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EPISTEME

An International Journal of Undergraduate Philosophy

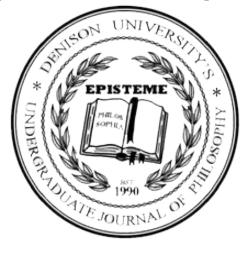Volume XXXII   May 2021

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EPISTEME

Volume XXXII • May 2021

Episteme is published under the auspices
of the Denison University Department
of Philosophy in Granville, Ohio.

An Agambenian Critique Of The Australian Immigration Detention Camps

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Despite all of its pretensions to the contrary, the famously cruel immigration policies pursued by the Australian government over the last decades have begun to mar its image as a human-rights-respecting liberal democracy, though, I would contend, not nearly enough, given that other countries (among them the UK) have started looking to it as an example. Despite the overall lack of scholarship critically engaging with the Australian detention camps, in part perhaps owing to the lack of available information thanks to the government's politics of secrecy, there has recently been a new rise in academic interest, due largely to the 2018 publication of a refugee's memoir detailing the horrors of immigration detention. Smuggled out in form of text messages on an illicit mobile phone, Behrouz Boochani's work (itself heavily influenced by European philosophy like that of Giorgio Agamben) is both the chronicle of a silenced narrative and an invitation to intellectual engagement with the *topos* of the camp and its historico-political role in Australia. In this essay, I will first give a brief overview of immigration detention in Australia and Agamben's biopolitical philosophy respectively in order to then analyse and critique the Australian camps on the basis of Agamben's theories, utilising mainly his concepts of the state of exception and the accompanying *homo sacer*. I will then consider Boochani's insights and his apparent hesitancy toward adopting the Agambenian notion of 'exception', outlining a possible critique of the term. Finally, I will argue that Agamben's conceptualisation can accommodate Boochani's concerns and that their respective theoretical narratives merge nicely to allow a more nuanced critique of the Australian policies and their effects.

A Historical Overview of Immigration Detention in Australia
Mandatory immigration detention was first introduced by the Keating government (with bi-partisan support) in 1992[1], but the project was taken to its extremes by the Howard

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1   Phillips & Spinks, 2013, p. 1.

government following the 2001 *Tampa* affair, in which a Norwegian freighter carrying 433 rescued refugees was denied entry to Australian waters, an event that triggered a harsh new immigration policy known as the Pacific solution.[2] A number of offshore territories were excised from Australia to render them moot as potential migration zones, and 'unauthorised boat people' arriving at these places were removed to offshore processing centres in Nauru and Papua New Guinea (the latter of which is signatory to the *Refugee Convention* with significant reservations and the former not at all.) They were then detained in these camps indefinitely without any of the legal protections theoretically available to asylum seekers processed on Australian territory, as well as a marked lack of independent scrutiny

Several cases challenging the intolerable conditions of detention were brought before the High Court in 2004, to no avail. Despite a brief bid for a more compassionate policy in 2007, off-shore processing was soon resumed on both Nauru and Manus Island and brought to new heights with the 2013 Abbott government's hard-line 'stop the boats' campaigning and 'zero tolerance' policy toward 'illegal maritime arrivals', with the declaration that no asylum would be granted to those arriving by boat no matter how legitimate the claim and launch of the military 'Operation Sovereign Borders'.[3] The 2015 change of government again saw little improvement, even following the 2016 document leak of the so-called 'Nauru files' detailing "the assaults, sexual abuse, self-harm attempts, child abuse and living conditions endured by asylum seekers",[4] which, thanks to the complete blocking of media access to the island and the criminalisation of whistleblowing under the Border Force Act 2015 (which led to the dismissals of several medical professionals who dared reveal the deliberate neglect of asylum seekers, at risk of a prison sentence) had previously gone largely unpublicised. Although the Morrison government in 2018 promised to ensure the removal of all children from Nauru by the end of the year following a number of reports of suicidal behaviour and resignation syndrome,[5] the 2019 Medevac bill (which would have allowed sick refugees to be transported to the mainland for medical treatment), initially passed against

2   Phillips & Spinks, 2013, p. 9.

3   Martin & Tazreiter, 2017, pp. 102-104.

4   Farrell, Evershed & Davidson, 2016.

5   Pearson, 2018.

the government's will,[6] was repealed soon after.[7] Though the Manus Island Processing Centre has now been closed, the last detainees who didn't die from suicide or neglect[8] currently being held in a Brisbane hotel during the pandemic,[9] Nauru remains operational.

Agamben's Biopolitics and Philosophy of The Camp

Giorgio Agamben, an influential Italian philosopher, offers some of the more controversial critiques of modern politics (a matter that hasn't changed with the advent of the Covid-19 pandemic).[10] The utility of his work for analysing the discourses of immigration and the concept of the refugee, both in general and in the specifically Australian context, has not gone unnoticed, with theorists repeatedly drawing on his ideas. In line with a range of thinkers, among them Derrida and Arendt (who both influenced him greatly), he asserts that there is a paradox at the heart of sovereignty by which the sovereign is simultaneously "outside and inside the juridical order as the entity that instituted the law and is thus capable of suspending its validity. As Agamben formulates it: "the law is outside itself."[11] In his philosophical complex, this dichotomy is intimately intertwined both with the notion of the 'state of exception' (in the sense of something *taken outside (ex-capere)*, rather than simply excluded)[12] that emerges from this limbo of juridical self-suspension, and the 'bare life' that inhabits this liminal space.

Let us consider this notion of 'bare life' first: taking his lead from the Greeks, Agamben draws a distinction between 'natural' life (*zoe*) and 'good' or 'qualified' life (*bios*), where *zoe* is located outside the sphere of the political and *bios* within it. Given this differentiation, he opines that in modernity's attempt to (bio-)politicise 'natural life' by presenting itself as a "vindication and liberation of *zoe*"[13] that values life above all else with the declaration of human rights, the spheres of

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6   Murphy & Karp, 2019.

7   Martin, 2019.

8   Doherty, Evershed & Ball, 2018.

9   Lynch, L. & Dennien, M., 2020.

10   Caldwell, 2020.

11   Ibid.

12   Ibid., p. 18.

13   Agamben, 1995/1998, p. 9.

the natural and the political, "outside and inside, *bios* and *zoe*, right and fact, enter into a zone of irreducible indistinction."[14] This zone, which constitutes a 'state of exception', is the space from which the marginalised figure of *homo sacer* or 'bare life' emerges, the "originary political element"[15] that presents the basis of sovereign power.[16] Agamben takes this concept of *homo sacer* (sacred man) from an "obscure figure of archaic Roman law"[17] representing he "who *may be killed yet not sacrificed*"[18] – occupying the sovereign sphere, i.e., the indistinct space of exception that is at once outside and inside the law, *homo sacer* is simultaneously subject to the law but not protected by it.

It is in this context of bare life that the central notion of the 'state of exception' – which Agamben associates also with the government increasing its powers in supposed times of crisis – takes on its full significance, a point he illustrates vividly with a discussion of the 'camp as the nomos of the modern' where he links modernity's biopolitical tendencies with the historical rise of the concentration camp. "*The camp is the space that is opened when the state of exception begins to become the rule*", the temporary suspension of law localised in a "permanent spatial arrangement."[19] The inhabitants of the camp are "wholly reduced to bare life",[20] homines sacri *par excellence*, residing in a space that, characterised by the (self-)suspension of the law, allows for the realisation of "the most absolute *conditio inhumana* that has ever existed on earth."[21] An important point to note here, however, is that this space of exception is not

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14   Ibid.

15   Ibid., p. 181.

16   It should be noted here that the distinction between zoe and bare life in the sense of sacred life, *homo sacer*, is not entirely clear, thanks to a certain inconsistency in Agamben's discussion of the topic – sometimes he equates zoe with bare life, but in other places he distinguishes between "simple natural life" and "life exposed to death (bare life or sacred life)" (Ibid., p. 88) –, which has led to some confusion in critical readings of his texts. Despite the ambiguities, it becomes fairly clear however that homo sacer is distinct from zoe, or rather, living in the indistinction between zoe and bios; he is natural life exposed to the (bio)power of the sovereign.

17   Ibid., p. 8.

18   Ibid.

19   Ibid., pp. 168-169.

20   Ibid., p. 171.

21   Ibid., p. 166.

simply *outside* the normal order, but by being initiated at all has been taken *into* the order: "Insofar as the state of exception is 'willed,' it inaugurates a new juridico-political paradigm in which the norm becomes indistinguishable from the exception."[22] It is this spatial configuration of indistinction that Agamben (ominously) calls the "hidden matrix of the politics in which we are still living."[23] In the modern move from politics to biopolitics, where life becomes more and more central to the State, "all citizens can be said, in a specific but extremely real sense, to appear virtually as homines sacri."[24] Thus, as I will go on to show, Agamben argues that the camps with their 'exceptional' status (despite the ordinary associations with that term as something anomalous and separate) are becoming characteristic of our contemporary political condition.

Agamben in the Australian Context

The loquacious, mythologising sweep of Agamben's analysis can make it difficult to see the immediacy of application, despite the number of practical examples he provides in the course of his historico-political investigations, but the relevance of his concepts to the discussion of both refugees in general and specifically Australian immigration politics is evident. The refugee becomes paradigmatic of bare life, stripped as he is of the rights of the citizen, breaking the link between "nativity and nationality"[25] and thus no longer represented by the sovereignty of a nation-state. According to Agamben, the refugee is "the central figure of our political history", his rights no longer those of the citizen, thus making him "truly *sacred*, in the sense that this term used to have in the Roman law of the archaic period: doomed to death."[26] Archetypal *homines sacri*, these are bereft figures who, following Arendt, "should have embodied rights of man par excellence [and] signal[…] instead the concept's radical crisis."[27] Despite having ostensibly the greatest claim on *human* rights, these are only bestowed upon the modern citizen, thus illuminating the centrality of citizenship, 'qualified life' – it is the human qua citizen, not the human qua human, to whom 'human rights'

22   Ibid., p. 170.
23   Ibid., p. 175.
24   Ibid., p. 111.
25   Ibid., p. 131.
26   Agamben, 1993/2000, p. 93.
27   Agamben, 1995/1998, p. 126.

apply.[28]

Turning now to the specifically Australian context, the analysis can begin with the state of exception – consider the process of excision, where the government deterritorialized swathes of Australian waters and islands in order to remove them from the 'migration zone'. What was this, if not the literal creation of a space of exception in which the laws governing asylum and the rights of those seeking it are suspended? The *Minasa Bone*, landing on Melville Island on the 4th of November, 2003, had arrived on a territory that was *in* Australia – but not *of*. Towed back into international waters, the boat was pointed toward Indonesia, where the refuge-seeking Kurds onboard could expect to be returned to Turkey, their escaped point of origin. With this "marvelous [sic], brutal, incontrovertible logic of excision"[29] – yes, they claimed asylum, but *couldn't*, since they never entered Australia in the first place – the Pacific Solution with its acts of deterritorialization and offshore detention arrangements becomes paradigmatic of the state of exception, creating spaces that are both inside and outside the law and often consolidating these absurd legislative manoeuvres by establishing a camp, a permanent exceptional order localised (both geographically and otherwise) on the margins of the state. In the "dislocating localization"[30] '*Not-Australia*', the category of 'national' ceases to operate and life within this space is stripped bare, 'human' rights failing to find purchase without the necessary 'citizen'-property to substantiate the claim. In removing the law from a certain space, the Australian state reveals precisely the paradox Agamben finds within sovereignty, legislating selectively for its own removal and thus extending beyond its own purported boundaries.

Thus, the birth of the Australian detention camp can be traced along the lines of Agamben's biopolitical narrative, which he exemplifies with the establishment of the Nazi concentration camp. Seeds sown in an apparent crisis (in Agamben's example, the 1933 Reichstagsbrand in Germany; in mine, the unchecked arrival of 'illegal boat people' in Australia) go on to trigger a (willed) state of exception (Agamben cites

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28   In Australia, these dynamics can also be illustrated by an example that predates the refugee, namely the Indigenous peoples – they, also, were not considered citizens and not human as such, in a detrimental double-bind where it isn't clear which qualifier was lacking first.

29   Perera, 2007, pp. 201-203.

30   Agamben, 1995/1998, p. 175.

the 'Decree for the protection of the people and State' based on *Schutzhaft* in Germany; I would indicate the Pacific Solution and its excision of offshore territories, in combination with increased powers for immigration officials in Australia) that then solidifies into a permanent arrangement (concentration camps in Germany, offshore detention facilities in Australia). Although some might balk at comparing the *Vernichtungslager* of the Third Reich to the Australian centres, human suffering can hardly be quantified, and the image of a child sewing its own lips or becoming catatonic from resignation syndrome holds no less horror than anything we might come across in regards to the Nazi camps.

Boochani's Manus Prison Theory

The work of Behrouz Boochani, Kurdish-Iranian journalist and author who was detained on Manus Island from 2013, provides an intellectually informed insight to the lived experience of asylum seekers in the Australian detention system, and his 'Manus Prison Theory' offers an interesting complement to Agamben's more detached ruminations. As I mentioned, Boochani's personal engagement with European thought is evident, and not just from his translator's remarks to that effect.[31] However, despite the clear influence Agamben had on him, Boochani problematises the use of the term 'exception' as applied to the camps. Nevertheless, as I will argue, I think Agamben's concept doesn't just accommodate this criticism but also captures Boochani's central concerns.

