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Foreword from the President

Presented here is a collection of philosophical writings, which serve as a testament to the vibrant intellectual curiosity cultivated at our university. While our program may be small in number, it overflows with potential. I extend sincere gratitude to Professors Scott Squires and Dr. Don Viney for their invaluable mentorship and guidance. They are two of the most brilliant and caring people that I have had the pleasure to know. I thank Addy Campbell, whose artistic talents grace our cover and seal design. Her passion for all she does is obvious and admirable. To all who came before me in cultivating this academic forum, and those who will serve as future caretakers, I am deeply grateful. As Editor-in-Chief and President of the PSU Philosophical Society, I have the great honor of presenting the 17th edition of Logos-Sophia

- R. Elliott Norman

A Philosopher Remembered: James (Jim) McBain (1971 – 2021)

-Donald Wayne Viney

Jim McBain passed away peacefully at home on October 13, 2021, after a year-long struggle with ALS. He was 50 years old (born July 9, 1971). He was surrounded by his family—his wife, Rhona Shand McBain, his sister and brother-in-law, Janice and Jerry Kenkel, his nephew, Steven Kenkel, and his mother, Elizabeth Irene McBain. He was preceded in death by his father, James Francis McBain Sr. He had no children.

Jim had two undergraduate degrees, one in psychology from Truman State University (1994) and one in philosophy from the University of Missouri-St. Louis (1996). He took the M.A. (2002) and Ph.D. (2008) in philosophy at the University of Missouri at Columbia. His graduate work focused on the role of intuitions in philosophical theorizing. His Master's thesis is titled "The Role of Theory Contamination in Intuitions"; his dissertation is titled "Philosophical Analysis - Philosophical Intuitions." He taught part-time and as an instructor at Pittsburg State University from 2002 to 2008. He also taught courses for Kansas State University at the Salina campus from 2003 to 2005. In 2008 he was awarded a tenure-track position at Pittsburg State University, where he taught until his passing. He had risen through the ranks from Assistant Professor (2008), to Associate Professor (2013), and finally to Full Professor (2018).

The unusual chemistry of Jim's personality and interests included, among other things, a passion for philosophy, a penchant for video games, skill at cooking, love of dogs, a sharp wit, a gregarious nature, a lack of ego, and a generosity of spirit. He adored the give-and-take of the classroom where he was a master educator. During a meeting to consider his tenure, one of his colleagues commented to the chair of the committee, "If you should hire another one—an additional philosopher—get a clone of Jim."

I had the privilege for nineteen years of teaming with Jim to teach the philosophy courses at PSU in the department of History, Philosophy, and Social Sciences. There is no hyperbole in saying he was very simply an ideal colleague and a trusted good friend. Our different approaches to philosophy were a study in contrast, a kind of yin and yang of philosophical companionship.My mentor was Charles Hartshorne, who talked a lot about God, while Jim admired W. V. O. Quine, who was almost completely silent on the topic; Hartshorne saw value in the formalisms of modal logic, while Quine thought they were mostly linguistic confusions.

I considered Jim more of a pure philosopher than I am since I often get sidetracked into the history of ideas and religious studies. But Jim, a tireless advocate for liberal education, encouraged this. Prior to his joining the department as a tenure-earning faculty member, I taught World Religions once every two years. When Jim came, he suggested that I teach the class every semester and become what he called "the religion guy." After that, I usually taught the course twice every semester while Jim did the heavy lifting for ethics and epistemology. We shared courses in the introduction to philosophy, logic and the history of philosophy. At his instigation, we created new courses and students were offered a much wider, and more diverse, menu from which to choose. Jim's intelligence was almost always spiced with a grin. When *300* was in theaters, I complained that it presented a cartoonish version of the Spartans and Persians at Thermopylae. Jim's way of agreeing was to say that the two of us should "get buff and fight for freedom and reason." As for "reason," Jim knew of my love of formal logic, so he bought me a bumper sticker—the only one I've ever put on my car—which reads, "Honk iff you love formal logic." The inside joke is that philosophers use "iff" to abbreviate "if and only if," signifying a biconditional: "Honk if you love formal logic and if you love formal logic, honk." I don't think anyone ever honked at me on account of that.

Jim exhibited a healthy irreverence for great philosophers. He said that reading Immanuel Kant is like following stereo instructions. Not long after Jim began teaching at PSU, I invited him to a lecture I was giving on Kant. As I discussed

Kant's antinomies of reason as a possible crowning proof of his transcendental philosophy, I heard Jim coughing. Then I realized that he was making a philosophical point. He was coughing out the words "affirming the consequent" indicating that the argument, as I had presented it, committed the formal fallacy of affirming the consequent! *He was correct*. This persuaded me to clarify that the antinomies are, *at best*, a consequence of, or perhaps a confirmation of, Kant's claims about the limits of pure reason. Jim always had his finger on the pulse of current philosophy. He knew what was trending, which topics were most often read and discussed, which famous philosopher had died, and which philosophy departments were in danger of being shut down or pruned because of administrative ignorance or supposed financial exigencies. We often reflected on our very different styles of philosophizing. Jim characterized the difference by saying that I approach philosophical arguments with a scalpel, whereas he preferred a cleaver—he would make a swinging motion with his arm, as if cutting a piece of meat. This anecdote illustrates another aspect of Jim: his self-deprecating humor. He related being at a symposium with some high-powered philosopher and added, "I was in the corner playing with a slinky." Jim's expression for getting the worst of a philosophical disagreement was "asshandage"—as in, "There was a lot of asshandage at that meeting." No one was fooled by such self-effacement. I saw Jim interact with seasoned philosophers. At one conference, he quizzed the speaker about probability theory and pareto optimality and *I* was the one in the corner playing with a slinky.

In March 2006, we attended a Wesleyan Philosophical Society meeting in Kansas City. We had come to *practice* philosophy, not merely to hear people report their opinions. Perhaps this is why we got a reputation at the conference for being a sort of tag-team, pressing speakers to probe metaphysical questions (usually from me) and epistemological questions (usually from Jim). We endeavored to display the attitude that our respective educations in philosophy had instilled in us—to disagree agreeably. I recall the final session. Jim and I were sitting in different parts of the room and the young man delivering the

talk kept looking at us, his eyes darting back and forth. During the question-and-answer period, Jim raised his hand. The speaker rolled his eyes, smiled nervously, and intoned, "I *knew* you'd have a question."

Jim believed that philosophers should strive to solve problems, not just talk about them. For this reason, he had a keen interest in what came to be called "experimental philosophy." I might have dismissed this as an oxymoron, were it not for Jim's enthusiasm. I now understand how useful it can be to ask whether the intuitions behind famous philosophical thought-experiments are culturally relative; the trolley problem, so humorously depicted in the television series *The Good Place*, is an excellent example. I know that Jim enjoyed that episode. Indeed, he was able to take an adolescent's joy in incongruities, as in the playful title of one of his published articles, "Should I Let My Zombie-Wife Eat My Brains?: Navigating a Messy Moral Question."

The closest that Jim and I came to collaborating on a publication was when we each wrote a review of Richard Dawkins' best seller, *The God Delusion* for *The Midwest Quarterly*. (Two other reviews appeared side-by-side with ours.) Neither Jim nor I was impressed by the book. I thought Dawkins did not engage the best forms of theism, spent too much energy tilting at creationist windmills, and, inexplicably for a champion of evolution, did not take seriously enough developmental perspectives in religion and theology. Jim criticized Dawkins for not understanding that an account of the origin of our moral sense is not perforce an explanation of the normative or binding force of morality. In addition, Jim accused Dawkins of "raging bluster, and bad arguments." Jim closed his review by saying, "this atheist is mad as hell" that Dawkins failed to make a better case for atheism. I agree with Jim's critique and, as far as I could tell, he agreed with mine.

Jim described himself as an anti-realist about morals. In the 1970s, J. L. Mackie, referred to moral properties (e.g. goodness and badness) as "queer," noting their differences from physical properties (e.g. weight, solidity, etc.). Jim used the word "spooky." One of his mottos was, "No spooky shit," which helps

to explain why he kept religion at arm's length. I never thought to ask whether the motto itself was spooky. In any event, he showed me Terence Cuneo's refutation of anti-realism in his book *The Normative Web: An Argument for Moral Realism* (Oxford 2007), which draws a parallel between values as they pertain to morality and as they pertain to knowledge. Cuneo's argument is neatly laid out in the way Jim always preferred, with premises and conclusion clearly specified. He saw that the argument is formally valid, and the premises seemed unassailable. Jim joked, "There *must* be something wrong with this argument!" This was funny enough, but I also found irony in the fact that Jim was one of the most morally conscientious persons I have ever known.

Jim invariably behaved as though those "spooky" moral properties were real. I doubt that he could do otherwise while serving as co-chair of the medical ethics committee for Ascension Via Christi hospital in Pittsburg. But I saw Jim's moral qualities at work in other ways. While I endured a painful divorce, I felt Jim's strong support. When I moved to a new residence, Jim organized a small party of students to help. He also offered to teach me to cook saying this skill might come in handy in my future relations with women. Finally, he suggested that I could gain some distance on my problems—*literal* distance, as it happens—by traveling with him in 2008 to South Korea on a university sponsored tour. Jim had taken that trip once before. I am happy I followed his advice; among other things, it brought me face-to-face, for the first time, with far eastern culture.

