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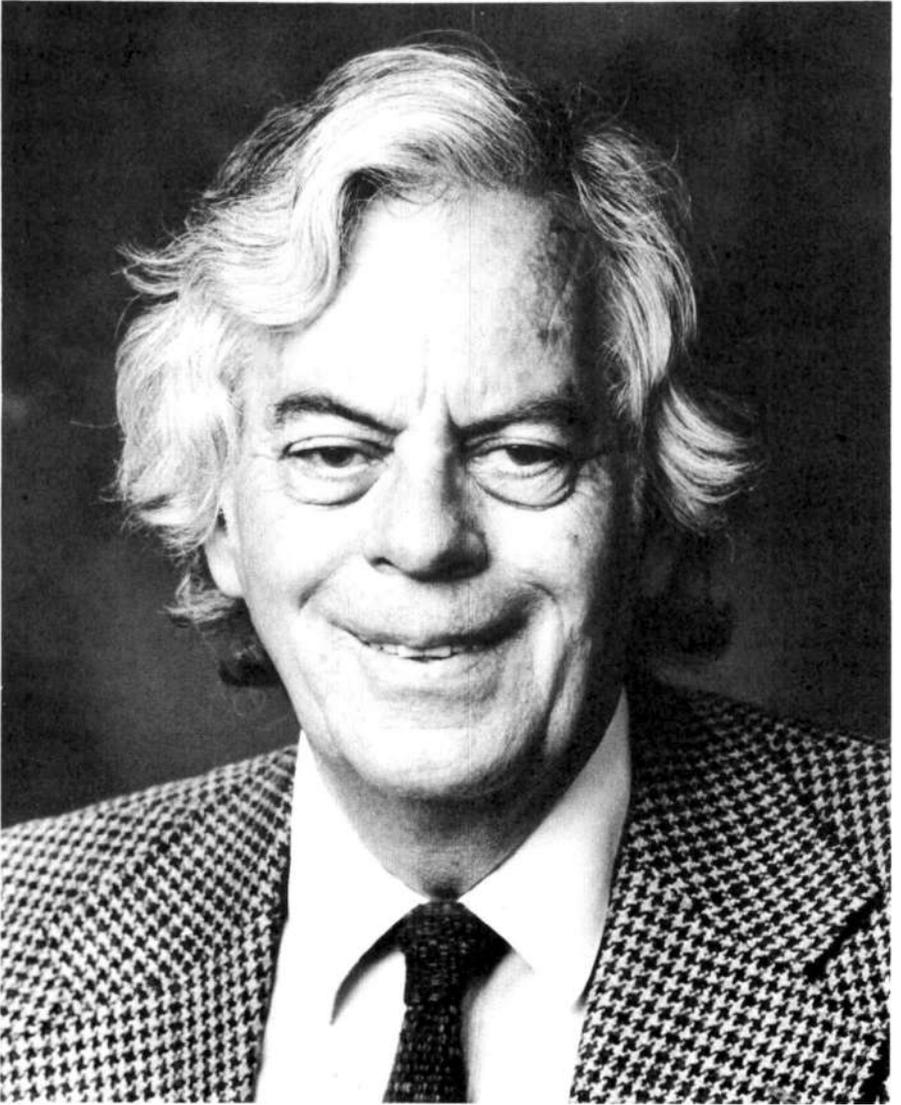## UNISA

Professor Michael Macnamara

LIFE, WORLD AND MEANING

Essays in Honour of Professor Michael Macnamara

Editor

A P J ROUX

Department of Philosophy, University of South Africa

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Preface

In 1989 Professor Michael Macnamara completed 25 years in the service of the University of South Africa. At the end of that year he retired as Professor of Philosophy and as Head of the Philosophy Department. On 5 January 1990 he turned 65. It is against this background that his colleagues and friends honour him in this publication. Much was said in his honour when he left Unisa, but the contributors to this volume, as representatives of this wide circle, are concerned to pay him a more lasting tribute, one that will dovetail specifically with his interests and achievements as an academic and be available to an extended audience.

Professor Macnamara's most marked philosophical interests over the past twenty years have been world views and existential meaning. He was one of the first analytical philosophers to tackle these issues, by trying to plot the 'logical geography' of 'world views' and 'the meaning of life'. The work he did, and is still doing in these fields, warrants more attention. In this publication, therefore, we have made it our first aim to bring together a number of articles which address various aspects of existential meaning. We hope this will emphasize the significance of his contribution and stimulate further work in this important field.

However, one of the most striking characteristics of Michael Macnamara, as shown by his curriculum vitae at the end of this volume, is the wide span of his interests, both in philosophy and in other fields. In the extra-philosophical realm, these range from science and art to social issues, and in philosophy, apart from his concern with world pictures and existential meaning, from the standard disciplines of epistemology and metaphysics to applied forms such as philosophy of literature and philosophy of time. The extra-philosophical is represented by Professor Dreyer's contribution on 'Life and society at ancient Memphis according to the Saqqâra texts', and Professor Skawran's contribution on 'The cultural boycott: an act of censorship or a tool of liberation?'. By including papers touching on some of the other areas in philosophy, such as epistemology, philosophical logic, philosophy of literature and political philosophy, we hope to highlight the breadth of his philosophical concerns, and to hint at the way in which philosophy, or rather philosophizing, is an essential part of the man, Michael Macnamara.

Interdisciplinary co-operation, and in particular the role that philosophy has to play in this regard, was very important to him. He succeeded in involving a variety of researchers with no philosophical training in the philosophical debates pertaining to their own disciplines, persuading them to co-operate in finding and exploring these more general problems. Some of these 'encounters' led to joint publications, which are reflected in his curriculum vitae. In the university he made a point of discussing the importance of philosophical studies for other disciplines such as mathematics, physics, theory of literature, computer science and linguistics with senior colleagues. This has been one of his most important contributions to academic life. To highlight this facet of his academic activities an essay which is co-authored by him and Professor Jeanette Ferreira-Ross, of the Department of English, 'Drama and the notion of scheme-role meaning', is included in this publication.

This joint effort draws attention to and actually exemplifies yet another of his important contributions. Research is usually regarded as an individual effort, and in philosophy in particular, there is a widely held view that joint or team research is not possible. Michael Macnamara does not agree. A few years ago he began identifying and working on joint projects with colleagues and friends. In this way he succeeded not only in increasing his department's research output but also in establishing a definite research culture in the department and in popularizing a certain style of research. In this way he also helped young colleagues to find their feet in research, and to start publishing. Although his personality has had much to do with his success in this regard, working on joint projects, especially on those of an interdisciplinary nature, can now be taken as having been institutionalized in Unisa.

Michael Macnamara's sensitivity to thinking things through with others can also be seen in the Department of Philosophy's lively programme of guest lecturers from overseas. Through his efforts the department has been visited by world-renowned philosophers over the last eight years. Provisional arrangements have also already been made for the immediate future. The first of the department's visitors on Professor Macnamara's initiative, Brian Farrell, has contributed to this volume. In his article his own interest in psychology is expanded so as to link it with the problem of existential meaning.

Not all areas in which Professor Macnamara took an active part are represented or reflected in the papers collected here. The teaching of philosophy, for example, is not included, although he made a considerable contribution in this field. Perhaps one of his best pieces of writing is a section on atomism in a Unisa study guide. His own books were written specifically for student use. Although he was not directly involved in first-year teaching at Unisa, his views on the general aims of the course are evident in its content. Only about one third of first-year students continue to read philosophy, but even a year of philosophical training can be of value in other fields. It was Professor Macnamara who played an important role in establishing the first- year philosophy curriculum offered by his department as a service course. His involvement in one particular aspect of distance teaching should also be mentioned specifically. He helped to propagate the possibilities of using and of improving the available facilities of what he dubbed 'teleseminars', that is, the use of the conference telephone, a medium which he used with great success.

Under his guidance, the Department of Philosophy last year also moved into the field of community teaching. A series of lectures on 'Six great Western philosophers' was presented under the auspices of the Institute for Continuing Education. This proved so popular with the Pretoria public that the service will be continued and extended.

But Michael Macnamara has made his mark in a much wider context than that of the Philosophy Department. He is a poet of note, with several published volumes to his credit. As chairman of the now defunct Pasquino Society in 1968 and 1970 he played a leading part in the fight against censorship. At Unisa he is well known for his positive and wide-ranging contributions. For years he has been a member of the Management Committee of the Unisa Art Gallery, which has requested him to stay on after his retirement. Thanks to him, an ad hoc committee was appointed to investigate the academic boycott and Unisa's position in this regard. As a result of his initial concern, the university has adopted a policy regarding the disease Aids. He is also known as a critic and as a fighter, especially for the underdog. For example, when the policy of financial recognition for research publications was announced, he realised immediately the problems implied for departments where there are other kinds of 'products', as in the instance of Fine Arts, Music and Literature. He used every opportunity to state and argue the case for creative art in the university.

A change in the conditions of service for temporary staff members and discriminatory inscriptions on the buildings on the new Unisa campus raised his ire.

These are some examples of his interest in and involvement with what goes on in the world and how people can be affected. We are now back where we started: Michael Macnamara's interest in world views and existential meaning. His philosophical activities are not ivory tower concerns. He is involved with live issues as linked to their origins in the life-world, with the explicit aim of trying to come to a better understanding of ourselves, our fellow man and the world.

I know Michael Macnamara's first reaction to this presentation will be: 'Am I worthy of it?' His contributions to his department, his university, to academic life and his community have not been aimed at recognition or honour. They have been made in the true philosophical spirit of reaching a better understanding of our situation and living a better life. Although the final judgement of the value of what he has done and produced is in the hands of time, what has been said above shows that Michael Macnamara made important contributions to Philosophy, to academic life in general and to the institution where he has spent most of his working life. Moreover, as he well knows from his study of existentialism, honouring someone for what he is, or has done, or has accomplished, does not mean putting a full stop behind that life, or fixing the essence of that person: it is to add a new challenge, widening the scope of his freedom and responsibility. Michael Macnamara will now be free *from* ... free from administrative duties, from personnel problems, from meetings, from concern about closing dates and from all the other issues of the academic arena. But life goes on and at all times the unexamined life is not worth living. In other words, he will now be free *to* ... to go on examining, to think, to publish, etc.

With this publication, we are taking leave of a respected colleague and friend. We are thanking him for his co-operation, assistance and many contributions. May the years to come be as fruitful and rewarding as has the last quarter of a century.

Braam Roux
Department of Philosophy
University of South Africa
Pretoria
9 March 1990

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The meaning of life: a psycho-logical exploration

Brian Farrell
Corpus Christi College, Oxford

I

Consider the following conversations between an adolescent, Bob, and his father:

(a) Bob: 'Why are all those birds settling on that field?'
Father: 'Looking for the grain left over from the harvest, I think.'

(b) B: 'Why are those people over there making all that noise?'
F: 'They are shouting for their teams – they are rugby supporters.'

(c) B: 'Why are we living here in this ugly city, and not in the much nicer countryside?'
F: 'It's much more convenient for my work. That's why.'

(d) B: 'Why are we living at all?'
F: 'Sorry, I don't follow. What are you talking about?'

The 'why ...?' questions in (b) and (c) presuppose that we humans can and do have purposes in mind by reference to which our conduct can be explained. This is the home use in this sort of context of the expression 'why are ...?'. In question (d), the expression is not being employed in its home use. We have no purpose in mind by reference to

which our existence can be explained. Naturally, therefore, the father is puzzled by the question, and, by implication, asks Bob to explain how he is using the expression.

The parent might go on to try to help him. 'Do you mean: "How did human life arrive on the planet?" ' If Bob accepts this reading of this question then his use of 'why are' in (d) serves to ask for a scientific explanation. This is a very difficult question to answer, but it is not conceptually baffling. What, however, if Bob rejects this reading of (d) and says:

> No, when I ask: 'Why are we living at all?', I want to know why the material was there out of which we humans developed. Please don't tell me that the material was produced by the Big Bang a very long time ago. For this presupposes that very dense material was in existence when the Bang happened. What I am really asking is: 'Why is there material at all?'

> I can put it differently, father. When you explain to me that, and how, we humans developed out of pre-existing inorganic matter, you are explaining the fact of human existence by showing how it developed out of the fact of pre-existing inorganic matter. But you are only explaining how, roughly speaking, one fact produces another, and why, therefore, the latter exists. You do *not* explain why there is fact at all. Why is that here? And since we humans are part of fact itself, why are we here?

To this response from Bob, the father can reply on the same lines as before:

> We humans have no purpose in mind by reference to which we can explain our being here. The most we can do is, for example, to explain why our family is living in the town rather than in the country. Hence, to ask why we humans are here at all is to take the words 'why are', and connected expressions, out of their home contexts, and to frame a question to which no sense has been given. You have asked the 'why' question once too often. The same applies if we ask for an explanation, not of a particular fact or facts, but of fact itself. For now we take the expression 'an explanation' out of its home context and fail to give it a sense. So to look for the meaning of life along this road is a senseless endeavour.

Should Bob accept this way of dealing with his question? It is, of course, a very well-known way. One description of it amounts to saying that the meaning of life can logically only be found within the world; it cannot be found outside of it. Another description is that it amounts to pointing out what happens in this context when we do depart from the literal use of language. All I have done is to explore a little of what is involved in dealing in a literal way with Bob's difficulty. This exploration can be tedious, but it does have the merit of exhibiting the nature of the force of the literal way. The force resides in the fact that this way makes us face the reality with which our concepts apparently confront us. Such facing can be, and often is, a psychologically upsetting business, just as it is quite often upsetting to be obliged to face the reality of our own personal conflicts and difficulties. If we now claim that the father's replies do really confront the adolescent with conceptual reality, then it seems to follow that we are also claiming he should accept that his father's replies are telling him the truth. His question has no sense, and hence it is silly to ask it.

II

But is this the true or correct answer? We all know that the literal answer from the father runs into an objection which is widely accepted. We can put this objection as follows: The father's replies do *not* present the adolescent with conceptual reality; the cosmos and our life in it have a purpose and meaning, even though we may not know with confidence at present what it is. For we have good and sufficient reason to believe that there exists a supernatural person, God, who transcends the cosmos and ourselves; and it is by reference to His purposes that we humans can, and do, give our life a meaning. Thus, for example, Archbishop Tutu said (on BBC 2, at the time of the Lambeth Conference) that he would regard life as a very 'bad joke' if we did not have an afterlife in which God's purposes could be revealed to us. By this remark, the Archbishop is claiming that, since life without God and an afterlife would be a bad joke, we have a good and sufficient reason to believe in both.

What then should Bob do at this point? Which answer should he choose, the literal or the theistic? Most of us, and especially no doubt the professional philosophers in the West — who are committed to

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the pursuit of truth with a very large 'T' — will be much inclined to say: 'Bob should choose the right or correct answer, the one that embodies the truth. That is, the one which does present us with conceptual reality.' But is this good advice? It presupposes that it is sensible to try to find the right or correct or true answer. But is it? Is it sensible to claim that there is a true answer to Bob's query?

III

Let us approach these doubts indirectly by looking again at the literal answer. What is it about this answer that leaves Bob, or the ordinary person, very uneasy? I suspect that he remains uneasy because it still leaves him compulsively wanting to take the relevant words and expressions out of their home context, and to ask the 'why are' questions once too often. What are the sources of this compulsion?

An important one is that mentioned by Tutu. If our life has no meaning in the sense that there is no purpose behind it that humans can make sense of, then it is a bad joke — it is a bitter, empty affair in which nature has just made fools of us. But we resist regarding life as a bad joke, and so we are inclined to say that life *does* have some transcendent purpose which makes it worthwhile. Very well, but note that this inclination is the outcome, in part, of Tutu's own use of 'bad joke'. The context in which we learn and use this expression is one where, for example, someone, X, plays a joke on Y in which the humour is bitter, and which makes Y feel something of a fool. In his argument Tutu is comparing the natural order to X. But the natural order is not a person and can play no jokes, bad or otherwise. Hence he is covertly using the expression 'bad joke' outside its home context, and without explaining how he is using it in the new context he has given it. This covertly extended use then allows, and encourages, us to say that life has an overall meaning. When, however, we take in this feature of Tutu's verbal behaviour, our compulsions are likely to be weakened or even inhibited. For we are now encouraged to say that there is no sense in speaking about the purpose *of* life, and this in turn encourages us to notice and affirm that there is still a great deal of purpose left *in* life — for example, in the efforts by Tutu and many others to end apartheid and racial domination by whites in South Africa.

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Consider another source. If there is no overall further purpose to life, why do we maintain it? For *mere* living and *mere* existence is of no value, and we would then have no reason for not committing universal suicide, as we would have nothing to live for. But this is absurd. No doubt, there are occasions when some of us feel like agreeing that we dislike the human race with its ugly face. However, we do all believe that human life should be maintained and hence it must have some overall purpose and meaning.

This argument works by inducing us to assimilate life with no overall purpose to a state of mere living, and to overlook that a life with no overall purpose is quite compatible with the people in it living lives which are full of significance and purpose. This way of talking helps to give rise to the compulsion to doubt the value of life as such, and hence to extend our language so as to allow us to affirm some transcendent purpose. Of course, there is a moral question half buried in this argument. 'Might it not be right to exterminate ourselves and leave the planet to be enjoyed by the animals, which will preserve the earth better than we are doing?' But we do not need to resort to transcendent purposes to deal with this moral question. It is also worth noting that the doubt expressed in this argument about the value of living is very apt to be a pseudo-doubt, like our doubt about the sun rising tomorrow morning. For we do not *really* doubt the value of living and seriously contemplate suicide. If we discover that Bob is seriously contemplating suicide we would, and should, stop at once giving him our philosophical treatment, and hand him over to our psychiatric and psychotherapeutic colleagues.

I have now worked sketchily through two sources of our compulsion to answer the question about the meaning of life by using key words and expressions outside their home contexts. There are, however, an indefinite array of such sources. If Bob's father does not work through some of these other sources, or does not teach and encourage Bob to do so for himself, then Bob will be left exposed to the threat to his peace of mind which arises from these other sources. Any 'philosophical satisfaction' which he may have achieved so far will not be very secure. On the other hand, if the parent and he do work through some further sources of his compulsion — especially those he finds the more disturbing — he will then be in a better position to appreciate what it is that makes the question about the meaning of life both so moving

and seemingly important, and yet also one without sense. The philosophical satisfaction he obtains from his literal discourse will be more secure.