During his six years of incarceration, Boochani wrote a number of articles detailing the human rights abuses he witnessed, sending information to news organisations and human rights advocacy groups via a secret mobile phone. Finally, despairing of the limits of journalistic language, he even typed out a memoir in text messages, which was translated and published in 2018 (a time to which he was still imprisoned) to a number of prizes and accolades. There, Boochani details the horrifying absurdities and bizarre Kafkaesque logic of the camp with its endless queues, random privileging and selective starvation, senseless orders (shrugged off with deference to 'The Boss'), intermittent withholding of supplies, and denial of even the most basic human requests (a man is desperate to call his dying father, but since it isn't his 'turn' he is not permitted to, despite the other prisoner's willingness to let him take their place.) Boochani's descriptions fit well into Agamben's

31   Boochani, 2018, p. 14. (Translator's introduction.)

theoretical frameworks, the prisoners conceived of as bare life within an unforgiving system ruled by the lack of law that is exception. They are dehumanised, at the mercy of guards who have through propaganda or personal experience come to alienate their charges entirely: "[…] a young guy has slit his wrists in the toilets. The guard turns to me and says, 'Sorry – I can't understand you and this petrified young guy. I've been a prison guard for most of my life . . . Sorry.' This is the extent of his compassion."[32] The Kafkaesque elements recall Agamben's analysis of *The Trial*, the laws of the system "in force without significance",[33] the refugees under the heel of a bizarre system lacking all logic. Motifs of Agamben's philosophy specifically come up in several interviews, if not always with explicit reference – his influence is undeniable in the statement "now we are living in the age of camps",[34] as in Boochani's talk of bare bodies and biopolitics, which is all very *Homo Sacer*. Boochani even refers explicitly to Agamben's state of exception in his 2016 article "Australia, exceptional in its brutality", which criticises the July 2013 'transfer arrangement' and the exile of refugees to offshore camps in the light of Agamben's theory: "Our legal status as individuals has been suspended and we become legally un-nameable beings, transformed into animals devoid of dignity."[35]

However, as noted, Boochani maintains a certain distance to Agamben's philosophy and appears to take issue with the term 'exception'. In Manus Prison Theory as developed by Boochani and his collaborators, the relationship between Australia and Manus Island is tropologically imagined as a 'transposable synecdoche', an interchangeable part/whole connection that exerts mutual influence. In a recent symposium by Western Sydney University on 'The politicisation of seeking asylum', his translator Omid Tofighian spoke about the obstacles faced in theorising the relationship between Manus Island and Australia: although "we often talk of Manus prison being (in) a state of exception […] we also argue that Manus is part of Australia's history, part of Australian society and politics, they're both deeply embedded in the narrative and the psyche of Australia, a colonial state."[36] As an

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32   Ibid., p. 173.

33   Agamben, 1995/1998, p. 51.

34   Boochani, 2020.

35   Boochani, 2016.

36   Boochani & Tofighian, 2020.

interchangeable part-whole relationship where either site can act as the regulating whole, it can be considered as "sometimes exceptional, sometimes not, and this as being interchangeable and fluid and everchanging. This helps to understand how Manus Prison can be exceptional and unexceptional at the same time."[37]

I understand this as a reservation with regards to the concept of exception based on the quotidian idea of it being isolated, independent of the normal order that governs the unexceptional, whereas in the construct advanced by Boochani Australia is bound up in its immigration policy and cannot detach itself from the horrors practiced on its margins. Boochani is convinced that this semi-externalised torture damages the fundamental humanitarian principles Australia professes to hold, the immigration policy infecting the supposed liberal democracy and threatening the advent of totalitarian tendencies in all aspects of life: "You cannot treat refugees in this way and treat your people the right way."[38] As an example, he draws a parallel between the system's use of cigarettes as a means of control on Manus – "Sometimes they cut the cigarettes and said that you should do this […] For example, we refused to give case [sic] to them, they cut the cigarettes. We refused to go out to the new camps, they cut the cigarettes"[39] – and the similar methods of resource-cutting employed to subdue environmental activists in Australia. He also cites the silencing of journalists and the bureaucratic hold on university research interests via selective allocation of funds, which he claims has led to the lack of serious scholarship on, for example, the detention system. These control mechanisms aren't restricted to the camps but are replicated in Australia. For Boochani this is one of the most crucial aspects of the discourse: "if we only talk about the refugees and say they are victims under this, we cannot create change. People don't care about the refugees. […] This policy is becoming a model for the UK, and I am sure other countries are looking to it as an example. So, when you torture the refugees, you are not only torturing the refugees. You are damaging many things. And […] now it's a global matter."[40] Thus, his emphasis is less on some isolated state of exception but rather the (moral and practical) implications these camps

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37   Ibid.
38   Ibid.
39   Ibid.
40   Ibid.

have for Australia and the world as a whole.

(Un)exceptional States

Despite the concerns Boochani raises regarding the use of 'exception', I argue that it is possible to read Agamben's concept of it in a manner that encompasses these ideas – in fact, I think these ambiguities of (un)exceptionality and the threat of totalitarianism are precisely what his 'imperfectly nihilistic'[41] biopolitical theorising strives to expose. Recall Agamben's designation of the camp as the 'nomos of the modern', the 'hidden matrix' of our present condition, a provocative thesis that very much anticipates Boochani's conviction that totalitarianism cannot be contained: "Sacredness is a line of flight still present in contemporary politics [...] to the point of ultimately coinciding with the biological life itself of citizens."[42] Despite the chagrin Agamben apparently felt at the appropriation of his *homo sacer* even by American neo-Republicans in their perceived marginalisation,[43] he does suggest that "if today there is no longer any one clear figure of the sacred man, it is perhaps because we are all virtually *homines sacri*."[44] Also, although his messianic notion of a coming 'new politics' (no longer "founded on the *exceptio* of bare life"[45]) currently remains very much undeveloped, his claim that today's "politics knows no value (and, consequently, no nonvalue) other than life, and until the contradictions that this fact implies are dissolved, Nazism and fascism [...] will remain stubbornly with us"[46] can certainly be construed in line with Boochani. Thus, it would seem that the bias toward the state of exception as somehow truly exceptional in the sense that it presents an outlier to the norm is repealed rather than realised in Agamben's work – he repeatedly points out the importance of learning to recognise "the structure of the camp [...] in all its metamorphoses into the *zones d'attentes* of our airports and certain outskirts of our cities,"[47] a sentiment that recalls Boochani's examples of how the structures of the detention

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41   Agamben, 1995/1998, p. 53.

42   Ibid., pp. 114-115.

43   Schuilenburg, 2008.

44   Agamben, 1995/1998, p. 115.

45   Ibid., p. 11.

46   Ibid., p. 10.

47   Ibid., p. 175.

centre's oppressive systems are echoed on the Australian mainland in all sorts of institutions. It appears that Agamben's theoretical frameworks continue to provide an effective basis from which to critique and challenge the political developments that are currently taking place both in Australia and, as other states like the UK increasingly look to it as an example, globally. Whatever a political future that transcends these aporias of bare life and the associated threat of totalitarianism may look like, a penetrating intellectual analysis of the dynamics of the camp and how these exceed the boundaries of the liminal spaces we pretend to relegate them to is crucial to exposing the dangerous trends that can be observed in our contemporary political culture. Although Agamben's biopolitical opus certainly does not present the only perspective from which to approach this topic, it provides an interesting theoretical lens, both in terms of tracing the evolution of the camp and analysing the juridical circumstances that allow for the creation of 'bare life' on its premises and beyond. Several moments of the Australian policy development become much clearer when regarded from this Agambenian perspective, as does the bizarre logic that governs the camp in Boochani's first-hand accounts. And although I do not know what other reservations Boochani may have toward Agamben's philosophy, despite his liberal use of the latter's ideas, the picture Agamben paints of contemporary politics with the camp as its hidden *nomos*, as well as the casting into question of human rights with the rise of the exception and *homo sacer* in all aspects of existence, merges nicely with Boochani's own warnings of dictatorial overflow from a policy that is not hermetically sealed on an island and cannot be practiced selectively. It is only by becoming aware of these trends through a critical examination of the camps and the structures they are manifestations of that we can hope to reverse them, both in Australia and on the global scale.

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The Epistemic Superiority of Berkeley's Ideal Realism

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Abstract

In this essay, I analyze the three most prominent views regarding the philosophy of perception- direct realism, indirect realism, and ideal realism. I consider two relevant problems of perception, specifically the existence of hallucinations and perceptual relativity, and to what extent they are problematic for these views on perception. I first argue that direct realism, the view typically referred to as 'common-sense realism', is in fact far from common-sense. Although direct realists hold the common-sense view that we directly perceive physical objects, they are forced to hold the absurd view that we do not know what physical objects look, smell, taste, sound, or feel like. Further, they can never know if their perceptions are ontologically mind dependent or not. I then argue that although indirect realism is supposed to bypass the epistemic problems of perception bogging the direct realist down, its epistemic issues are at least as severe. Worse, an indirect realist cannot explain how an unperceived physical object could produce sensible qualities, and as such suffers from mind-body epistemic problems. I then argue that ideal realism, the view that physical objects cannot exist unperceived, is the most consistent and least problematic view regarding the philosophy of perception. I conclude that we should accept ideal realism as probably true on the basis of epistemic reasons alone.

Introduction

The primary focus of the philosophy of perception is to understand the ontological nature of what it is that we perceive by sense. There are three main views regarding what the ontological nature of sense experience is, being direct realism, indirect realism, and ideal realism. Direct realism is the view that "perception is an immediate or direct awareness of mind-independent physical objects or events in the external world." The term 'mind-independent physical objects' is synonymous with 'material objects'. The traditional proponent of direct realism was Thomas Reid. Indirect realism is the view

that perception is an immediate or direct awareness of mind-dependent non-physical representations of mind-independent physical objects, and mediate or indirect awareness of mind-independent physical objects or events in the physical world. The term 'mind-dependent non-physical representations of mind-independent physical objects' is synonymous with 'sense data'. The traditional proponents of indirect realism were Rene Descartes, and John Locke. Ideal realism is the view that perception is an immediate or direct awareness of mind-dependent physical objects or events. For an ideal realist, physical objects cannot exist unperceived, and the term 'mind-dependent physical objects' is synonymous with 'sensations'. The most notable ideal realist was Bishop George Berkeley.

      In this essay, I argue that ideal realism is the most consistent view regarding the philosophy of perception. I begin by defining 'perceived by sense', and consequently provide other important definitions. I proceed to argue that direct realism, if true, commits its holders to radical epistemic skepticism. I then argue that indirect realism if true commits its holders to radical epistemic skepticism. Lastly, I argue that ideal realism is more epistemically consistent than direct and indirect realis. I conclude that we should accept ideal realism as probably right.

Definitions

      I understand whatever that is perceived by sense as properly perceived by sense, or proper objects of the senses, following Aristotle and George Berkeley. I define what is properly perceived by sense as irreducibly phenomenal, wholly perceptible qualities that "would have been perceived if that same sense had then been first conferred on us", and things that are properly perceived are perceived by only one sense. Colors/light are thus the only proper objects of vision, sounds of hearing, tastes of the palate, odors of smell, and heat/hardness/solidity of touch. Proper objects of the senses are also immediately perceived by the senses, and by immediately perceived by the senses I mean perceived without being perceived via suggestion, and without being inferred to exist. Something is perceived via suggestion if we perceive it in virtue of it having some habitual connection grounded on experience with something we immediately perceive. For example, upon immediately hearing the word "red", the color red may present itself to our imagination. But, the color red is not perceived immediately by hearing, rather it is mediately apprehended

in virtue of the word we immediately hear, which we've come to associate with the visual color red through experience. Whatever is perceived via suggestion from wholly perceptible qualities which we immediately perceive by sense I define as mediately perceived. What we properly and immediately perceive by the senses can *suggest notions* (like emotions, truth, God, mind, and virtue) which though we've never properly and immediately perceived them, we have an understanding of what they are in virtue of their definitions or use in linguistic convention. Otherwise, what we properly and immediately perceive can *suggest* something we have *previously properly and immediately perceived by the senses* (like a sound or color), to the imagination- which is where all sensible things are represented- due to a frequently experienced connection between sensible qualities and notions, or between sensible qualities and other sensible qualities.

From that which we properly and immediately perceive by the senses, we can infer the *cause* of our sensible qualities through the use of reason. Thus for a direct and indirect realist, they will infer that a material object is the cause of their sensible qualities, while for an ideal realist, they will infer some mind is the cause of their sensible qualities. The sensible qualities previously properly and immediately perceived by sense that are suggested to the imagination by current proper objects of the sense can be termed improper objects of the sense. Those improper objects of the sense are mediately perceived by sense. When we properly perceive or hear the word 'red' by sound, it may suggest to the imagination an improper object of sound which is some visual quality we term as red, though the proper object of sound is strictly what is properly and immediately heard. In like manner, when we see fire, in strictness we properly and immediately perceive only colors, the heat we associate with the fire is suggested to our mind through experience. Thus, the hotness of the fire is an improper object of sight, being only suggested to the imagination through experience, and is a proper object of touch, being felt only properly, and immediately by sense. Things that are perceived wholly by the imagination, being not suggested or inferred to exist, are immediately perceived by the imagination. For example, when I imagine a red balloon existing in front of my face, it is not suggested or inferred to exist, and is thus immediately perceived, not be sense, but by the imagination.

Physical objects must be defined such that it is agreeable to all three views regarding the philosophy of perception.

The term 'physical object' are often conflated with 'material object', and even often are discussed hand-in-hand: "while 'physicalism' is no doubt related to 'physics' it is also related to 'physical object' and this in turn is very closely connected with 'material object', and via that, with 'matter.'" My definition of physical objects involves two important parts. First, physical objects occupy the area of extended space perceived immediately by sense. Second, the existence of physical objects are not ontologically dependent on the existence of other physical objects.

Physical objects occupy the *mediate* area of extended space perceived by sense, and their existence is not ontologically dependent on the existence of other physical objects for indirect realists. Sense data occupy the immediate area of extended space perceived by sense for indirect realists, but their existence is ontologically dependent on the existence of physical objects, and thus sense data are not physical objects. Physical objects occupy the *immediate* area of extended space perceived by sense, and their existence is not ontologically dependent on the existence of other physical objects for direct realists and ideal realists. For an ideal realist, however, the existence of physical objects is ontologically dependent on the existence of minds. It should be noted that objects perceived by the imagination are not perceived by sense, thus though I can imagine a red balloon occupying the visual space in front of me, it is perceived wholly by the imagination. I think it will be agreed upon on all hands that this is a neutrally acceptable definition of 'physical objects'.