When Jim first revealed to me in early January 2021 in a telephone conversation that he had been diagnosed with ALS, he was most upset by how this would affect Rhona. His voice cracked and I could tell he was on the verge of tears thinking about the trials that awaited her because of his condition. He also wanted to talk about the future of the philosophy program and whether our former student, Scott Squires, might be hired. He knew that I was not far from retirement and that sustaining a philosophy minor— PSU has no philosophy major—with one person is a challenge. It seemed to me that his own welfare was not his foremost concern. I heard no self-pity whatsoever in that conversation. He hastened his

end by adamantly refusing heroic measures such as a feeding tube and help with breathing—he said he did not want any "false hope." I admired his courage in facing death as I had admired his embrace of life's fulness.

In Plato's *Phaedo*, Socrates says that philosophy is a preparation for dying and for death. I do not know what Jim thought about this, but he was in no way morbid. He certainly knew what he was about philosophically, and he had considered the grand question of the meaning of life. In the last couple of years, he had been studying and teaching about the Stoics and the Epicureans. Here again, he was using philosophy to solve problems, in this case, the problems of how best to live one's life. He never preached these philosophies to me, but I learned from his example—as the weakness of his body increased, the strength of his character became ever more evident.

Jim never mastered the art of self-promotion. He seemed to write his promotion dossiers under protest. Against my advice, he insisted on *not* mentioning his charitable work with Special Olympics. I suppose he considered it in the same category as boasting about one's humility. A few months before his death, he began to give away his library. He also explained to Scott and me that he had taken a publication of his out of the departmental display case because he was trying to "erase" his life. I replied that he would not succeed as long as I was living. He might even disapprove of these words that I write in his honor and memory, for he did not want a memorial service. I doubt that this was Jim trying to tell people how to grieve. It is yet another instance, so typical of him, of avoiding the spotlight, even after death. For my part, I'll be true to my word to remember the man, as well as to promote his memory for everything that made him truly memorable.

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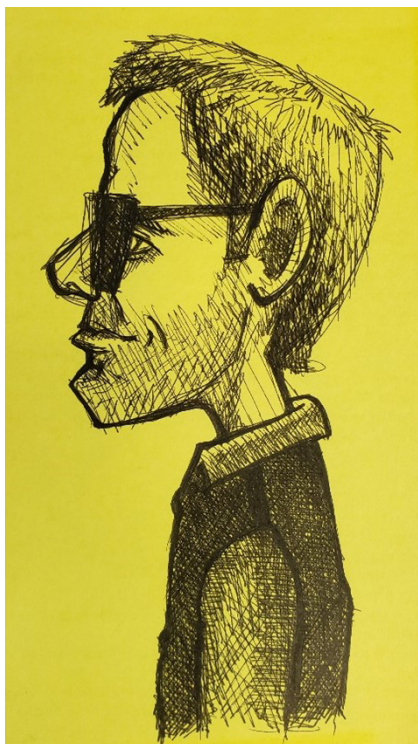
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Jim McBain next to portrait of David Hume

Jim McBain and Don Viney, Jan. 2004

Jim McBain with Don Viney's dog Toby

Portrait by Rhona Shand McBain

Should We Cancel Aristotle?
-R. Elliott Norman

Introduction

Aristotle's influence on the course of civilization cannot be overstated. Humanity is on an ever progressing path in the pursuit of knowledge, and Aristotle made invaluable contributions. His theories have left a lasting impression on Western philosophy and have had an impact on a variety of disciplines, including politics, biology, and physics. His emphasis on reason, logic, and observation as the basis of knowledge influenced the development of the scientific method and provided the foundation for much of contemporary science. Likewise, his theories on ethics and politics are still studied and discussed today, and many modern thinkers have drawn from them to create their own theories.

Though Aristotle made groundbreaking contributions that withstood the test of time, modern knowledge has also revealed the egregious mistakes and prejudices that infected many of his views. In his writing he strongly defended slavery as natural and just and believed women to be inherently inferior to men (Aristotle and Rackham 1994). Over the past several years, previously valorized historical figures have had their moral characters called into question based on their now out-dated beliefs and actions. For example, Christopher Columbus was highly celebrated in the United States just twenty years ago but now more and more institutions are beginning to recognize his extreme moral failings and reconsider his place in American mythology. While it may be tempting to dismiss Aristotle as just another dead, immoral bigot, it is worthwhile to analyze why he held these beliefs and what they reveal about his character.

There seems to be a significant disconnect between how contemporary society views the moral and scientific failings of historical people. Today, Aristotle is most heavily criticized for his social prescriptions, but he was incorrect about a variety of subjects. For example, Aristotle studied physics but did not understand relativity or gravity, nor did he know about evolution while studying biology. This raises the question - should incorrect

ethical and social statements be judged harsher than incorrect scientific statements? To properly address this question, we need to first examine the ethical framework put forth by Aristotle.

Virtue Ethics

The ethical system proposed by Aristotle is based on the principles of virtue and *eudaimonia*. Aristotle believed that most things we pursue are not the final goal in themselves, but rather a way of getting to something greater (Aristotle and Rackham 1959). For example, one does not pursue money for its own sake. By itself, money is useless. The reason we desire money is because of its ability to be exchanged for commodities. These commodities are also only pursued as a means. There is only one thing that we desire for its own sake and that is *eudaimonia*. *Eudaimonia* is a Greek word which translates literally to "good spirit", but is best understood as happiness or flourishing. According to Aristotle, people are able to achieve *eudaimonia* through living a virtuous life. Aristotle argues that *eudaimonia* is not merely the possession of virtue, but the exercising of virtue as well (Aristotle and Rackham 1959). Acting virtuously is the function of a human, the same way cutting is the function of a knife. A knife which is "happy" is a knife that is sharp. But the sharpness of the knife is meaningless if the knife is never used to cut. For the knife to truly be "happy" it must exercise its sharpness to fulfill its function. A sharp knife which never cuts might as well be dull.

Aristotle asserts that acting virtuously is rational. Virtue is considered to be the function of humans because rationality is something that is unique to them (Aristotle and Rackham 1959). If we are to find Aristotle immoral by his own standard, we must demonstrate that his actions were irrational, and therefore unvirtuous.

Were Aristotle's beliefs about slavery and women rational? Slavery was a common practice in ancient Greece, and it was thought that some people were suited for servitude by nature. This viewpoint was founded on the notion that some people were born with innate characteristics that made them better suited for particular social roles, and that people's social standing was influenced by their inherent skills and characteristics. Aristotle's

belief that some people were "born slaves" and lacked the ability to think critically and govern themselves was in line with the predominant ideas of his time (Aristotle and Rackham 1994). In his view, the people who were born slaves could only be virtuous, and therefore happy if they fulfilled their slave function. The same could be said with women. Aristotle posits that women lacked the "deliberative element" and were able to perceive the rationality of others, but were not capable of rationality themselves (Aristotle and Rackham 1994).

Categories of Knowledge

There seems to be a contradiction in Aristotle's logic. He states that women have the capacity for virtuousness and not rationality, but he also claims that virtuousness is inherently rational. One way to reconcile this apparent contradiction is to recognize that Aristotle believed there were different kinds of rationality and knowledge. In Nicomachean Ethics, Aristotle identified three types of knowledge: *episteme*, *techne* and *phronesis*. *Episteme* can be thought of as scientific knowledge like the laws of motion or principles of logic. *Techne* is technical knowledge like the ability to repair a car or play the piano. *Phronesis* transcends *episteme* and *techne*. It is practical wisdom, concerned with the ability to make judgments about what is right and what is wrong (Aristotle and Rackham 1959). According to Aristotle, women are capable of practical reason (*phronesis*), which enables them to make wise decisions in their daily lives. He didn't think, though, that they were capable of the same kind of theoretical rationality (*episteme*) that men were, which was required for philosophical inquiry and abstract thought (Aristotle and Rackham 1994). *Episteme* and *phronesis* can also be characterized as constituting the difference between declarative knowledge of 'what is' versus prescriptive discernment of 'what ought' to be done. While Aristotle places ethics in the category of *phronesis*, it may actually also fit into the field of *episteme* if we are to think of ethics as 'the science of happiness'. Aristotle believed that one ought to be moral for the same reason we do everything else: the pursuit of happiness. It is the goal of ethical theories to establish general guidelines or moral standards

that can be used to judge what is good or bad behavior. If this state of *eudaimonia* is truly what all people desire, then one could conceivably use the scientific method to find what acts, dispositions, rules, and values maximize *eudaimonia*. The traits that lead to this state of *eudaimonia* can be distilled down into virtues that people are taught to uphold. Even if moral facts are able to be discovered through an empirical process, *phronesis* is still necessary for them to be useful. For example, the statement: "theft is immoral" is meaningless without the claim "people ought to only do what is moral".

