment of the foundational principles, although not completely rationally according to Kuhn, that were previously indispensable to their 'puzzle-solving' contemplations as a way to return back to them.

Scientific Revolutions, and Paradigm Incommensurability

Kuhn contends that in the aftermath of the of 'scientific crisis', when paradigms are switched, sometimes alluded to as a scientific revolution, the foundational principles are always changed in such an extreme way that the riddles, or hypotheses, that the previous paradigm had are no longer in any correspondence with the new (or any other paradigm for that matter). In other words, an

objective view of progress between paradigm shifts becomes impossible. Consequently, for Kuhn and his followers, it becomes be irrational to believe that science could be cumulative when there is no sensible communication or translation possible between the paradigms and their suitors (Kuhn, 201). Since we could never properly understand a paradigm in relationship to all other paradigms, we could also never figure out what the best paradigm is, or even a preferential one, for making progress. As a result, Kuhn describes the transition between paradigms as an 'all-or-nothing' wonder in which science, after it is upset, must start once more and lose the greater part of its earlier achievement. A described instance of this happening in the "Fear of Knowledge" by Paul Boghossian is the substitution of Newtonian mechanics by the Einsteinian relativity hypothesis (Boghossian, 124).

Kuhn contends that the incommensurability of paradigms results as a cause of two different reasons that occur when paradigms shift. The first issue of commensurability of paradigms is that paradigms are not compatible in regard to the rundown of issues that should be explained. This point sensibly follows since all paradigms must shift because the list of issues that must be resolved have gotten too great for the current foundational structure to determine. In this manner, a move will be guaranteed, and in a move, there will consistently be fortunes and misfortunes regarding which issues are supposed to be unsolved in the return to ordinary science (Boghossian, 124).

The second issue of commensurability is that paradigms are not translatable among one another. In their use of terms, definitions of words, language, or vocabulary they employ, paradigms are essentially diametric and opposed to one another. Kuhn argues that the new paradigm will communicate using an alternative language from its suitor paradigms due to their differing values and thusly this difference will result in ideas that cannot be properly understood . When some understanding is possible, correspondence is to a limited or qualified degree in which paradigms are permanently locked talking past one another. Suitor paradigms will not be seen through a rational lens since there is no way in which to have the option to

address debate on their principal values without first being in that paradigm itself. Since no sensible connection could be made for either of the competing theories which could contain language that is impartially expressible or translatable it would make their debates unsound to each other forever. For instance, Newtonian gravity communicates an alternate definition of 'mass' or 'space' than the Einsteinian theory of general relativity. In this way, by using the definitions of one paradigm, according to Kuhn, it would not be conceivable for a researcher who studied under the Einsteinian paradigm, or vice versa, a student which studied under the Newtonian paradigm, to completely and impartially understand each other, or argue amongst each other, or make the discoveries that are mutually compatible since they employ them in a different world all together.

The failure of translation can happen at a global level or a local level although ultimately the results from either result in consequences that are equivalently grave. In a global failure of translation, the thoughts between paradigms could be diverse to such an extent that no interpretation of ideas is conceivable at all (Kuhn, 201). In other words, no part of the language in a paradigm would translate and we would not be able to tell any difference between two suitor paradigms at all. In a local failure, only certain words or expressions are lost in interpretation. In the case of our earlier example of mass in competing paradigms, "for Newton energy is conversed while Einsteinian is convertible with energy" (Bird, 2018).

This difference in definition may alone seem markedly insignificantly but under analysis can reveal itself to lead to the same degree of incommensurability as a global failure. For example, even under conditions of local failure Kuhn realized that "these sorts of conceptual differences indicated breaks between different modes of thought, and he suspected that such breaks must be significant both for the nature of knowledge, and for the sense in which the development of knowledge can be said to make progress". Thusly, researchers, by simply describing their world in certain ways, such as in their primary values, change the way in which researchers themselves experience reality (simply looking through the lens of a paradigm such as which problems to solve). A completely different experience of reality leads terms such as 'mass' in suitor paradigms, such as Einsteinian and

Newtonian, to espouse entire difference in conceptual schemes
regarding reality and not just definitions of words. Two researchers in
the differencing paradigms would not be able to locate the same
problems because they would be looking at an entirely different world
and be attempting to solve entirely different dilemma in wholly
incompatible frameworks. Thus, both issues of incommensurability,
Kuhn contends, lead to loss in cumulation of thoughts across
paradigms and forestall the target of advancement in science.

Resolving Incommensurability between Paradigms

To address the issue of cumulation in science across
paradigms, we must first solve the dilemma of incommensurability
between paradigms. The issues of incommensurability, the issue Kuhn
describes of different concerns of problems, and their varied
translations, can be addressed and explained away by showing that
understanding does occur between the theories of paradigms even
though they may not translate into an impartial language (Kuhn, 201).
If this were to happen communication could on a global and local
level when paradigms shift. Such a situation can be argued for with
the use of a realist approach in our epistemology.