Direct Realism

Direct realists believe that mind-independent physical objects or material objects are sometimes perceived by sense. In saying that material objects are sometimes perceived by sense, direct realists are committed to saying that material objects are then perceived properly, and immediately. When direct realists properly and immediately perceive a material object, they say that the material object appears, seems, or looks, sounds, tastes, smells, or feels a certain way to a certain person. For example, when a direct realist perceives an apple, they will say that they see a material object that looks round, and red. This apple, as it is in itself or objectively, can exist unperceived by any mind.

The direct realist however cannot say that they perceive an apple that *is* round and *is* red without being only arbitrary. Without an appeal to reason, there is no non-arbitrary way to

claim that the senses provide us with anything but mutually incompatible accounts of some property of a physical object. The way an object looks is relative to a perceiver and thus any way the object looks has just as good a right to be considered the real way the material object is as any other way the object looks. But this would be absurd, a determinate and unchanging material object cannot be composed of mutually incompatible properties. If any way the material object appears to us is the presentation of the objective material object, we could only be mediately aware of it because we have to reason which immediately perceived appearance can exist independently of a perceiver. But, as direct realists are committed to the claim that they perceive material objects without inference, they cannot claim a material object *is* a certain way only by sense, because it would entail an appeal to reason or an inference, or else would be only arbitrary. Thus, direct realists believe that they perceive material objects by sense which appear a certain way to them, but they do not know how the material object is in itself objectively, when unperceived. And, whatever criterion the direct realist appealed to for ascertaining the true qualities of the physical object could itself be challenged, for whatever reason one person gives seems no better than the criterion another gives. After all, we cannot discern whose unique perceptual apparatus is right for ascertaining the real qualities of an object, which object would appear different to everybody.

The existence of hallucinations seems to present a significant challenge to anyone grappling with the philosophy of perception. In hallucination, what is immediately perceived is not a mind-independent physical object. If you were to take a hallucinogenic drug such as LSD, you could hallucinate a pink elephant existing in your visual field. Now, if I was suddenly bestowed with your precise perceptual faculties and perceptual position, perhaps because our brains/minds were placed in each other's bodies, I would not experience pink elephants existing in my/your visual field, for I had not taken LSD. Thus, when we hallucinate, what we are aware of is not a mind-independent physical object. What we are aware of is something that is mind-dependent, being not perceived by sense, but wholly by the imagination. What we are aware of is then not a physical object because it does not exist in space. Given that we are direct realists, our hallucinations are therefore representations of mind-independent physical objects. Therefore, for direct realists, when hallucinations occur, what we are aware of are mind-dependent non-physical

representations of mind-independent physical objects which are perceived by the imagination.

This is similar to the definition of sense data I gave in paragraph one, but subtly and importantly different. Sense data are immediately perceived by *sense*; however, hallucinations are not perceived by sense, they are perceived wholly by the *imagination*, and are thus immediately perceived by the imagination. Sense data are representations of a physical object existing in some relationship with their correlative sense data. The hallucinations we experience would not stand in such a relationship, the pink elephant I see while hallucinating is not a mental representation of a pink elephant existing roughly in the place I seem to see it. It seems therefore, that assuming direct realism is true, the existence of hallucinations is something like a purely mental image. When we use our imagination to picture a blue rectangle, there is a mental image that is a blue rectangle immediately perceived by the imagination. This is what a direct realist can say happens in cases of hallucination, we perceive mental images just like we do in any direct application of the imagination, except that it is not due to our own volition that the mental images in hallucinations appear to us, like the occurrence of mental images normally is. Rather, the application of our imagination during hallucinations is something similar to the unconscious application of our imagination in our dreams.

Although the existence of hallucinations does not force the direct realist to accept the existence of sense data, like many philosophers have thought in the past, the existence of hallucinations provides a significant epistemological challenge for the direct realist. As Dicker put it, "the Argument from Hallucination… should not be regarded as an attempt to demonstrate that there are sense-data… the argument should be regarded as yet another way of calling attention… to… an epistemological problem concerning perception." The problem becomes evident if we accept direct realism as true, for, anytime we perceive something, I ask, can we ever know if that thing is *not* mind-dependent? If we sometimes perceive things that are mind-dependent mental images, but we cannot distinguish them from anything we perceive in veridical perception without an appeal to inference, then we can never know that we perceive material objects, or something that is not wholly dependent on our mind. Further, if direct realism is true, the streamlined argument from perceptual relativity that I presented shows that whenever we do perceive material objects, we do not know how they are in themselves or objectively, but

rather, some object with we know not what qualities appears a certain way to us. It would seem therefore, that we never know if or when we perceive mind independent objects, due to the existence of hallucinations, and even if we did, we would not know what they were like, due to the existence of perceptual relativity. Thus, although direct realism is not metaphysically inconsistent, its holder is plunged into perhaps the deepest epistemic skepticism imaginable.

Indirect Realism

Indirect realists believe that mind-independent physical objects or material objects are perceived mediately by sense, while only mind-dependent non-physical representations of these physical objects termed sense data are immediately perceived by sense. In saying that physical objects are not perceived immediately by sense, the indirect realist is committed to saying that material objects are justifiably inferred to exist from the sense data they perceive immediately. The supposition of sense data is supposed to help deal with the epistemological challenges presented to the direct realist. And, the supposition of the existence of mind-independent physical objects is supposed to make the existence of the immediate objects of perception (i.e. sense datum) more probable. An indirect realist will often infer the existence of physical objects in the likeness of the sense data they perceive immediately by sense to help explain the existence of the immediate objects of sense perception. When an indirect realist perceives an apple, they will often say that they see a sense datum that is round, and red, and which consequently gives them reason to suppose that there is a physical apple which is round, and red, that we perceive indirectly, insofar as it resembles its correlative sense datum. This apple, as it is in itself, or objectively, can exist unperceived by any mind, however the sense data cannot, as sense data exist necessarily in an object-perceiver relationship.

In saying that the sense datum is round, and red, the indirect realist is not being only arbitrary, for the way that sense data seem to us is the way that they are. The indirect realist accepts the principle that "if X appears F to S, and F is an irreducibly phenomenal, wholly perceptible quality, then S immediately perceives a sense datum that is F." Thus, since the apple appears or looks round and red, and since roundness and redness are properly perceived, and because the only things that are properly perceived are irreducibly phenomenal, wholly perceptible qualities, the sense datum actually is round and red.

However, in saying that the physical object or apple is round, and red, the indirect realist is not being only arbitrary, as the indirect realist is making an inference. The indirect realist is reasoning that the physical object is like the sense datum which they perceive immediately by sense. However, the indirect realist is fallible in their conjecture because they do not know how the physical object is with certainty. They can only make an educated guess as to how the material object is in itself; but since they are not immediately aware of the physical object, they can never know how the object is in itself. Thus, like the direct realist, whatever criteria the indirect realist gives could itself be challenged.

The existence of hallucinations presents a challenge to indirect realists, though it is less so a problem for the indirect realist than to a direct realist. What we are aware of in a hallucination is not a physical object because it does not exist in space. However, what we are aware of in hallucinations can be phenomenally indistinguishable from what we perceive in veridical perception. Thus, for indirect realists, without the application of reason it seems we cannot distinguish between whether we are perceiving a sense datum which represents a physical object by sense, or rather a hallucinatory image, which for an indirect realist I will call a mental image. I call it a mental image instead of a regular sense data because it is perceived wholly by the imagination, and not by sense. There are some who would call the objects perceived in hallucinations sense datum, but the term 'sense datum' implies that there is a physical object which is mediately perceived when a sense datum is perceived. However, during hallucination, like while in a dream, no physical object is perceived at all; *ergo* to call the object of perception in hallucination a sense datum would be erroneous. I therefore conclude that the object of hallucinatory perception is merely a mental image.

The indirect realist has the advantage over the direct realist with regards to the existence of hallucinations because when indirect realists perceive something immediately, they can be sure that they are perceiving something immediately that is mind-dependent. The direct realist cannot know if they are perceiving something that is mind-dependent, or mind-independent immediately by sense, for they know not if they are perceiving either a physical / material object, or a mental image. The indirect realist, conversely, knows that they immediately perceive either a sense datum, or a mental image, both of which are *dependent* on the mind of the

perceiver. Unfortunately for the indirect realist, the existence of hallucinations still provides a difficult epistemic challenge that they must overcome. Whenever an indirect realist perceives, they can never know whether they perceive a physical object indirectly or not. Although the indirect realist knows the object of immediate perception is mind-dependent, and is in this sense in an epistemically privileged position in relation to a direct realist, they know not if there is really an object of mediate perception, i.e. a physical object in its place, wherever that may be.

The indirect realist is, like the direct realist, bogged with at least two severe, epistemic, perceptual problems. In the first place, the indirect realist can never know whether they are perceiving a physical, material object or not due to the existence of hallucinations. Although the indirect realist can be certain that the direct or immediate object of perception will always be mind-dependent, they can never know if they perceive an object that exists independently of sense perception or not. Secondly, even if the indirect realism was true and we could sometimes infer the existence of material objects we perceive mediately, we could never know with certainty what the physical object looked like.

Berkeley also pointed out that an indirect realist does not know how mind-independent (material) objects could produce mind-dependent qualities (sense datum). Neither do we know how material objects could act upon mind, nor do we know how a mind-independent object could imprint a sense datum on our mind, especially if the sense datum is not like the object. Further, we would have the same reason to believe a material object exists whether it did or not, as is evident by the existence of hallucinations or dreams. It seems therefore, that the existence of sensible qualities is not better explained by the existence of mediately perceived material objects, because an indirect realist does not know how a material object could cause sense data. The problems of perception and mind seem to make indirect realism epistemically unattractive.

Ideal Realism

Ideal realists believe that everything that is perceived are ideas, which exist only in the mind. I define ideas as irreducibly phenomenal, wholly perceptible, mind-dependent qualities. Ideas are perfectly known, as they contain nothing in them besides for how they appear to our mind. However, there are two types of ideas, being mind-dependent *physical*

objects termed 'sensations' or 'real things' which are perceived by sense, and mind-dependent *non-physical* representations of mind-dependent physical objects termed 'thoughts' or 'images of things', or 'mental images' which are perceived by the imagination. Sensations or real things are properly and immediately perceived, being imprinted on the senses. Thoughts or images of things are either immediately, or mediately perceived, being perceived mediately by the senses or immediately by the imagination. When thoughts are suggested to the imagination by sensations which are properly and immediately perceived, they are mediately and improperly perceived by sense, and represented by the imagination. When thoughts are not suggested to the imagination, but are perceived wholly by the imagination, they are immediately perceived by the imagination, being not suggested or inferred to exist. Thus, when an ideal realist perceives an apple, they will say that they see a sensation or physical object that is round, and red. This apple, as it is in itself, or objectively, cannot exist unperceived by any mind.

In saying that the apple is round, and red, the ideal realist is not being arbitrary. The way that physical objects appear for ideal realists is the way that they are. The ideal realist accepts the principle that "if X appears F to S, and F is an irreducibly phenomenal, wholly perceptible quality, then S immediately perceives a sensation that is F." Thus, since the apple appears or looks round and red, and since roundness and redness are properly perceived, and because the only things that are properly perceived are irreducibly phenomenal, wholly perceptible qualities, the apple actually is round and red. Ideal realists therefore believe that they perceive sensations by sense which appear a certain way to them, and this is how the physical object is in itself or objectively, because all physical objects are the way that they appear to us. Thus, for an ideal realist, there is no problem of perceptual relativity, for everything that is perceived is an idea that is a certain way, unlike a direct realist who can never tell when they perceive the true qualities of the object, and unlike an indirect realist who can never tell to what extent, or even if their sense data resembles its correspondent object.

The existence of hallucinations presents an epistemic challenge to ideal realists similar to the indirect realist, but it is less significant of a problem for ideal realists than it is for the indirect or the direct realist. What we are aware of in hallucinations is not a physical object because it does not exist

in immediate extended space. However, what we are aware of in hallucinations are phenomenally indistinguishable from what we perceive in veridical perception. Thus, for ideal realists, without the application of fallible reason, it seems we cannot distinguish between whether we are perceiving a physical object or sensation by sense, or rather a hallucinatory thought by the imagination.

Like the indirect realist, the ideal realist can always know that the immediate object of perception is mind-dependent. However, the existence of hallucinations is less of a problem for the ideal realist than for the direct and indirect realists because direct and indirect realists can never be sure if they perceive something that can exist wholly unperceived at all. When a hallucinogenic sensible quality is perceived, something that is exclusively mind-dependent is perceived, as opposed to in veridical perception. But sometimes hallucinations are phenomenally indistinguishable from veridical perception. Thus, direct and indirect realists could never know if they perceive something that can exist wholly unperceived, regardless of it being perceived directly or indirectly. However, for ideal realists, they can always be sure that they perceive nothing that is mind independent, for ideal realists only perceive ideas, and ideas are wholly mind dependent qualities. And, although ideal realists may have difficulty distinguishing sensations from thoughts without the use of reason, they still know that however they are appeared to by ideas is how that idea really is, for the existence of an idea consists wholly in its being perceived.

Conclusion

Although the existence of hallucinations provides an epistemic challenge to ideal realists, it is negligible compared to the epistemic challenge it provides to direct and indirect realists. Further, the epistemic challenge provided by the existence of perceptual relativity makes direct and indirect realism look further unattractive. That is because direct and indirect realists can never know how physical objects really are, even if and when they are perceived. This same point does not apply to ideal realists, who are aware of the way physical objects are when they are perceived. There is thus no problem of perceptual relativity for an ideal realist, for their ideas are perfectly known. Lastly, indirect realists have epistemic concerns regarding the mind body problem that appear impossibly to remedy. I conclude my essay by saying that if we

look at the facts, ideal realism provides the most consistent and least paradoxical view regarding epistemic knowledge and the philosophy of perception, and as such should be considered more likely true.