The only statement Aristotle made that genuinely qualifies as *phronesis*, is his view that one ought to behave in a way that leads to *eudaimonia* . Everything else can be distilled into *episteme.* For example, the statement "one ought to act virtuously " can just be reduced to "acting virtuously will lead to *eudaimonia"*. The claims Aristotle made concerning slavery and female intelligence were also attempts at producing episteme knowledge. Even the claim that slavery can be virtuous is just a descriptive claim that is downstream from Aristotle's axiom. Because his ethical and social views are fundamentally the same type of knowledge as his scientific claims, they must be judged with the same weight. They should not be viewed as personal moral failings but rather flawed conclusions drawn from imperfect data. Aristotle lived in a society where women were hardly ever formally educated and slaves were stuck in roles of servitude, separated from intellectual pursuits. It is possible that he never met a woman or slave that had demonstrated what he believed to be the bar for producing episteme knowledge. Aristotle can not be blamed for not knowing that these people had the capacity for *episteme* rationality. If someone spends their whole life watching caterpillars, but never sees them metamorphosize, they can not be blamed for not knowing it is the caterpillar's nature to turn into a butterfly.

Conclusion

While Aristotle's contributions to philosophy and science were immense, it is clear that many of his views reflected the biases and limitations of his time. His beliefs about the innate inferiority of women and justification of slavery stemmed from

the norms and practices of ancient Greek society. However, these views should not simply be dismissed as the antiquated moral failings of an individual. Rather, they indicate gaps in Aristotle's data and experience that led him to draw flawed conclusions about entire groups of people.

Ultimately, Aristotle's ethical and social claims operated on the same logical principles and pursuit of truth as his groundbreaking work in other fields. His mistaken views reflect the difficulty of producing episteme knowledge about complex human affairs from limited perspectives. While Aristotle laid crucial foundations for Western thought, no single philosopher transcends the knowledge and attitudes of their era. Intellectual progress depends on continually reevaluating even our most esteemed thinkers in light of new evidence, diverse experiences, and evolving moral standards. We must neither uncritically exalt historical figures nor simplistically condemn them. Their ideas must be analyzed on their own philosophical merits while also situating them within the larger arc of humanity's imperfect but persistent march toward greater knowledge and justice.

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Aristotle and Abraham Maslow: A Comparison of Philosophies

-Addyson K. Campbell

Introduction

From the beginning of history, people of discovery have struggled to encapsulate the essential features of a well-adjusted, competent, fulfilled human being and the mind that it possesses. Many disciplines across time have provided a plethora of explanations – with or without proposed solutions – relating their understanding of the nature and functioning of humans through biological assertions, allegorical prose, religious writings, philosophical propositions, and, more recently, psychological theories. A discussion of such importance must be approached according to the many different disciplines, rather than through the specifics of one, and using materials regardless of their expression in time. This paper will be a comparative work analyzing Aristotle's philosophical approach to human nature and its flourishing in the *Politics* along with the works of the 20th century psychologist, Abraham Maslow, that express the human process that he deemed "Self-Actualization" or the "Hierarchy of Needs". (Francis & Kritsonis, 2006)

Maslow's Hierarchy

Maslow's hierarchy of needs classified the following five tiers in order of needs to be met first to the needs that can only be met at last: physiological needs, safety, love (belonging), esteem, and self-actualization. (Davis, 2023) While Maslow did state that lower-level needs must be satisfied before moving up to the next level need, he clarified that this progression is not an "all-or-none" phenomenon. (McLeod, 2007) This clarification is to state that certain base level needs may not have to be met at 100% capacity to qualify moving on to the next level, but instead, that need can be "more or less satisfied" for the individual to progress on to the next salient need. (McLeod, 2007) A similar consideration involves the progression of persons through these need-tiers. As opposed to a lateral progression in one direction, any person can move among

the proposed stages as life progresses and needs become met or unmet. (McLeod, 2007) Now that these presuppositions have been addressed, each stage of Maslow's hierarchy will be directly compared to the structure that Aristotle proposed for human life and flourishing.

Physiological Needs

Maslow described the first tier in the hierarchy of needs, human physiological needs, as a compilation of the following features: "breathing, food, water, sex, sleep, homeostasis, [and] excretion." (Davis, 2023) This list of needs must be met for the human body to maintain optimal functioning. (McLeod, 2007) Every other need that Maslow outlines falls secondary to these basic physiological needs. In the first book of Aristotle's *Politics,* he spends much time delving into the intricacies of relationships within a household. (Heinemann, 1944) The partnership he reveals that such persons who enter it cannot function without their other counterpart are male and female relationships and master and slave relationships. The male-female relationship substantiates Maslow's physiological need for sexual relationship or release. While Aristotle outlines a master-slave relationship in a much different understanding than any person reading this paper would today (in such a way that a slave has the inherent nature to be ruled over and is an instrument for the betterment of the master and his household), this master-slave relationship in relation to running a household would likely ensure the satisfaction of the basic physiological needs that Maslow outlines. Aristotle concedes that managing the household is an essential component of a healthy life that "without the necessaries even life, as well as the good life, is impossible." (Heinemann, 1944)

Safety Needs

The second tier of Maslow's hierarchy concerns an individual's safety. On first consideration, this may only seem like the direct physical safety of any person, but it can also relate to an individual's perceived safety. (Raz, 2019) This is one of the needs that can be unearthed in Aristotle's work in a much more subtle distinction. The inherent nature of men and how that nature flourishes best in being connected to a larger grouping than the

household (namely, a city) is enunciated by the first book of the *Politics.* Aristotle boldly asserts that "a man who is incapable of entering into partnership, or who is so self-sufficing that he has no need to do so, is no part of a state, so that he must be either a lower animal or a god." (Heinemann, 1944) While this claim may seem like it has more to do with the next tier of Maslow's hierarchy, belonging, it can provide a pointing insight into the basic formation of cities. An indispensable piece of information that can further this insight relays the structure of studied environments that were found to be insecure. Fundamentally insecure environments contain fewer complex systems of almost everything. They consist of much smaller communities and very short-range plans for any kind of development or structure. (Raz, 2019) Herein lies a revealed component of the quote from Aristotle – a person that has no need of a city has either achieved some level of "god-likeness" in self-sufficiency, security, and stability or that person must be a "lower animal", not fulfilling their capacity in stability and security, much like the insecure lifestyle of an animal that is slave to the will of its ecosystem, predators, and prey. Another important note, Aristotle places the highest good on pursuing virtue and eudaimonia (happiness, well-being, flourishing). Such concepts are unable to be pursued in an insecure environment and as a "lower animal" because they are in no way immediately relevant to any short-range plans.

Love and Belonging Needs

As aforementioned, the third tiered need of Maslow's hierarchy details love and belonging. This need of socialization and interpersonal relationship motivates behavior. (McLeod, 2007) Again, Aristotle places a severe emphasis on the family unit – that a male-female relationship is a functional need of every individual. (Heinemann, 1944) He also recognizes the prominent relationship between father and child. In another sense of belonging, Aristotle posits that, without a city, people are the worst kinds of humans since we are able to function at our best when participating in life in the city. Individuals can then depend on the specialized work of many other people cooperating to live well. This environment Aristotle proposes is bound to foster a deep sense of

connectedness, partnership, and, therefore, belonging.

Esteem Needs

Esteem is the fourth category of human needs which Maslow divided into two categories: "esteem for oneself and the desire for reputation or respect from others." (Davis, 2023) In *Politics,* Aristotle names the individuals who are unable to elevate themselves or spend time in study as the "vulgar". These individuals cannot really contribute as citizens because they have no time to develop themselves because they must support themselves with work. Individuals who qualify to be a citizen have leisure time which they use to dedicate to philosophical pursuits and politics. Pursuing philosophy would fall under the first category of esteem (for oneself) and political pursuits could be classified in the second category of esteem (the desire for respect). Aristotle made the claim that the best rulers would do so out of necessity, rather than to fulfill a selfish desire, in this case, for respect. His research did conclude that the regimes that people would rule for self-interest could last for quite some time. In fact, he was able to formulate information that would help these "flawed" systems continue to run. All of this to say, the people whom Aristotle would have given the title citizen would have been in the process of developing esteem.

Self-Actualization Needs

The final and most evasive set of needs in Maslow's Hierarchy is the needs of self-actualization. This set of needs has also been labeled "peak human experience" and "selfless actualization". (Davis, 2023) Someone who would be considered self-actualized would example behavior of problem solving for the majority in the desire to make unacceptable situations better, crafting systems that have a positive impact on others, and the belief in equality and fairness for every individual. Self-actualization provokes behaviors that focus on the well-being of others through voluntary actions. (Davis, 2023) All of these descriptive characteristics are eerily similar to the definitions that Aristotle would provide for the characteristics of a virtuous individual. The highest good – as mentioned earlier – that could be achieved would be virtue (which would in turn lead to

eudaimonia). Exemplified characteristics of virtue that Aristotle mentions in the *Politics* include generosity, service for the common good, the pursuit of knowledge and politics, the management of human desires, and above all, one who seeks to fulfill his "telos" or ultimate fulfillment or purpose. To make a direct comparison and quote Maslow, self-actualization can be summarized as "a desire

'to become everything one is capable of becoming.'" (McLeod, 2007) There is not any other way to state more clearly that Aristotle and Maslow were unified in composing what they defined as the highest attainable good for human nature.
Though Aristotle and Maslow existed two millennia apart from one another and were defined by differing disciplines in their academia, both were able to assert such similar philosophy on the nature of humanity and its function. Both men had completely different intentions while writing their work - Aristotle for the informing of political philosophy and Maslow for a theory of behavioral motivations. Both men were able to ground their assertions in the displays of observed humanity and propose what needed to be done to produce the greatest amount of good for each individual and for the whole of society.