In the scope of this paper, a realist approach can be said to be
one the acknowledges that the difference in terms between paradigms
can be reconciled since they fundamentally refer to external
phenomena which can indeed be said to be always objective despite
our perception of them (Kuhn, 111-113). As a result of applying this
approach here, the lenses through which philosophers always
experience their warped reality can be taken off to show that our
scientific theories and methodology for justification is always
grounded in an unremovable sense of reality. Kuhn had argued
otherwise against a realist approach and tried to show that
methodology ran so deep that it affected the total world around
philosophers. However, to maintain this position of this is to suggest
that a case of relativism and one which is simply only based on a
different interpretation of the semiotics within paradigms. Such a case
of relativism is not , which is not compatible with the fundamental
goals of science itself.

Boghossian argues against this relativist approach by showing that such a linguistic difference only illuminates the difference in representation and the thing represented, not a diversity of entire realities (Boghossian, 123). By taking this realist approach, we also make it possible to say that the underlying ideas in these paradigms are always somehow consistent and connected and should fundamentally be reconcile or related (to some degree). A stage for their commensurability could eventually be found since competing paradigms fundamentally describe aspects of the same world (perhaps only in different ways).

An example of rational commensurability between paradigms is demonstrated when we witness scientists working within multiple paradigms. This instance is particularly relevant in the development of a new paradigm. For example, Einstein, in creating his ideas on general relativity continually referred to the work of Newton even though it was an older paradigm from the one he was imagining. In fact, his ideas implicitly depend on some of the central ideas Newton constructed earlier in his work; especially since Newton's ideas had not been disproved by Einstein's ideas. Taking this into consideration, it is easy to see that Einstein could understand the meaning of the vocabulary and terms in their respective paradigms. And perhaps the various other paradigms of gravity that came before since they too ultimately reflected on the ideas of the same world. Hence, for Einstein, and many other scientists, when paradigms shift, an identical translation is not necessary to have a conversation and analysis between these competing paradigms in order to decide which is superior. Simply an understanding of the ideas in each of their respective paradigms is necessary. Thus, despite what Kuhn suggests, it seems that ideas between paradigms may communicate even though they do not fully translate.

Just like Einstein did when working on his theories, scientists today continue to work beyond the boundary of a single paradigms. In their calculations, scientists switch between paradigms by using Newtonian calculations for most of their work while only reserving Einsteinian calculations for close approximations (such as at travel at the speed of light). Resultantly, neither theory shown to be incorrect or disagrees with one another. Rather, they are over all compatible and

merge to enrich the understanding of the researcher. The
understanding achieved for the researcher is possible without the
paradigms ever sharing their vocabulary and terms. In this way, by
showing that the old paradigm was not just discarded and still useful
for researchers today, we may say that science continues to cumulate
and be progressive since the ideas between the old and new theories
continue to be understood by scientists, used, and cherished.

Another positive consequence of the realist approach is the
resolution of the first problem of commensurability. Under a realist
approach, researchers can accurately measure the weight of problems
in a paradigm. Since we can communicate between paradigms by
understanding them on their own terms their problems can be judged
on which issues are important to explain and resolve. Philosophers of
science, such as Larry Laudan, shows this in Curd Martin's book
"Philosophy of Science: the Central Issues". Laudan argues the
meaning of *importance* has a subjective variation as well as an
objective one (Curd, 238). The former is far less relevant than the
latter for our purposes; the former is an issue of politics that is not
relevant to our investigation into science.

When using the objective approach of importance, one that is
applied in an epistemic setting, we may argue that a problem or theory
has a greater weight due to its *probative importance*. This importance
is produced by looking at the consequences that may follow by
resolving the problems important to us in competing paradigms and
analyzing the benefits and consequences of their suggested resolutions
(Curd, 238).

Laudan's ideas show us that that the consequences of
discarding some problems and retaining others are not actually a
subjective matter but is an objective dilemma since they can be
properly justified by empirical and rational factors – not due to
political values regarding which problems are more important or
satisfying to solve for the scientific community right now (perhaps for
the sake of securing funding or perhaps during the case of a pandemic
to apply radical approaches). The most compelling objective solutions
ought to be those which solve the greatest breadth of dilemmas and
accrue 'puzzle-solving' 'normal' science for the longest time. The

solutions are not those which only solve dilemmas that are currently fashionable in the scientific community. By consequence, a paradigm can objectively be said to have failed to be preferential for acceptance and be a less compelling paradigm than a competing one which when it does not solve enough compelling problems (or satisfyingly enough) as other competing ones. By taking this probative variation of importance, we can say that scientific revolutions continue to be progressive by way that the dilemma they are attempting to solve either inevitably become reduced or become simplified. These epistemic values remain consistent between paradigms, and are indicators of good science, allowing tenets of science to be cumulative despite their alleged irrationality.