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Virtuous Civic Friendships: An Alternative Interpretation of Aristotle's Theory of Political Friendship

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In his *Nicomachean Ethics,* Aristotle identifies three categories of friendship: friendships of utility, pleasure, and virtue. He further argues that friendships are a necessary part of the *eudaimon* life for people (1155a) as well as a relevant aspect of a successful and unified polity, for they serve the legislators' goal to "expel civil conflict" and promote justice (1155a25). The question arises as to what type of friendship best characterizes such 'civic friendship.' Many scholars, including Sibyl Schwartzenbach in her paper "On Civic Friendships," take Aristotle to argue that political friendships are friendships of utility (105). However, I will argue that a more appropriate interpretation of Aristotle's work indicates that political friendship is actually a virtue friendship. Since Aristotle clearly considers cultivating virtue to be a significant part of a legislator's role in a *polis*, I will argue that it clearly follows that legislators must not only tend to concord and justice between the citizens, but also, to foster the best sort of friendship between citizens. Lastly, I will consider certain aspects of the United States current political climate to show the danger of deflating civic friendship to a relationship grounded solely on utility.

I. Schwartzenbach's View of Civic Friendship as Utility Friendship

Schwarzenbach, in her paper "On Civic Friendship," argues that modern political thought seems to have abandoned Aristotle's premise that a thriving political society is characterized by friendship between citizens among themselves and between leaders and their populace. She states that "a plethora of views on the problem of political unity… barely mention friendship or else explicitly reject it as

a serious contender." Schwarzenbach hopes to counteract this development by arguing that "political friendship emerges as a necessary condition for genuine justice" and a unified "modern state" (98).

Schwarzenbach begins her argument by offering an interpretation of Aristotle's theory of friendship. She argues that all types of friendship, including "both pleasure and [utility] friendships for Aristotle necessarily retain the aspect of wishing the other well for that other's own sake" (100). She further argues that even friendships where "one loves the other friend under some particular and limited description only," such as advantage or utility friendship, the object of the friends' love is the other person (100). However, if this is the case, she still must offer a description to save Aristotle's distinction between utility, pleasure, and virtue friendships. She accomplishes this by arguing that "what in fact distinguishes virtue friendship from the other two kinds is, rather, that the description under which one loves the other is a description of that other's whole (or near whole) character" (100).

All of Schwarzenbach's analyses are directed at justifying an expansive reading of advantage or utility friendships so that her underlying assumption that civic friendships are of that type becomes more palatable. Her overall goal is to argue that the political unity necessary to reclaim our overly partisan modern state can be achieved through a "political friendship, that is, the traits of mutual awareness, of wishing the other well for their own sake, and of doing things for the civic friend are still retained… [and] evidenced in a *general concern*" (105). However, I argue that her interpretation of Aristotle's theory of the three types of friendship and her categorization of civic friendship is not strongly supported by the text. Instead, her claims that civic friendship is characterized by mutual valuing of other citizens for themselves would be better supported by an interpretation of Aristotle that places civic friendship in the category of virtue friendships.

II. Virtue Friendships

Like Schwarzenbach, I think that political unity is best served by relationships between citizens founded on an appreciation of each other's value as a person and a desire that each citizen receive the good things in life. However, upon my

analysis of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* , I find substantive evidence that somewhat contradicts Schwarzenbach's claim that the quality of 'valuing the friend for themselves' is to be found in all types of friendships. Beginning with his classification of the types of friendships, Aristotle states that the types of love are distinguished by "the three objects of love. For each object of love has a corresponding type of mutual loving" (1156a7). I take this to mean that utility friendships are those in which the object of love is not the person themselves, nor the description under which the person themselves is loved as Schwarzenbach interpreted. Instead, the object of love is that aspect of the person that the friend finds useful, or perhaps even the services the friend provides. Furthermore, in utility friendships the friends do not wish goods on the other for their own sake, rather "those who love each other wish goods to each other [only] insofar as they love each other. Those who love each other for utility love the other not in his own right, but insofar as they gain some good for themselves from him" (1156a10). Aristotle writes further that "those who love for utility or pleasure, then, are fond of a friend because of what is good or pleasant for themselves, not insofar as the beloved is who he is, but insofar as he is useful or pleasant" (1156a15). Thus, we must search for another explanation for how civic friendships contain the qualities of valuing the friend for themselves and their characters, and wish goods for their friend's own sake as both Schwarzenbach and I believe they do.

Now that we can set aside utility and pleasure friendships as contenders for the categorization of civic friendships, I will turn to the remaining type: virtue or character friendships. Aristotle argues that virtue friendships have three main features: they are between equals (1157b37, 1158b), each friend values the other for themselves and their whole character (1157b2), and each friend wants good things for the other, for the other's sake (1155b28). He considers these types of friendships the most complete and friendship-like friendship there is. The other types of friendships are sometimes said to merely "[bear] some resemblance to this complete sort" (1157a). There is one additional qualification of these friendships: "complete friendship is the friendship of good people similar in virtue….Hence these people's friendship lasts as long as they are good; and virtue is enduring" (1156b7).

Virtue friendships are overall the best friendships,

according to Aristotle. Such friends value the other for themselves and their characters. As such, they are willing to do the work necessary to preserve and maintain their friend's virtues (1159b). Altogether, it seems that virtue friendships serve the goals of Schwarzenbach's civic friendships more clearly in the text. However, it remains to be seen whether Aristotle would see it that way. In my next section, I will advance my argument that Aristotle too would have categorized civic friendships as virtue friendships, or at the very least, more like virtue friendships than utility friendships.

III. Virtuous Civic Friendships and Concord

It is clear throughout the sections on friendship in the *Nicomachean Ethics* that Aristotle sees friendship as an integral part of a successful political society. He states that "friendship would seem to hold cities together, and legislators would seem to be more concerned about it than about justice" because good friends won't need justice and regulations from political leaders in order to do right by their fellow citizens (1155a25). Though it is clear Aristotle believes in a sort of civic friendship, he does not state clearly how to classify it according to his three kinds of friendship or whether it forms an independent type of friendship altogether. However, in considering his description of concord, I argue that virtue friendship would best characterize civic friendship.

Aristotle states that "concord would seem to be similar to friendship" (1155a25). Indeed, he goes farther by arguing that "a city is said to be in concord when [its citizens] agree on what is advantageous, make the same decision, and act on their common resolution" (1167a25). Furthermore, "concord, then, is apparently [civic] friendship… for it is concerned with advantage and with what affects life [as a whole]" (1167b, brackets in original). At first glance, this statement would seem to indicate that concord, and the friendship it implies, is a relationship based on mutual utility. I argue that this interpretation is incorrect for in the next breath, Aristotle claims that "concord is found in decent people…. They wish for what is just and advantageous, and also seek it in common" (1167b5) and that "base people, however, cannot be in concord" (1167b10). Therefore, base people, or unvirtuous people, cannot develop civic friendships. From these, it seems quite clear that concord, or civic friendships, must be a sort of virtue friendship. I think perhaps the source of confusion

is inappropriately conflating 'advantage' with 'utility'. In the context of the above passage, the advantage that is discussed is not for some immediate good for an individual such as would be served by utility. Rather, it deals with an advantage that is held in common, shared between the various citizens. Additionally, the advantage mentioned is that which "affects life [as a whole]" (1167b, brackets in original) which more appropriately refers to the advantages of a whole life well lived with virtue.

Additional evidence for my argument that civic friendships are virtue friendships can be found earlier in the text. To clarify the statement that civic friendships are founded on advantage, I'll briefly discuss the type of advantage specific to civic society. In a political community, Aristotle writes that citizens and legislators "aim not at some advantage close at hand, but at advantage for the whole of life" (1160a20). Advantage for the whole life, I would argue could roughly correspond to the good. The good, as we know from the rest of *Nicomachean Ethics,* is achieved through a whole long life (1100a7) of activity in accordance with virtue (1099a15) accompanied by sufficient external goods (1099a30) and friends (1170b17).

Furthermore, cultivating virtues within their citizens seems to be part of the excellence of the legislator. Aristotle wrote "it is finer and more divine to acquire and preserve [the good] for… people and for cities" (1094b10), and "the goal of political science [is] the best good; and most of its attention is devoted to the character of the citizens, to make them good people who do fine actions" (1099b30). Clearly, there is a relationship between legislators' goals to promote concord, chase away enmity between citizens, and develop their virtue. With legislators necessarily preoccupied with habituating good character, it seems right that the friendships that develop between such citizens would recognize the value of their counterparts as tied up with their virtue. I see a strong connection with the legislators' responsibility to tend to the virtues of the citizens and their other roles around producing advantageous conditions for people's whole lives and their goal of producing concord. Each of these goals feed into one another. Thus, it seems quite fitting to categorize the relationships between citizens on a horizontal axis, and between citizens and their legislators on a vertical axis, as

virtue friendships.

IV. Legislators' Responsibility for Civic Virtue and Concord: Worries About American Politics

Considering politics today, it is quite obvious that people care about the ethical characters of their fellow citizens. Citizens worry about the questionably moral choices of their elected officials–vote trading, bailouts to big corporations over small businesses, and campaigns marked by big-spender schmoozing. On top of these activities between legislators, newspaper opinion columns are replete with editorials lamenting the rise of rancorous partisanship, especially in the wake of the 2016 and 2020 elections. It seems quite obvious that the United States has lost even the semblance of civic unity or agreement over what is advantageous for the nation as a whole. I argue that this situation may stem, at least in part, from an abdication of responsibility by our leaders to "aim at concord among all, while they try above all to expel civil conflict, which is enmity" (1155a25). While citizens seem to care increasingly about their fellow citizens' moral character, legislators seem to have set aside any hope of developing any kind of relationship among citizens marked by mutual valuing of another for themselves.

Congress has done little to catalyze an appreciation among citizens of their common good and common goals. Not only have they failed to address the rising partisanship among the populace, they seem to fuel it with rhetoric saturated with political rage and revolving around stimulating contempt and partisan enmity. Some elected officials, like retiring senator Tom Udall, have raised concerns about "a culture [that] valued partisanship over the country's best interests" (Broadwater). I think that many of us are tired of the discord and contempt that marks our political relationships. I believe that one possible solution to these attitudes is a shift from thinking of our fellow citizens as means to our individual advantage to an appreciation of them as people who are valuable in and of themselves.

In most modern liberal democracies and republics, there is an underlying doctrine of viewpoint neutrality–that a precondition for living together in a diverse nation is in part contingent on one's fellow citizens minding their own business on certain (sometimes moral, especially religious) matters. I am not convinced that such neutrality is inconsistent with

forming character friendships between citizens. However, that would be a subject for further questioning. Altogether, if politicians and ordinary people could begin to cultivate relationships even at the local or community level founded on desiring the good things in life for their neighbors because they are good neighbors, a new culture of unity could arise.

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Practical Identity and Forms of Life: An Attempt at Clarifying Wittgenstein's Ethics

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Abstract
    This paper offers an account of the possibility for a system of normative ethics in a later Wittgensteinean epistemological context. By adopting a viewpoint of ethics as fundamentally grounded in 'practical identities' as the source of normative obligations in a manner expressed by thinkers such as Christine Korsgaard, the paper attempts to clarify and surpass the quietist and unanalyzable ethical account given by Wittgenstein himself. Such an approach based on identity largely mirrors the normative possibilities in speech offered by 'forms of life' in *Philosophical Investigations* by offering in-context, normatively rich frameworks in which ethical statements can be adequately and normatively assessed. Such a viewpoint accounts for the accepted disagreement in Wittgenstein's ethical thoughts by showing the in-context, identity-based 'form of life' differences that lead to acceptable ethical divergence, while also opening up room for semi-universal bedrock ethical statements that all humans in a given social community necessarily are subject to due to the basic identities implied in being a human being for their community. Such an account introduces more clarity to the way that ethical deliberation and disagreement takes shape from a Wittgensteinian perspective.

Introduction
    In *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein destroys the determinacy of meaning in language that was and seemingly still is taken as a given by most people when thinking philosophically, creating a great skeptical problem for anyone wanting to adequately communicate with those around them. Luckily for anyone who wants to use language, Wittgenstein believes that there is a social solution to this problem and

seems to claim that normative standards for meaning in language do exist. There are various interpretations of exactly what Wittgenstein's solution involves, but at its base it goes something like this: "Although there may not be a deeply philosophically analyzable absolute meaning of any given sentence, when used in practice by members of a shared social community, the terms gain normative meaning." Thus, the members of a community can communicate with each-other, and in those contexts, there are normative standards of correct and incorrect usages of language.

Although Wittgenstein believed in limited normativity in the meaning of language, he never gave a clear account of his ethical beliefs and specifically opposed any attempts to create systems of ethics. Creating a system of ethics seems to be an attempt to apply a rigid, constricting lens onto a linguistic landscape incapable of handling such rigidity. Thus, Wittgenstein only ever comments on ethics as being an extremely personal subject, and a subject about which great variation is to be accepted. As Anne-Marie Christensen describes it, to Wittgenstein, a person's "ethical attitude" is "a form of personal worldview." These personal ethical worldviews may differ, and they may even differ fundamentally. If they do differ, there is no sure way to resolve the difference, as there is no shared standard to which they can appeal; it is simply a clash between worldviews.

This account of moral disagreement leaves Wittgenstein's account of ethical disagreement in a position somewhat similar to his account of the interactions between separate linguistic communities. To Wittgenstein, determinacy in language use only exists within the bounds of a specific community. Thus, the way in which what is true and untrue about the world is decided necessarily resides within communities as well. There is no external measure to appeal to. Nevertheless, when two linguistic communities meet, it is possible that one community might critique the beliefs of the other as inaccurate. It is even possible that a group would internally critique itself, as has happened numerous times in scientific and cultural revolutions. In these revolutions, core assumptions about the way that things work have been challenged and flipped on their heads. It seems that ethical disagreement between two individuals for Wittgenstein lies in a similar position. The disagreeing people simply have disparate worldviews.