IV

But is this view of the matter correct? Has the question really no sense? Say Bob accepts this way of reasoning. Let us then contrast Bob with the adolescent Koos. Whereas Bob has plainly no particular wish to go beyond a literal way of talking, let us suppose that Koos has. He has a wish to believe in God, by reference to whom the purpose of life can be settled. He is predisposed, therefore, to answer the question by adopting a theistic way of talking about it. This way at once confronts Koos with the challenging obstacle of having to explain to himself, and to others, the extended use of the words and expressions he employs in his answer. Thus, since the meaning of life is to be explained by reference to the purpose of a supernatural person, God, he has to explain this extended use of the word 'person'. How, for instance, can a disembodied person, such as God, be identified? When Moses or Mohammed heard the voice of God, how did they know that they were not hearing the voice of the Devil, or merely suffering from auditory hallucinations like many schizophrenic patients? There are two ways at least in which Koos can meet this challenge. He can try to give to the words and expressions he employs (for example, 'person') an extended use which will avoid incoherence, and yet will do the work for him which he requires. Or Koos can try to lessen the impact of the challenge by dissociating it from the rest of his way of talking. For example, by maintaining that to try to elucidate in literal terms a sense in which God is a person is quite impossible, since this attempt overlooks that God is a mystery, which we, His creatures, cannot penetrate. If Koos's wish to believe in God is strong, he may be ready to try to meet these threats to his conceptual security, which are presented by his extended theistic discourse. The conceptual equilibrium he achieves in this way may be more satisfying to him than any which literal discourse can provide.

V

Which answer is correct, Bob's or Koos's? How are we to settle this question? Presumably, if Bob's answer (say) is correct, and does

present us with conceptual reality, then the conceptual equilibrium at which Bob arrives is likely to be more secure, or stable, than Koos's. But how are we to determine whether Bob's condition is more stable than Koos's? But even if it were more stable, we cannot affirm the consequent here in order to infer that Bob's answer is correct. It looks very much as if we cannot tell which answer presents us with conceptual reality. Well, is there any way of dealing with this question which is strong enough to produce a rationally grounded consensus? Again, it looks as if there is no such way. If Bob and Koos wish to take the matter further, then it is clear that they must direct their attention to these questions.

But Bob (or Koos) will probably be very inclined to believe that his own answer is correct, or on the right lines, or getting near the truth, and so on. This is quite understandable. For the answer he arrives at (over the meaning of life) is the one which resolves his conceptual conflict in a way which is psychologically most satisfying to him. This fact may then tempt him to give to his personal resolution the extra security that comes from applying to it the honorific and reinforcing words 'true', 'right', and so on. But of course to do this is to plunge him at once into further difficulties. Can he speak of his own answer as true or correct, and so on, if he and Koos are in principle unable to arrive at a rational consensus? This doubt, in turn, suggests that for Bob (or Koos) to claim that he really has the truth, or the correct answer, and the like, is to reveal that he is in the grip of yet another compulsion — one which is psychologically unfortunate, as it leads to further troubles, and which requires to be explored and brought under control.

Let me stand back and ask: does Bob (or Koos) now still have the same urge to *press* the original question about the meaning of life? I hope not. I hope that an exploration on these lines can do something to help him to master the relevant concepts, and thereby do a little to bring his compulsion under control. But, of course, an adequate treatment of this matter would take us far away into other parts of the large and tangled network of our conceptual difficulties — a network which both afflicts and enriches our lives.

As for my own remarks, I do not now have to throw away a ladder of nonsense or surmount pointless discourse. For my remarks amount

merely to a description of a certain cluster of conceptual conflicts, somewhat analogous to a description in psychiatry of the nature and pathology of (say) obsessional difficulties. Like any such description, it can be supported or upset or modified by further empirical enquiry.

2

The relevance of philosophy in the quest for the meaning of life

E D Prinsloo
Department of Philosophy
University of South Africa

Die Philosophie muss, um dem Menschengeschlecht zu helfen, den gefallenen und schwachen Menschen aufrichten und leiten, nicht seiner Natur Gewalt antun noch ihn in seiner Verderbnis verlassen (Giovanni Bathista Vico).

In this quotation Vico expresses the view that it is the task of philosophy to assist the human race in difficult times and not to do violence to human nature. Vico's view, which is representative of a philosophical approach, is one among many and cannot be taken for granted. The view that philosophy has on one hand to help the human race, and in doing so to assist and guide the weak and the ruined and, on the other, not to do violence to human nature or leave men to their fate, has to be tested.

If we ask how philosophy is to avoid doing violence to human nature or is to guide human fate we are presupposing that we know what human nature is and that human fate has to be understood with

reference to the weak, the ruined and the doomed. For Vico philosophical assistance ('helfen') consists in consolation or comfort ('aufrichten') and guidance ('leiten').

CONSOLATION, COMFORT AND GUIDANCE

These concepts are universals and thus polymorphous in nature; they can have different manifestations. A request to different persons to console, comfort or guide someone may be 'understood', but understood differently depending on whether 'different persons' relate to homogeneous or heterogeneous groupings. Priests, medical doctors, psychologists or relatives may comply differently with such a request.

The question now arises as to what a philosopher would do. This question cannot be decided without reference to a view on what philosophy is and how it can assist in the sense of consoling, comforting and guiding. This question will be set aside until the concept 'human situation' has been dealt with.

THE WEAK, THE RUINED, AND THE DOOMED

These terms refer to and interpret situations of human suffering. Such situations give rise to questions about the meaning of life since people want to make sense of their own situations. Although people may wonder about the meaning of life in circumstances where they are strong and successful, it is especially the case with reference to situations of suffering.

One can be weak, ruined or doomed in several ways, which means that these words can have different meanings in different situations of human existence. Someone who hears that he is a terminal patient may feel doomed or ruined in a different way from one who is declared insolvent, whose marriage has broken up or who has lost a loved one. Not only are the facts in these cases different, but the way in which people discuss their fate may also differ. We can, however, expect to find the feeling that their lives have no purpose, which leads to the question of why they exist at all. To make sense of this question it must be remembered that the world of the terminal patient is the world of disease; the world of the insolvent person is that of economic laws which have been created by the community in which he lives; a broken marriage concerns the world of relations between people and

death means a world without someone and everything thát involves. The question 'Why do I exist?' is thus related to the question 'Why *this* world?' — irrespective of whether 'world' refers to laws of nature or human creations.

These questions may be answered differently (by the theologian, psychologist, etc.), as we have seen, and the answers may be proclaimed as credos or argued for. Arguments are valid or invalid and the premises of arguments acceptable or unacceptable. A theologian may either proclaim certain beliefs about the relation between God and man in dealing with suffering, or argue about it. When a theologian tests his viewpoints for acceptability or his arguments for validity, he transcends the boundaries of theology. Such questions are not asked *within* theology, but *about* theology, *about* the claims made by theologians.

The same applies in the case of other types of answers that can be given, for example by psychologists, psychiatrists, medical doctors or economists: there are questions asked *within* a particular field and there are questions that can be asked *about* the claims made within the disciplines with a bearing on these fields.

Questions about the validity of arguments and the acceptability of premises are questions about claims made in disciplines and transcend these disciplines.

The difference between questions within disciplines and questions about disciplines can be clarified with reference to examples of different types of human suffering. I shall deal with one example and analyse it with respect to different approaches.

THE TERMINAL PATIENT

In *Cancer ward* by Alexander Solzhenitsyn a senior doctor discovers that she has cancer:

> Dontsova had never imagined that something she knew inside and out, so thoroughly, could change to the point where it became entirely new and unfamiliar. For thirty years she had been dealing with other people's illnesses, and for a good twenty she sat in front of the X-ray screen. She had read the screen, read the film, read the distorted, imploring eyes of her patients. She had compared

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what she saw with books and analyses, had written articles and argued with colleagues and patients. During this time what she had worked out empirically for herself, had become more and more indisputable, while in her mind medical theory grew increasingly coherent ...

Until now all human bodies had been built identically, as described in the standard anatomical atlas. The physiology of the vital processes and the physiology of sensations were uniform as well. Everything that was normal or deviated from the normal, was explained in logical terms by authoritative manuals.

Then suddenly, within a few days, her own body had fallen out of this great, orderly system. It had struck the hard earth and was now like a helpless sack crammed with organs — organs which might at any moment be seized with pain and cry out.

Within a few days everything had been turned inside out. Her body was, as before, composed of parts she knew well but the whole was unknown and frightening.

It is clear that cancer is viewed by the medical doctor in one way and experienced by the patient in another. The quotation starts with the medical view: reading the screen, the film and the distorted imploring eyes of patients, reading books and articles and arguing with colleagues and patients, building up a coherent medical theory which supplies the meaning of the illness. However, in suffering from cancer, the orderly system disappears and the body is experienced as unknown and frightening, 'a helpless sack crammed with organs — organs which may at any moment be seized with pain and cry out'.

With reference to this example I now wish, firstly, to consider three areas in which attempts are made to help people give meaning to life: the natural sciences (the medical doctors), ideology (religion: the priest) and the humanities (psychology: the psychologist), and secondly to consider the role of philosophy in helping people to give meaning to their lives.

THE DOCTOR AND THE MEANING OF LIFE

The two views depicted in the quotation represent two conceptual schemes: one of medical theory and the other of suffering. Medical

theory is concerned with the treatment of diseases for which the study of life in terms of the human body is a necessary condition. It enables the doctor to tell his patient what he is suffering from, what the prognosis is, and what can be done to relieve his suffering. But does the patient's question as to the meaning of life belong to this group? It is clearly not a medical question. Although doctors do not deal with diseases but with sick people with whom they have to co-operate and communicate and with whom they can discuss the meaning of life, these aspects are not covered by medical theory.

In a question as to the meaning of life, 'life' includes more than just the biological life which is studied in medicine. Of course biological life is not completely different from human life, and suffering is not disconnected from biological functions — knowledge of one's bodily functions can even assist in finding an answer to the question 'why do I exist?', but biological knowledge itself is too restricted to supply the final answer. Knowledge of the function of bodily organs can help in finding an answer to the question 'what am I here for?' in terms of the question 'why exactly do I have this body and not another one?' This type of knowledge can explain limitations to performances and assist in caring for the body in order to live the life which one has chosen. But this knowledge can neither determine one's choice nor provide premises for deducing an answer to the question 'why do I exist?', because such an answer (conclusion) must transcend the possible premises. Descriptions of bodily functions do not contain clues for any answer to the question posed.

But is knowledge of biological functions not relevant to answering the question 'why do I exist?', in that this question is linked to the question 'who am I?', which includes the body and its functions? To decide on this, we have to consider how we refer to persons in ordinary language. References to Dontsova are originally in terms of her job as a medical doctor and later in terms of suffering. The references to her profession are by means of the jargon of doings (she *dealt* with other people's illnesses, she *read* the film and *compared* what she saw with books and analyses) and references to her suffering are couched in the jargon of happenings (her body as *having fallen* out of this great, orderly system, and *having changed* into a helpless sack of organs). A medical doctor as a professional person is concerned with diseases, and diseases as happenings and not doings. To claim that a person's

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body is what a person is or that it is part of a person, is to claim that a happening is a doing or part of it, which is unacceptable.

However, in order for a person to do something, bodily movements are involved, and in order to identify a person, descriptions of his face, height, build and the colour of his skin are most important, if not essential. A person is not imaginable without a body but it does not follow that a person is identifiable with his body. A person is not composed of a number of bodily organs and their functions. Descriptions of a person are, in the majority of cases, descriptions of doings or descriptions that can be related to doings. Persons are alike or different in terms of ways of life or values they adhere to. Bodies of persons can be different or similar for doctors or physiologists since their interest is not strictly in persons but in bodies as such.

The argument from identity may be adduced to disprove the claim that persons can be described and even identified in terms of bodily descriptions only.

Anthony Quinton (1973: 91) remarks as follows about Ayer's view that the criterion of personal identity is a bodily criterion:

> A person is composed of those total mental states that contain an organic sensation belonging to one particular human body, itself to be identified in terms of continuity of qualities and spatial position. Ayer drew the conclusion that properly follows from this as from any account of personal identity that involves reference to a particular human body: that the notion of a person's disembodied existence is self-contradictory and, further, that the notion of the association of a personality with different bodies at different times is inconceivable ... Human beings are thus treated as just one variety of concrete objects.

According to this quotation, all mental states of a person belong to one particular body. The same applies to doings: they are doings of persons who engage in bodily activities.

The conclusion which follows if this analysis of happenings and doings is accepted, is that the body is involved in both cases, but in different ways. The point of the analysis is to show that one cannot console, comfort or guide bodily functions or for that matter, happenings, but one can do this to persons.

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To say that life has meaning is related to doings and not to happenings, because 'what am I here for?' or 'why do I exist?' cannot be answered in terms of happenings because the answer is not, for example, 'I exist because I must digest my food'. The answer must be in terms of doings, for example 'I exist because I have to or ought to fulfil certain ideals'. For this reason a medical doctor cannot give guidance to his patients about the meaning of their lives without transcending his field.

THE PRIEST AND THE MEANING OF LIFE

It can be argued that a theologian is in a better (or the best) position to give guidance, to console and to comfort the patient in the example above, since he can deal with a terminal patient in terms of religious viewpoints and beliefs. According to these beliefs God exists and we matter to Him. He has a plan for our lives and we must try to find this plan and carry it out. What occurs is part of God's plan and it is impossible for God to do anything unjust to anybody.

This approach is concerned with doings — people are expected to carry out God's plan for them. The question 'why do I exist?' seems appropriate in this context because people can be guided, consoled and comforted by being told what to do or by being helped to find the answer.

However, there are two problems. The first concerns the fact that a person must accept religious beliefs; the second that the reasons for accepting them must be acceptable. Accepting religious beliefs can be based on good reasons, but someone can accept them without being able to supply good reasons; furthermore a person may also refuse to accept such beliefs in spite of good reasons for accepting them.

With reference to the example from *Cancer ward:* Dontsova or people in her position may argue that God is cruel to her, or she may fail to see a divine plan for her, or may refuse to accept God's plan if a priest should explain it to her. There can be different reasons why a person in this situation may refuse to accept religious consolation: she may query the internal consistency of such beliefs (e.g. a God who allows suffering may be regarded as irreconcilable with a God of love and mercy) or she may consider God completely transcendental (and thus irrelevant) to her situation of severe suffering because He can

never be known personally; or God's plan, if somehow spelled out, may not coincide with her plan for her life and thus be unacceptable; or for lack of empirical evidence, the existence of God may be doubted. These considerations neither exclude the possibility that she could have accepted these beliefs when she was a doctor and that all her performances subsequently would have been inspired by them, nor do they exclude the possibility of Dontsova's giving meaning to her life without any religious beliefs being involved.

Dontsova may, however, accept the account of such religious beliefs and God's plan for her and be comforted and consoled in this way. She may start to see suffering in general and her suffering in particular as part of God's plan and an opportunity to resist temptation, and to show that she has the courage and faith to accept her fate and carry on with what is left of her life.

However, whether a person accepts religious beliefs or not, the question whether there are good reasons for accepting them still remains.

The question 'why do I exist?' concerns our lives and not something beyond. We do not have conceptions of matters beyond our experience. God transcends our lives altogether and it is not possible to know what God's plan is. Our notions of justice, goodness and what is meaningful may contradict His. Knowledge of God's view is based on an analogy to our own view, since we can only know things within the field of our experience. Built into man's views on the point and content of God's will and interpreting the revelations in the Bible are our own ideas of what is good, right or meaningful.

As a medical doctor Dontsova's life is meaningful to her, but it loses its meaning when she discovers that she is suffering from cancer. We can come to this conclusion in terms of what is implied by the way she is described: from an enthusiastic doctor she turns into a helpless sack crammed with organs. If life had meaning for her as a doctor because she held certain religious beliefs, then the same religious beliefs cannot hold in the new situation. Say she believed that God had given her the gift of treating and trying to cure cancer and that this was God's plan for her, then this way of making sense of her life would be destroyed by her suffering from cancer; God's plan for her would have been destroyed in this way. This analysis shows God's will as being interpreted from within: Dontsova read the screen, read

the film, compared what she saw with books and analyses, wrote articles and argued with colleagues and patients. These activities of hers were meaningful to her. To say that God had a plan for her in terms of these activities is to interpret God's plan not from without but from within. Talk of the plan of God, then, on this analysis, is parasitic on our human ideals and objectives.

In the changed situation (suffering from cancer), God's plan can be seen as destroyed, not because of a knowledge of God's plan or will from without, but again from within: Dontsova's possible conclusion that God's plan has been destroyed would be based on her having become a helpless sack crammed with organs. In both cases it has been shown that knowledge of or discourse about God pivots on knowledge of or discourse about our own experiences. The two discourses cannot be separated. To accept everything that happens to people as the will of God is to render the will of God inconsistent, if not absurd and unreasonable.

In human life we do not equate what we regard in any situation as right with what is wrong, or what is good with what is bad, although it is sometimes difficult for people to realize the badness or goodness of someone or something, for example to convince some parents of their children's vices or a wife of her husband's unfaithfulness. The trust of some people in others is just unreasonable and absurd. If this trust can be proven not to be absurd it is not logical but psychological, which does not mean that it cannot also be logical (but then it can no longer be called absurd or inconsistent). It is psychological when no reasons can be provided for the trust and logical when attempts are made to back it up in terms of the interpretation of facts. Different persons may identify patterns of behaviour, that is the point of doing something in certain situations, differently. If someone starts singing a song while travelling on a bus full of strangers, it is possible to find different patterns in what is going on — for example, he is trying to impress the girl sitting next to him by showing off; he is trying to shock his fellow passengers; he suffers from an inferiority complex and is trying to show his superiority; he is fulfilling a wager; he is a first-year student and is performing an initiation ceremony; he is ill-mannered. However, not all of these interpretations are true and their truth has to be decided on or argued for with reference to facts about the person. The point is that an accusation that he is behaving, for

example, in an ill-mannered fashion can be backed up or criticized by interpreting his behaviour in different ways. Backing up and criticizing claims are of course different kinds of performance.