Justification Between Paradigms

A possible response from Kuhn or someone who holds such a position may be imagined here. For 'Kuhnians', only debates which rely on 'constitutive shared values', or within a single paradigm, remain rational (Curd, 227). Even when these values can be shown to be consistent across competing paradigms, and paradigms are made commensurable through understanding still someone with a 'Kuhnaian' position would argue it is not possible that there is some way to justify an objective standard of progress itself and not one that could be for certain described impartially since a person is inevitably tied to bias by the paradigm of which the researcher is in. An objective analysis of probative importance would continue to be an overall biased approach because the researcher would be confused by their competing ideas of what progress is across paradigms. What may appear to be progressive to one paradigm does not satisfy the standard of what progress is another paradigm leading to inherent conflict since the standards by which the standards are established are themselves derived from the paradigm to which one believes in (Kuhn, 42-43).

This is the case since the idea of objectivity in itself is derived from shared values, and these values are by themselves an act of political expression – even if it were for objective pursuits such as in science (Kuhn, 42). Shared values only arise by virtue of being shared and not since they are actually justified signifiers of truth. Values that judge paradigms are said to be context-independent in science are

those of truth, scope, and straightforwardness (Curd, 229) are actually
not so independent of context but rather motivated by social rules.
These values find themselves produced as legitimate indicators of
truth as a result of social petitioning and not because they can be
justified to do so. Scientists only believe these rules for justification
since they are convenient but not actually truthful. By consequence,
'Kuhnians' would find that even still there is no way to have a rational
debate across paradigms since the standard of values that govern the
governance over a selection of paradigms themselves are politically
derived and dependent on the paradigm one is in (Kuhn, 43-44).
Political values cannot have any efficacy in assessing truth (and
probative truth) in deciding between paradigms when we are
concerned with progress. Thus, science continues to shift irrationally
across paradigms since standards for governing the standards between
paradigms are themselves paradigm dependent.

Justifying Values by Experience

McMullin ideas allow us to assert that the examination which
Kuhnians offers of shared qualities is inadequate to clarify the
explanations behind the improvement of science (Curd, 232).
Kuhnians depicts that it is absolutely impossible to show the
association between our qualities, for example of straightforwardness,
and their yield in truth since the standards that govern this evaluation
are by themselves evaluative (Curd, 232). An approach to defeat the
deterrent is to speak to the virtues of experience in our epistemology
(Curd, 232).

Experience based justification can satisfy our commitment to
shared epistemic values in an objective manner. Epistemic values such
as straightforwardness are said to succeed without any politics from
scientists when deciding between competing paradigms   . This may
be provided with the addition of experience, since it can be
demonstrated to be a signifier of truth in science without any social
motivations.

Scientists cannot prove that by themselves that these shared
values are indicators of predictive accuracy, yet we can say that they
are subordinate to the primate goals of predictive accuracy and

explanatory power by the empirical discovery that these theories are consistently more reliable explainers. Occam's razor is an example of this. Hence, although there is no clear demonstration of simplicity as a virtue of truth, we do admit that time and time again through experience that a greater simplicity leads us to a greater sense of truth. As these indicators have remained successful indicators in the past, McMullin argues, they will "likely remain good predictors in the future" which merits their legitimacy (Curd, 232) when deciding between competing paradigms. In this way, experience allows us to maintain that scientific theories continue to progress across paradigm shifts and our standards for deciding the idea of progress continues to be relevant.

Conclusion

In summation, I have discussed the way scientific theories persist, progress, and evolve. Initially, I clarified the way science is described to be historically created by Kuhn. By aftereffect of this portrayal, Kuhn argued paradigm progression as a noncumulative [something] in which an old paradigm is displaced in whole by an incommensurable new one. This is due to issues of weighting problems and translating language. But I have argued that this view to be incorrect. Translation is not necessary for understanding the languages of competing paradigms, and an objective analysis of importance in problems is possible without being warped by committing to a paradigm. With commensurability shown to be possible in science, I contended that cumulative progress of science is the certainly possible. This is demonstrated to be the situation by the different manners in which researchers constantly reference and work in crafted by the old paradigm regardless of their transformation to the new. A response from Kuhn, or those in his position, is imagined here accepting their correspondence however challenging the idea that progress can itself be shown to be an impartial criterion of judgement without commitment to a single paradigm. I battled my imagined response from Kuhn's by attempting to show that debate between epistemic convictions can be shown to be entirely rational by making use of experience to our epistemological pursuits.
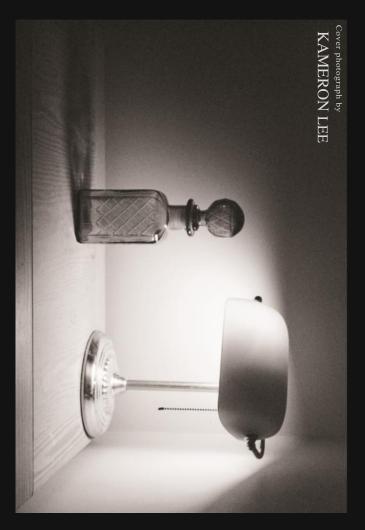
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