From these disparate worldviews, meaningful

critique can happen. Wittgenstein even gives examples of such discussions in an ethical context. That said, how such meaningful critique is resolved goes unanswered, despite the fact that it *does,* in fact, often resolve itself. There is nothing in Wittgenstein's philosophical arsenal (ethical or linguistic) that can help us understand what might happen when two members of separate linguistic communities or two people with different ethical worldviews interact. There is no separate, crystalline fact of the matter that they could appeal to in order to resolve their disagreement. This lack is already worrying to what we intuitively feel should be the case in interactions between communities about scientific matters of fact, but in the ethical scenario between two members of the *same* community such a conclusion feels almost unacceptable. To have ethical disagreement between two very close people shrouded in such epistemic fog seems like it might be giving up more than is needed and obscuring what is a coherent, if a bit difficult, process for those involved.

In this paper, I will present a potential solution to this problem. This solution will build a conception of moral decision making using the concept of 'practical identity' provided by Christine Korsgaard as an analogue to Wittgenstein's *forms of life* which he employs to understand normativity in general uses of language. Such an approach might help in resolving some of Wittgenstein's ethical indeterminacy. Additionally, it will give a useful analytic lens to understand both personal moral conflicts and ethical disagreement. Using this lens, moral deliberation and disagreement is revealed as not a vague interaction of viewpoints clashing with each other that mysteriously and inexplicably resolves itself, but rather a negotiation of identities for the person/s involved.

Practical Identity

At the core of Korsgaard's ethical theory is the claim that all obligations are fundamentally a response to a threat against one or more of our identities. These identities are what Korsgaard calls "practical identities," meaning that they aren't based on some deep metaphysical claim of identity as a thing existing from a third person perspective and informed by the Scientific World View, but rather a practical account of the way that we experience deliberation from a first person perspective. Regardless and independent of the existence or nonexistence from a third-person perspective of some idealized Cartesian self, the reality of our lived first person decision-making process

is that "it is as if there were something over and above all of your desires, something that is *you,* and that [deliberates and] *chooses* which [desire] to act on." It is this non-metaphysical, practical you that makes up your overarching practical identity as a person.

Such an approach of establishing practical identities may seem like it does not mesh well with a Wittgensteinian account of things. It may seem like it relies too much on some *a priori* method of speculative reasoning that fails the test of the private language argument (which I will explain shortly) for lacking a criterion of correctness. This, however, is not the case. In this argument, it seems to me that Korsgaard is actually making a somewhat Wittgensteinian argument against the classical Cartesian view of the self while simultaneously maintaining the the deliberative agent self as a practically, although not necessarily metaphysically, existent identity.

Obviously, the classical Cartesian view of the self is flawed from a Wittgensteinian perspective; it posits a dualist account of the world that quite blatantly assumes the existence of a deeply and inherently private view of a self fundamentally inaccessible to others. This conception fails the test presented by Wittgenstein's private language argument. According to the private language argument, this self could not really communicate with itself in such a private way, as would be no external criterion of correctness it can appeal to. To illustrate this, look at what we might normally do to see whether we're right or not. Say I want to know what the date is. Since we are currently in a 2020 COVID world and the days all blend together, I'm not 100% sure if my disposition to guess that it's December 19th is correct, so I decide to check the calendar on my phone. After checking the calendar, I realize that I am wrong. It is, in fact, December 20th. I needed an external criterion of correctness to compare my internal disposition to, or else I wouldn't really know what was right. From this base, Wittgenstein argues that such a private definition cannot function. All that such a private definition could possibly give would be a measure of whether the person who gave the definition feels that they are using the term properly. That isn't much of a standard for truth at all; it's not verifiable. All real truth claims require an outside criterion of correctness with which they can check. Thus, the metaphysically dualist Cartesian account of selfhood is doomed to fail should we accept Wittgenstein's critique of private languages.

In contrast, Korsgaard's account treats our decision

making process as a fundamentally public and practical matter. Korsgaard points out that we do, in fact, experience a deliberative process as agents, one that is unified by our identity and fundamentally relies on language as a tool for representing our reasons. We do, in fact, order, encourage, blame, obey, and punish ourselves, as Wittgenstein points out. Our inner monologue is not simply real: it is also public. If we were to share the language that we use with ourselves in our deliberative process with others, they would be able to understand it. Such a process is not a private one in the sense of a private language, but merely in the sense that it is a negotiation between parts of ourselves. We may or may not choose to share this process with other people, but it happens nonetheless using a publicly available language and employs publicly shareable reasons. To deny that this account of identity and agency is resting on an inherently public base would be to deny that the reasons we use to justify our decisions are public as well, which is blatantly false when further considered. The deliberative process is inherently one of negotiation with ourselves, and we can all explain our reasons as to why we make the decisions we deliberated over. The results of this personal deliberation provides us with reasons that we can and do regularly share. I can explain my reasoning for a decision I make to anyone, and although they might not agree with me, we can certainly expect that they will understand me.

Identities of Obligation

In addition to having a single overarching practical identity as a given individual, each individual also has many smaller identities. Contingent practical identities such as 'sister,' 'doctor,' or 'Austrian citizen' each come with their own socially-determined reasons to do certain things and not do others. A good doctor ought to spend time developing their medical knowledge and ought not to harm their patient, for example.

Everyone also necessarily shares their identity as deliberative and social beings who need the social context provided by their contingent identities to motivate their decisions and live a meaningful life. In our specific case, this identity can be referred to as our human identity. This human identity, being the base upon which our other identities stand, also provides normative force to our other, contingent identities. Additionally, it can not be given up without dire consequences, as to give it up would be to give up our capability for identity and thus deprive us of our reasons for action. This is why

we might say that someone "lost themselves" in rage if they kill someone in a murder of passion; they have temporarily snapped out of their identity as human. Other identities can also approach a similar level of importance in our lives when we become very attached to them. Someone might choose to die rather than betray their country's interests because to do so would be to forsake a national identity that they've made so core to their being that dying is preferable to betraying it. Ethical decision-making then involves the deliberative negotiation between our identities and the situations and urges we face in living our lives. For example, a man might face a conflict of identity when his family refuses to invite his boyfriend to a family gathering due to their bigoted beliefs around sexuality. In this situation, the man must decide between an obligation from his identity as a member of his family and an obligation from his identity as a lover and a gay man (among others).

If someone makes decisions that clash with one of their identities, then that identity is threatened. If they either make enough decisions against that identity, or a decision that directly rules out that identity, then they lose the identity completely. For an example of losing the identity through making enough decisions against it, imagine someone who identifies as a tea enthusiast. If that person suddenly starts choosing coffee over tea every morning for a week, then their identity as a tea enthusiast is threatened, and they and the people around them might start questioning it. "Hey," a friend might say, "Why did you stop drinking tea all of the sudden? You drank it every morning before last week!" If such behavior continues for six months, then calling that person a tea enthusiast seems to no longer be applicable, and a friend might call them out on it if they still insist that they are. "I haven't seen you drink tea in half a year with no good excuse! How can you still claim to be a tea enthusiast!" An example of a decision that instantly destroys an identity might be one of someone identifying as a member of their school's board game club. If they quit the club, then that identity is instantly destroyed. In almost all cases, it would be incorrect to continue claiming that you're a part of board game club if you've formally quit, and the people around them could also call them out on that. "Stop saying you're a part of the board game club! You told everyone you quit!"

As you can see by these examples, identities are fundamentally public entities. In the social contexts where a given set of identities is used, they have their meaning by

dint of the standards set within that social context, and there are normative standards one must achieve in order to claim membership in those identity groups. In a society without music, you cannot identify as a musician. Similarly, the honor code of a knight during the Middle Ages will be different than the honor code of a baseball player in our modern day, even though they would likely both identify as honorable. The existence of these identities is determined by the shared social world in which they're used. The contents of these identities (i.e. the reasons and obligations they give you), as well as the criterion under which you can claim ownership to them is mediated through this inherently public social lens as well.

Korsgaard employs this account of practical identity to offer a compelling Kantian account of what such decision-making necessarily looks like. That said, Korsgaard employs many claims that a Wittgensteinian perspective might reject in constructing her account of morality building off of this base. Regardless, the starting point of practical identity itself is really what has important implications for pulling back a bit at some of the vagueness present in Wittgenstein's account of morality. Non-Kantian approaches could certainly be built from the base of obligation that the conception of practical identity provides.

Identities and Forms of Life

One of the terms often discussed in explanations of Wittgenstein's conception of linguistic normativity is the term *Lebensform*, or "form of life." Although Wittgenstein himself doesn't use the term to any truly great extent, it is an illuminating term for understanding the type of scenarios in which a language has normative meaning. To Wittgenstein, language only gains normative meaning within a given embodied context. Here's how I like to think of it: language cannot be understood in isolation, but requires two levels of context. The first context is a social one. You must be indoctrinated into a community that speaks a shared language in shared contexts before you can adequately understand the language in use. The second context is a teleological one. You must employ the language in a specific context of *use* before it can be adequately understood. Both of these contexts are intertwined, with no hard barrier between them. You cannot understand any given use of language without both.

An example of a form of life can be seen in the institution of a grocery store and the many activities that you engage in within it. For example, imagine a woman bringing

her big cart of items to the checkout lane. In the cart, she has oats from the bulk section, some produce, and tofu. She begins placing her items on the conveyor belt, and eventually the cashier gets to her oats and asks her "What's the code for that?" The woman replies "GE30." This situation requires both that the woman buying groceries and the cashier have the cultural knowledge of how supermarkets work, the process of checking out, and the special process of exchanging codes for items from the bulk section in order to understand how the language is to be used in that specific situation. In a different situation with different context, such language would have absolutely no meaning, or a completely different one. Asking "What's the code for that?" has completely different meaning as a software programmer, or a spy learning how to communicate using a cypher. Without knowing the specific context, you cannot understand the specific utterances and follow the language game properly. These cultural and teleological contexts are what make up forms of life.

Wittgenstein's example of a language game between two builders in section two of *Philosophical Investigations* can also be analyzed from this form of life perspective. In the example, two people are conversing in a very simple language consisting solely of words of construction materials, such as 'slab.' One builder will yell 'slab!' at the other, and the other builder will go and fetch them a slab. The language of Wittgenstein's builders from section two has meaning in part because they're using it in the context of a specific activity. That said, if you take one of the builders out and replace them with someone without the social conditioning and training to be a member of their construction-worker community, they won't have the social context to know what's going on and understand the teleological context they've been placed in. If you lack a part of the context required to participate in the form of life that a language is being used in, then you won't be able to adequately understand the use of language you're engaging in. For Wittgenstein, language is to be understood *in use*.

In the case of the builders, the fact that they live in a form of life as members in a construction-worker community seems to express nearly the same meaning as saying that they are construction workers. It is their entrance into that community that allows them to *identify* as construction workers, and people who can properly assert that they hold the identity of construction worker can reasonably be expected to understand the language games that construction workers play.

Identity, in the sense of practical identity as given by Korsgaard, seems to bear resemblance to the concept of a form of life. Our practical identities give us structure around which we can shape the contours of our life, they give us reasons to make both mundane and profound decisions in our life, and they give us boundaries within which we must mostly abide unless we want to feel the guilt of losing our sense of self. They give us teleological reasons that we should strive for and a social context in which we live. In a quite real sense, our identities express the literal form that our life takes.

Ethical Theories

As forms of life give normativity to language, so too can identities give normativity to ethical expression and ethical language. Although such a conception of identity as the normative scope through which we can evaluate language would necessarily seem to create a *theory* of ethics, something Wittgenstein was quite blatantly against, the rigidity of the system springing from this theory is not extreme. In many cases, the account offered by Wittgenstein of differing worldviews does not greatly differ from such an identity-based account. That said, the lens of identity can offer more clarity to the situation.

To illuminate this, let's take a look at an example used by Christensen in her account of Wittgenstein's ethics taken from a conversation between Wittgenstein and Rush Rhees. In their conversation, Wittgenstein and Rhees discuss "a man 'who has come to the conclusion that he must either leave his wife or abandon his work within cancer research.'" Wittgenstein responds: "[s]uppose I am his friend, and I say to him 'look, you've taken this girl out of her home, and now, by God, you must stick to her.' This would be called taking up an ethical attitude." He also notes that the man might respond "but what of suffering humanity? how [*sic*] can I abandon my research?" Wittgenstein even notes that the man might consider his wife "'It probably won't be fatal for her. She'll get over it, probably marry again,' and so on." All of these are referring to different 'ethical attitudes' that the man could take up in defending his actions, and Wittgenstein is okay with that.

All of these 'ethical attitudes' are just as easily expressed in terms of identity. In the first case, Wittgenstein is appealing to the man's identity as a husband and the duties that come with marriage. In the second case, the man is responding with the reasons given to him by his identity as a cancer scientist and

someone whose work brings good into the world. In the final case, the man is qualifying the harm done to his wife by arguing that she can handle the destruction of her identity as his wife. To Wittgenstein, all of these responses are theoretically valid, and under an identity-based system they are as well. As we can see here, although a practical-identity based theory of ethics is certainly a theory, its system need not be excessively rigid in its reach. Each of these identities place valid claims on the scientist in question. The 'theory' I offer in this paper is really more a method to add more clarity to the nature of Wittgensteinian ethics than any substantive change in the contents of it.

Nonetheless, there are places where a practical-identity based system of ethics does impose seemingly universal rules upon us, and those cases come into play when our identity as human is threatened by an action that we might take. To give up our identity as human would be to give up our very nature as a social, deliberative animal in need of having socially-defined identities which obligate and motivate us. To give up our human identity would be to give up the base groundwork that enables us to exist and be ethical creatures in the first place. It is thus impossible to give up our human identity without in some moral way dying and losing our membership in our community. The standards set by this identity as human are the ethical standards accepted as so right that to question them would be crazy, and to act against them would be to commit an '*inhuman*' deed.