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All's Well That Ends Well: A Critique of Aristotelian Teleology

-Keith Perkins

Throughout the illustrious history of philosophy no figure's stature stands taller than that of Aristotle. It is without dispute that Aristotle's extensive corpus contains contributions to western philosophy matched by few to none. Aristotle laid the groundwork for some of the immortal problems of western philosophy and did not stop short of providing lasting and compelling answers. Aristotle's ventures range from science(natural philosophy), psychology, the inception of formal logic, and the subjects of this paper, metaphysics, ethics, and politics. Particularly, Aristotle's account of teleology including so called 'final cause' as well as 'natural' arrangements such as the family and the city. I will thus examine Aristotle's conception of teleology and its implications for Aristotle's ethics. Aristotle's notion of teleology can seem intuitive and is certainly more defensible in certain contexts than others, but ultimately it finds itself poorly founded when applied in such unsuitable contexts as ethics and politics as Aristotle attempted to do.

Teleology(from the greek *telos* roughly meaning 'purpose' or 'end') in Aristotle is introduced as one of his four causes which he says are necessary to the ontology of things in the world, specifically the 'final' cause. Final cause is simply defined as "the purpose or goal of the compound or form of matter" (Shields, 2008). Shields representation of Aristotle acknowledges that a final cause does not exist in every conceivable situation.

> If a debtor is on his way to the market to buy milk and she runs into her creditor, who is on his way to the same market to buy bread, then she may agree to pay the money owed immediately. Although resulting in a wanted outcome, their meeting was not for the sake of settling the debt; nor indeed was it for the sake of anything at all. It was a simple co-incidence. Hence, it lacks a final cause.

The provision of this isolated counterexample in fact reinforces the notion that final cause in Aristotle is almost completely ubiquitous. Other scholarly allusions are made to the breadth of Aristotle's

teleological accounts like "basic teleological or goal-directed orientation of Aristotle's biology"(Humphreys, 2019) and notions of relations which are 'natural' will find themselves being of great importance in Aristotle's evaluative works, *Ethics* and *Politics*.

It is not immediately obvious that there are ethical implications for Aristotle's teleological view of the world and the objects therein, but in fact teleology is imbued not only throughout the natural world of objects but finds itself critical to human ethical endeavors as well. In section 8 of his 'Physics' Aristotle makes clear the usual intended meaning of his teleology, "It may be objected that nature does not act with reference to a goal nor by reason of the fact that one thing is better than another…but of necessity" (Aristotle). In confronting potential challenges to his 'telic' view of nature, Aristotle incidentally provides useful criteria by which something can be found teleological or otherwise, and whether this is an exhaustive definition of teleology for Aristotle, both of these particular criteria are problematic nonetheless. In his outline of the idea the 'telic' things either act with reference to a goal or a value standard, Aristotle is preparing to confront an objection that nature is merely mechanical, or acts 'out of necessity'. Aristotle retorts vis a vis human teeth, stating that they are arranged and assembled such that they are curiously adept at exactly what they are used for, chewing food. He says due to the regularity with which they are configured in people, they are not the product merely of coincidence or fortune, and that if not luck it must instead be purpose, and he is eager to extend this reasoning to encompass all scientific phenomena, "The same argument(involving teeth) can be offered about any organic structure to which purpose is commonly ascribed"(Aristotle). Scrutinizing Aristotle's wording is a fruitless and cheap task given the unfortunate but unavoidable imprecision of translation afflicting any foreign and antiquated work. That caveat issued, Aristotle's language betrays his mistake in that sentence when he references things 'to which purpose is commonly ascribed'. It is in fact Aristotle's error to place purpose prior to the ascription of purpose in his reasoning. In other words, he treats purpose as preexistent and merely recognized, whereas in reality this purpose

is not naturally endowed but rather constructed. It is the direction which the purpose flows that Aristotle has mistaken, it is not that teeth have the purpose of chewing therefore they are good at it, but rather the opposite, that teeth are good for chewing therefore they are used to do it, among other things for which they are suited beyond what they 'evolved for'. And Aristotle's teleology questionably precludes alternate functions of things that currently exist as well as alternate means of accomplishing something currently done by something else. For instance, if humans, through some inexplicable hex of the thought experimenters wand, were toothless creatures, would we not simply develop an alternate method for reformatting our food? A primitive rock utensil instead of teeth, a mortar and pestle, and in fact it is an unstable, uncertain, historical contingency by which teeth developed as they did, and in the counterfactual in which the teeth are replaced by the primitive rock utensil, under an Aristotelian conception of natural purpose, not only might one conclude that the rock utensil was equally as naturally purposed as we consider our teeth, but one might quicklier conclude that humans are *meant to not* consume food which required grinding. And so without regard to human wellbeing, in this case our nutritional intake, one would be left believing that it was a violation of human nature to grind and eat bread instead of subsisting solely off the juice of fruits and vegetables. One shudders to imagine Aristotle drinking a smoothie processed by a mechanical blender.

This is a complex area given the intuitiveness of purpose in a modern evolutionary worldview. It is easy to say that regardless of other potential methods of accomplishing the same result, teeth actually do have the purpose of chewing food, since they evolved to perform exactly that act, but this misunderstands teleology as Aristotle means it, or as his explanations would bind one to understanding it. There are two possibilities, either Aristotle's teleology involves one 'thing' being suited for one specific act, outcome, or purpose, or the same thing being suited for more than one. If the former, then for example, using a toothbrush as an archeological tool or using teeth to remove a particularly obstinate bottlecap, is not only an unorthodox use but in fact an   outward

misuse of the object, a *wrong* use. If the latter, and something can have multiple purposes, Aristotle's notion of teleology is not particularly objectionable because it is completely trivial. If somethings 'objective purpose' is so varied and multiple so as to include any effective use of one thing to accomplish another thing, then whether to label it as objective purpose or not is entirely unimportant; it becomes a distinction without a difference. This is the coherence problem of teleology. Additionally, using the mere fact that teeth evolved for processing food to morally credit teeth with having that telic property, makes one guilty of the naturalistic fallacy.

Aristotle's view on teleology becomes not only philosophically mistaken but ethically troubling when the connection between the two, teleology and ethics, is established, and this takes place when the transition is made from the processes of science to valuative sectors, involving agents whose ends are within their own control, ethics and politics. It is established prior that most anything natural has a final cause.

Being charitable to Aristotle, we can stipulate that, for example an acorn being robbed by some act such as a squirrel eating it, of its telic potential to flourish into a towering oak tree, is not done an ethical disservice because no occurrence in the chain of robbery involved an agent (the community of things capable of acting ethically). In his commentary on Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics, Michael Pakaluk evokes the famous example illustrating the potential ethical implications of teleology, "If a goal is a good, then the good of a knife would seem to involve cutting. It is odd, perhaps, to say that something like a knife has a good. But then we might say that if a knife were a living thing, then its good would be to cut." I would only slightly alter his reference to 'a living thing' to instead refer to an agent, but the sentiment nonetheless marks the relative ease of connection between teleology and ethical determinations.

Aristotle argues in his book Nicomachean Ethics, that any intrinsic ethical good must proceed from politics.

"If in all our conduct, then, there is some end that we wish on its own account,

choosing everything else as a means to it…then clearly this one end must be the good—even indeed, the highest good. Will not a knowledge of it then, have an important influence on our lives…If so, we must try to comprehend, in outline at least, what the highest end is, and to which of the arts or sciences it belongs. Evidently the art or science in question must be the most absolute and authoritative of all. Politics." (Aristotle)

If the leap may be allowed, between the teleology of a person and their good, then it is through politics that we may realize the teleology, or purpose, of a human. Aristotle outlines his case for a virtuous life involving cultivating attributes which lie in a golden mean between vices of excess and deficiency, for example virtuous courage lying between vicious cowardice and hubris. If this is, in Aristotle's view, human teleology, and politics is the optimal route to enacting the inculcation of these traits, then politics is where we shall seek Aristotle's teleological prescriptions for man which he dubs a political animal.

In his politics Aristotle expounds a view of naturally arising relationships among people, beginning with the nuclear family, a free and authoritative man, his submissive, child rearing wife, and their children, and followed closely by the city, which is characterized by a collection of families in conjunction with a labor source, slaves, and a decision making process for free individuals.