If we apply the notions of substantiating and refuting claims to religious beliefs, we find the following defences for God's will as always being good: God is a perfect being who can never make mistakes and who governs our lives according to His plan; He cares for the well-being of man and whatever befalls us is always for our ultimate well-being. If things go against our ideas of good and bad or right and wrong, it is either because we do not understand the mystery of God's will or we misinterpret God's intentions (as in the case of the young passenger on the bus about whom we do not know all the facts). In the case of suffering, God's intentions are not to be cruel to us, but to punish us for our sins or to try us in order to ascertain the strength of our faith in Him. The problem, however, is that if the reasons for the punishment are not clear or no reasons can be given for its being necessary for Him to try us, then it looks like a patching up on the basis of empty applications of analogies like the relationship between a father and his children. If, however, it is argued that a person has led an evil life in terms of a certain value system and is being punished for the sin he committed, then this is not an empty application of, for example, the father–son relationship, but it makes sense, and would make complete sense if it were not for the fact that not all suffering falls into this category.

The upshot seems to be that religious beliefs are redundant in the search for the meaning of life since they are based on human discourse, sometimes with correct and sometimes with empty applications, and the same sense can be made both with and without them.

An important aspect of the discussion is that a critical attitude concerning the appropriateness of religious beliefs for rendering human situations meaningful is not an attitude stemming from religion itself; it is not a religious criticism of religious beliefs, but an attitude transcending the field of religion. This indicates that there must be a discipline transcending the field of religion even when a theologian becomes selfcritical.

THE PSYCHOLOGIST AND THE MEANING OF LIFE

There are many schools of psychology, but generally speaking psychology is concerned with the mind of a person, and the important question here is what is to count as the mind of a person. In Cartesian terms it is regarded as an entity over and above the body; in Freudian terms as consisting of the id, the ego and super-ego; and in behaviouristic terms as a logical construction for patterns of behaviour like thinking, experiencing, believing and communicating. Freud can be interpreted in two ways: the id, the ego and the super-ego can be regarded as logical constructions in the sense that different patterns of behaviour are distinguished, or they can be interpreted as entities, different mental substances. For our purpose it is sufficient to distinguish between the two main approaches to mind: if the mind were regarded as a substance consisting of powers, abilities, control mechanisms and causal structures, the task of the psychologist will be different from what it would be if the mind is regarded as a logical construction on the basis of particular patterns of behaviour. Most contemporary professional psychologists reject the first view and prefer to deal with human behaviour. This fact does not, however, imply that there are no differences among them about the methods to be used.

Clinical psychologists are trained to deal with psychological problems such as stress, neurotic behaviour, and depression and they can also act as, inter alia, marriage counsellors. One of the methods they use to determine people's aptitudes, intelligence, and personality traits or to determine mental disorders is psychological testing. The results of these tests have a place in a consideration of the meaning of life because they are used for choosing a profession in line with aptitude, intelligence and personality traits, or for overcoming stress or depression, or for a better understanding between people who are attempting to save a marriage. However, there is a growing uneasiness, about psychological testing in particular, but also about psychological practice in general, when it comes to dealing with individuals.

K. F. Mauer and A. I. Retief (1985:19–24) discuss two problems which psychologists encounter. One concerns the conflicting models of causality used and the other, difficulties encountered in cross-cultural psychology. They say:

Mainly as a result of the history of the discipline, psychology has long nurtured a positivistic tradition. While many psychologists nowadays acknowledge the inappropriateness of this model, they are, nonetheless, trapped in a tradition where they have to buy the respect of their colleagues by producing research results firmly embedded in the positivist world. The conflict which arises is particularly evident in research conducted in the field of therapeutic psychology. The resultant situation is that the researchers in this area conceptualize their research problems against a theoretical orientation derived from general systems theory (Von Bertalanffy 1968) but in conceding to the pressures of their peers they formulate hypotheses (preferably null hypotheses), measure their variables, and manipulate their data along simplistic linear models which have traditionally been used by psychologists. When they try to interpret the results they find themselves in a totally untenable position, and reading their research reports requires something akin to intellectual hopscotch between the different and conflicting models which they employ.

The second issue relates to the difficulties encountered in the area of cross-cultural psychology. While battles royal used to rage in the area of the intellectual structure of various cultural groups, the focus shifted to the difficulties associated with measuring attitudes, interests, and personality dimensions (Mauer & Retief 1985:23–24).

The authors point out that the linear causal model (started in 1879 at Wundt's laboratory in Leipzig) can be related to the development of Newtonian physics. Newton's methods made a wonderful knowledge of the universe possible and it was presumed that the same could happen in the field of the humanities if a slightly changed scientific method could be applied to gain a better understanding of man. Psychologists such as J. B. Watson and B. F. Skinner thought that an objective science of behaviour technology could assure the salvation of mankind. The positivistic approach, as formulated here, implies that man can be controlled in the way nature can be controlled. According to this view, man's life has meaning if the linear causal chain can be restored or controlled. Meaning in life is in this sense equivalent to the (passive) control of human functions or operations.

The authors further point out that the acceptability of this methodological approach was strengthened by the rise and development of behaviourism, which is based on stimulus and response explanations. This pattern of stimulus and response does not contain any intervention as a variable for the earlier behaviourists. The later behaviourists admitted an organism as a variable but emphasized that only what could be perceived was acceptable and they believed that matters such as thought, feelings, experiences and attitudes did not fit behaviouristic methods since they could not be measured, weighed or counted. Anything that exists, exists as measurable quantity for the behaviourists, a conviction which impoverishes psychology although the intention was to rule out all sorts of postulated entities which populate speculative psychology (known as Ockham's razor in philosophical circles). More often than not this view leads to unacceptable generalization from the behaviour of laboratory rats to human behaviour.

Meaning in human life consists, according to this view, in a passive process of stimulus and response; human beings do not give meaning to their lives, because it is there as a perceptible mechanical process. Giving meaning to one's life requires agency or intervention between the stimulus and the response. The organism is for the later behaviourists a kind of intervention, but still an intervention which is determined by causal laws and not that of agency, which is a logical construction for unpredictable behaviour based on improvisation and freedom. Applied to the case of Dontsova, it would mean that she is captured in a deterministic causal order which can be controlled only by mechanical means such as chemical treatment or shock therapy. However, if we accept that the question as to the meaning of life is not related to happenings, but to doings, these types of treatment cannot be related to questions about the meaning of Dontsova's life.

According to Mauer and Retief other developments in psychology have contradicted the presuppositions of the behaviourists. On one hand the view is developed that man is a being who strives after the satisfaction of a number of needs which are integrated hierarchically, with self-realization at the top of the system; on the other hand we have systems theory, in terms of which man lives in a community and cannot be understood as an individual unless his relationships with other people are analysed. As a matter of fact, it is argued, a person sees

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himself as other people see him. Problematic behaviour can in this sense be dealt with and evaluated only against the background of man's functioning within the community. According to both these views the meaning of life consists in the active participation of man in giving meaning to his own life.

This view of the meaning of life is completely opposed to the behaviouristic view that behaviour is to be explained in terms of linear causality. A psychologist would be inconsistent if he used both approaches to the meaning of life in his dealings with people; moreover, he would simply be wrong in thinking that questions about the meaning of life can be asked in the context of linear causality (stimulus and response), since these questions concern doings and not happenings.

Self-realization and man's functioning in a community system are not only complex, but presuppose agency. Mauer and Retief distinguish between linear and circular causality: a kicked stone moves according to the physical laws of mass and energy; a kicked dog's reaction cannot, however, be predicted exactly, because the dog may react by running away, barking or biting. The same applies in the case of the person who kicked the dog — he may decide not to kick it again, but rather to use a whip or a stick, or to get rid of the dog or to become more friendly with it. We note from this complex structure of actions and reactions that they are unpredictable because of the many alternatives. The alternatives can be limited or open-ended. If they are limited, it is relatively possible to predict reactions but it is impossible if the alternatives are open-ended.

Concepts like predictability, freedom, determination, causality and agency transcend the field of psychology and call for a more general reflection in order to ascertain the criteria for their application. Psychologists define concepts operationally but do not analyse them, which does not imply that an analysis is not necessary. It only implies that there is a logical difference between the application of concepts (operationally defined) and knowing the criteria for their application. Concepts can be defined operationally to serve the purpose of any specific empirical discipline, but this cannot be done without analysing the criteria for the application of these concepts (see the quotation from W. J. Jordaan on p. 27).

Mauer and Retief also express the need for a philosophical reflection on psychological methodology:

> Wat ... baie duidelik is, is die feit dat daar heelwat werk op metodologiese, teoretiese en meta-teoretiese (of wetenskaps-filosofiese) gebied gedoen sal moet word om metodes te ontwik-kel wat dit vir navorsers wat 'n sirkulêre siening huldig, moontlik sal maak om navorsing te doen wat wel van 'n wetenskaplik-aanvaarbare standaard is (Mauer & Retief 1985:21–22).

We may add to this that a certain view of man is involved here which forms part of philosophical anthropology. Philosophical anthropolo-gy is concerned with the question 'what is man?' and tries to arrive at parameters in terms of which man should be considered. A psy-chologist, in order to describe what an individual is and to gain clari-ty in this way about the 'I' in the question 'why do I exist?', must use certain parameters or conceptual schemes in terms of which perso-nality, intelligence or character traits are to be considered. He may start with determination, causality, and stimulus and response or he may start with freedom, improvisation and agency. To reflect on which scheme is the correct or relevant one, he must transcend his own field by reflecting on man in general, which involves spelling out the criteria for the concept 'man' in terms of a wide range of comparisons which are strictly not the concern of the psychologist (e.g. the place of man in the cosmos, man and things, the soul and the body, agency, etc.).

The second problem raised by Mauer and Retief is the problem of the measurement of variables like attitudes, interests and personality traits within a multicultural context such as we find in South Africa. Researchers apply test material which was developed for Western groups to non-Western groups. Mauer and Retief refer to the very low level of reliability coefficient in cross-cultural testing, and argue that the bad results in such cases can be assigned to the difference in cul-ture; it is possible that if tests which are developed for non-Western groups were applied to Western groups, they might fare just as badly.

It was also found that the metrical properties of the measuring instru-ment are less affected when applied to non-Western groups when only two alternatives ('Yes' or 'No') are set than when the respondent is required to make a choice between three or more alternative answers.

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The consideration of the notions of culture and cultural differences again requires a general reflection which covers a much wider field than psychology, but without which psychology cannot do. The 'I' in the question 'why do I exist?' can have different meanings in different cultures, and to analyse or ascertain the nature of this 'I' by means of psychological tests, and in terms of parameters abstracted from a particular culture which is different from other cultures, is to fall into the trap of illegitimate abstraction. This implies that the meaning of behavioural concepts is defined in terms of situations which are not representative of the whole spectrum of situations that have to be considered in order to find the criteria for the application of these concepts.

These views can be substantiated by considering a few examples from the SA Wechsler Intelligence Scale for adults. This test is divided into different parts such as general information, general comprehension, arithmetic, digit span, similarities, vocabulary, picture completion, object assembly, block design, digit symbols and picture arrangement. Before considering examples from each category, let us first consider whether these categories are all concerned with intelligence, whether they are the only categories of intelligence, whether they overlap and whether they bear on human abilities or human knowledge.

Philosophers like Aristotle and Kant introduced categories of the understanding as a means of understanding the relatedness of man and world. Categories of intelligence as offered by Wechsler should be considered in the light of such attempts.

Let us briefly consider Wechsler's categories in turn.

According to the questions appearing under general information, this category presupposes a kind of orientation in a world which is supposed to be familiar to the respondents. An empirical method can be used in order to determine statistically which questions most respondents are able to answer and to take this as an indication of the aspect of orientation as one of the properties of intelligence. However, orientation cannot be divorced from interest and people who fare badly in this test may do so because of specific interests which determine their type of orientation in their specific fields.

The questions on general information cannot therefore be regarded as a reliable test of intelligence. A brilliant mathematician may be a bad biologist and the saying 'Jack of all trades, but master of none'

is illustrative of the error committed. 'Orientation' is not properly analysed in terms of the criteria for its application. Average achievements determined by statistical methods as a basis for such a test can also be queried because they do not provide for special interests. The question is whether a person who has a superficial knowledge of many different things is really intelligent. This gives rise to the question whether general information is really a category of intelligence.

The second category is concerned with general comprehension. Many of the questions are introduced by 'ought' and are therefore loaded with presuppositions about a universal ethical code applicable to all cultures and even to different groups within the same community. 'What ought one to do if one picks up an envelope which is sealed, addressed and provided with a new stamp?' In different cultures people may entertain different views about how lost articles are to be handled, and even people of the same culture may differ here. The fact that an average norm can be established statistically does not eliminate its being logically possible for a few to think otherwise and therefore to be seen as less intelligent.

We further note that in the answers to questions like 'What is rubber manufactured from?' and 'Why are shoes made from leather?' there is a difference between reproduction of knowledge and insight as to the reasons why a thing is what it is. However it cannot be taken for granted that insight is at stake in 'ought' questions except when a certain law of one's country may be interpreted and applied.

Orientation has to do with reproduction of knowledge which can be of a mechanical nature, whereas insight is an intellectual phenomenon. However, not all questions under general comprehension demand insight: 'Why must one pay tax?' can be seen as testing knowledge of a law and not necessarily insight, especially when the law stipulates the reasons. We can say that in this test the questions do not clearly differentiate between habits, reproduction of facts and insight. Reproduction is a case of memory and it is questionable whether memory is identifiable with, or forms part of, intelligence.

To see similarities between things is based on the ability to classify. However, different people may classify differently. Take for instance 'dog' and 'lion': the expected answer to a question is that they are both animals; but there are numerous other possibilities, for example that both are predators or dangerous or even holy objects.

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Too much is taken for granted here. The notion of classification has not been given the attention it deserves.

The vocabulary test is concerned with definitions of concepts. However, there are many kinds of definitions, and definitions and contexts cannot be separated. The test requires not synonyms, but descriptions of essential properties, which implies that one must be able to identify the object described. If we take the example of 'apple', descriptions or definitions which are acceptable to the compiler are: fruit of an apple tree, edible fruit, deciduous fruit, a round, firm edible fruit. These definitions do not, however, make identification possible. The respondent may thus find himself at a loss as to what answer to give on the instruction: 'Tell what "apple" means.' In compiling the test, classification and identification have clearly not been distinguished in terms of a preceding conceptual analysis but an operational definition has been taken to be sufficient.

The assignment of a low or high mark after a person has been tested can have an effect on how the testee gives meaning to his life. In the case of a low mark, the psychologist may advise him to take training in jobs which require a low intelligence. However, he may eventually find that his life is meaningless because he cannot realize himself in his work. This may be due to the fact that the test did not address his interests.

It is not necessary to go into the tests for attitudes, interests, etc. We have the same pattern throughout. It is clear that conceptual analysis is a prerequisite for psychological practice. A lot is taken for granted in the use of psychological testing to guide and console people. Moreover, to revert to our example from *Cancer ward,* none of these tests seems relevant to Dontsova while suffering from cancer. This objection may be circumvented by arguing that she then became a case for the psychiatrist or clinical psychologist. A question may in turn be raised as to what the jobs of these people are. Dontsova was suffering and her 'I' became the 'I' of a suffering person. What is now required is reflection on the sense of suffering, which again transcends the field of the psychologist, for the sense of suffering forms part of the general question in philosophical anthropology about man's place in the cosmos. This can be called the 'existential role' of philosophy in psychology, which can be distinguished but not separated from its methodological role.

The discussion of the methodological role of philosophy in psychology can be summarized with reference to a quotation from Jordaan (1989:55):

> Surely the employment of operational definitions is not invalid in itself, but there are limitations to this procedure that are often not sufficiently realized, or simply ignored by many mainstream psychological scientists precisely because they lack 'philosophical ... commitments to other issues'. Exactly at this juncture logical defects often slip into the psychologist's theoretical armamentarium. This happens when he/she *arbitrarily* assigns certain meanings to key concepts in a research project, and then interprets/applies the empirical results beyond the confines of these meanings.
>
> It is, for example, conceptually unjustified (logically defective) to define 'thinking' as 'proficiency in problem solving', and then to assume that the results of an empirical investigation into problem solving apply to *all* 'thinking situations', or that the 'geography' of the concept of thinking has been sufficiently mapped.

To draw the threads together: To guide, comfort and/or console people is to act in certain ways in certain contexts but such acts are not limited to a specific group of people. Ordinary people like parents do these things continually. Because of their special training doctors, priests and psychologists are in a special position to guide, comfort and console people, that is, to play a part in their making sense of their lives. I argue, however, that medical science operates with happenings and in such a context meaning is not relevant, religion is transcendental to human experience although parasitic upon it (which renders it redundant), and psychologists operate with operationally defined concepts and thus in a world of their own making. For these disciplines to make contact with human reality and thus to become relevant in the quest for meaning, it must be realized that in practising sciences such as these, reflection about (inter alia) the criteria for the application of concepts, the justification of values and value judgements, the understanding and justification of procedures is necessary. As was shown, this kind of reflection always transcends the boundaries of particular disciplines or fields of activities. This implies that reflection is an activity in its own right which cannot be bypassed.

In the statement quoted above, Vico by implication classifies philosophy with these disciplines as being in a privileged position to guide, comfort and console people. It is clear that Vico is presupposing a particular view about the nature of philosophy in making this claim. This view is not acceptable. It not only leaves philosophy open to the same kind of criticism lodged against the other disciplines, but in so doing also makes philosophy a house divided against itself. Vico's claim implies that philosophy will have to face considerations which transcend it. It is clear that we have to do with a confusion of logical levels and it seems to me that in this way the important role philosophy has to play in the context of life and meaning gets lost.

Looking at the professions of the doctor, priest and psychologist in so far as guiding, comforting and consoling people are involved, I argued that in order to do these things in an effective, rational and responsible way, philosophical input in the sense of a logico-conceptual reflection on what they are and should be doing is a necessary element. Living a meaningful life or assisting people to do so is, of necessity, a dialectical process, doing certain things or talking about doing things and reflecting on what was or should have been done or said, which in its turn acquires concrete shape in yet further activities, and so on. This kind of reflection can in its turn be considered at a higher level of generality and abstraction, that is, one then reflects on the meaning of life in general. Seen in this way this problem is a purely philosophical one.