Non-negotiable Obligation

One example of such a non-negotiable, 'human' obligation would Korsgaard's account of a conflict between one's identity as a solider and their identity as human. While a good soldier should follow the orders of their superiors, a good human should not murder the innocent. In such a situation, the identity of humanity overrides any contingent identity, as to lose it would be to lose the self.

The identity as human could be considered as giving us a group of unquestionable, certain statements from a Wittgensteinean point of view presented in *On Certainty*. Such certain statements are basic assumptions that we act on in normal life, and it does not make sense to doubt them in almost all contexts. The identity of human comprises obligations so basic and fundamental to our conceptions of morality that they are unquestioned for most people outside of truly exceptional circumstances. For example, behaviors like killing another

human being for fun or causing completely arbitrary harm to a person can be quite simply taken as bedrock immoral actions in our society. These statements *could* be questioned theoretically, but practically are taken as a given. In the process of ethical deliberation with someone who tried to question one of these bedrock statements of ethical life, many would simply dismiss them as insane.

Imagine, for example, two people entering an ethical debate about the permissibility of some hotly debated topic, say the practice of eating meat. Perhaps the argument of the person insisting that people should not eat meat may take Peter Singer's perspective and explain that animals are sentient beings just like us who can experience pain just like we do, and that we have no good reasons to inflict such pain on those other animals. From an identity perspective, this could be seen as appealing to our identity as a sentient being who also avoids pain. If their interlocutor were to simply respond "Well, I don't see anything wrong with causing pain to other human people anyways, why should I care about animals' pain?", then the conversation would be brought to a standstill. Their argument is *inhuman.* It is making a claim so contrary to the base moral assumptions that we share that it becomes almost impossible to engage with them. In these situations, what they're saying is just so absurd that to argue with it no longer makes sense. They seem to not be a member of our linguistic and ethical community. When these statements are questioned, we may have exhausted our justifications and 'reached bedrock with our spades turned.' Perhaps the only answer here is to say "That claim is simply wrong."

The Limitations of This View

When I originally set out to write this article, I had much more lofty goals. I wanted to introduce universally normative statements within Wittgenstein's epistemic framework. Unfortunately, such a goal has proven to be untenable. It seems impossible to push the inherently limited epistemic framework adopted by Wittgenstein to accept any standard of truth that would extend beyond the reach of one language-using community. Such a conclusion is certainly painful for anyone aspiring to universal truth in ethics, especially given how persuasive Wittgenstein's argumentation is. That said, if such a viewpoint is all that a careful and honest analysis of the epistemic situation allows, then we are obligated to adopt it.

The largest reason that I am quite unhappy with this

result is that it maintains the weirdness that is inherent in Wittgenstein's epistemic system. How are we to adequately account for what happens when two completely separate language-using communities meet with each other? The communities have totally separate normative standards of truth, yet supposedly *something* will happen in their interaction, and one view will come out on top. It seems that here we are necessarily forced into one of two directions. The first possible route would be to accept that all truth standards are equally good, and that in such scenarios each community is equally right. This would be taking a relativist perspective. The second option would be to reject the very idea of truth in an absolute sense, claiming that from an outside perspective, to say that either community is really *right* would simply be a misuse of language. There is no criterion of correctness to be had from this outside perspective. This seems to be this position that Wittgenstein takes, rather than the relativist one. Such an account represents the destruction of the 'capital T' Truth. At the very least, it is a claim that argument about such a truth is altogether impossible (how one could adequately argue for the existence of such a truth from this framework is beyond me). Such a conclusion is deeply disappointing, especially in the context of ethics, where it seems to take some of the weight out of an area of life which you are expected to make significant sacrifices for.

Conclusion

Limitations in mind, the framework expressed in this paper does accomplish a somewhat significant step in improving the tools of analysis that we have when discussing ethical disagreement from a Wittgensteinian epistemic perspective. Under Wittgenstein's perspective, differences in worldview are just that: not analyzable in a systematic way and philosophically non-navigable. By offering an account of how practical identities are meaningfully similar in (giving context to moral obligation) to the way that forms of life give context to other linguistic expressions, I have enabled a somewhat comparable level of analysis of ethical statements to other linguistic contexts under a Wittgensteinian framework.

The account offered here is certainly not a complete one. It still has a few rough edges. Specifically, I think that there is still room to improve the account of obligation from our identity as human that is offered in this paper. The claim that our identity as human is in some way basic makes sense even

within a Wittgensteinian framework. To call some person or action inhuman seems to be about the strongest ethical critique we have available. That said, the claims about our human identity being the base upon which all other identities build and the idea of what is essentially a human 'species being' as a social creature in need of identity are perhaps a bit out of place in a Wittgensteinian system. This is despite the fact that ethical bedrock claims do undoubtedly exist. Perhaps the structure they have been fit in within this paper is simply a bit too rigid.

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Analysing and Resisting American Citizens' Insensitivity to Civilian Casualties of American Wars

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American wars have had a considerable toll on the civilian populations of the countries they have been waged in. The best estimate of civilian deaths directly caused by coalition forces in The Iraq War is 11,516, which is three times higher than the deaths of coalition forces and accounts for 33% of Iraqi deaths in the war.[48] The American public, however, is not particularly concerned by these casualties. American casualties play a far larger role in determining public support for wars, despite the fact that these are often much lower than civilian casualties (as seen in the figures above).[49]

Such partiality is to be expected, but the indifference to civilian casualties should be meliorated for two reasons. Concern for civilian casualties is good from a moral-epistemic standpoint, insofar as these casualties are morally concerning. Many of these wars are partly justified by the aim of improving these civilians' lives, hence their deaths at the hands of US forces are deeply unjust. I cannot explore this complex question further, so I will assume that more concern for civilian casualties than the indifference currently displayed is a moral-epistemic improvement. These moral-epistemic improvements can in turn lead to political improvements. The public becoming more aware that civilian casualties are morally troubling might lead to greater public outcry about them, which might in turn lead to changes in foreign policy and military strategy that reduce civilian casualties.

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48 Bruce Cronin, *Bugsplat: The politics of Collateral Damage in Western Armed Conflicts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018), 17.

49 John Tirman, *The Deaths of Others: The Fate of Civilians in America's Wars* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), 339; Cronin, *Bugsplat*, 17.

In this essay, I will explore the nature of Americans' insensitivity and propose strategies for meliorating it. I will argue that the epistemic structures it is rooted in and the fact that Americans are not aware that they are insensitive mean that certain strategies are particularly effective in combatting Americans' insensitivity. In the first section, I will outline the social-epistemological terms that will be applied to Americans' insensitivity - meta-blindness, meta-attitudes, and social imaginaries. Meta-blindness is José Medina's term for the phenomenon whereby insensitive subjects are unaware that they are insensitive.[50] In the second section, I will apply these concepts to international relations scholar John Tirman's analysis of Americans' insensitivity to civilian casualties. I will argue that two causes Tirman identifies, orientalism and the frontier myth, are dominant social imaginaries. Another cause, orientalist knowledge hierarchies, are meta-attitudes. I will argue that this implies that American citizens are blind to their insensitivity, something Tirman doesn't identify.

In the third section, I will outline the implications of this analysis for how insensitivity to civilian casualties must be combatted. I will argue that combatting this insensitivity requires something beyond pointing out that certain attitudes are insensitive or presenting sensitive attitudes. Specifically, it requires targeting meta-blindness and the background epistemic structures of orientalism and the frontier myth. I will argue that since these background epistemic structures are dominant social imaginaries and meta-attitudes, they should be challenged from different imaginaries and meta-attitudes that Americans can access. Meta-blindness should be combatted by engendering the comparison of different epistemic perspectives.

1. Meta-Blindness, Meta-Attitudes, and Social Imaginaries

This section will outline the paper's governing social-epistemological framework. I will first outline the sense in which emotions are epistemic attitudes. I will then explain what Medina means by the term meta-blindness, and set out what will be meant by the terms "insensitivity", "concern", and their antonyms throughout the paper. Finally, I will outline what meta-attitudes and social imaginaries are.

50   José Medina, *The Epistemology of Resistance: Gender and Racial Oppression, Epistemic Injustice, and the Social Imagination* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 75.

Because Americans have both beliefs and emotions about civilian casualties, it is important to clarify the epistemic significance of emotions. I cannot treat these issues in detail, but will briefly justify the claim that emotions are epistemic attitudes because they serve as reasons for belief. I will assume that the perception theory of emotions (which I will outline shortly) is correct. It is an example of a theory which sees emotions as involving what D'Arms and Jacobson call "evaluative presentations" of their objects, and theories of this kind are currently the majority view in the philosophy of emotion.[51] Analogous arguments to those made in this paper could be made assuming any other evaluative presentation theory.[52]

Christine Tappolet claims that emotions are perceptual experiences of an evaluative property, such as fearsomeness or admirability, in their object.[53] If I fear a plant then I perceptually experience fearsomeness in it. Such perceptions can be fitting or unfitting depending on whether the object possesses the property in question.[54] Fear of a lion is fitting, while fear of a sunflower is not. Perceptual experiences do not undertake epistemic commitments – I can perceptually experience a plant

51   Justin D'Arms and Daniel Jacobson, "The Moralistic Fallacy: On the 'Appropriateness' of Emotions," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 61, no. 1 (2000): 66. Scarantino and de Sousa, in a review article, claim "The dominant view on emotions is that they are representations of… formal objects" (Andrea Scarantino and Ronald de Sousa, "Emotion," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Winter 2018 Edition), edited by Edward N. Zalta, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2018/entries/emotion). See Daniel D. Hutto, "Truly Enactive Emotion," *Emotion Review* 4, no. 2 (2012): 179, for a contrary, non-representational view of emotions.

52   This is because all evaluative presentation theories can accommodate the idea that emotions are epistemic attitudes as easily as, or more easily than, the perception theory. Other evaluative presentation theories include the theory that emotions are judgments (see Robert C. Solomon, "Emotion and Choice," in *Explaining Emotions*, ed. Amélie O. Rorty (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1980), 257-258) and the theory that emotions present their objects as falling under a "paradigm scenario" and thus make that object salient to the subject's attention (Ronald de Sousa, *The Rationality of Emotion* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1987), 201-202).

53   Christine Tappolet, *Emotions, Values, and Agency* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2016), 13, 15-16.

54   D'Arms and Jacobson, "The Moralistic Fallacy," 66-67; Tappolet, *Emotions*, 20.

as fearsome and yet know that it is not fearsome. Emotions can nonetheless be seen as epistemic attitudes on the perception theory in the broad sense of attitudes that are *relevant* to epistemic commitments. Tappolet claims that emotions are reasons for beliefs in the same way visual experiences are: if we perceive fearsomeness in something, this is a *prima facie* reason to believe that it is fearsome.[55] This means that emotions are relevant to knowledge and are thus epistemic attitudes in the broad sense. Moreover, fittingness is an epistemic norm – fitting emotions are reasons for correct beliefs, and unfitting emotions are reasons for incorrect beliefs.

Fitting emotions about civilian casualties, on this view, lead Americans to correct beliefs and thus have the same moral-epistemic and political benefits as correct beliefs. Outrage about a civilian casualty gives Americans a *prima facie* reason to believe that the casualty is outrageous. Outrage about civilian casualties should therefore be cultivated insofar as civilian casualties are outrageous, and insofar as believing a casualty to be outrageous can lead subjects to other correct beliefs, such as "the casualty was a terrible injustice". Similarly, unfitting emotions like joy are *prima facie* reasons to form incorrect beliefs like the belief that a casualty is joyous, and so there are benefits to cultivating more fitting emotions. While the reason joy gives is firmly overruled by basic moral considerations of the value of human life, such considerations may not sway certain people, and replacing joy with a more fitting emotion might bring them to have correct beliefs. This indicates that emotions and beliefs have similar importance for my question, and I will speak of them concurrently as epistemic attitudes.[56, 57]

55   Tappolet, *Emotions*, 40.

56   This is not the only way to bring about correct beliefs about civilian casualties, for one can have unfitting emotions about a casualty and still acknowledge it as deeply wrong. Nonetheless, attempting to cultivate fitting emotions in Americans will give them reasons to change their beliefs, and might thereby cause some of them to do so.

57   Fitting emotions might also have distinctive political benefits due to their greater capacity to motivate action than beliefs. Because I am discussing emotions as epistemic attitudes, however, it is best to conceive of their benefits as coming from knowledge, rather than motivation. I will thus see fitting emotions' political benefits as I do the benefits of correct beliefs - actions which follow from people knowing how morally troubling civilian casualties are. Nonetheless, investigating which strategies should be used to motivate political action, and whether these differ from those I propose in this

I will count absences of emotion as emotions. Thus, if a civilian casualty is outrageous and someone is apathetic in the face of it, their emotion is unfitting insofar as they are not perceiving the property of outrageousness. This is not a theoretical claim, for I do not think that absences of emotion are emotions, particularly assuming a perception theory on which emotions must perceive properties. It is rather a matter of convenience, insofar as not having a fitting emotion can inhibit people from acquiring correct beliefs about casualties in the same way that having an unfitting emotion "proper" like joy can. While the latter has more potential for distortion insofar as it gives an active reason to form an incorrect belief, some people might not consider casualties outrageous unless they have the *prima facie* reason outrage gives them. For such people, having no emotion can inhibit them from reaching correct beliefs insofar as it inhibits them from feeling outrage, and in this sense their absences of emotion are "unfitting emotions".

Medina defines meta-blindness as a subject's epistemic blindness with respect to their first-order epistemic attitudes.[58] First-order epistemic attitudes are about something that is not an epistemic attitude – for example, the belief that the earth is round. Second-order epistemic attitudes are about a subject's own first-order epistemic attitudes – for example, *A*'s belief that *A*'s belief that the earth is round is correct. Meta-blindness always involves first-order epistemic attitudes about features of one's social world, and second-order epistemic attitudes which are incorrect attitudes towards those first-order attitudes.[59] One could have first-order attitudes of incorrect beliefs about others (such as not knowing the difference between Shia and Sunni Islam), and a second-order attitude which is an incorrect belief about one's first-order beliefs (such as thinking that one's beliefs cover every part of the social world). The first-order attitude could also be affective, such as a lack of concern for the suffering of Muslims.[60] Meta-blindness would here lie in an incorrect second-order belief about this lack of concern, such

paper, would undoubtedly be of interest.