This is the final problem with Aristotelian teleology, its relegation of those who are "naturally" slavish and stupid to being excised from the free political process, much less from themselves pursuing eudaimonia. Aristotle says of these ostracized groups, "The slave is wholly lacking the deliberative element; the female has it but it lacks authority; the child has it but it is incomplete". (Aristotle).

In Aristotle's view, the city state is natural and necessary to achieving the good, which involves the subjugation of women and the use of the unpaid labor of slaves to assist in the fostering of Eudaimonia for free men. Either this is the single teleological route by which these things, which are themselves teleological ends of

those whom they apply, can be achieved, or the notion of teleology once again is trivialized, and Aristotle is left to be bigoted without a metaphysical justification. It is not particularly productive to slander Aristotle from the moral ivory tower of the distant future, but our reflexive abhorrence of these relations which teleology sanctioned, encapsulate the broader point of the ethical problem of teleology, it creates a permanent anachronism. The objective standards established by a teleological view towards normative outcomes eventually become antiquated, and abandoned in favor of a 'new purpose'. Aristotelian views of the family as 'natural therefore good', and necessarily involving "a male and a female, who unite for the sake of procreation"(Aristotle) are still levied at gay couples seeking civil union under the state, or trans individuals who violate the 'nature' of their gender to reproduce.

Ultimately, the coherence problem of teleology and the ethical problem of teleology share the same misguided difficulty, they are unnecessarily exclusionary. If it is wrong for an acorn to not become a tree, then it must be wrong for the squirrel to eat, or for an acorn to be used decoratively, or for it to simply find itself buried impotently never to grow. If it is in the good nature of a man and a woman to comprise a family and have children, then gay and trans people are told they are living unethically by virtue of their identity, irrespective of their happiness or contribution to society, and this argument is weaponized. If it is bad for women and those of slave nature to participate in education, voting, and free association, then throughout American history groups who have fought vigorously to prove they are of equal merit and ability to the dominant group, are to be told they are living unethically by violating their teleology. Teleology mistakenly conflates its contrived purpose with the good, and uses it to define the good, excluding anything outside the narrowly conceived purpose.

That is the failure of teleology, to limit the good so staggeringly that what is good becomes bad by technicality of not being teleological. If teleology is concerned with potential, it is in this sense ironically and tragically that the interests of potential disrupt and extinguish such immense and beautiful potential elsewhere.

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The Pain of no Pain
-Hunter Hinds

When someone is often asked to describe a great or ideal life, they say fear, anger, sadness, and other simular emotions should be void where as happiness and joy should be present as much as possible, if not as the only emotions, barren of any emotion or feeling unpleasant. As time passes we come to develop better medicine and treatments. We conduct studies and perform scientific experiments to understand depression, reduce accidents, and stop unnecessary aggression. All this is for the end goal of a world with no fear, no danger, and ultimately, no suffering. I however, believe this is not the way to a better way of living. To erase pain, anger, suffering, and all other negative emotions, is to void a critical aspect of humanity itself, and a threat to our autonomy. To live a life without pain or suffering, is not just a life of bliss and pure happiness, it is a life of ignorance, of unfulfilled wholeness, and of disconnect to our own existence.

At a surface level, the admiration to live without pain and suffering is not unreasonable. Pain is in its very nature unpleasant and undesirable. A mechanism designed to turn us away from things or situations that bring us harm or pose a threat. It is good only in that it pushes us away from or warns of harm as a biological protector. However it exists in that moment as unpleasant and undesireable. Opposed to pain is pleasure, which in its nature is the very opposite, it is in the present moment desirable and pleasant, and a instigator of happieness. However, as all things have an effect past their present moment there are pros and cons that can come out of both pain and pleasure. Moving past the present feeling of suffering or happiness can allow for the growth of autonomy through knowledge of oneself and humanity. Doing so correctly and optimally requires a balance I will discuss later, but the benefits of autonomy from pain and suffering will be the crux of the furthering discussion.

Autonomy is the knowing and owning of one's own being or self. *The Britannica Encyclopedia* defines autonomy as, "... leading one's life according to reasons, values, or desires that are authentically one's own," (Taylor, 2017). So, as you must

know yourself to be more authentic, determine values and true desires to have autonomy, knowledge is essential to having true autonomy. Therefore we can not negate the personal knowledge gained as the effect of our negative emotions and experiences. It is autonomy that makes negative emotions ultimately positive when used correctly. After having a bad experience or emotion, in the aftermath (sometimes during) we can come to understand a concept of being human better. It is something that is a part of us that we cannot remove and that we share with other people. Something that exists as a possibility and reality in the universe we now have a grasp on. Having now gained autonomy in an aspect of ourselves though unpleasant, we reach a further state of fulfillment and thus a docile state of happiness from that fulfillment, bringing a positive emotion in advancing forward in our lives and obtaining further wholeness. We can act truer to ourselves knowing better who and what we are, and thus be happier in that wholeness.

There are however, conditions for the experience of negative emotion in order to truly benefit and have positive effects. In order to reach the highest and truest autonomy, we must gain knowledge of ourselves in all spectrums of emotion, experience them all and with some balanced level of frequency and intensity so we don't lose the understanding, while also not having one be so strong it overpowers other emotions and creates bias in new knowledge. In some emotions like fear and anger, going too high on its spectrum of impact and experience can leave one with long lasting effects. PTSD is derived out of dramatic fear that results in an individual being unable to exist as peacefully or normally as other human beings. This condition results in the disruption of other emotions, interrupting them with fear which is overly drilled and experienced and activated often by hardly related stimuli, unbalancing one's autonomy by drowning it in one emotion and perspective, making one likley miserable. Trauma, conditioning, and other exteranl threats to a balanced mind can disrupt this necessary process for optimizing or increasing one's autonomy. So for certain emotions, keeping the experience to a lower extent of its spectrum is required to preserve this process as a whole. That said, this is for the sake of balance, peaking in intensity or

experience for a negative experience can be objectively good for other reasons, as people who go through those experiences get a different sense of reality and knowledge to its maximum, but as it is the most relevant to the average person and has more long term benefits we'll stick with this balanced view.

There is another primary hindrance to this balance process as well. As I've stated before, the benefit of negative emotions is the gain of autonomy it brings often after the negative process has been had. Which means that the negative must be concluded, set aside, as assessed for that knowledge and autonomy can be gained. If one lingers on the cause and fails to let go of it, they will fail to receive the effect. Similarly if one has a fully negative view on pain and refuses to see the good they also further block themselves off from its benefits. So having a proper attitude to the emotions is also essential for this balance for there to be gain. Not doing so can also warp the experience the wrong way, if the pain or experience is too severe it can drive anger and resentment, another hindrance that creates bias and issues for any new knowledge gained by experience as the focus always turns to the bad. This is why to aid in the balance and achieve a fulfilled and happy life, negative emotions should still be far less frequent or powerful than positive emotions, but still present. Many individuals who are humble, happy, and well established citizens are those who live largely positive and active lives but have a consistent low negative like a job or chores to put them in a spot that gives them the guise to be humble and understanding. Those without a constant negative who exist only in pleasure become selfish and unsatisfied with anything, and those with too much suffering turn to resentment and blind rage. Aristotle's Nichmachean ethics bears application to this end, in that all virtues or good things lie between two opposing ends that are both vices or sin. Literature database *Litcharts* defines it this way, "Aristotle's larger argument in Nicomachean Ethics is that practicing virtues involves determining the "mean" (the intermediate) between an excess and a deficiency," (*Litcharts*, n.d).

1. Besides the necessity of experiencing negative emotion or feeling for autonomy, there is another crucial aspect of its existence we actually choose to be a part of almost every

day. One we tend to get a positive thrill or entertainment from: stories. Often we find that the best stories and songs that enthrall us and grasp us to our core in which we feel strong emotions and connections come from stories or songs of betrayal, of war, and of untimely death. To say we do not find pleasure in the pain and sufferings of others on a nearly daily basis would be to tell a lie. However, it is not in their despair that entertains us, but what it stirs in the listener. Why is this the case though if these events are recognized as terrible and unpleasant by those who listen? It is again because of the recognition in the emotions and experience that binds us to our humanity that occurs in the strongest of fashions without us needing to be there or go through it ourselves. Even though we recognize the unpleasantries, we recognize what we share and what we are within without having to experience it first hand. As a musician myself I can attribute my goals in my songs to be to make people feel sad and uneasy, more so than to dance or feel happy. This is not out of spite for other individuals, but to share it as an art that can be enjoyed in the experience. Often the forthcoming of sadness in music is a comfort rather than just unpleasant, as it brings openness and release from that very emotion. The creation and sharing of a feeling of anger, fear, or sadness creates it in a way those emotions can be felt, but also vented by the listener. Personally, often I believe the release from pain can be stronger and more effective than coming to happiness from a state of neutrality. It brings comfort to the listener as it brings connection to the artist who understands the exact same thing they are experiencing, while also shedding new light on the experience and bringing knowledge to allow for autonomy and moving on into something with more experience and understanding. What's more, pain is a driving force for storytellers and artists. Pain drives and motivates in ways pleasure does not. It pushes a writer to sit down and make art when they now have something to say. Pain brings us to our limits,

showing the extent of our autonomy through those limits and pushing us to reach other limits. I believe it is fair to make the claim art is celebrated worldwide and with great acclaim for its diversity and creativeness. Thus Art itself across all mediums would be greatly diminished and of less importance without the ability to feel anything other than happiness and pleasure.