The philosopher's task is not to guide, comfort and console but to think about the logical conditions for the possibility of guidance, comforting and consolation. This kind of reflection must ultimately lead to considering these phenomena in a wider context, and then the question becomes 'What are the logical conditions for the possibility of a meaningful life?' Struggling with this problem was Michael Macnamara's lasting contribution to philosophy in South Africa.

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3

Work, leisure and a meaningful life

Pieter du Toit
Department of Philosophy
University of Pretoria

Current concern over unemployment and the creation of retraining programmes for so-called displaced workers (i.e. those whose jobs have permanently disappeared) seems to be based on the ideal that everyone should have a job, and this ideal is apparently linked to the notion that work is something essential to human nature. The Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which was signed in 1948 at the United Nations after the Second World War, states: 'Everyone has the right to work.' A cursory glance at the present situation in developed and developing countries would seem to indicate that the answer to the question 'Does a person have a right to work?' must be in the affirmative. A closer look at the problem, however, indicates a complexity that a surface glance fails to reveal.

In this contribution I do two things. I argue that the view that individuals have a right to work is in most cases based on the assumption that work is characteristic of human nature, and accordingly, if man were to be deprived of work he would cease to be truly human. According to this view a human right is such that if it were to be taken away from a person, it would violate his essence or nature. Thus, if it is in the nature of man to be free, then he has the right to be free, and if

his freedom were to be restricted, it would be a violation of his essence or nature. Similarly, most arguments for the right to work rest on the notion that work is not only peculiar to man (and therefore a specifically human characteristic), but also part of human nature. Deprivation of work infringes on the person, nature, dignity and worthiness of human beings.

I also look into the acceptability of this assumption. This I do by approaching it from three perspectives: the historico-cultural aspect, recent research on work, and work and the meaningful life.

In the historico-cultural investigation, I discuss on one hand the ideas of a few Western philosophers who developed theories about work and on the other hand the place of work in the Greek, Christian and African cultures. On the basis of these examples I argue for the thesis that the content of the concept of work and, with that, whether work is to be regarded as a part of human nature, has altered from time to time and from society to society.

Although a cursory survey of recent research on the place of work in the human situation reveals crucial gaps in the areas researched, what has been done does not provide substantial evidence in favour of a necessary link between work and being human. It does, however, highlight the complexity of the problem and the need to make distinctions between, for example, work, labour and leisure as well as to establish the interrelations.

Finally, I discuss attempts to argue for work as a necessary condition for self-respect and self-realization and thus for a meaningful life. I argue that these attempts do not succeed — activities which do not require exertion and strain and which are normally not classified as work, can foster self-respect and self-realization just as well. My general conclusion based on the three kinds of considerations, then, is that work is a special kind of activity but it need not necessarily occupy a prime position amongst human activities. The assumption basic to the so-called 'right to work' does not hold.

HISTORICO-CULTURAL SURVEY

Hegel, Marx and Christian thinkers

G. W. F. Hegel (1770–1831) considered work to be a specifically human phenomenon; it is practical consciousness and forms the

'mediation' between man and world. The products of man's work are his cultural creations. Individuals should be allowed to impose their will on any external object and make it their own. Hegel recognized an important point when he emphasized not so much man's ability to work, but his right to possess objects. This introduces the concept of *Besitzergreifung* ('act of seizure') (Hegel 1956:412 *et seq*.). Karl Marx (1818–1883) held the view that people begin to distinguish themselves from animals as soon as they begin to *produce* their means of subsistence, a step which is conditioned by their physical organization. It is especially the phenomenon of work *(Arbeit)* which distinguishes man from animals. Whereas animals passively adapt to nature, man on the other hand actively and consciously strives to change nature — the real human being

> ... is primarily a living organism consuming food, clothing, shelter, fuel and so on, and compelled to find or to produce those things (in Strauss & Cropsey 1972:756).

Marx wrote that in producing their means of subsistence people indirectly produce their actual material life. Humans express themselves through the 'mode of production' which is

> ... a definite form of activity of these individuals, a definite form of expressing their life, a definite *mode of life* on their part. As individuals express their life, so they are. What they are, therefore, coincides with their production, both with *what* they produce and *how* they produce. The nature of individuals thus depends on the material conditions determining their production (Marx & Engels 1973:18).

In the *Economic and philosophic manuscripts* Marx stated that man's species life has its basis in the fact

> ... that man (like animals) lives from inorganic nature ... To say that man *lives* from nature means that nature is his *body* with which he must remain in continuous interchange in order not to die (Marx 1971:100–101).

Clearly, for Marx human nature is an objective reality; this reality has a normative character and for man to be his true self, certain conditions should be met in the everyday world (e.g. man must not be brutalized, overworked, subjected to unnecessary toil, etc.) in order

to ensure man's dignified existence. It seems that for Marx human nature also has a physical character, that is certain physical characteristics are necessary for a creature to qualify as a human being, such as his physical ability or willingness to act, to work, to produce (Marx 1979:48).

Marx introduced the concept of alienated labour *(die entfremdete Arbeit)* as the ultimate cause of all forms of alienation, that is man is alienated from nature, himself, his species-being and fellow human beings. Briefly, alienation means that man is dehumanized, he is not what he should be. Man is not in the right relationship to (i) the objects of the world (the products and results of his labour) and (ii) his own labour activity, the last aspect resulting in self-alienation. According to Marx, this sorry state of affairs should be rectified, and this can only be done by removing the root of the problem, that is by abolishing private property in favour of communism.

It is impossible for me to enter into a detailed account of Marx's theory of labour at this point. Suffice it to say that Marx was concerned about the misery and exploitation of the individual. He gave a theory of exploitation and put forward alternatives with the view to giving every individual his rightful due. Marx believed that unemployment, or 'setting the workers at liberty' as this process was called in Marx's day, was fundamentally the consequence of the capitalist system, a result of keeping wages low, of exploiting the workers. The possibility of a future society where individuals do not need to work, where all their basic needs (and more) are met, was given some thought by Marx. He gave consideration to unemployment, as brought about by the introduction of new machinery, or the extension of old machinery. He argued:

> If it employs a smaller number, the number of 'redundant workers' increases; if it employs a greater number, the general demand for labour increases only to the extent of the excess of the employed over those 'set free' ... [T]he mechanism of capitalist production takes care that the absolute increase of capital is not accompanied by a corresponding rise in the general demand for labour (Marx 1979:793).

The question 'Does a person have a right to work?' would have been answered in the affirmative by Marx if the question meant the

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following: do unemployed, exploited, miserable creatures have the right to work? If the question referred to well-cared-for individuals who lived within a society where their ability to work was irrelevant for some reason or other (such as mechanization), this state of affairs would go against the socialist idea that man is essentially a productive and creative creature who by nature should work. I suspect, however, that had the question been put to Marx, given a future context where work was totally redundant, Marx would have answered that such a situation would constitute a new form of alienation, or an extension of the alienation of man's species-being.

Clearly, Hegel and, especially, Marx introduced new notions about work and man's relation to it, thus departing from the prevailing Calvinistic attitude of the 'inner-world asceticism', which roughly implied that Christians should not try to escape participating in everyday events (as the monks of the Middle Ages tried to do), but that they should become involved with the knowledge that the spiritual part of man's life is more important than the material. Thus Calvinism introduced a model whereby Christians participated in everyday affairs with divided loyalty, involved in matters of the day but in a sense already belonging to the coming kingdom of God. John Calvin (1509–1564) explained the biblical notion of property in the following way: the believer should use and enjoy his possessions, always remembering that he is responsible to God for everything that he does. He will also be judged by God for his actions (Calvijn 1956:224). At the moment of creation man was given the task of cultivating the Garden of Eden. Work was an essential aspect of created human nature. Sin, however, added the element of toil to work. Thus man needed to work (he is in the world) but there were other things (not of this world) which were of higher value (cf. the influence of Platonic-Aristotelian views on higher and lower forms of labour). The important underlying thesis was that work (i.e. labour) was unavoidable and should be seen as an opportunity to serve fellow humans, but even more important was the fact that man's spiritual needs should be satisfied. This work ethic also incorporated the commandment of the Mosaic law which emphasizes the toilsome character of work; for six days man should work, the seventh day is the day of rest, the day of joy, the day that is blessed. The Old Testament Jew regarded work as toilsome and wearisome, his real joy lying in his possessions, his blessedness in wealth and rest. The wisdom literature of the Old

Testament, for example Proverbs, does, however, emphasize the fact that experience proves that the industrious man has an advantage over the sluggard; the diligent person is more prosperous than the lazy one.

Martin Luther (1483–1546) held the view that the apostle Paul explicitly commanded Christians to do physical work in order to enable them to obtain the goods which they needed to assist their fellow men, the poor in particular. For Luther work was part of Christian nature or, to put it differently, the work Christians do has a different character, a *Christian* character. In Luther's works there is hardly any reflection on the nature of work as such, possessions and the use to which they can be put being the important factors under consideration (Luther 1959:58).

The notion that work or labour ennobles was especially prominent during the *Aufklärung* (Enlightenment). Thomas Carlyle wrote:

> Not 'I can't eat!' but 'I can't work!' that was the burden of all wise complaining among men. It is, after all, the one unhappiness of a man, that he cannot work; that he cannot get his destiny as a man fulfilled ... the night cometh, wherein no man can work ... our work, behold, it remains ... (in Trevelyan 1953:74).

Thomas Aquinas (1225–1275) held the view that human nature is constituted by a unique set of properties and that these can be understood and defined. Man has an intelligent nature and it is part of his nature to provide for himself and others.

The Greek notion of work

If we go further back in history we find that in the time of Aristotle (384–322 BC) the Greek work ethic had reached the stage where the aim of work was to acquire possessions, since possessions bring enjoyment. Lower work was for slaves so that 'those who have it in their power to be free from these low attentions, employ a steward for this business, and apply themselves either to public affairs or philosophy' (Aristotle 1947:12). Aristotle made the interesting distinction between certain people who are 'slaves by nature' (i.e. it is in the nature of these people to do certain *toilsome* duties), and free men who have 'different' natures:

> ... for it is the intention of nature to make the bodies of slaves and free men different from each other, that the one should be robust for their necessary purposes, the others erect, useless indeed for what slaves are employed in, but fit for civil life, which is divided into the duties of war and peace; though these rules do not always take place, for slaves have sometimes the bodies of free men, sometimes the souls ... (Aristotle 1947:9).

The notion of work being characteristic of aristocratic human nature was clearly stated by the Greek poet Pindar (born 518 BC) who wrote about man's 'powers of nature; for might of limb maketh itself manifest by action, and might of mind by counsel, for those who are attended by the inborn skill of foreseeing the future' (Sandys 1961:1.26). Pindar differentiated between the workings of the body and the workings of the mind. The skills of the hand and the skills of the mind are two inborn powers of nature, the one being a physical power and the other a mental power. Action is opposed to thought, and similarly there is a difference between work and counsel. Pindar distinguished between work which was of higher value — work of battle, the toil of the athlete, deeds or prowess, great exploits, various skills and crafts — and lower work, which was that of the hireling, the manual labour done by the slave.

Homer ($\pm$ 800 BC) distinguished between various types of work — work in battle, the toil of the swineherd, the burning of a city that causes toil and woe for the inhabitants, the toil of building a wall — and the tasks of women (the loom and the distaff). Work that was more pleasant included the following: the work of the masters of public craft (prophets, healers, builders, minstrels, poets, heralds), works of beauty, and works of marriage. Again, as in Pindar, there is strong emphasis on the joy of possessions, prosperity, feasts and being wealthy. Both Homer and Pindar drew a distinction between skills of the mind and physical skills; it seems that, by the time Pindar wrote, the need to work was regarded as essential to human nature, an innate characteristic, independent of human decisions and enactments.

African cultures

If we examine African tribal cultures we find that there was no work ethic in the Western sense of the word. Everyday work, be it the build-

ing of a hut or the weaving of a basket, was not given separate value or meaning. In most African cultures, for example the Bhaca society, there was sexual division of labour: a man seen hoeing would be ridiculed and men would be indignant if women joined in the hunt. Cattle-raiding from neighbouring farms was a common and honourable pastime, an accepted way of adding to one's possessions. Work (communal land tenure, cultivation of fields, etc.) was done 'because grain is necessary for food, and because beer made from it is very much desired' (Hunter 1961:92). Clearly, the attitude in African cultures towards work was that, if circumstances allowed, there were more pleasant things to do. The absence of a 'philosophical' reflection on work is counter-balanced by the high value placed on certain possessions (e.g. cattle, women, children, etc.). Man is thus depicted in African culture as a collector, an accumulator of things, one who has the need to possess certain objects and enjoy these possessions. If these needs are fulfilled, the need to work disappears; there is no compelling *natural* need to work.

Investigation shows that most societies do not query the rights of their members or groups to exercise their rights of property. There is seldom or ever dispute over the right of property; the right to accumulate, collect and possess property either privately (capitalism) or collectively (socialism) is not questioned. In most societies the right of property seems to be an accepted one. Individuals or groups may claim property, for example A claims what he has worked for or obtained by other means, and B, who accepts A's right to property, expects A to acknowledge in turn his (B's) right to property. However, there is a difference of opinion on a number of issues as far as work itself is concerned.

Summary

There are groups and individuals who are quite happy not to work as long as someone takes care of their needs, though they are likely to protest if they are not allowed possessions! If a society were to disallow individuals or groups the right to property, this would merely mean that the members of that society would be propertyless. In the present context, work is usually linked with a job, being paid for what you do, earning a livelihood. The 'right to a job' is a new claim, generated by a new set of circumstances in which many of the traditional

forms of work have become superfluous. To my mind the claim of 'a right to a job' seems to rest on the assumption that man has 'a (natural) right to work'. It is quite conceivable that a future society might develop, one in which work in the traditional sense of the word would have disappeared completely; the absence of work in such a society would in no way violate man's personhood or humanness. At most he would be a person 'who is free from work'. In a socialist society, however, to work is a requirement and an obligation, the individual may not choose not to make his contribution to the overall goal of the economy. The socialist believes that man needs to work not only for the products of work, but also to fulfil his being.

The examples above have shown that the content of the concept of work, such as the characteristics of work, the items listed under work and whether work is to be regarded as part of human nature, has altered from time to time and from society to society. Individuals or society may accept certain rights and act accordingly, exercising those rights, committing themselves and others to mutual obligations; or conversely these rights may be suspended or disappear altogether.

Marx, in his time, would have endorsed the thesis that man has the right to work. But such a claim in the Marx era is different from the contemporary claim of thousands of jobless people who demand that they have the right to work; this is so because a different set of circumstances exists today.

RECENT RESEARCH ON THE NOTION OF WORK

Although many researchers still believe that the solution to unemployment lies in re-establishing full work opportunities for everyone by pure economic means (cf. T. Kuipers *et al.* 1988/89 for a debate on this issue), the premise that unemployment is here to stay is gradually gaining widespread acceptance.

Much research has recently been done on leisure activities as such, but on the other hand

> ... one of the most widespread organizational policies that would seem to have direct implications for work and nonwork concerns has been virtually ignored as a research topic — a vacation from work (Lounsbury & Hoopes 1986:392).

This view is endorsed by Garnett Stokes Shaffer:

> The role of leisure activities in determining work and non-work satisfaction is unclear ... Just as job satisfaction literature makes clear that work satisfaction is multivariate and complex, it is also probable that nonwork satisfaction is multifaceted (Schaffer 1987:116).

Although research is being done in certain areas concerning work–non-work linkages, and the effect of experiences in leisure or family spheres on experiences in the domain of work, and vice versa, virtually no research has been done on the attitude of people to the possibility that a stage may be reached in future where people will not be called on to work at all. As 'most research demonstrates only a weak empirical relation between work and nonwork satisfaction' *(ibid.:*115), it is improbable that empirical research will be helpful in describing, analysing and evaluating a possible future situation where the absence of work is prevalent.

The contemporary scene reflects a changed attitude to the nature of jobs. It is claimed that the micro-electronic revolution heralds the abolition of all work, that there can no longer be full-time waged work for all, and waged work cannot remain the central activity in our lives (cf. André Gorz 1985). Handy (1984:5) says:

> Muscle jobs are disappearing, finger and brain jobs are growing, or, to put it more formally, labour-based industries have been displaced by skill-based industries, and these in turn will have to be replaced by knowledge-based industries.

In the developed countries jobs are becoming fewer and further between and shorter working weeks are being introduced. Charles Handy distinguishes between various forms of work: (i) job work, which is paid, full-time self-employment, (ii) marginal work or work 'on the side' for extra earnings, and (iii) gift work we do for free *(ibid.:*52).

A redefinition of work is well illustrated in the following example:

> Consider these facts. Fewer than 20 million people out of Britain's 56 million have full-time jobs. A further 13 million are adults of working age, of whom 4 million might describe themselves as not working and wanting jobs. The other 9 million may do part-time work (4 million do); they may do voluntary work (18 million

people do some of it); they may do something 'on the side' in the black economy (probably 1 million do some of that); or they may be wholly or partly occupied in the grey economy of the household (4 million women are probably in this category). Few, if any, of these 9 million people would think of themselves as 'not working'. By restricting the word 'work' to mean a 'proper job' we have, as it were, disenfranchised at least 9 million people *(ibid.:*52–53).

Handy concludes that full employment as we used to know it is not feasible in the foreseeable future. Four alternative scenarios are possible — the unemployment scenario, the leisure scenario, the employment scenario and the work scenario. The first scenario accepts unemployment as a necessary and inevitable price to pay for bringing down inflation; the second scenario reflects a position where few people aided by many machines will do the job for the many; the third scenario is built on the premise that the only real form of work is a job, thus, more jobs are created by infrastructure spending and beefing up the state service sector; the fourth scenario, advocated by Handy, regards the employment economy as only part of the total economy and money as only one of the rewards for work.