58   Medina, *Epistemology of Resistance*, 149.

59   Medina, *Epistemology of Resistance*, 75, 149.

60   Medina sees epistemic attitudes as "hybrid… cognitive-affective attitudes", but does not defend this or elaborate on what it entails (José Medina, "Racial Violence, Emotional Friction, and Epistemic Activism," *Angelaki* 24, no. 4 (2019): 25).

as thinking that one is not wrong for lacking concern because the situation does not warrant concern. While the second-order attitudes could be affective (feeling concerned or unconcerned about one's first-order attitudes), only cognitive second-order attitudes are required for my analysis.[61]

First-order blindness refers to first-order epistemic attitudes that are incorrect beliefs or unfitting emotions. I will, following Medina, refer to both of these as "insensitivities", because it best captures the epistemic attitudes that are the focus of my paper.[62] I will also refer to them as "first-order insensitivities", even though I do not use the term "second-order insensitivity", in order to distinguish them from meta-blindness. Insensitivities could be cognitive, such as thinking a civilian casualty isn't morally wrong, or affective, such as not feeling outrage at a needless casualty. Conversely, "sensitivities' are correct beliefs or fitting emotions. Correctness and fittingness of beliefs and emotions come on a scale, so sometimes I will speak of attitudes as more or less sensitive than one another, rather than as "sensitivities" and "insensitivities". Beliefs and emotions about civilian casualties can be concerned – such as the belief that a casualty is unjust and outrage at a needless casualty –- or unconcerned. "Concern" and "unconcern" do not determine whether an attitude is correct or fitting – a concerned or unconcerned attitude could, depending on how the world is, be an insensitivity or a sensitivity. I have, however, assumed that the world is such that Americans coming to have more concern about civilian casualties is a moral-epistemic improvement.

Medina defines "meta-attitudes" as epistemic attitudes about one's epistemic attitudes.[63] Meta-attitudes could take many shapes, such as attitudes about one's epistemic abilities.[64] For example, epistemic arrogance places undue credence in one's beliefs, and an undue lack of credence in contradictory beliefs.[65] Meta-attitudes influence epistemic life in several ways. For example, they determine which attitudes one takes seriously, and which are dismissed without consideration.[66]

61   Medina, *Epistemology of Resistance*, 81.

62   Medina, *Epistemology of Resistance*, 89.

63   Medina, *Epistemology of Resistance*, 58. It is plausible to see meta-blindness as itself a meta-attitude, but this is irrelevant to my argument.

64   Medina, *Epistemology of Resistance*, 58

65   Medina, *Epistemology of Resistance*, 31.

66   Medina, *Epistemology of Resistance*, 212.

For example, epistemic arrogance leads people to dismiss anything which conflicts with their current attitudes.[67] Meta-attitudes also influence epistemic life by determining which epistemic attitudes a subject seeks out, and what subjects count as justification.[68] Meta-attitudes can be beneficial as well as harmful – e- empiricism is a beneficial meta-attitude that places higher credence in attitudes for which there is evidence.

Moira Gatens defines the social imaginary as the "background" of "imaginings" by which individuals in a society can understand one another, with these imaginings including things like images and scripts.[69] The social imaginary consists of many different imaginaries, some of which are dominant imaginaries such as the patriarchal imaginary and the white imaginary.[70] When something falls outside dominant social imaginaries, it is "unimaginable" from within them.[71] Medina analyses how in *To Kill a Mockingbird*, "black pity for white subjects" and "a white girl coming on to" a black man are shown to be unimaginable within the dominant white imaginary of Jim Crow Alabama. Instead, the script of this imaginary read that black people "have a sexual agency out of control whereas white women lack sexual agency".[72] Imaginaries can also influence affective life, for example by rendering one unable to experience sympathy for people who are dehumanised by the imaginary's scripts.[73]

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67   Medina, *Epistemology of Resistance*, 31-33.

68   Medina Epistemology of Resistance, 212.

69   Moira Gatens, "Imaginaries," in *50 Concepts for a Critical Phenomenology*, eds. Gail Weiss, Ann V. Murphy, and Gayle Salamon (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2019), 183; Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 2004), 165, quoted in Gatens, "Imaginaries," 183; Medina, *Epistemology of Resistance*, 67 n. 4.

70   Medina, *Epistemology of Resistance*, 78.

71   Medina, *Epistemology of Resistance*, 67-68.

72   Medina, *Epistemology of Resistance*, 67-68.

73   A relevant feature of social imaginaries is that they can be "internalized" by subjects, and can thus influence one's beliefs and emotions even if one's conscious beliefs refute the imaginary (Medina, *Epistemology of Resistance*, 269). Someone in Jim Crow Alabama who consciously believed that white people are not superior to black people could nonetheless be biased towards thinking that black people do not feel pity for white people. This is the well-known phenomenon of "implicit bias". See Jennifer Saul,

Subjects' beliefs and emotions are not completely determined by dominant social imaginaries, for there are what Medina calls "alternative social imaginaries".[74] For example, the black imaginary within Jim Crow Alabama challenged the script of the white imaginary insofar as black people recognised the incorrectness of the white imaginary's racist stereotypes.[75] People may come to inhabit different imaginaries, and thus be able to imagine what was previously unimaginable to them.[76] Nonetheless, since dominant imaginaries render many contents of other imaginaries unintelligible, entering other imaginaries is challenging for subjects under dominant imaginaries.[77] Hereon, I will use "epistemic structures" to refer to both imaginaries and meta-attitudes.

2. The Insensitivity of American Citizens to Civilian Casualties

Having outlined the concepts of meta-blindness, meta-attitudes, and the social imaginary, I am now in a position to analyse American citizens' insensitivity to civilian casualties in terms of this framework. After going over part of the empirical evidence for Americans' insensitivity, I will present Tirman's case for orientalism and the frontier myth causing this insensitivity, noting that both are dominant social imaginaries. I will then present Tirman's case for orientalist knowledge hierarchies causing insensitivity, noting that they are meta-attitudes. Finally, I will argue that the influence of these epistemic structures would cause Americans to be meta-blind. The implications of this analysis for how insensitivity should be combatted will be presented in the next section.

Tirman presents empirical evidence for Americans' insensitivity to civilian casualties, although notes that there is little survey data on this topic, which he claims is "itself a symptom" of indifference.[78] I will present Tirman's evidence for insensitivity to civilian casualties in the wars in Iraq, since

"Implicit Bias, Stereotype Threat, and Epistemic Injustice," in *The Routledge Handbook of Epistemic Injustice*, ed. Ian James Kidd, José Medina, and Gaile Pohlhaus (Abingdon: Routledge, 2017), 235-242.

74   Medina, *Epistemology of Resistance*, 78.

75   Medina, *Epistemology of Resistance*, 78.

76   Medina, "Racial Violence," 31.

77   Medina, *Epistemology of Resistance*, 71.

78   Tirman, *The Deaths of Others*, 338.

these wars feature later in my paper. Analysing public polling, Tirman claims that "American casualties and achievement of war aims tend to be the key variables of popularity, not local impact", which reflects indifference towards civilian casualties.[79] Tirman identifies that the public sphere also reflected indifference: "few major politicians… expressed compassion for the Iraqis' suffering; no major religious figures came forward with calls to help the victims of violence…; editorials about Iraq in major newspapers rarely mentioned civilian casualties".[80] Tirman doesn't specify which epistemic attitudes are reflected in the public polling, but his description of the public sphere's reaction indicates that Americans' insensitivity involves both beliefs about the moral seriousness of civilian casualties and emotions directed towards those casualties. Tirman gives several causes of this insensitivity: government narratives, psychological defence mechanisms, orientalism, and the frontier myth.[81] The latter two will be the focus of my analysis, because they most clearly demonstrate why Americans are meta-blind.

Tirman identifies both orientalism and the frontier myth as causes of American insensitivity, and while Tirman doesn't use this term, both are dominant imaginaries. Margaret Kohn and Kavita Reddy define Edward Said's concept of orientalism as referring to "a structured set of concepts, assumptions, and discursive practices" prevalent during colonial Europe "that were used to produce, interpret, and evaluate knowledge about non-European peoples".[82] These assumptions included associating negative traits with non-European people, with Said giving the example of seeing "the Arab" "as an oversexed degenerate,… sadistic, treacherous, low."[83] Said also identifies

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79   Tirman, *The Deaths of Others*, 339. His analysis is that several polls from 2007 to 2009 showed a majority supported American withdrawal from Iraq, even though a majority believed such withdrawal would lead to Iraqi civilians being more vulnerable to attacks by insurgents. On the other hand, Operation Desert Storm's public support went from 50% to 80% as the American military began to see success.

80   Tirman, *The Deaths of Others*, 340.

81   Tirman, *The Deaths of Others*, 342-359.

82   Margaret Kohn and Kavita Reddy, "Colonialism," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (Fall 2017 edition), edited by Edward N. Zalta, https://plato.stanford.edu/cgi-bin/encyclopedia/archinfo.cgi?entry=colonialism; Tirman, *The Deaths of Others*, 344.

83   Edward W. Said, *Orientalism* (Vintage, 1979), 278-9, quoted in Tirman, *The Deaths of Others*, 345.

that Arab people are not seen in their specificity as human beings under orientalism: "The Arab is always shown in large numbers. No individuality, no personal characteristics or experiences".[84] Tirman identifies that these orientalist assumptions have underlain American attitudes towards the civilian populations of American wars, and have reinforced insensitivity.[85] These populations have often been Asian and Arab populations who are subject to orientalist stereotypes. Furthermore, Tirman notes that American empire has been "based in part on a supposition of white superiority", and that the American military has notably used such racial slurs as "gooks" and "hajis".[86] Orientalism is a social imaginary which Americans inhabit, since it is based on representations of Asian and Arab populations. Moreover, it is a dominant imaginary, insofar as non-orientalist imaginaries are less accessible to Americans than orientalist imaginaries.

This imaginary engenders insensitivity. In their research on Israeli citizens' reactions to Palestinian civilians dying at the hands of Israeli forces, social psychologist Noa Schori-Eyal and collaborators found that viewing civilians harmed in war in dehumanising ways leads to perceiving them as less common with oneself.[87] This, in turn, makes one more likely to tolerate harms to those civilians.[88] Americans influenced by orientalism see civilians in derogatory and dehumanising ways, and are therefore less likely to form concerned attitudes about civilian casualties.

Tirman defines the frontier myth as a "set of ideas, myths, and self-identities" in which America is seen as having a "mission" of "taming… the wilderness" and the "savages" who live there.[89] The earliest example of this in the public conscience is the violence European-American colonisers committed against Indigenous peoples, and Tirman claims

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84   Said, *Orientalism*, 278-9, quoted in Tirman, *The Deaths of Others*, 345;

85   Tirman, *The Deaths of Others*, 344

86   Tirman, *The Deaths of Others*, 236, 344.

87   Noa Schori-Eyal, Eran Halperin, and Tamar Saguy, "Intergroup Commonality, Political Ideology, and Tolerance of Enemy Collateral Casualties in Intergroup Conflicts," *Journal of Peace Research* 56, no. 3 (2019): 434.

88   Schori-Eyal, Halperin, and Saguy, "Intergroup Commonality," 434.

89   Tirman, *The Deaths of Others*, 350-351

that the myth has underlain American global expansion.[90] He identifies a particular conception of violence as central to this myth. Firstly, the violence is seen as "defensive" or "reactive", responding to provocation from external forces (for example, to provocation from "Indian savagery").[91] Secondly, the violence is seen as "regenerative", as reaffirming the "moral worth of its practitioner." In the modern context, this takes the form of reaffirming "the natural rightness of Anglo-Saxon liberty", among other things.[92]

      This is a dominant imaginary, and Tirman claims that it underlies American responses to civilian casualties and engenders insensitivity. While Tirman doesn't label it as an imaginary, he notes it is deeply rooted in the American psyche and "powerfully shapes the attitudes and behaviour of Americans from childhood."[93] This imaginary structures how Americans see wars and the civilians in them, since American wars are often framed under the lenses of defensive and regenerative violence (for example, The Iraq War was seen as regeneration after "a period of softness" which had resulted, in this imaginary, in 9/11).[94] This way of seeing wars engenders insensitivity. Tirman identifies that it creates a script on which civilians are not the focus, being rather "players in this drama" which is truly about America's moral redemption.[95] Americans' reactions to civilian casualties are determined by this script, which stifles concern insofar as it accords no harm to civilians, or frames harms that do occur as justified insofar as they are defensive and regenerative.[96]

      Tirman claims that another side of orientalism fosters insensitivity, namely hierarchies of knowledge which mediate

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90   Tirman, *The Deaths of Others*, 350.

91   Tirman, *The Deaths of Others*, 351. Tirman cites empirical evidence which shows that support for reactive violence among Americans is "positively correlated with the embrace of ''frontier values''" (Tirman, *The Deaths of Others*, 352; James Shields and Leonard Weinberg, "Reactive Violence and the American Frontier: A Contemporary Evaluation," *Western*

92   Tirman, *The Deaths of Others*, 351-352.

93   Tirman, *The Deaths of Others*, 360.

94   Tirman, *The Deaths of Others*, 353.

95   Tirman, *The Deaths of Others*, 353.

96   Tirman, *The Deaths of Others*, 354

the way in which people in "The Orient" are understood.[97] These knowledge hierarchies are meta-attitudes. American orientalist knowledge hierarchies unduly privilege the American social sciences, such as historiography and international relations. These disciplines are thought to lead to "knowledge" of other cultures, while voices from those cultures "are not heard", and "are discounted as… ignorant" on the rare occasions when they are heard (Tirman cites the US public's reaction to the polls of Iraqi civilians).[98] Such knowledge hierarchies constitute a meta-attitude about what counts as "knowledge" of these civilians, namely that "knowledge" of them does not come from their mouths, hearts, and bodies, but from American expertise. Tirman claims that these knowledge hierarchies engender American insensitivity because they makes it such that the American public "knows", with "scientific veracity", that foreign populations have traits which justify violence (for example, having "no appreciation for freedom").[99] This makes Americans see their unconcerned attitudes towards civilian casualties, that are in fact insensitive, as justified.