We have now been able to state that we can experiace know pain through artistic mediums. So why not just get our experience of fear and suffering from stores and music and not have to live through them? To truly experience these emotions through stories, we must first have first hand understanding to some degree that allows us to connect with the material. We would have some connection to the material, as though we can relate in our nature and humanity, though we cannot relate in experience and receive the gained experience of release or comfort in the same way. A scene of death is often much sadder and relatable to an individual who has lost someone close rather than someone who has lost no one at all. And thus they could not reap the full value of a scene of death close to another individual who understands. Therefore I believe receiving the concept of pain through stories alone would be insufficient to reach these connections I find necessary to both people and art.

This leads into my next point, pain gets its true importance in its being for our autonomy as an experience that is collective and not to that of just the individual. In many ways we exist for and from other people, so emotions must all be tethered . We find ourselves brought into the furthest depths of insanity when we are unable to see or speak to another. We naturally long to be validated in our existence by another who can understand it, and so I myself fear the disconnect from others, for whom suffering and pain is unavoidable. If many are unable to reconcile with the pain of another then we have lost a crucial part of ourselves that connected us all that allowed us to be called humanity. We as humans are designed to live as a collective, a society rather than singular individuals, thus it is not of benefit for some to exist without knowledge of sufferings to this extent.

In conclusion there are connections and ways to fulfillment and autonomy that cannot be reached without first having experiences both positive and negative. There are awful things in this world that can ruin a life past these benefits, but to live a life in ignorance of pain or any manner of unpleasantness, is a life far from completion and personal understanding. Importantly, to some these sufferings will become inevitable no matter how far we advance, and the worst thing we can do is not understand them. We find ourselves in fear and in painful reminders and experiences through stories and song, only to also find ourselves lost in it with intrigue and reflection, coming to a more complete and knowing existence from them. I by no means am trying to say the state of suffering in this world is in a good place, we still have the means and reasons to improve. However it is the apparent end goal of eradication that I find misguided. To have pain and to suffer is to be human, and that is a pleasantry all its own. To end and to keep on theme of the importance of understanding emotions through story, I would like to end on a story of an event I witnessed in a church service while taking notes for this thesis.

After the crowd eased their way quietly back into their seats, a woman in the front row towards the stage remained standing after a worship song for communion, and as such, drew some attention in that, as well as her barely audible crying and soft prayer. As she stood there crying in pain, her hands were raised up. I'm sure this was not her first time coming into church or worshiping, but it was in her pain that she was brought to the desire for hope, that desire for hope, becoming hope. Even if there is not a god to listen, or a god to answer whatever she was praying for in that moment, she was in hope. A higher standing with hope and optimism than if she had walked in that day without her pain. I found this thought of mine exaggerated by a bright lamp that was conveniently set behind her head from my angle of observation, leaving her a weeping shadow with an irradiating light around her.

Footnote:

Note that an opposing premise, that no pain or suffering is the ultimate reality, is a staple in nearly all religions as the blessing

of existence in the afterlife. Is this to say I think these religions are also misguided, no. Where pain cannot exist means no need or ability to connect and sympathize by existing with pain and there will be connections and fulfillment in that itself. Autonomy will be different because we and our existence would be different. However it means to ask why this life on earth is such a way. As I've argued, it is good to experience pain as we get to realize and feel an emotion that is possible and have knowledge of it. Therefore I find that to be why a god would allow pain to exist so we can experience it, and be released from it later.

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Collateral Damage: The Impact of Leibnitz's Pre-Established Harmony on Human Freedom
-Scott Squires

One of the most difficult problems facing a traditional theist is an explanation of the presence of evil in the world. It is difficult to make sense of a world that has so many examples of what it means to be evil manifested in the actions of human beings on the one hand and the supposed existence of an omnipotent, omniscient, and omni-benevolent supreme being one the other. The theist must reasonably address this. While questions can be asked as to why God does not stop or prevent evil by overwhelming it with power, the issue that most critics start with relates to God being all-knowing. God seems less respectable as God if, having the aforementioned capacities generally ascribed to the divine, God went ahead and created the world anyway. The theist generally responds to this kind of attack by trying to assert the reality of free will. If humans are free to make choices, then they can make bad ones. This is how evil's presence and God's goodness are maintained as separate, yet does not exonerate God for God has foreknowledge of evil, the power to change it, and still goes ahead with the whole project. The theist is faced with a disagreeable conclusion or a difficult task. The disagreeable conclusion, is that humans are completely responsible for evil and God did not see it coming, perhaps even having to conclude that God could not have seen it coming at all since there is no way to guarantee the reality of future contingents. This would make traditional "omniscience" impossible and make traditional theists uncomfortable because it seems to reduce God from being truly divine. The difficult task is to try to affirm God's full omniscience and give reasoning that affirms our ability to choose and be responsible for evil. Many theists affirm that God's foreknowledge has determined all events that will be and say that human freedom is still compatible with that fact, which is called compatibilism. Gottfried Leibniz, in his *Discourse on Metaphysics*, lays out such a view. In this paper, I argue that Leibniz's account of God and human interactions through pre-established harmony invalidates his compatibilist

position with respect to human freedom and show how a kenotic theory of God might be a better compatibilist position.

Leibniz explains early in the *Discourse* that God is an absolutely perfect being.[1] Since Leibniz's whole system rests on this foundation, it is important to understand what he means when referring to God as an absolutely perfect being. This means that there is no defect in God whatsoever. For Leibniz, something is perfect if it possesses a property to the highest degree possible. A perfect square, for example, means that this geometric shape possesses whatever it means to be "square" to maximal capacity. This kind of reasoning would apply to God as well in respect to the properties that define "God." For Leibniz, God is maximal in all respects.

According to Leibniz, though people commonly talk about God in these terms, the implications of this way of conceiving God have never been fully applied.[2] This perfection, encompassing every aspect about God, includes what God knows about future events. God is outside of time and space in Leibniz's system, giving this divine being the ability to see all the events of the universe and time, completely unfolded to the deepest detail. As a result of God's position in relation to the universe and God's maximal knowledge, along with every other aspect of being, God truly knows all.

Certain consequences go with this kind of perfect knowledge,   especially with respect to actions and their causes. For Leibniz, if God is going to have perfect knowledge, all the actions of the creatures within the universe throughout all of time, must be already known.[3] God's power is the only power by which events take place, so that the outcome of those events can be completely assured as true. According to Leibniz, "… God is the only external cause that acts on us and he alone affects us directly…"[4] God must cause all things to work together

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1   Gottfried W. Leibnitz, Dis*course on Metaphysics*, translated by Jonathan Bennett at earlymoderntexts.com, (2014), 1.
2   Ibid.
3   Ibid., 10, 19.
4   Ibid., 19.

in accordance with what is already determined. If even the potentiality of the indetermination of events were present then this would speak to an imperfection in God, because if God is to remain supreme, then God must have absolute knowledge of all events. For Leibniz, there can be no room for something to be any other way than the way that God planned it or God cannot be God at all.

Since Leibniz presents a totally determined universe, he must explain how it is that events that do not seem to line up with God's maximal goodness appear in the world. God cannot be held liable for any event that negates goodness in any way (Leibniz's definition of "evil") because that would make God less than maximally good and therefore not God.[5] Leibniz explains in the *Discourse* that humans have a state of will that is suspended in indifference:

> Absolutely speaking, our will is in a state of indifference, as opposed to necessity: it has the power to do otherwise, or to suspend its action altogether, each alternative being and remaining possible. It is therefore up to the soul to take precautions against being caught off its guard by events that come into its ken; and the way to do this is to resolve firmly to be reflective, and in certain situations not to act or judge without mature and thorough deliberation.[6]

What exactly he means by this is difficult to ascertain. At first glance, it seems as though he means that the will is completely neutral in its natural state and that God bends the will towards the appropriate goodness for the moment. We are all imitators of God's goodness in this regard, doing the things that have genuine good in them. This is part and parcel to his view that there is a pre-established harmony between God's will for the universe that is determined to the tiniest detail and the actions/thoughts of people. This indifference is acted upon by God's will, but because we do not have foreknowledge like God does and did not know what was determined, these thoughts seem spontaneous to us and are thus "free" with respect to decision-making. But then he says in the

5   Ibid., 2.
6   Ibid, 20

same section of the *Discourse* that souls have the power to pause and think about what they are doing in light of every situation that they may encounter.[7] It is the soul that is mature and recognizes that God has set the conditions for the opportunity to do good that ends up doing good things. Conversely, it is the soul that is immature that fails to recognize the opportunity to do good that does bad things. For Leibniz, this explains an absolutely good God, a determined universe, and the evil present in it.[8]

  The problems with this view are apparent. The first problem is that Leibniz has a muddled conception of what freedom really is. For someone to be truly free, there cannot be any outside force acting upon them that would guarantee the outcome. This is what we commonly mean when we say that someone has a "free" choice. To illustrate, consider an election that happens in a country that has lived under an oppressive regime and is now voting in a "free" election. The worry in those kinds of situations is that the former powerful leader or party will influence the outcome of that election in some way. This worry can be realized in a variety of ways: the presence of the military along the route to polling centers, monetary remuneration given to those that vote a certain way, the use of civil groups to cause violence against supporters of a party that the formerly powerful do not want to show well in the final vote, or the promise of certain favors to a certain people group in return for their support in the election. There are all kinds of ways that one may shape the outcome of an election without obvious control of the numbers. But, in none of those cases, is the outcome of the election considered free, because the outcome was predetermined. There must be none of these kinds of activities surrounding an election for it to be considered a "free" election.