WORK, LABOUR AND LEISURE

A distinction is often made between *work* and *labour*: work is regarded as unalienated action and labour as activity leading to alienation. This distinction also underlies many of the examples discussed earlier on in this article and could be schematically illustrated by work and labour at the opposite ends of a scale:

work   labour

◄───►

activity

Scale of alienation

The more alienated the action, the closer we are to labour, the less alienated, the closer we are to work. It is important to note that absence of work or labour does not imply there being no human activity at all, therefore the following scheme may be a better one:

absence of work	work	labour

◄───►

activity

What does absence of work imply? Does it imply that the work ethic has become redundant and people must accept the absence of work and be taught to cope with lives of leisure? Whatever is said about the absence of work, it does not follow that absence of work means leisure in the sense of doing nothing. Any sort of activity means at least *doing something*, and activity means exerting energy. Even leisure activities have so much in common with work activities that in both cases there is an exertion of energy. The previous scheme could be elaborated as follows:

absence of work	work	labour

◄───►

leisure

degree of activity or

◄─── 0% degree of energy exerted 100% ───►

◄─── more meaningful   less meaningful ───►

WORK AND MEANINGFULNESS

One could of course take a different line of argument, such as the following: certain activities are regarded as meaningful, and among these are certain leisure activities and certain work activities. The ones which interest us are the meaningful work activities. If they were eliminated, what would the consequences be? We have already shown that eliminating work does not make a person less human or something other than a human being, but it has been argued that to lack the opportunity for meaningful work is to be deprived of a constitutive element in the good life of a person, that is, man is deprived of his self-respect and self-realization (Attfield 1984:141, 150). In the Rawlsian sense, then, self-respect is regarded as a primary good, that is, something which it is reasonable to want whatever else is wanted. Self-respect has the following characteristics: a person's sense of his own

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value, a secure conviction of his conception of the good, and a sense that his goals in life are worth carrying out. It is argued that although there are individuals who are for some reason or other deprived of work (for health reasons, because of physical handicaps, etc.), on the whole, meaningful work enhances the quality of life and confers self-respect. Although meaningful work may not be indispensable to an individual's self-respect, it may be argued that it goes a long way towards fostering and strengthening self-respect. Jenkins and Sherman have noted that although most people work because they need work, many do not like their work. They conclude:

> We do not believe that work *per se* is necessary to human survival or self-esteem. The fact that it appears to be so is a function of two centuries of propaganda and an educational system which maintained the 'idea' of work as its main objective, but which singularly failed to teach about leisure and how to use it ... People at present accept that they will be bored if out of work ... This need for work is, we would argue, an ingrained and inculcated attitude of mind. Children have learned from their parents that work is essential, and their parents from their parents, and within the family circle, let alone outside, work has taken on the attributes of a shibboleth (Jenkins & Sherman 1979:41).

Weaver's study of job satisfaction as a component of happiness, involving 1 500 respondents, clearly showed that job satisfaction is only part of the satisfaction–happiness relationship:

> Thus, happiness seems to be a generalized phenomenon, according to which employees are either generally satisfied or generally dissatisfied across a broad totality of life, with relatively few employees experiencing a significant satisfaction–happiness relationship in only one of a few aspects of life ... The happiness of most employees would rarely come entirely from a satisfying job, with little or no support from satisfaction in other domains of life (Weaver 1978:839).

To what extent is *work* an indispensable ingredient of meaningfulness in life? Almost all the researchers working in this area accept the fact that work is *by definition* an indispensable item. The following quotation is typical of the view that work is essential for a meaningful life:

> Work, in some form, is critical to individuals. It is, apart from anything else, a principal structure for mattering. We all need to feel that we matter, that we can contribute, that we are missed in our absence, that we are respected and liked (Handy 1984:55).

In contemporary society work is regarded as a way of life, a social necessity which to a great extent contributes to self-fulfilment. In most industrialized societies work has a very definite social status, and being able to identify with one's work contributes to a sense of personal identity, self-esteem and creativity.

Although the above notion of work has become entrenched in most societies, there is no reason whatsoever why work need be essential or critical to individuals. In a future society where work has become redundant people could be educated to accept the fact that if work is removed from the list of meaningful activities in life, they might still find meaning and fulfilment in a host of other activities. Although a case could be made for retaining work because it is one of those activities, and an important one, that contributes to self-respect and self-realization, this does not alter the fact that within a given community, other types of activities such as sport, play, music and reading, which are done without exertion or strain, could supply sufficient self-respect and self-realization. Meaningful work need not be the principal basis of self-respect in people's lives.

CONCLUSION

Work is a special kind of activity, but need not necessarily occupy a prime position amongst other human activities. It seems that the question 'Is there a right to work?' depends on the position that this specific type of activity occupies on the value-scale of human activities which a certain community adheres to at a particular point in time. If work or labour activities happen to be at the bottom of the scale of values, the claim to a right to work will be rejected, and other types of activities with a higher standing will be more desirable. The right to work depends on the attitude of a specific society. I think that in future societies where work has become redundant the general claim to a right to work will be rejected, whereas the claim to a right to property or the right to an acceptable standard of living may continue to be accepted. I also suspect that in future societies what counts as work will also change, as it has through the ages.

Pieter du Toit

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Life and society at Ancient Memphis according to the Saqqâra texts

H J Dreyer
Department of Semitics
University of South Africa

Our colleague and friend, Mike Macnamara, being a philosopher, a poet, and a man with general interests in the history of mankind, will hopefully accept this contribution on life and society at Ancient Memphis as revealed by the Aramaic texts from North Saqqâra as a token of appreciation and gratitude for his contribution toward the dissemination of knowledge at the University of South Africa.

DISCOVERY AND DATING

Aramaic texts together with Demotic and Greek papyri were discovered during 1966 and 1967 and from 1971 to 1973 at North Saqqâra in Egypt (see Emery 1967:143–144 and Segal 1983a:23). The 202 fragmentary Aramaic papyri together with Aramaic and Phoenician ostraca were published in 1983 by Segal (Segal 1983b). Since the texts were not discovered within an archaeological context, one must rely on other criteria for dating the Aramaic texts. One text (27:4) mentions 'the fifth year of Darius', and another one (31:2) refers to 'the ninth year of Darius'. This 'Darius' is the same person as the 'Darius' who is mentioned in several papyri from Elephantine, e.g. the well-known petition of the Jews at Elephantine to the governor of Judaea concerning the rebuilding of the Jewish temple at Elephantine (Cowley

30), and the famous Passover letter instructing the Elephantine Jews to keep the Passover in accordance with the community in Jerusalem (Cowley 21, and see Porten 1979:91–92), i.e. Darius II (423–404 BC). Text 30a:1 mentions 'the thirty-first year', and Text 32:1 refers to 'the thirty-seventh year' and 'the thirty-eigth year', which can refer to either the reign of Artaxerxes I, i.e. 465–424 BC, or the reign of Artaxerxes II, i.e. 404–358 BC. The reign of Artaxerxes I may be preferable, since after 404 BC the Elephantine papyri are dated according to the reign of Amyrtaeus, e.g. Cowley 35. Text 34a:3 refers to 'the days of Cambyses' thereby indicating something that happened in the distant past, with which Cowley 30:13 may be compared: '... and when Cambyses came into Egypt he found that temple built ...' On the basis of these date formulae we may date most of the texts from North Saqqâra to the same period as the other Aramaic documents from Egypt, i.e. the Elephantine papyri (Cowley 1923 and Kraeling 1953), the Driver documents (Driver 1954), and the Hermopolis letters (Bresciani & Kamil 1966). A dating in the Persian period, roughly between 500 and 404 BC, is also confirmed by the palaeography and linguistic features of the Saqqâra texts (see Segal 1983b:3–4).

Since most of the Saqqâra North texts probably originated at Memphis, they throw an interesting light on life and society in this city, called *Mnpy* (with nasalization) in 24:7, 30a:1, and *Mpy* in 63:5, 136:2, cf. Hebrew *Moph* (Hos. 9:6) and *Noph* (Isa. 19:13, Jer. 2:16).

COMPOSITION OF THE SOCIETY

About 46% of the personal names attested in the Saqqâra texts are Egyptian, 12% Persian, and the remainder Semitic. Some of the Semitic names are pure Babylonian, for example *Manukki* ('Who is like ...'), *Iddinamarduk* ('Marduk gave'), *Iddinabel* ('Bel gave'). Other personal names are composed of the name of a Babylonian god and a West Semitic verbal form, for example *Nabunathan* ('Nabu gave', 77b:1), *Nabushezib* ('Nabu saved', 30a:1, 30b:1), *Nabu'al* ('Nabu entered', 47:5), and *Sinbanit* ('Sin, you created', 28a:2). Still other personal names are composed of a West Semitic deity and a West Semitic verbal form, for example *Bethelshezib* ('Bethel saved', 9:7, 47:6), *Bethelnuri* ('Bethel is my light', 53:20), and *Betheltequm* ('Bethel, you will rise', 47:7). Only two Jewish names, *Yehoram* ('The Lord is lofty', 47:8; see Fowler 1988:80 for a discussion of this name in Biblical

Hebrew) and *Yehomodi* ('The Lord is my confessor', 54:4) are found in the Saqqâra texts. This is strange since we know from Jeremiah 44:1 that there was a large Jewish community at Memphis. Must we assume that this community had disappeared or had been assimilated by the time the Saqqâra texts were written? However, the texts reveal that the society at Memphis was of a cosmopolitan nature, albeit predominantly Egyptian. At a specific moment at Elephantine, 445–420 BC, the percentage ratio of personal names was as follows: Egyptain 12,7%, Persian 10,3%, and Semitic 77% (Silverman 1985:85–86). The society at Elephantine was, in contrast to that of Memphis, predominantly Semitic. This was probably due to the fact that Elephantine was a far-away military outpost. Silverman (1969:709) has shown that at Elephantine there was a growing process of Aramaization of the Jews to the predominantly Aramaic environment. This may be illustrated from Cowley 18:5, where a father has a good Jewish name, viz. *Yehonathan* ('The Lord gave'), but the son an Aramaic name, viz. *Bethelnathan* ('Bethel gave'). At Memphis, so it seems, there was an assimilation process of the Semites to the Egyptian environment, which may be illustrated by two cases where the fathers have Semitic names, but the sons Egyptian ones: 'Petetwere (Egyptian *P'-d'-t'-wry*) the son of Nabu'al' (47:5), and 'Shamaw the son of Sinbanit' (For *šamaw* being an Egyptian name, see Kornfeld 1978:94, Grelot 1972:492, and Ranke 1935:387, 13).

The presence of Greeks, viz. Ionians and Carians, involved in shipping is attested by Text 26. The 'Carians' are also mentioned in a text from Elephantine where they are called 'the boatholders of the Carians' (*nwpty' zy krky'*, Cowley 26:1 and 8); unfortunately Cowley misunderstood the word *krky'* (see Porten & Yardeni 1986:99). These Carians and Ionians were probably mercenaries, and the receiver of Text 26 is instructed to seize them so that they should not flee. He is ordered to put six chains on them, to appoint police to guard them 'between the gates', and they must not receive 'clothing and food'. 'Between the gates' is then qualified as 'between the gates of the sea', that is the Nile; cf. also Nahum 3:8 and Isaiah 19:5 where the Nile is called *hayyam*, 'the sea'.

RELIGIOUS LIFE AT MEMPHIS

The Saqqâra texts reveal a highly polytheistic situation at Memphis. We encounter the well-known Egyptian goddess 'Isis the Great'

('*syt*ᶜ' = Egyptian *Is.t-t'-ᶜ'.t*, Text 56), and the lesser-known 'Sati the goddess' *(sty 'lht [],* 181:3). She was the goddess of the First Cataract, and consort of Khnum (see Morenz 1973:268), an Egyptian god who had his priests *(kmry' zy ḥnwb)* at Elephantine according to Cowley 27:3 and 30:5. It is interesting to note that Sati was worshipped in the very vicinity of the Jewish colony at Elephantine, and it is to be expected that she should be mentioned in the texts. According to Cowley 14:5, a Jewish lady by the name of Mibtachiah ('The Lord is my refuge'), known from several Elephantine texts, 'took an oath by the goddess Sati'. One of the Saqqâra texts (no. 56:1) also mentions 'the priest *(kmr)* of Isis the Great'. Other texts refer to the Babylonian gods *Bel (bl 'lhh,* 'Bel his god', 23b:5), and *Nabu (nbw 'lhh,* 'Nabu his god', 30:7).

The theophoric personal names, that is names of which one element is a divine name, show that the following gods were honoured by those who wrote the texts: the Egyptian gods Ptah and Osiris, the Babylonian gods Nabu, Marduk, Sin, and the goddess Nanay (known from the Ur III period, ca 2000 BC, already), the West Semitic gods El, Bethel, and the goddess Atteh. In the light of the Saqqâra texts and the Hermopolis letters, which mention a temple of Bethel (Hermopolis 4:7), the existence of Bethel as an independent Aramaic deity cannot be denied (see Porten 1969:118–119), and it is possible that Genesis 31:13, 'I am the God Bethel', also refers to this deity. Atteh represents the Aramaic form of the Canaanite goddess Anath, well-known from the Ugaritic texts. In Texts 35:1 and 88:2 we find the personal name '*šmrm*, 'Eshem is lofty', a name which also appears at Elephantine (see Kraeling 8:11; 11:12). Since the element '*šm* also occurs in other personal names from Elephantine, e.g. '*šmšzb* ('Eshem saved') and '*šmn* ('Little Eshem'), as well as in the composite divine name '*šmbyt'l,* 'Eshembethel', it was accepted that '*šm* is a West Semitic deity. In his study on the Israelite personal names, Martin Noth proposes a connection with the Phoenician 'Ishmun', a god of healing, known from the inscriptions of Ishmun'azar and Baalshillem, or with the word *šm,* 'name' (Noth 1928:124–125). Silverman (1985:227) suggests that 'Eshem could be connected either with *šm,* 'name', or with '*šm,* guilt-offering', although he prefers the latter. He further remarks: 'The Jews may have connected via folk etymology the two similarly sounding words '*šm,* 'name, '*šm,* 'guilt-offering' ' (Silverman 1985:227). With the name 'Eshemram' ('Eshem is lofty')

one may compare the personal name *šumu-ramu*, 'the name is lofty', which is attested in Ugaritic (Gröndahl 1967:44). ''Eshem' (*'šm*) should be regarded as the Aramaic form of the word *šm* or *šumu*, 'name', and in the light of the Ugaritic evidence it is possible that the name *'šmrm* (''Eshemram') means 'the name (of the child) is/will be lofty'. The existence of an independent West Semitic god ''Eshem' is still a matter for further discussion.

ECONOMIC LIFE

Seven of the Saqqâra texts deal with taxation. Text 19 refers to 'the tax' *(mks)* to be paid in money, but probably also in 'red barley' (*'t šry* = Egyptian *it dšr*), used for beer-making. The word *mks* also appears in Cowley 81:112, a text which is much later than the other Elephantine papyri. Another word for 'tax' or 'tribute', viz. *mndh*, is encountered in Text 24:11 where reference is made to 'the tax of the garrison'. *Mndh* is also found in Kraeling 5:7, Driver 10:3, 4; 11:2, 3, 5, and in Biblical Aramaic (Ezra 4:13; 7:24). In Kraeling 5:7 it means 'payment' (*wlmzlky mndt ksp*, 'and to sell you for a payment of silver'), that is it has the same meaning as the neo-Babylonian word *mandattu*, 'payment', of which it is a direct borrowing. In the Driver texts *mndh* means 'rent', due from the royal domains in Egypt to the Persian overlord (Driver 1954:31). It is interesting to note that 'the garrison' or *hayla'* had to pay the 'tax' or 'tribute'. The *hayla'*, also mentioned in Text 17:6, is well-known from Elephantine, where it includes the soldiers and their families (see Porten 1968:29 and Grelot 1972:46). It is not clear whether at Memphis the *hayla'* was a military unit or whether it was a colony of agriculturists cultivating royal estates, in exchange for which they had to pay the 'tribute'.

Several texts deal with other economic matters. References are made to the monetary units hallur, sheqel and karash. At Elephantine the system of exchange was composed of four units: hallur, zuz, sheqel, and karash. These monetary units circulated in the form of silver weighed out on the balance (Cowley 15:23–24, Kraeling 7:26) according to the 'stones of the king' (*'bny mlk'*, Cowley 15:5) or, in one instance, 'the stones of Ptah' (Cowley 11:2). The hallur was the smallest denomination and was the equivalent of 1/40 of the sheqel, while 10 sheqels or 'the tenner' (*'šrt'*, Cowley 6:15; 8:14, 21) were equivalent to the Persian karash (Porten 1968:66). Text 42b:1 refers to ḥ 2 šmšm,

'2 hopen sesame'. At Elephantine the ḥopen or 'handful' was both a popular and an official measure of capacity (Porten 1968:71). It appears in Driver 6:3 as a measure of white flour and wine or beer, and in the marriage contracts from Elephantine as a measure of castor oil, for example Cowley 15:15, Kraeling 2:5–6; 7:20–21. According to Kraeling 2, the newly wedded lady Tamut brought with her into her husband's home several articles, amongst them *plg ḥpn'tqm*, 'half a handful of castor oil' (for *tqm* see Dupont-Sommer 1964:71).

Text 35 states that Nanayshezib, 'an Aramean', made a loan in money of 6 sheqels in the presence of Eshemram, and that 'it will produce interest *(yrbh)* 2 for 100', that is an interest rate of 2%. Several loan contracts, for example Cowley 10 and 11, indicate that an interest rate of 12% was sometimes demanded at Elephantine. Cowley 10 states that Ya'uhan, the daughter of Meshullak, borrowed money from Zakkur, 'the Jew of Yeb' (Elephantine), and Ya'uhan, on her part, made the following commitment: 'You have given to me as a loan the sum of 4 sheqels ... which shall be due from me at the rate of 2 hallurin per sheqel per month, being at the rate of 8 hallurin for each month; if the interest is added to the capital, it shall produce interest *(yrbh mrbyt')* like the capital ...' Should the borrower fail to pay the interest and the loan by the end of the second year, Zakkur could take hold of the borrower's possessions.