The preceding analyses indicate that American citizens are meta-blind because these citizens have epistemic structures which block epistemic counterpoints, and can avail themselves of several justifications for their cognitively and affectively insensitive attitudes.[100] Medina calls epistemic attitudes that conflict with one's own "epistemic counterpoints".[101] The imaginaries of orientalism and the frontier myth inhibit Americans from experiencing such counterpoints by rendering concerned attitudes towards civilian casualties unimaginable. This unimaginability inhibits Americans from coming to concerned attitudes themselves, which might act as counterpoints to their other epistemic attitudes. For example, perhaps without the imaginary of orientalism an American might feel sympathy for the family of a civilian casualty, which

97   While this could be analysed as part of the social imaginary of orientalism, I prefer to analyse the imaginary as involving imaginings, and I do not see knowledge ascription as an imagining.

98   Tirman, *The Deaths of Others*, 345-346.

99   Tirman, *The Deaths of Others*, 346-347

100   Medina gives arguments for why imaginaries and meta-attitudes generally cause meta-blindness, which I have drawn on for my specific claims here (Medina, *Epistemology of Resistance*, 82, 149, 306).

101   Medina, *Epistemology of Resistance*, 70, 75.

would challenge their belief that "that killing was, on balance, justified." The unimaginability of sensitive attitudes can also distort Americans' interpretations of epistemic counterpoints that others articulate. Imagine someone expresses the belief that a civilian casualty was unjust. Such concern is incompatible with the orientalist imaginary, so it might be distorted for someone living under that imaginary – they might see it as a mere expression of the speaker's sadness about their day, rather than a claim about the world. Thus, the imaginaries preclude Americans from experiencing concerned attitudes (whether held by themselves or others) which would challenge their insensitivity. This makes them unable to acknowledge that their beliefs and emotions are insensitive, rendering them meta-blind.

Even if Americans did experience epistemic counterpoints, however, their imaginaries and meta-attitudes would diminish the counterpoints' ability to make them aware of their limitations. This is because these structures distort Americans' judgments of which attitudes are sensitive and which insensitive. I have argued that knowledge hierarchies engender first-order insensitivity by justifying unconcerned attitudes, but this justification also entrenches meta-blindness by making Americans see their insensitive attitudes as sensitive.[102] According to these meta-attitudes, unconcerned attitudes are correct or fitting since they accord with American "expertise" and are not blinded by "inferior" forms of knowledge. The imaginaries similarly justify unconcerned attitudes. The frontier myth renders unconcerned beliefs and emotions about civilian casualties sensitive, since they correctly respond to the properties of American moral regeneration, and are not blinded by considerations irrelevant to the expansion of the frontier. Deep concern is an insensitive attitude towards civilian casualties according to the orientalist imaginary, on which civilians are unworthy of respect and lack the individuality which might give special value to their lives. According to this imaginary, callous attitudes, rather than concerned ones, correctly perceive the properties of civilian casualties. Thus, these imaginaries and meta-attitudes make Americans see their unconcerned attitudes, which are insensitive, as sensitive. These are incorrect attitudes towards

102   I am using "sensitive" in a technical sense here to mean correct belief or fitting emotion, and Americans would likely not describe their attitudes with this word. My point is that they see attitudes which are in fact incorrect beliefs or unfitting emotions as correct or fitting.

their beliefs and emotions about civilian casualties, and thus constitute meta-blindness.

3. Combatting Insensitivity

I have claimed that American citizens are meta-blind with respect to their insensitivity to civilian casualties, and that this meta-blindness is rooted in the dominant imaginaries of orientalism and the frontier myth, as well as the meta-attitudes of orientalist knowledge hierarchies. I will now show how this analysis suggests ways in which insensitivity should be combatted. I will first outline two seemingly intuitive strategies for combatting insensitivity, which do not target meta-blindness or background epistemic structures: highlighting insensitivity and presenting sensitive attitudes. I will then argue that such strategies are inadequate, and background epistemic structures and meta-blindness must be directly targeted. I will suggest strategies that directly target each of these. Epistemic structures can be challenged by utilising different imaginaries and meta-attitudes, while meta-blindness can be challenged by engendering comparison of different epistemic perspectives. I will give concrete examples of these strategies from the MoMA's exhibition "Theater of Operations: The Gulf Wars 1991-2011".[103]

An intuitive way of combatting American insensitivity focuses on first-order insensitive attitudes without regard to their background epistemic structures or Americans' meta-blindness. Two strategies which do this are highlighting insensitivity and presenting sensitive attitudes. Imagine that someone expresses a callous attitude towards a civilian casualty like "their life wasn't worth much". Highlighting insensitivity involves telling the speaker that what they said was insensitive, for example by saying "that's quite callous of you". Presenting a sensitive attitude involves exhibiting a concerned attitude towards the casualties, for example saying "that attack was horrific".

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103   I have not seen this exhibition in person, and my knowledge of it is from the following sources: "Theater of Operations: The Gulf Wars 1991-2011," MoMA, accessed June 10, 2020, https://www.moma.org/calendar/exhibitions/5084; Tim Arango and Jason Farago, "These Artists Refuse to Forget the Wars in Iraq," *New York Times*, November 14, 2019; Neil MacFarquhar, "Mourning Iraq's Destruction, a Native Son Creates," *New York Times*, December 31, 2019; Eleni Zaras, "New York City's MoMA PS1 "Gulf Wars" Exhibition Caught in Crossfire," *The Washington Report on Middle East Affairs* 39, no. 3 (2020): 48-50.

These methods, while effective to some extent, are insufficient as a complete strategy for combatting American insensitivity, since forms of insensitivity may remain in the face of such challenges unless epistemic structures and meta-blindness are directly targeted. If Americans' epistemic structures are not targeted, the challenges identified above will often be unimaginable or unjustified to them. As previously identified, Americans often interpret sensitive attitudes incorrectly due to the imaginaries' distortions. Even if sensitive attitudes can be correctly interpreted, they might be written off as insensitive since meta-attitudes and imaginaries distort judgments of sensitivity and insensitivity. Similarly, highlighting insensitivity might be ineffective, as the insensitive subject might think that their attitude is not insensitive – they're not callous, they're having a clear-thinking reaction to a justified killing. Because of these ways in which insensitivities can remain in the face of first-order challenges to insensitivity, orientalism and the frontier myth must be directly targeted. Because I analysed them as imaginaries and meta-attitudes, I can avail myself of Medina's strategy for combatting such epistemic structures. This is the strategy of challenging epistemic structures from different epistemic structures that Americans may access.

Recall that subjects in dominant imaginaries are not wholly stuck there, but can enter different imaginaries. Alternative social imaginaries can challenge the dominant one.[104] For example, perhaps certain American citizens can enter a pacifist imaginary and see the world through its lens. This might lead them to outrage at civilian casualties. Nonetheless, alternative imaginaries might be inaccessible to one who is stuck within a dominant imaginary that renders the contents of alternative imaginaries unimaginable or unjustified. The frontier myth renders it unimaginable that peace could be sustained, because that would end the frontier myth.[105] Therefore, subjects who inhabit the frontier myth might be unable to inhabit a pacifist imaginary. This means that resistance from within a different dominant imaginary could be necessary.[106] For example, Dia al-Azzawi's painting "Mission of Destruction" directly challenges the frontier myth by drawing

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104   Medina, *Epistemology of Resistance*, 257

105   Tirman, *The Deaths of Others*, 366.

106   Medina "Racial violence", 32-33.

on Picasso's "Guernica" (American troops are on the right, Iraqis on the left):[107]

Dia al-Azzawi, "Mission of Destruction"

"Guernica" is not a dominant imaginary in American society as a whole, but it is in the context of a modern art gallery. This painting uses this imaginary to frame American troops not as saviours or as engaging in regenerative violence, but as engaging in violence equivalent to the horrifying violence of "Guernica". This uses a different dominant imaginary which people in the art gallery inhabit ("Guernica") to challenge the frontier myth.

Similar strategies can be used to challenge meta-attitudes. Challenges can come from meta-attitudes the subject doesn't currently possess, but can come to possess, such as meta-attitudes which privilege local knowledge over American "expertise". Alternatively, challenges can come from a different meta-attitude the subject currently possesses, for example using the meta-attitude of empiricism to challenge the meta-attitude of privileging American expertise, as this expertise gets things empirically wrong (for example, being wrong about what will be politically stabilising). Thus, combatting Americans'

107   MacFarquhar, "Mourning Iraq's Destruction."

insensitivity requires directly targeting background epistemic structures, and my analysis of their insensitivity suggests doing this by challenging Americans' epistemic structures from different epistemic structures they can access.

Combatting insensitivity to civilian casualties also requires targeting meta-blindness directly. Combatting meta-blindness involves creating an awareness of first-order insensitivities.[108] For Americans, this would be an awareness of their inability to have certain beliefs about and affective attitudes towards civilian casualties. In order to ensure that Americans overcome insensitivities in new contexts that generate new insensitivities, Americans must be vigilant about checking their epistemic limitations and seeking out alternative perspectives that might correct those limitations. These habits can be fostered by combatting meta-blindness to make them aware that they have limitations. It might be that some level of awareness of limitations is achieved by highlighting insensitivities and presenting sensitivities, since one might become humbler upon being corrected. This is by no means guaranteed, however. We should therefore consider strategies which try to directly combat meta-blindness.

The strategy Medina proposes for combatting meta-blindness is encouraging people to compare different epistemic perspectives with their own.[109] Through a comparison of sensitive and insensitive perspectives on civilian casualties, insensitive subjects can become more aware of their epistemic limitations. If an American compares their perspective on civilian casualties with an Iraqi's, the more concerned attitudes in the latter than in the former are highlighted. The American might thereby realise that such concern is sensitive, and their absence of concern is insensitive.[110] "Theater of Operations" encourages its audience to engage in such comparison. It contains works by both Western and non-Western artists, including artists from Iraq and Kuwait, allowing comparison not merely between cognitive perspectives, but affective ones as well, insofar as these perspectives are expressed in emotionally

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108   Medina, *Epistemology of Resistance*, 186-190.

109   Medina, *Epistemology of Resistance*, 199-201.

110   I acknowledge that this strategy is limited insofar as many of the perspectives presented for comparison with the American one will be distorted or rendered insensitive by Americans' background epistemic structures. The two strategies I have proposed in this section should therefore

charged artworks.[111] For example, many works focus on media representations of the Gulf War. Michel Auder's "Gulf War TV War" plays footage from contemporary news broadcasts.[112]

Michel Auder, "Gulf War TV War"

These images depict the war as, in Tim Arango's words, "a sanitized… war without a lot of casualties".[113] They convey the dominant epistemic perspective, and it is insensitive to civilian casualties. The work also conveys Auder's perspective, which criticises the dominant perspective without showing what that perspective misses. Yet the exhibition also contains works from Iraqi artists which present sensitive attitudes that the dominant perspective misses. Hanaa Malallah's "She / He Has No Picture" is a series of portraits of the victims of a US bomb strike that killed 400 people in the Amiriyah shelter.[114]

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111   Arango and Farago, "These Artists Refuse to Forget," and Zaras, "Exhibition Caught in Crossfire," 48-50 mention this comparison of perspectives.

112   Arango and Farago, "These Artists Refuse to Forget".

113   Arango and Farago, "These Artists Refuse to Forget".

114   Arango and Farago, "These Artists Refuse to Forget".

Hanaa Malallah, "She/He Has No Picture"

The texture of these paintings is disrupted, making it seem like they are disintegrating. This disintegration is juxtaposed with the often lively, smiling faces, conveying a great sense of loss.[115] Mallalah's works mourns these casualties, and this is a sensitive attitude towards them. Considered alone, Auder's work and Malallah's highlight an insensitivity and present a sensitivity, respectively. The exhibition as a whole, however, allows for direct comparison of Malallah's sensitive perspective with the perspective of the American media, promoting awareness of the absence of concern in the latter perspective. Viewers can also compare it with Auder's critical perspective, seeing that Auder does not perceive what is missed by the dominant perspective and acknowledging this as a blind spot in Auder's perspective.

4. Conclusion

American citizens are meta-blind with respect to their insensitivity to civilian casualties: they do not know that they are insensitive. Their insensitivity is rooted in the dominant social imaginaries of orientalism and the frontier myth, as well as in the meta-attitude of orientalist knowledge hierarchies. This means Americans are likely meta-blind, since these epistemic structures prevent them from engaging with epistemic counterpoints that would make them aware that they

115   This analysis is inspired by John Farago's in Arango and Farago, "These Artists Refuse to Forget".

are insensitive, and distort their judgments of which attitudes are sensitive and which insensitive.

Identifying the role of imaginaries, meta-attitudes, and meta-blindness in American insensitivity has implications for how insensitivity should be combatted. Effectively combatting insensitivity requires directly targeting Americans' meta-blindness and their background epistemic structures. I thus suggest two strategies for combatting insensitivity –– comparing differing epistemic perspectives to combat meta-blindness, and using different epistemic structures Americans can access to challenge the epistemic structures of orientalism and the frontier myth.

I have provided a novel analysis of Americans' insensitivity to civilian casualties, and suggested novel ways for combatting this insensitivity. The effectiveness of various strategies is not settled by the arguments I have presented, and interdisciplinary empirical work needs to be done to determine which strategies are the most effective. Finding the best strategy possible is necessary for producing the moral-epistemic and political benefits of combatting insensitivity to civilian casualties.

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