  This example gives us a good analogy as to what it means to be free, namely that there is no external force acting upon another entity that would pre-determine the outcome of that entity's future in any way. There has to be the possibility that the results could have turned out a different way if one is going to use the term "free." Leibniz's account of human decision-making

7 Ibid
8 Ibid., 19-20.

in light of the foreknowledge of God does not allow for this kind of freedom. It only allows for the appearance of an ability to do otherwise. God, in Leibniz's view, is acting upon the people of the world in every situation, bending their wills towards the good. This then becomes a problem as it relates to the moral evil in the world because humanity's sense of justice engages at this point, challenging Leibniz's desire to have it both ways. If God is acting on the people of the world in all situations, then one cannot say that God is just if God holds anyone responsible for evils that they commit in the world. Either God must be forcing some towards evil or God must be allowing people to choose the evil or the good in any action. If there is going to be the action of an outside force, even for the good, then we cannot truly say that the entity in question is "free." If humans are not truly free to make choices in any given situation, then it makes it difficult for us to accept that anyone is truly responsible for choices, good or bad. The one that is responsible is the one that is moving everything towards a pre-determined outcome, which in Leibniz's account is namely God.

A further problem with Leibniz's theory is that he says that, while the will may be indifferent, God bends it towards the good. Every moment has the possibility of reflection in it that will keep one from committing awful acts. The ability to reflect implies a certain amount of education, an education that enhances one's ability to reason. By using reflection and reasoning as the qualifier to give people freedom, Leibniz seems to be saying that at least the educated, reasoning people have the ability to find God's bending and choose the good. The problem is that educated, reasoning people make awful choices all the time. Osama Bin Laden, the mastermind of a terrorist attack that killed thousands of innocents, was a highly educated individual. The doctors that ran the Tuskegee syphilis experiment for six decades that intentionally gave African-Americans a disease with false treatments, were highly educated people. These are evil acts and, Leibniz must be able to explain how this is possible in his system. He offers no adequate explanation as to how it can be that humans do things like this and God is not responsible in some way for it. He tries to say that some are just bound to be that way, citing the example

of Judas Iscariot betraying Jesus to his death, but this strikes against his point that there actually is human freedom. If God determined that Judas, Hitler, and Bin Laden should exist and be educated, making them reflective people, yet they still turned out evil, then one is left with the blame falling only upon God. God, because of divine maximal knowledge and power, could have kept them from existing in the first place and retained maximal goodness. The existence of people that have the ability to reflect and still do wrong causes massive problems for Leibniz's kind of compatibilism.[9]

In the same way that God is maximally knowing and maximally loving, if there is going to be evil in the world, then God must also be maximally just as well. If this is the case, then there must be some sort of reward and punishment system or metric that is in place so that the injustices that we observe in this life end up as only apparent injustices. To think that those who rape and murder innocent children might have no consequences to their actions would force one to downgrade God from "maximally good" to "marginally good" at best. This need for justice as a component of God as it relates to evil in the world then presents a third problem for Leibniz that is perhaps the most damaging to the kind of compatibilism that he wants: he must explain how it is that humans are responsible for anything and thus can be punished justly by God if they are not given real choice by God. As described above, freedom is dependent upon no external forces guaranteeing to the outcome of an event. In Leibniz's system, God

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9   Leibniz does account for the presence of this kind of evil in the world in his *Theodicy*. He explains, in short, that the presence of evil in the world gives us a way to gauge how good any act of goodness really is as a feature of his "best possible world" argument. Because *Theodicy* was written after *Discourse*, it seems as though Leibniz has either given up the reflective principle as it relates to good in the world or he assumes it as a part of his account. If the reflective principle is still at work in *Theodicy*, then I think that the worry I am leveling here still holds. If he has given it up, then I acknowledge that my criticism of Leibniz's account has little weight.

is always ensuring that the outcome of any given event lines up with God's pre-determined will, so then there is no way that any event can truly be called "free."

But if God is involved in every aspect of a person's life like Leibniz suggests, then it would mean that somehow God was a part of making those kinds of atrocities happen. This is a horrifying thought. There is nothing about the glorification of God, which is Leibniz's reason for a determined universe, that could reasonably account for these kinds of things. If God is acting upon the world, as Leibniz suggests, then it is God that is responsible for the awful and actions that people take. Since Leibniz's compatibilism only affirms the appearance of real choice, then there is no way that people can be the authors of the evil that we appear to make. Since there is no one else to blame, the blame falls directly on God and the only thought that we have to comfort us is that it is all somehow part of God's plan for evil to take place. This would cause us to question God's justice. God cannot be considered just in any kind of punishment/reward system if God is involved in the actions that are going to be judged as evil. God cannot hold someone responsible if God is involved in guaranteeing any of the deeds in question. God would be a hypocrite to hold Judas responsible for the betrayal of Jesus if God acted upon Judas' life at any moment to guarantee that outcome. We are then left to wonder if Judas or any other person for that matter has ever really been free.

For Leibniz, it seems as though affirming God's maximal knowledge is more important than adequately explaining how it is that evil shows up in the world though humanity's choices. Perhaps he is biting the bullet here and is just going where the implication of the argument takes him. If God is going to be maximally knowing, then the universe must be fully known throughout all time. This means that human action must line up with these pre-determined notions. Leibniz's notion of human freedom does not do the work that he wants it to do because his notion of freedom is not real freedom. It is apparent freedom only and humans have no real choice. Without real choice, we cannot be held liable for immoral or harmful acts. "The devil made me do it" defense

actually becomes "God made me do it" according to Leibniz's view. Saying that human freedom is genuine because it appears to be genuine results in the same thing as a rigged boxing match: a false perspective of a determined outcome. If the events throughout time are already determined and the events that we live or observe happen through pre-established harmony, then we are always being acted upon by an outside force and therefore it is not unreasonable to say that God is not maximally good because God becomes responsible for both the good and the bad in life.

Leibniz would have been better served by adopting a kenotic theory when viewing God. Kenotic theories are those that attempt to explain God as traditionally understood to be retaining the divine requirements of maximal power, knowledge, goodness, and justice, but say that God freely limits those powers when interacting with humans. These theories, though present in the background of ancient Christian theologians and philosophers when trying to explain the doctrine of the Incarnation of the Second Person of the Trinity, were more formally developed in the 19th century in Europe by German and British theologians and philosophers. They quickly fell out of favor with the orthodox and it has only been recently that these have come back into the discussion about God, as one can see in the writings of Stephen T. Davis, a philosopher who supports kenotic theory[10] and Richard Swinburne, one who does not[11]. Most of these theories are spoken of in the specific discussion of Jesus and the claims that Christianity makes about his divine and human status and the interaction between them, but I think that this theory can also be applied to general philosophical problems about God along the lines that Leibniz is proposing.

Before moving on to what makes for a kenotic theory, I think that it is important to note that though much of the Judeo-Christian-Islamic monotheistic tradition would balk at the notion

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10   Stephen T. Davis, "Is Kenosis Orthodox?," in *Exploring Kenotic Christology*, ed. C. Stephen Evans (Vancouver, British Columbia: Regent College Publishing, 2010). 112-138.
11   Richard Swinburne, "The Evidence of the Incarnation," in *The Christian God* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1994). 230-233.

of limitations on God, that they are all kenotic in some form or another. The maximal greatness that all of these traditions use to describe the God that they honor transcends human limitations. Humanity is a limited species. Humans are limited in time, space, knowledge, understanding, and ability. The God to which these traditions ascribe, even though the specifics might be different, is similarly linked through their description of divinity being beyond all these things that define what it is to be limited as a human. Divinity, even in a "philosopher's God" scenario where the divine is limited to omniscience, omnipotence, and omni-benevolence, is being described well beyond any ability that humans have to be like that. The accepted definition of the divine being is similar in all these traditions and it is agreed that this being is well beyond us. Therefore, any kind of tradition that is going to say that God is making any attempt to interact with people is kenotic at its core, because for the unlimited to interact with the limited, something is going to have to change on the part of one of the parties. It seems as though it is much more reasonable for the unlimited to limit itself as opposed to the limited to find a way to become unlimited. It is for this reason that I say that any tradition that has a God that is accessible to people or is in some sense self-revealing to them in any way is kenotic at heart. Kenosis is built on the idea that the unlimited freely limits itself for the benefit of interacting with those that cannot become unlimited. So, as lofty and unchanging as these traditions would like to make God to be, they are kenotic if that God is knowable by people in any way.