SLAVES

A number of the texts from Saqqâra deal with slaves, both male and female (nos 4, 5, 8, 9, 10a, etc.). According to Text 4:1 the value of certain slaves was estimated at 15 karashin in money. Texts 4 and 5 deal with the manumission of slaves. In 4:5 we read: 'I am manumitting, but there are slaves that I have not released,' and in 5:6 we find: 'I shall release the two of them.' The reasons for releasing the slaves are not given, but it may be for humanitarian reasons. The verbs used here for 'to manumit' and 'to release', viz. *ntr* and *ṣdn,* do not occur in Egyptian Aramaic, where the verb *šbq* is found. The verb *ntr* can be connected with *ntr*, 'to set free', in Job 6:9 (see Koehler & Baumgartner 1983: *s.v. ntr I*), and the same verb in Cowley 15:35 where it has the meaning 'to remove'. The verb *ṣdn* is of Phoenician origin, and should be connected with the expression *'iš ṣdn* appearing in Punic inscriptions with the possible meaning of 'a free man' (see Jean &

Hoftijzer 1965:s.v. ṣdn). The practice of manumission was also known at Elephantine. Kraeling 5 deals with the manumission of the lady Tamut and her daughter, Yehoyishma, by their master, Meshullam. The master made the following statement: 'I have taken thought for you in my lifetime; free have I released you at my death, and I have released Yehoyishma by name, your daughter, whom you did bear to me; son of mine or daughter, or brother of mine or sister, close or distant ... shall not have power over you and Yehoyishma, your daughter, whom you did bear to me. Nobody shall have power over you to mark you and to sell you for payment of silver. Whoever shall rise up against you and against Yehoyishma, your daughter, whom you did bear to me, shall give to you a fine of silver, 50 karash by royal weight, and you are freed from the shadow to the sun, as well as Yehoyishma, your daughter, and another man shall not have power over you and Yehoyishma, your daughter, but you are freed to the god.' Hereupon Tamut and Yehoyishma replied: 'We will serve thee as a son or daughter provides for his father in your lifetime and unto your death (and after your death), we will provide for Zakkur as the son provides for his father, just as we were serving you during your lifetime. We, if we rise up saying, "we will not provide for you as a son provides for his father, or for Zakkur, your son, after your death", we are liable to you and to Zakkur, your son, for a fine of silver 50 karash by royal weight ...' The following interesting points emerge:

(i) Tamut and Yehoyishma are released but have to provide for Meshullam and his son, Zakkur, as long as they live, and should they refuse to do so they are liable to a fine of 50 karash.

(ii) The expression 'from shadow to sun' (Yaron 1961:39–40) indicates that Tamut and her daughter enjoy inviolability of person, that is they cannot be marked as slaves nor sold again.

(iii) 'Freed to the god' either indicates that the act of manumission took place in the temple of Yahu at Elephantine (so Porten 1968:220) or it may refer to a practice found in the Greek laws of manumission according to which a fictitious sale to the gods did take place (so Falk 1954:116). In Babylonian manumission documents there are also indications that the act of manumission took place 'before' or 'for' the sun-god Shamash, the god of justice (see Driver & Miles 1956:230).

(iv) In the light of the Babylonian manumissions, the procedure followed, although not spelled out, was that of adoption, i.e. both

Tamut and Yehoyishma became the 'daughters' of Meshullam and thus the legal sisters of Zakkur, his son (Porten 1968:221, and see Driver & Miles 1956:228–229 for Babylonian examples).

Some of the Saqqâra texts refer to the marking of slaves. In 5:8 we read that a slave 'is inscribed with the mark Eta'. The word for 'mark', viz. *šnyt'*, is probably to be connected with Babylonian *šintu*, 'sign of ownership'. It is interesting to note that the Greek letter *Eta* is employed as the owner's mark. Text 8:3 mentions a slave-girl who 'is inscribed with my name'. In both texts the verb *str* is used, and the same verb appears in Driver 7:7 for the marking of slaves. According to neo-Babylonian texts, privately owned slaves had the name of their owner branded on their hand, while temple slaves were branded with symbols of the deity (see Oppenheim 1944:15). The practice of marking slaves is also confirmed by the Elephantine texts. In Kraeling 5:3 we read: '... his slave-girl on whose right hand is a mark, thus, "Belonging to Meshullam"',' and in Cowley 28:4–5 we find: 'A Yod is engraved on his right hand with a mark in Aramaic, thus, "Belonging to Mibtachiah"'.' In the light of Saqqâra 5:8 it is now clear that the *Yod* is a mark indicating ownership . The marking of a slave may also be reflected in Isaiah 44:5: 'And another one will write on his hand, "Belonging to the Lord"'.'

The expression 'the son of the house' *(br byt')* occurs with three names in Text 53. It is also found in Kraeling 10:19, and may indicate a son born from a union between a master and a slave-girl. With this we may compare Ecclesiastes 2:7: '... I have sons born from slave-girls' *(bny byt)*.

CONCLUSION

The Saqqâra texts reveal a cosmopolitan society at Memphis during the Persian period, comprising Egyptians, Persians, Babylonians, Arameans, Jews, and even Greeks. The texts also give evidence of different and divergent religious and cultural elements in the society. Through assimilation these different ethnic, religious and cultural strata developed into a symbiosis which formed the basis of the peculiar form of Hellenism later to develop in Egypt. In legal matters the texts reveal a dependency on the Babyonian legal tradition.

H J Dreyer

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5

Presuppositions in science

Wietske Kistner
Department of Philosophy
University of South Africa

Presuppositions may be a problem for science, as well as in ordinary life. Things can go wrong because of certain unacknowledged assumptions which we have. The idea that objects move only as long as they are pushed or pulled directed mechanics for a long time, until Galileo thought of another possibility. We know of many other cases in the history of science where assumptions that were so natural that they were not discussed and often did not become explicit, guided inquiry: that the stars are relatively near to earth; that light has to consist of either particles or waves, but not both; that energy decreases or increases in a continuous manner; that there is radio-silence in intergalactic space. We also know of presuppositions in ordinary life, such as expecting shopkeepers to be willing to sell goods, and sidewalks to be solid. Some puzzles in particular bring out certain tacit assumptions, for example the problem of connecting nine dots that are arranged in a square, by means of no more than four straight lines without lifting one's pen from the paper.

The question addressed in this paper is: What can we do about presuppositions? I shall consider several solutions that have been tried, and argue for the necessity of a multi-faceted approach to inquiry. This will also provide basic support for Macnamara's special interdisciplinary investigations, as discussed below.

Usually, we become aware of a presupposition when something goes wrong, when it prevents us from solving a problem for example, or disrupts communication. It has happened that a tutor explained at great length to a student the logical and philosophical problems involved in talking of non-existent objects, using the concept 'unicorn' as a paradigmatic instance, only to find that the student, having no idea what 'unicorn' means, totally failed to make the necessary connections. The tutor wrongly presupposed the student to possess a piece of non-academic cultural knowledge. A little thought beforehand might in this particular case have prevented the communication breakdown, but clearly one cannot always have such foresight.

Presuppositions are what we take for granted or assume to be necessary conditions. They form a body of knowledge and assumptions present before we enter into a context: presuppositions have their place outside the narrow situation with which one is actively concerned, and they are for the most part implicit and lie outside one's awareness. So how can we handle such tacit assumptions: can we avoid them or, if that is not possible, find a way to detect them in order to make them harmless? In science, the detection of a special presupposition may mean an important breakthrough, as in the historical examples mentioned above. It would certainly help if we could locate the most glaringly wrong assumptions, those that prevent science from developing in useful ways.

I shall now discuss (i) the formal role of presuppositions in inquiry, and whether we could set them aside by mechanical means. (ii) It can be shown that it is logically impossible to avoid presuppositions altogether. (iii) Attempts to make all presuppositions explicit are also doomed to failure. (iv) Thus we are faced with the inevitability of presuppositions in all inquiry. This conclusion has led to various reactions. Some thinkers have accepted a thoroughgoing relativity, where 'anything goes'. Others have concluded that one may freely choose one's approach, with its own built-in assumptions; and still others cling to a rational basis, salvaging objectivity as far as possible. If we opt for the latter approach, how should we proceed?

Because presuppositions do not form part of the immediate situation, we cannot apply a simple formal logical treatment to them. For suppose that any statement about Louis presupposes that he exists. Then

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we can formalise ' "Louis is happy" implies "Louis exists" ' as

$$H \supset L$$

But we also have to accept that ' "Louis is not happy" implies "Louis exists" '

$$\sim H \supset L$$

and the unfortunate consequence of joining these two formulas is that Louis exists necessarily, since either H or ~ H must be true. (It is either true or false that Louis is happy.) So if presuppositions are formally expressed as above, it turns out that all presuppositions must be true. Naturally this is not the case. Our mistake was to treat the presupposition as part of a restricted situation, whereas its correct function lies outside. In axiomatic systems, the presuppositions that one is using two-valued logic, and that there is at least one individual in the universe of discourse, do not form part of the system itself, although they can be specified separately. But even formally, presuppositions can neither be fully spelled out, nor avoided. If Frege could have made clear to himself beforehand that he assumed that sets can be members of themselves, he might not have been caught unawares by Russell's discovery that the Fregean system of *Grundgesetze der Arithmetik* was inconsistent. Frege (1964:127) mourns:

> Hardly anything more unwelcome can befall a scientific writer than that one of the foundations of his edifice be shaken after the work is finished ... It is not just a matter of my particular method of laying the foundations, but of whether a logical foundation for arithmetic is possible at all.

In the case of an axiomatic system, the presuppositions form part of the context of the system. True, it is possible to formalize this context in turn, but this can only be done by stepping outside the axiomatized system itself; even if we should repeat the process, obtaining a hierarchy of formal meta-languages, it would still be impossible to eliminate the final non-formal embedding context altogether (Blanché 1962:63–64). The formal context itself, therefore, offers no solution. The embedding context is that of human communication. Now any communication requires common ground between the participants, and this requirement itself is a further presupposition. Moreover, we cannot spell out exactly what this 'common ground' consists of, since

it is itself vague and shifting. We only become aware that such a common ground is required when it falls short in some respect, as in the example of the unicorn related above, or as in the case of a student who interprets 'If A then B' in the sense of 'A as well as B'.

Should we, then, rather try to avoid presuppositions? It is not possible to be a completely neutral observer, a mere recorder of facts and events, which would be what a presuppositionless science requires. Kant (1978:63) tells us that 'the sensuous faculty cannot think': we do not accept information through our senses passively, but must actively make it into our own, which means that we inevitably add our own presuppositions to any observation. Husserl insists that the world is not just out there on its own, but that it exists to the extent that we can experience it, and that what we experience, is what we call the world. (See e.g. Husserl 1969:154–161.) He is not talking about a single consciousness, however, but rather of the consciousness of human beings in general. According to Husserl, scientific knowledge, and in fact all knowledge, rests on our everyday experience of the world, that is, on our life-world *(Lebenswelt)* as Husserl came to call it later in his *Crisis* (1970).

Thus as far as a starting-point is concerned, we may say that whatever theories and constructions the scientist may put forward, he always has to start from the life-world (Husserl 1970:142–143). This life-world, however, is still a quite sophisticated and, above all, structured context; it contains many levels of knowledge, as well as values and culture (1970:133; 139–140).

The same kind of conclusions as Husserl's are expressed in the more recent writings of N. R. Hanson (1961, 1969), T. S. Kuhn, and others. Kuhn (1970) argues that a scientist always sees the world in terms of some frame-work or 'paradigm'. He says (1970:10) that by choosing the latter term, 'I mean to suggest that some accepted examples of actual scientific practice — examples which include law, theory, application, and instrumentation together — provide models from which spring particular coherent traditions of scientific research.' A scientist thus always works within a framework of presuppositions, some of which may be made explicit, but many of which remain unconscious. As Kuhn (1970:85) says: 'Scientists do not see something *as* something else; instead, they simply see it.' They become conscious of a problem because the paradigm functions as a

background: 'Anomaly appears only against the background provided by the paradigm' (1970:65). Thus we only see a problem when our expectations, fitting in with a particular context, are not realized. An event or object by itself cannot be problematical.

Although Popper disagrees with Kuhn's main idea and believes that science, rather than existing in separate frameworks or paradigms, can approach (but probably never attain) actual truth (1969, ch. 10) — he does say that every scientific problem must have been preceded by some other problem. There is no 'beginning', no first problem in science. Practical problems arise very early, even before there is consciousness: 'Organic structures and problems arise together' (1976:133). As problems are solved, new problems arise, and so on, until we come to what is known as science. Problems, says Popper, even practical problems, are always theoretical. The correlate of this, however, is that theories are always tentative solutions of problems (1976:135). In other words, scientific problems arise in a context that is already there, with its presuppositions (1969:238).

The upshot of all this is that we cannot demand a science without presuppositions. Scientific questions (problems) arise in a certain situation, against a certain background, as philosophers as different as Husserl, Popper and Kuhn agree. This background itself is not neutral; but precisely because it is a background, it is largely unconscious. Thus science inevitably starts with presuppositions.

Can we, perhaps, make explicit all our presuppositions, more or less in the Cartesian manner of starting from a known base? We saw that any formal context is embedded in an informal, intuitive one in turn. So we must look here. Husserl in his later writings actually tries to find the most basic experiences. If we are ever to unearth all presuppositions, it might be by uncovering just such a basis. Husserl goes back to the pre-predicative world, the world of immediate experience without the intervention of language (*Experience and judgment*, 1973). But even here we are not free of presuppositions and a necessarily pre-given structure; the recognition of individual things, for example, which may be seen as the primary experience, presupposes the field in which such things exist (1973:29–30). In knowing or recognizing something, man always 'knows' more than that of which he is conscious (1973:31–32). The background structure, in the life-world

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as well as in the pre-predicative context, is necessarily shared by human beings in communication. Human beings learn and become human in a social context (Kistner 1984, ch. IV).

We can apply Husserl's kind of reasoning to the logical positivists' sense data as well. Here, without some organizing principle, we could not collect data into a meaningful whole (Kistner 1984:72–73). We must give up the idea of a presuppositionless totally explicit foundation of inquiry, for ordinary life as well as for science.

It is worth noting that the presuppositions of science occur on all levels, not merely regarding the direction in which solutions are sought (What was the cause of the Big Bang; Why does South Africa have so many divorces; How can we detect lung cancer in an early stage?) but also in the selection of the problems themselves. This covers not merely a choice between what is or what is not a worthwhile subject for research (Should we put a man on the moon, or rather use the money to prevent blindness in Africa?), but also what strikes us as being a problem in the first place. An example is Olbers' paradox: if the universe is infinitely large, and if it is empty so that nothing impedes the propagation of light, why is the sky black at night? Most people who believe the antecedent conditions to be true do not go on to formulate the question, that is, they do not even see that there is a problem at all. It seems more important to concentrate on the size and age of the universe, or the conditions for the propagation of radiation. And how many people before (and since) James Watt have been irritated by the noisy lid of a boiling pot, yet how many have asked themselves how the power that lifts such a lid could be made useful? In short, even the fact that a problem occurs at all requires a background. Next, the formulation of the problem rests on presuppositions. If marriage were not important in our society, divorce would not be a problem. So do we locate the divorce problem in the bourgeois view of marriage, or in the divorce figures themselves? Are we content to say that we cannot go back beyond the Big Bang and can at best try to find causal relations within those first milliseconds, or do we look for a plan or purpose behind the way the world is?

The idea of looking for a plan or purpose behind the world as it is would be ruled unscientific by many people. So even the concept of science itself rests on certain presuppositions. What is involved in rational

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inquiry? The problem shows itself particularly clearly when we go to other cultures. In his discussion of Westerners' views of the Zande belief in witchcraft, Winch (1964:160) says that Evans-Pritchard, attempting to describe the Zande views, found it difficult to return to 'a clear view of how things really are'. The point Winch is making in his paper, however, is that there is no way in which 'things really are'; that, given the Zande presuppositions, their data and their theories are as rational as those of Western science. Thus what is a problem for the Azande, and what counts as a solution, differs from what is a problem or solution in other cultures, and if Winch is correct, we have no way of rationally deciding between the presuppositions of one or the other culture. They have different world views, and therefore any rational inquiry will be different, since reality is always conceived in terms of language and culture. We cannot split one part of reality — that which is amenable to rational inquiry — from someone's world view, since what constitutes rational inquiry is part of one's world view. Macnamara (1980:17) characterises a world picture or world view as 'a conceptual framework in terms of which one tries to interpret reality'; he says (1980:30) that a world picture provides one with intellectual bearings and a value system. The matter of presuppositions thus goes a long way beyond our being confronted with a problem to which we wish to apply science. Because science as we usually conceive it is totally Western in character, however, there is only one science by definition, and the further complication of different world views is not always seen. Yet the realization that another world view may mean another science, merely takes our original presupposition problem back another step.

So far we have argued that without presuppositions there could not be any science at all. Questions can arise only on the ground of certain preconceived expectations. Nor can we formulate all presuppositions, since they only become visible when they in turn cause some problem. And further, listing prejudices or trying to see other points of view is again done from a specific standpoint with its own presuppositions in turn. What, then, can a scientist (or a philosopher or a teacher or a housewife) do in order to minimize the chance of being adversely influenced by them? Quite obviously, there is no ready-made answer or solution.

One reaction to the lack of 'objectivity' or presuppositionless science is a sense of freedom from restraint: everything seems to become

possible. Although Kuhn's theory has met with severe criticism, for example from Popper's followers (Lakatos 1970:93, 178), it also has been welcomed, especially in the social sciences. Kuhn's denial of the possibility of choice on rational, scientific grounds, has been welcomed by some people as leaving a place for theories that are generally considered scientifically dubious — for example, it may be claimed that parapsychology or witchcraft can no longer be rejected out of hand, since there are no neutral data outside a paradigm by which one might judge that paradigm, complete with its inherent presuppositions. Van Dongen and Gerding (1983:118–120) make a plea for eventual acceptance of parapsychology with reference to Kuhn. They see parapsychological events as anomalies that may eventually lead to a new paradigm. Roy Wallis (1979:5) claims that in general 'particularly under the liberating impact of Thomas Kuhn's bold challenge to this complacent [orthodox] view of scientific knowledge — sociologists and historians have adopted a more methodologically "agnostic" view of the truth claims of scientists'.

Richard Rorty (1980:348–349; 388) has another approach. He thinks that we probably should not even try to make all our knowledge commensurable or 'objective' (p. 335). The emphasis should be on conversation, not on true knowledge (1980:373, 378). We should choose a theory because it is interesting, in whatever sense, not because it is true. Or perhaps we should choose theories because they lead to actions alleviating the oppression of people.

Others, not happy with these more or less relativist solutions, declare that we should make an explicit choice of approach. Habermas and Bernal, for example, think that 'objectivists' are merely hiding their ideological partiality from themselves. Habermas (1981:308–309) contends that our interests inevitably direct our attempts at objectivity in science. Bernal (1971:923) argues that in a society consisting of classes, these class divisions permeate science in material and ideological ways, and influence the structure, development and uses of science, and he goes on to say: 'De opeenvolgende technische transformaties, van het onstaan van de beschaving tot op heden, werden op ieder keerpunt gemotiveerd door de belangen van individuen en groepen uit de heersende klasse van dat moment.'