The way that one develops one's kenotic theory is important to the discussion. The first element is imperative: God must be able to be seen as retaining all of divine attributes in maximal capacity and still give humans the power of choice. First, assume that God is maximal relating to knowledge. Maximal knowledge would mean that God would not only know all the actualities before they are realized but also all possibilities as well. Maximal power, meaning that God would be able to actualize any possibility regardless of any other factor if indeed God chose to do so, needs to be present as well. These abilities, defined in this way, are probably the easiest definitions about God to agree on in

this process. The definition of maximal goodness could be a place where there is contention, since "the good" is something that can be subject to perspective of the definer. For a working definition, I will say that "maximal goodness" in a being is having both no substance of anything that is not good present in that being and a being that always does the morally best action (when there is one) and never a morally bad action (This "action" clause should cover the "justice" element of God as well from a traditional point of view). This definition comes from combining both Augustine[12] and Swinburne's definition[13] of what it mean to be "good" and, I admit, probably has flaws to it, but gives me something to start to my kenotic theory with. I hope that God, as at least partially defined in this way, should satisfy most orthodox and philosophic conceptions of what it means to be divine in this scenario.

   With God as understood maximally in this way, the same problem that Leibniz attempted to explain through his pre-established harmony comes into view. The evil that is easily observable in the world diminishes the maximal God of traditional descriptions. God cannot maintain the lofty status assigned to God if evil ends up being God's fault. But, what if another factor, divine restraint, were considered here? What I mean by divine restraint is that God can at any time, choose to not intervene in any situation, no matter how small or great, and allow the power of human choices to play themselves out. I think that is a common misperception in this kind of a discussion to assume that foreknowledge means the same thing as fore action. Because God knows *x*, this does not necessarily commit God to causing

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12 Augustine, *On Christian Doctrine*, trans. D.W. Robertson, Jr., (Indianapolis, Indiana: Boobs-Merrill, 1958), 11 [Bk 1, sec.7, part 7]. Augustine's definition of God is "something that which nothing more excellent or sublime exists" of which goodness, an aspect of God's constituted being, is applied.

13 Swinburne, *The Coherence of Theism*, (Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press, 1994), 184. Swinburne says that a being is perfectly good if and only if that person always does the morally best action (when there is one) and is so constituted to never do that which is morally bad.

x to occur. God could still be omniscient in this scenario as well. God would still have maximal knowledge, meaning that God would be aware of both all possibilities and all actualities. God would just be leaving it up to humans to actualize most everyday possibilities through their power of choice. This also does not mean that God could not reach in and actualize something as well, according to the divine knowledge that only God can possess. The success against all odds types of moments, like a D-Day example, could be the kinds of moments that could speak to this kind of intervention from the divine. Knowing that Adolph Hitler was the kind of person making evil choices that had to be stopped because only God could see what a world with Hitler victorious could look like, God could have reached in and been a determining factor in the invasion of Normandy succeeding. Therefore, kenosis gives one a scenario in the end where God brings certain events into being while leaving others to the freedom of the creatures. Some traditionalists may also counter that I am depriving God of true omnipotence as well when taking about God not actively bringing about the outcome of all situations, thus making describing God truly. To this I would respond that similarly to my thought above regarding omniscience. Possessing the power to bring about any result does not commit one to actually bringing about that result. One does not have to use power to be said to possess it. I think that this is the mistake that Leibnitz is making with his description of God and pre-established harmony. He is committing God to having to bring about the outcome of a thing to be truly maximally powerful. The use of power merely reveals the power that one has, it does not define actually having that power. Because a dictator makes a political rival disappear, this does not fully define the power that the dictator had, but merely reveals it. A description of God can hold onto the idea that God is all powerful even if it further describes that God as not always using that power.

The effects of this kenotic description of God change the outcomes dramatically. First, this allows for a true freedom that can be assigned to human beings and true justice can really happen. That God would be just is something that is an important aspect of those that want to talk about God in relation to the problem of

evil. If God is the one that is causing the evil to take place in any way, then how is it just that any kind of reward or punishment is taking place upon death? Where Leibnitz's description of God is open to criticism on this point, a kenotic view is not. A kenotic view can still have a God that both has an outcome in mind (purpose for creation is at the heart of what it means to have divine foreknowledge), a way to achieve this outcome (faith, law, moral living, etc.), and still give people the option of choice as to whether or not to follow that path. A God that is "pulling the strings" on every situation that happens in history cannot very well then accuse those that did evil of being wrong for doing that evil and still be just in any sense that we understand justice to be. However, if God is actively limiting omnipotence and allowing the course of choices to play out, then it seems as though it would be just for God to punish those that "got away with it" in this life. On this kind of view, the pedophile, a kind of person that society would point at and say is morally evil, that somehow escapes justice here in this life, there is an assurance that this person will have to face God after death and receive some sort of punishment for the actions committed against children.

God acting kenotically also allows for a beginning of an explanation for natural evil that occurs through disasters and diseases in the world. God is allowing these sorts of tragic things to occur by restraining the power that the divine has to change it. Unfortunately, this does not give us solid reason for the occurrence of these things that will satisfy all the kinds of people these events may happen to. One might say that "Well, God had a plan that only God can know and that is why the hurricane killed three thousand people." This may not give us the answer to the "why?" questions, but it does give the beginning of an explanation as to how this kind of incident occurred.

A possible explanation as to questions about why natural evil occurs could be that God desires to affirm the courses of nature, the consistent descriptions that science gives us of this universe that we inhabit. The achievement of man in science has brought an improvement in quality of life and that achievement has come through the ability to use the methods of science

to understand the universe. God restraining the divine power (or knowledge) to allow the courses of the universe to unfold according to laws of the universe that man has discovered would be consistent a benevolent God that has placed a premium on the power of discovery through curiosity. While we may think that knowing everything is a better or being protected from everything is a better state than the limited view that we have today, one should think more about the power that discovery has to a human. Tragedy has occurred in many instances and caused us to try to understand the natural courses of the world and triumph over them. Earthquake resistant buildings are an example of this as are those structures that are designed to withstand hurricane force winds. This makes for a resoluteness, a determination not just to survive, but to survive with understanding and learn from the situation that is a distinct feature of in all its cultural distinctions. This kind of restraint on the part of God as it relates to curiosity could also have the effect of producing a seeker of God, if indeed God would want to have a relationship with humans, as many of the great theistic traditions point to. Miracles, which are events that are not contrary to reason but can be contrary to consistently observed phenomenon thus making them not unreasonable but rare, would point to a God that is out there, making one curious about God. One who is survives a deadly tornado or emerges unscathed from a building that was destroyed by an earthquake would see the greatness of power displayed in those natural phenomena and wonder how she survived this, as frail and weak as she knows herself to be. This kind of occurrence could lead her to questions about why she survived and others did not. "Survivor's guilt", as it is commonly referred to in situations like this, could be explained, at least in its beginnings, as a way to pique the curiosity of the survivor and cause her to search for God as an answer to the reason she survived. Indeed, perhaps the beginning phases of this psychological phenomenon should be called "survivor's curiosity" since the feelings of guilt do not necessarily set in until after the question "why did I make it?" has been asked. I understand that the survivor's guilt case does not apply as well in cases of moral evil as it does in the natural disaster type evil described above, though

many religious traditions may try to make the argument that God miraculously spared someone from the hands of madman. That being said, a kenotic perspective about God gives us a God that both honors the outcomes of science and yet can still reach in in a moment and display maximal greatness. While Leibnitz's pre-established harmony gives us a God that is maximally great in all respects, it also gives us one that is responsible for all the injustice that is in the world as well, which cannot be the case. Kenotic theory allows for humanity to truly be responsible for actions, for the occurrences of natural science to be maintained, and yet still maintains a God that is maximally great enough to be miraculous.

Leibnitz intended to show that the implications of God being absolutely perfect in all respects means more than people had ever thought about before. In doing so he either did not understand the implications of what the idea of pre-established harmony would be or he just accepted the implications for human freedom and evil that would go with it. He says that the apparent freedom of people is enough to keep God being everything and give people responsibility for the choices that they make. This is a difficult pill to swallow, for at least the reasons given above. Leibnitz tried to assert God's goodness over all else and unintentionally eliminated human freedom in the process. I have tried affirm the maximal greatness that Leibnitz wants to have while making sure that God is not responsible for evil because in Leibnitz's view that is what takes place. Kenotic theory affirms the intuition that people have that determinism cannot be the way that the universe operates, even in the face of a God as maximally great as theists want their deity to be. Kenotic theory offers the same full and rich description of God that Leibnitz wants but allows for the human freedom as it relates to both choice and the outcomes of natural phenomenon in the world. The lesson that should be learned from Leibnitz's attempt to describe God and God's relationship to the world through pre-established harmony, that the development of one idea can be destructive to another, should be a one that we all take seriously.

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