As a consequence of such views, some scientists, notably from Marxist or orthodox religious backgrounds, have taken the step to make

explicit their own conscious choice of a specific ideological approach, thus hoping to bring into the open a stance that remains unconscious in others, and so perhaps to avoid a number of pitfalls (Duvenage 1987:21–22). But this strategy will not work, because as we showed, it is logically impossible to state all one's presuppositions. Such a move thus merely provides an undue restriction of the scope of one's research.

Both approaches, however — the 'anything goes' and the 'state your starting-point' kind — seem unduly defeatist. Descartes found that we could at any time be mistaken in what we thought; he concluded, erroneously, that we can be mistaken at all times. We seem to have a similar view here: since science can be partial, and can have wrong presuppositions, should we give up altogether trying to strive for an impartial science that is seeking truth? Reality has a way of intruding upon our constitutions. We are to some extent free to choose, or perhaps one should rather say, to fall into or to be socialized into, a world view with all the presuppositions entailed by it. Accordingly, we construe the world as consisting of these facts and not those; to see some things and not others. (It does not follow that we, as the Existentialists believed, are totally free to choose ourselves to be other than we have become.) But reality hits back: we can make mistakes in natural science. Sartre says that a rock can be seen as an obstacle to be overcome, or as something insurmountable. Nevertheless, it is not a puddle of water. The same holds for science. Bellarmini, with his opposition to Galileo's ideas, and Lysenko, with his theory of transmission between generations of non-genetically acquired characteristics, eventually ran into a wall of facts that were facts for everyone. Whatever anthropology we have, people become ill, get well, are born and die in an objective sense. Astrology is not a solution to the problem of cancer. And so on.

As Husserl already found, this does not mean that we can pick out a fixed set of rock-bottom facts, true for everyone. Nor can we detect all presuppositions. There can be no rules, let alone a decision procedure to find them. Finding a presupposition means a new way of looking at a situation, drawing to the front something that has always been in the background. Scientists never have a mere 'bundle of data' at their disposal: the case is more difficult than that. The data have been singled out from a situation, and another selection may have to be

made. This may require real creativity, and it is the merit of Hanson and Kuhn to have shown this very clearly.

Openness to the detection of presuppositions will be stimulated if scientists are as flexible as possible, able to look at a situation from as many perspectives as can be managed. Nobody can be blamed for having presuppositions : we could not function without them. We can, however, try to create the conditions that make it easier to detect them when necessary. We can read widely, talk to people working in other fields of our own discipline or working in different disciplines, all the while keeping the general problem in mind.

In order to get to grips with a problem it must be seen against the background of its context. However, if we wish to see an object against a background, we must look at it from more than one perspective (the most basic instance, perhaps, is the role of binocular vision to separate object and background). Scientists do normally try on their own to accomplish this multiplication of perspectives first of all by reading other studies of the subject, and by applying an analysis along methodical lines: How did the problem arise? What is known about this and related issues? What kind of solution might be useful? and so on. We usually find answers to these kinds of questions in the introductory parts of research papers. But a scientist may also find it helpful to draw in people from a slightly different group, or even from a totally other background. Watson (1968) reports that in the search for the structure of the genetic molecule, the opinions of fellow scientists working on *other* problems were sought as a matter of course. Scientists also may bring in colleagues from different disciplines. Einstein the physicist was assisted in the development of his general theory of relativity by the observation of the mathematician Minkowski that formally, in Einstein's transformation formulas for special relativity, the factor relating to time could be taken as fourth coordinate with the three spatial coordinates x, y and z. This led to the conceptual unification of space and time into a four-dimensional space–time continuum (Lanczos 1974:91–92). Einstein, who struggled with the mathematics needed for his theory, must have seen the formulas merely as a means to a specific preconceived end, while Minkowski was aware that mathematics has a structure that may in itself provide important clues.

Another case where contact between scientists working in different fields led to a breakthrough was the discovery of the background

radiation left over from the Big Bang birth of the universe. In the early 1960s, Penzias and Wilson at the Bell research laboratories, New Jersey, found a puzzling 'noise' in a new horn antenna developed for radio astronomy. They went to great lengths trying to eliminate the source of the noise. More or less by accident they heard about the theoretical prediction by Dicke's team at Princeton that the universe would show a background radiation with a temperature of a few degrees K. But when Dicke first entertained this idea, his radiometer was not sensitive enough to pick up this low radiation. Then the two teams heard about each other, and the puzzling radiation observed by Penzias and Wilson was explained. They had, however, wasted quite some time trying to eliminate the background noise, on the assumption that it should not be there (Gribbin 1987:181–193).

I suggest that the attempts at contact with other scientists are successful, not merely because additional data are obtained, but because such contacts create additional perspectives. We may also find such strategies useful in raising and solving problems in the social sciences and the humanities, and of course in philosophy. Philosophy through the ages has its own presuppositions, for example Descartes and Locke simply assume the mind to be first and foremost an individual ego, before it enters into communication; and an entire chapter in the philosophy of mathematics rests on the presupposition of a denotation theory of meaning, necessitating the search for a referent of the term 'number', leading to the platonist, formalist and intuitionist theories.

In the light of our considerations, Macnamara's initiatives for preliminary interdisciplinary and inter-trend philosophical exploration (Macnamara *et al.* 1980, 1985, 1986, 1987, 1988) are noteworthy. Some examples of interesting issues arising from these investigations are the following:

(i) In daily life, elegance is normally accepted (taken for granted) as being the cherry on the cake of serious business, but in the light of its place in science and mathematics, it may actually have a more basic role to play in other contexts as well.

(ii) A romantic poem is generally seen as an item of expressive language, and therefore not amenable to considerations of formal logic. However, it also is an attempt at communication in language, that is a set of (more of less) explicit statements, and so

it might still be possible that logic can teach us something about such a poem.

(iii) Given that Hobbes, naturally read mainly as a political philosopher, sees relations between nations as analogous to relations between individuals, perhaps we could in another approach extend the analysis of existential meaning to the international context in a similar analogy.

All this is not a plea for eclecticism. We usually cannot simply combine features from different approaches, just as we cannot combine different aspects of the two views of the Necker cube. But the mere realisation that there exist different justifiable points of view does alert us to assumptions that may remain hidden in the single taken-for-granted aspect. For the Necker cube, for instance, if we knew only one of its 'appearances', we should miss the function of perspective and general surrounding context, as well as the observer's constitution, in making sense of what we see.

In conclusion, we have found that science inevitably carries with it a number of presuppositions. Many people are put off by this, seeing it as a serious shortcoming, and some come to the conclusion that we must give up science as we know it. Others welcome the opportunity of actively choosing an explicit standpoint, but such a move merely restricts scientific research, without accomplishing its purpose. A better policy is to be flexible, in order to have access to more than one perspective. Koestler (1966:712–713) remarks on the 'characteristic property shared, apparently, by most great scientists: one may call it the "multiple potential" ' — once again, a matter of being equipped to appreciate more than one way of seeing. To the extent that science is a sample of human rational thought, our considerations about science hold for all rational endeavour.

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6

The cultural boycott: an act of censorship or a tool of liberation?[1]

Karin M Skawran

Department of History of Art and Fine Arts
University of South Africa

At this time there is consensus, worldwide, that apartheid is immoral. There are different opinions, however, on what morality requires us to do about it; on how to demonstrate our response to its discriminative laws and show our solidarity with the oppressed. The cultural boycott is one way of reacting against the apartheid system. It is also a fact — one that we may not ignore and which demands a definite response from us (Shaw 1986:59–72).

It is necessary to begin with a brief outline of the origins and historical development of the cultural boycott.[2]

The focus on this campaign has intensified considerably since the 'Culture in another South Africa' Conference in Amsterdam in 1987 and the 'Culture against apartheid' Symposium in Athens in 1988.

Relevant for my discussion is the policy statement by CASA that recognizes the emergence of a culture of the oppressed people in South Africa, expressing opposition to apartheid and furthering the liberation cause.[3] At the conference a pledge was made to develop a democratic culture which is characterized by a spirit of internationalism

and humanism, and which is rooted in the cultural tradition of the various peoples of South Africa. Cultural activities of South African liberation movements, recognized by the OAU, the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, amongst others, are to be encouraged as non-violent yet forceful alternatives to effect change in this country's apartheid policies (CASA 1987).

The cultural boycott contrasts cultural freedom with the apartheid system's denial of all basic freedoms to the black majority in South Africa and with the restrictive formulae of 'official culture'.

The first concerted attempt to create an awareness of the real meaning of apartheid was made in 1954, when Father Trevor Huddleston called for a cultural boycott. It was a powerful signal to the white minority in South Africa that the systematic institutionalization of racism in every sphere of social life, including the arts, was unacceptable to the outside world.

The response to his appeal was immediate. Equity put a ban on its actors performing in front of segregated audiences in South Africa. Their example was soon followed by the Musicians' Union, the Screenwriters Guild, and others.

There is no doubt that South Africa perceived such grassroots resistance as of crucial importance, because it soon implemented some minor reforms in the area of 'petty apartheid' in an attempt to frustrate boycott actions and create an illusion of 'normality'.

The total cultural, academic and sports boycott, called for by the United Nations in 1968, must be seen as a challenge to such reform policies and as an attempt to expose the fraudulent nature of Bantustan policies, propagated by government as oases of multiracialism.

In 1980 a specific resolution was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly to compile a register of entertainers, actors, etc., who violated the cultural boycott by performing in South Africa. The first register was published in 1983 and was seen to be a significant deterrent to overseas artists performing in South Africa.

What, then, are the components of the cultural boycott?

In an interview with Hein Willemse, Mi Hlatswayo, of Cosatu's Cultural Desk, defines 'a culture of apartheid' as one which encourages

tribalism, racism and white supremacy. It is believed that such a culture promotes the interest of the individual and aligns itself with the foreign imperialist cultures of Britain and America (Willemse 1989:42).

'A culture of resistance', on the other hand, is practised and controlled by the people, promoting the interests of the majority in their struggle for liberation. It does not seek, in the first place, to further the interests of the individual, but relates to the broader issues of the community.

Two types of artists are distinguished: the individual artist, schooled and educated, and cherishing individual freedom more than the freedom of the masses. This type of artist is not seen as relevant to a 'culture of resistance'. Then there is the artist who came forward during the Black Consciousness era and whose art relates to the feeling of the people and their socio-political realities. It is an art that cannot be evaluated in terms of Western aesthetic standards and it has little respect for the academic tradition. Artists of this group recite or write spontaneously in their own language.

As for the criteria which are applied when decisions have to be made about the acceptability of art works, the response of the Pan Africanist Congress is significant. It states categorically: 'Apartheid is a crime against humanity. Artists *must* convey the message. This *must* is an order.' Posters, cartoons and graphics, anti-apartheid plays and musicals have been suggested as means to furthering the national democratic struggle.

Individuals like Barbara Masekela and Wally Serote of the African National Congress are much more flexible in their demands. As individuals, they acknowledge artworks which do not necessarily carry an explicit political message, provided the artists who produced them have taken a firm stand against apartheid (Masekela 1987:19–21; *Weekly Mail* 1988; *New Nation* 1988). Such updated and more sophisticated views are, however, regularly thwarted by the Anti-Apartheid Movement which consistently pursues its totalitarian strategy of a blanket boycott, still rooted in South Africa's repressive laws of the sixties (Bauer 1988; Gordon 1988).

Much confusion still exists about the structures envisaged for the effective implementation of the cultural boycott. The intention is to create local, regional, national and international forums for cultural debate where artists can share ideas and skills and where they can learn about historical connections. Cultural workers are to operate in every city and from every factory. Cultural leadership is to be developed to ensure continuity, and the ultimate goal is a national cultural organization.

In the last five years considerable progress has been made in isolating South Africa in the cultural field. At the same time the cultural boycott has forced academics and artists to re-assess candidly their role and function in the light of rapidly changing socio-political events generally, and in terms of the cultural boycott specifically.

It is not easy for someone living in an apartheid society to assess fully the relative effectiveness of boycott campaigns versus strategies of quiet diplomacy and 'constructive engagement'. But given the facts, our own responsibilities have to be determined (Lowe 1987:265–277).

Historical precedents have taught us that it is unlikely that a cultural boycott — and a selective one at that — will dismantle apartheid. Nothing short of a total boycott, in every sphere of life, could possibly do that. Even then the results would be tenuous.

However, if we take cognizance of the dramatic unfolding of creative potential, the emergence of powerful cultural alternatives — not only in the Black communities, but in a significant number of Afrikaners as well (James 1989; Hough 1988) — and the determination to accomodate and organize divergent cultural needs, then, I believe, the boycott must be seen as a symbol of what can only be described as a call for a cultural revolution — a revolution voicing radical opposition to established social and cultural forms.

I come now to an assessment of the pitfalls and demands of such alternative action. Firstly, it is questionable whether the cultural boycott significantly affects those who are responsible for the socio-political ills of this country. By acknowledging a 'culture of apartheid' the supporters of the cultural boycott assume that apartheid *has* a culture. And if by culture we mean the upholding of Western values of humanism and personal freedom, then the denial by government of those very values to the majority of blacks in this country suggests

a total lack of culture. N. P. van Wyk Louw had in 1932 already addressed the question in an article entitled 'Cultural leaders without a culture' (Louw 1986a:72–79). Since then nothing much has changed. The visual arts still have a low priority for the government. We still do not have a Ministry of Culture, nor does the Nationalist Party have a distinct cultural policy.[4] And as for the four million rand recently allocated to the arts (De Klerk 1989), well, even President Roosevelt, true to his sense of the proper, abandoned his art projects when he concluded that they added nothing significant to his winning the Second World War. But then, perhaps the four million rand may be used for another Info Song?

There is distinct evidence that the cultural boycott has merely served to strengthen the laager mentality of the supporters of apartheid and taught them to be more self-reliant. The motto of the Afrikaner Volkswag is significant here. It reads: 'Op weg na ons EIE' (*en route* to our OWN).

The sporting boycott — yes, that hurts. Sport in this country is much closer to a culture than the arts can ever be under the present regime. Government won't change its policies because it can't see a Pinter play. Nor will Dolly Parton or Kenny Rogers signing a pledge not to perform in Sun City be persuasive enough to change its ideas. Ironically, then, the cultural boycott has adversely affected only those South Africans who would also like to see radical social change take place (Pretorius 1988:16).

The cultural boycott theory is simple, but its application is not. Half-hearted or poorly structured boycotts produce cynicism and confusion.[5] While the goals of the boycott have been clearly stated, the strategies and tactics best suited to achieve them still lack credibility and are, at best, counter-productive. The decisions made by the Anti-Apartheid Movement as to what is socially and ideologically acceptable in the field of art have exposed double standards and muddled ethics which are unhealthy and serve merely to retard the whole process of liberation. The situation in which the production *Sarafina*, having the black struggle as chorus line, is showered with Tony awards on Broadway, while another anti-apartheid play, Robert Kirby's *The Bijers bird*, runs into pickets in London, seems absurd. Johnny Clegg's music is one of the most potent forces expressing the

vibrancy of an emergent Euro-African art, yet he was prevented from participating in the first London Mandela concert (Silber 1988:16–19). The Paul Simon affair is another example which highlights the sense-lessness of decisions taken by some overseas anti-apartheid movements (Herbstein 1987:33–35). And in this respect, I'm afraid, one has also to question the exemption of the University of the Western Cape from the cultural boycott, when it is well known that the universities of Cape Town and the Witwatersrand, among others, have also made their anti-apartheid position perfectly clear.

Directly linked to the question of acceptability is the demand that art must serve to further the quest for a truly democratic South Africa. It is hardly necessary to remind the reader of similar demands made by the Nazi regime, and of the virtual annihilation of Russian avant-garde art by Soviet officialdom. Are the demands for an art depicting the liberation struggle not essentially the same? Do they not fore-shadow the replacement of one kind of officialdom or élite with another, and do they not demonstrate the same hostility towards creative freedom?

The revolutionary power of art is not being questioned here. The im-pact of Diego Rivera's mural paintings in Mexico cannot be denied. Also, there is a time and place for propaganda art in the form of posters and cartoons. But it must be realized that much of this kind of art is one-dimensional and transitory because it is dependent for its imagery and language on a socio-political crisis. The end of such a crisis in-evitably eliminates the reason and the feeding ground for such art.

It seems natural that the communication of radical non-conformist goals demands an equally non-conformist language for breaking the barriers of oppressive rule and established language and ideas. It seems equally natural that if such language is to be 'effective', the traditions of those who support the revolution provide the language and the images.

History shows that times of socio-political crisis mark a return to a more direct art which addresses itself to the emotions rather than the intellect. It seeks to give expression to the feelings and needs of the majority. At the same time it develops anti-forms which are unable, ultimately, to bridge the gap between real life and art. The subver-sive use of art inevitably leads to the destruction of aesthetic form.

And, according to Herbert Marcuse, it is because of this very form that art is able to transcend and thus *contradict* reality (Marcuse 1987:195). Art cannot change reality, and it can also not subject itself to the demands of a revolution, without denying itself. The political dimension in any artwork remains accountable to its aesthetic dimension which, in turn, takes on political dimensions. Art protests against social conditions in that it transcends them. In such transcendence art breaks with existing norms and revolutionizes experience.

Marcuse believed that 'A truly revolutionary art is so only inasmuch as it expresses goals that are universal and transcendent ... Art can fulfil its inner revolutionary function only if it does not itself become part of any establishment, even the revolutionary establishment' (Marcuse 1987:115). Such conviction is verbally echoed in a letter written to a young friend by N. P. van Wyk Louw in 1952. He maintains that the artist's loyalty is to something that exists above and beyond people, and which no political leader can prescribe for him. He furthermore believes that in a time of crisis

> ... he must do *his* kind of work, with greater dedication, with greater passion perhaps; but it must remain *his* kind of work, executed in *his* spirit; he must judge himself what his work will be (Louw 1986b:463).

There are poems by Bertolt Brecht which have no direct political references and which surpass many of his explicitly political plays. Using everyday language he manages to conjure up, for one fleeting moment, images of a liberated world. Closer to home, J. M. Coetzee in his *Waiting for the barbarians* succeeds in transcending the particular by creating a timeless empire of injustice and indecency (Rich 1984:365–393). That there is a place for landscape and still-life painting, at this point in time, is demonstrated by many South African artists. Clive van den Bergh's ominous and angst-filled images of his surroundings, William Kentridge's sharply satirical urban cityscapes, and Penny Siopis's still-lifes of opulence and decadence, are but a few examples. Remember, too, that Matisse painted flowers during the Second World War, as metaphors for another side of life, of freedom and serenity.

Clearly, freedom of expression is never also freedom from responsibility. And such responsibility can only be determined by the artist himself. Art survives only where it preserves autonomy.

To conclude: I believe that any interference with academic or artistic freedom, whether it be in the form of internal or external censorship, of arbitrary arrests or bannings, strikes at the very heart of civilization. It is our responsibility to assist in the fight for freedom and in the pursuit of truth. But it is also our responsibility to ensure the continuous flow of culture, to stimulate new growth points of cultural expression, to identify areas of collaboration, and to share ideas, skills and expertise.

I believe that nothing but good for the anti-apartheid cause could come from the freest exchange of ideas at the cultural, scientific and academic levels. Did we not support such a traffic of ideas with Eastern Europe for precisely these reasons?

We must face the frightening reality that the cultural vacuum and general dehumanization created by apartheid rule cannot be rectified merely by dismantling legalized discrimination. Universities will have to reassess their position in the transition towards a hopefully new, democratic South Africa, and devote themselves to developing and facilitating action programmes that further communication and understanding between all the peoples of Southern Africa.

Notes

1 'The cultural boycott: what is our response?'. Address delivered at the graduation ceremony of the Faculty of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, on 11 April 1989. The subtitle of my address was subsequently 'borrowed' from A. Dangor's 'Report on a workshop on the "Cultural Boycott" '. See bibliography.

2 I am indebted to Jane Duncan for making accessible to me her dissertation 'Contending ideologies in the debate on, and administration of, the selective cultural boycott', submitted to the History of Art Department, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Honours Bachelor of Arts Degree in History of Art, January 1989.

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3 That there is a body of literature, oral and written, in many languages of southern Africa which has long since formed part of the African heritage of cultural resistance was clearly revealed at the Culture and Resistance Symposium held in Gabarone, Botswana, in 1982. On this see K. Kgositsile, 'Culture and resistance in South Africa', *Black Scholar*, 17(4) 1986:28–31.
4 'Culture' is administered by the Department of National Education and is considered by it to be an 'Own Affairs' matter of each cultural group.
5 Examples of such confusion are reflected in the 'Report on a workshop on the "Cultural Boycott" as an act of censorship or a tool for liberation hosted by the Congress of South African Writers 14 May 1988' by Achmat Dangor in *Staffrider*, 7(2), 1988:90–92; and in the response to this report by Marianne de Jong in *Staffrider*, 8(1), 1989:121–124.

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7

Empirical justification

Jeanette Malherbe
Department of Philosophy
University of South Africa

THE PROBLEM

This article seeks to develop an argument concerning the character of *empirical* justification as opposed to other possible kinds of justification. If it is sound, the argument provides support for foundation-alism and poses a problem for coherentist accounts of empirical justification. In essence, the strategy will be to show that the general assumption that *empirical justification* is simply *the justification of an empirical belief* is mistaken. There are at least three distinct kinds of reasons (semantic, probabilifying and empirical) that can be offered in justifying an empirical belief; they may be distinguished by reference to the different relations they bear to the belief to be justified. The first two kinds of justification may apply to any sort of belief, while the last is peculiar to empirical beliefs.

We shall not get so far in this article as to say what constitutes good justification for an empirical belief. It should be borne in mind, then, that when the claim is made that x is necessary to the justification of a belief, or that x, y and z are adequate to its justification, what is meant is a belief's subjective justification, or the reasons that an epistemic agent thinks sufficient to justify his holding of some belief.[1] There remains the question of whether this is objectively sufficient justification, that is whether it is adequate to the justification *simpliciter* of a belief. The view is being taken here that the two are commensurate in that justification *simpliciter* is subjective justification which meets certain objective standards.

The issue of empirical justification may be approached by looking at one of the standard objections to foundationalism. The foundationalist maintains that the structure of empirical justification is linear. There are certain beliefs of an agent which are basic in that (i) they are justified without depending on any other beliefs of the agent for their justification, and (ii) they serve as the terminus of justification for all other, non-basic empirical beliefs of the agent. The first condition, concerning the independence of basic beliefs, seems immediately implausible. For any example of a basic belief that the foundationalist can give (typically beliefs about either simple observable facts in the agent's current environment or the contents of his current state of consciousness[2]), there seem to be many other beliefs of the agent which are somehow involved in its justification. Suppose the basic belief to be that S believes (at time t) that there is a grey cup on the desk in front of him. In order to hold such a belief, S needs to have a great many other beliefs about the nature of material objects in space and their properties in general, and about cups and desks and the colour grey in particular; he will have to have some general ideas about what constitutes reliable conditions for observing physical objects in his environment (lighting, visual apparatus, relative positions and distances of object and observer), and some particular beliefs about the conditions of his immediate situation.[3]

All of these beliefs are relevant to the justification of S's particular belief that there is a grey cup on the desk in front of him (Bp). They make Bp the belief that it is and they provide grounds which encourage S to accept Bp. All and any of the other beliefs mentioned above might well be offered by S as a reason for his holding Bp, in answer to the

question 'Why do you believe that there's a grey cup on the desk in front of you?'.

If this is so, however, then how can it be claimed that Bp is a basic belief, independent of all other beliefs of the agent for its justification? How can it and beliefs like it serve as the ultimate justificatory basis of all S's empirical beliefs if they themselves require justification in the ways just mentioned? The answer in brief is that Bp does not depend on these further beliefs for its *empirical* justification, but only for what we shall call its *semantic* and its *probabilifying* justification. In respect of its empirical justification, Bp is self-evident and *prima facie* justified. As such, it serves as the terminus of all empirical justification. Before going on to explicate the character of these different kinds of justification, however, some clarification is needed of the way the term 'justification' is understood in this paper.

JUSTIFICATION

Epistemic justification applies only to a belief or a set of beliefs. It would be inappropriate to predicate it (except perhaps in unusual cases) of knowledge, whose epistemic status is assured by definition, or of mental states like wishing and hoping, in which the belief component is not material. Beliefs are the natural bearers of epistemic justification.

However, not all the justification that is appropriate to beliefs is epistemic justification. A belief may be morally justified and epistemically unjustified, as when S believes, loyally but against the evidence, in his old friend's innocence; or it may be pragmatically justified and epistemically unjustified, as when a mortally sick S believes that he will recover, since a positive state of mind is essential to his recovery. Epistemic justification fails in both of these cases because S believes against the evidence or without sufficient grounds. Notice that even if it turned out later that S's old friend *was* innocent or that S *did* make a miraculous recovery, S would still not have been epistemically justified in believing as he did, if he did not have good reasons for his belief. The truth of what is believed is not sufficient to justify S in his belief, nor is it necessary for justification — S may be epistemically justified in some belief which is in fact false.

This does not imply that truth is irrelevant to justification. What rendered the two examples of belief above epistemically unjustified, was just that S did not have grounds for thinking p to be true, so that the justification of a belief is obviously linked in some way to its putative truth. Moser (1985:5–8) suggests that justification is essentially related to 'the cognitive goal of truth', and that 'a theory of empirical justification does purport to provide us with criteria of truth' (1985:5), which 'warrant' rather than 'guarantee' the belief in question. BonJour (1985:5–8) finds that 'the goal of our distinctively cognitive endeavors is *truth*: we want our beliefs to correctly and accurately depict the world'. In the light of this fact about rationality, 'the basic role of justification is that of a *means* to truth, a more directly attainable mediating link between our subjective starting point and our objective goal' (BonJour 1985:7).

It would, however, be a mistake to conclude from the close connection of truth and justification that for S to justify Bp at t, he has to show that his belief is true, or even likely to be true. Firstly, proving truth is forever beyond the powers of finite epistemic agents. Truth is here being taken to consist in some sort of relation of correspondence between belief and world. Since it is not possible to confront the world except through the mediation of belief, we are precluded from ever conclusively establishing that a particular empirical belief is true. The most we can do is fix some degree of probability of the belief's truth.

Moreover, even though this is the case, it would be wrong to think S's epistemic responsibilities consist in showing the likelihood of his *belief's* being *true*. In the case of an empirical belief (Bp), his primary obligation is to show the likelihood of his belief's *content* (p) being an *existent fact*. If he succeeds in this, Bp will at the same time have been shown to be very likely true. From S's point of view, the two processes are identical anyway; saying why he believes p to be the case is the only way S has of saying why he thinks that 'p', and so also Bp, is true.

The rationale for making the distinction, and taking empirical justification to be a process of the agent's showing (ineluctably from his own point of view)[4] the likely existence of the fact in question, rather than the likely truth of the belief, is that it is easier to distinguish different

kinds of justification in relation to the first definition than the second. If they were to be listed, S's reasons for thinking that there is a grey cup on the desk might prove to be the same as his reasons for thinking that his belief is true, but where they are all equally related to Bp's truth conditions, in the second case, the beliefs which are his reasons play different roles in establishing the likely empirical fact of there being a cup on the desk.

The second most important aspect of justification (apart from its relation to truth) is its deontological character. If truth is thought of as the highest epistemic value, then an epistemic agent will be conceived of as having a responsibility to aspire to truth in each of his individual beliefs and to maximize truth in his whole epistemic set. Accepting or holding a belief is a rational act with a moral dimension, and to justify such an act, the agent will have to show that he has met certain truth-related standards of rationality. To justify his *initial accepting* of a belief, S (if he is rational and it is a bona fide empirical belief) will typically cite its originating causes, that is the reasons which caused him to believe that p in the first place. In justifying his *continued holding* of a belief, S may cite reasons which did not figure in his coming to believe that p, but which increase p's likelihood and so provide additional reasons for Bp. The first kind of justification is essential to any empirical belief (as will be shown below), while the second may be regarded as corroborating grounds.[5]

In sum then, we may say that S is justified in Bp if he has good evidence for p, and if he can produce good grounds or reasons for thinking that p.[6] The requirement that S have *evidence* for p (as defined in note 6), in order to be justified in believing it, ensures that his justification will embrace originating as well as sustaining causes, as will be explained more fully in the section 'Empirical reasons' below. In this section and in the two sections preceding it ('Semantic justification' and 'Probabilifying reasons') some of the features of three discernibly different kinds of justification for empirical beliefs are discussed; the discussion is not intended as an exhaustive or definitive taxonomy of such justification.

SEMANTIC JUSTIFICATION

Justification is a function of (a subset of) the epistemic agent's beliefs, of which the belief to be justified is one. It consists then in the relations

of Bp to other beliefs of S. If S has sufficient and sufficiently good reasons he will be justified in Bp. The further contention here is that reasons are of different sorts, to be distinguished by the different relationships they bear to the fact that p.

Semantic reasons are beliefs of the agent which make Bp the *particular* belief that it is. It is not necessary to read 'semantic' as implying 'linguistic'. It implies only that the representative content of the belief is cognitively formed by other, and antecedent beliefs of S. In the example above, S's beliefs concerning material objects, cups, space, the colour grey, etc., would furnish his semantic reasons for believing that there is a grey cup on the table. They individuate the belief, give its content an intelligible shape; they enable S to recognize (and perhaps articulate) the particular empirical fact p. Semantic reasons for Bp would be those beliefs that stand about Bp, in a Quinean web of belief, in constitutive relations to it.

Being a belief about some current empirical fact, Bp cannot be reduced without remainder to the antecedent beliefs which constitute its semantic content. Such beliefs might be sufficient to make S entertain the thought of a grey cup on a table, but he will have no reason to believe that there is one there unless he has the requisite experience, perception being the 'causal process that injects beliefs about physical objects into our doxastic system' (Pollock 1986:87). Commenting on the essential roles that such antecedent beliefs play in all kinds of mental states, Davidson (1984:157) writes: 'Even to wonder whether the gun is loaded, or to speculate on the possibility that the gun is loaded, requires the belief, for example, that a gun is a weapon, that it is a more or less enduring physical object and so on. There are good reasons for not insisting on any particular list of beliefs that are needed if a creature is to wonder whether a gun is loaded. Nevertheless, it is necessary that there be endless interlocked beliefs. The system of such beliefs identifies a thought by locating it in a logical and epistemic space.' (For 'epistemic' read our 'semantic'.)

Semantic reasons may legitimately be given by S in response to a challenge of his belief. 'Why do you believe there's a grey cup on the desk?' might be met with 'Because a cup just is that shape, and that colour's a dark grey.' Depending on the context of the challenge, this might even qualify as an adequate justification of Bp — if, for instance, both parties can see the object plainly, so that the belief's existential

content is agreed upon, and the only features of the belief which might reasonably be called in question are the item's colour and its classification as a cup. Semantic reasons thus play a justificatory role by fixing certain features of a belief's content in a (shared) semantic network.

Semantic reasons by themselves justify Bp only when its empirical justification is already agreed upon; they play an adjunctive role to empirical justification. Being justified is having good reason to think something is the case. Suppose S to have seen the grey cup on the desk at time t. At t − 1, his doxastic set included a wide range of general beliefs about cups, physical space, desks, etc., that is all the semantic reasons for Bp, and yet S did not have any good reason to believe that there was a cup on the desk. At t + 1, his belief set includes Bp, the experientially acquired belief that there is a grey cup on the desk, and now S does have good reason to believe that there is a cup on the desk. Bp is necessary for its own justification — the special case of a self-justifying basic belief.

The same point may perhaps be more convincingly made by considering an inferential empirical belief, S's belief (acquired while he cannot see the kettle) that there is steam coming out of the kettle. At t, S hears a whistle in the kitchen and identifies it as his kettle's, thus acquiring the belief that the kettle is whistling — Bq. From this and antecedent beliefs about his kettle's properties he infers that the kettle is steaming — belief Bp. At t − 1, before hearing the whistle, he had no good reason to think the kettle was steaming. At t + 1, he has every reason to think so. At t − 1, he had no justification for Bp; at t + 1, he had adequate justification. What is absent from his belief set at t − 1 that is present at t + 1, is Bq and Bp. In this case, Bp is not self-evident, that is, it does not act in its own justification. What is essential to the justification of Bp is thus Bq, the experientially acquired belief that the kettle is whistling. This is the empirical reason that S has for Bp. (The discussion of empirical reasons follows below; there are also probabilifying reasons among the antecedent beliefs relevant to the justification of Bp. They are discussed in the section below, 'Probabilifying reasons'.)

The point of these two examples has been to show that semantic reasons play an adjunctive role in justifying an empirical belief. They are

necessary to its complete justification but alone do not give S good reason to believe an empirical fact.

PROBABILIFYING REASONS

Unlike their semantic counterparts, probabilifying reasons are not always perfectly general. Some will be general, for example beliefs about what constitutes good conditions for, and thus reliability in, visual perception — beliefs about the relative frequencies of such facts as p in different contexts. Some will be particular beliefs about actual background conditions, the reliability or otherwise of S's own perceptual processes, the likelihood of a p occurring in that particular context. They are relevant to the particular empirical fact which is believed, in that they render it more or less likely that p.

In terms of the distinction between evidence and reasons or grounds, it seems that probabilifying reasons, since they may be beliefs about empirical facts, can also function as evidence, where semantic reasons are reasons or grounds only. Particular probabilifying reasons such as S's belief that his eyesight is excellent could certainly be 'adduced as an empirical fact in support of the further empirical fact' (the definition of evidence) that there is a cup on the desk. General probabilifying reasons, e.g. the fact that desks are just the sort of place to look for cups, would be allowable as evidence in so far as it could be agreed they were empirical facts. Being evidential, however, does not make probabilifying reasons into empirical reasons for Bp. We are reserving that term for a third kind of justification.

Probabilifying reasons alone are no more good reasons for believing a particular empirical fact, than were semantic reasons. The same strategy as was applied in the semantic case, of looking at S's belief set before he acquires Bp (a basic empirical belief) or Bq (an empirical reason for Bp) and noting that, with all his probabilifying reasons in place, he still has no justification for thinking that p is the case, will serve to show that probabilifying reasons alone, like semantic reasons alone, do not serve to justify an empirical belief. The same strategy will show that semantic and probabilifying reasons together are also not enough to provide S with reasons for thinking that some empirical fact is the case.

Probabilifying reasons, unlike semantic reasons which are necessarily antecedent to Bp in S's doxastic set, may be either antecedent or subsequent to Bp, that is, S may have such beliefs before coming to believe p, or he may only acquire them after Bp. It seems that such reasons may be of at least two significantly different types (and quite likely more).

(i) Probabilifying reasons may be beliefs about the particular physical causal conditions in which Bp was acquired, in relation to the ideal conditions for reliable perception. These are the conditions that the reliabilist claims are objectively necessary for the justification of Bp. As *reasons,* they do not, as is sometimes claimed,[7] figure as originating causes for Bp. What is necessary to S's acquisition of Bp is not the belief that his eyes are good enough to see such things, but good enough eyes, and not the belief but the fact that there is sufficient light to see by. When S offers such a probabilifying reason in justification of Bp, it will be ex post facto justification, acting usually as a rough indicator of the statistical probability of p's being the case.

(ii) Probabilifying reasons may be beliefs about natural regularities. S hears a whistle which he identifies as that of his kettle, acquiring thereby Bq, a basic empirical belief. He already holds the general belief that a whistle of that kind is invariably accompanied by steam issuing from the kettle — Br. Together, the two beliefs produce Bp, the inferential empirical belief that the kettle is steaming: $Bq + Br \rightarrow Bp$. Here, the probabilifying reason Br is a belief about an inductive regularity which does seem to play an originating role in Bp's genesis, since it guarantees passage from perceptual evidence to the inferential conclusion. By itself, however, Br does not produce Bp. It plays an adjunctive role to the empirical reason.

EMPIRICAL REASONS

A good deal has already been said by default about empirical reasons in the discussion of the other two kinds of reasons. They are originating reasons for Bp; they contain the evidence that S has for Bp; they cannot be subsequent to Bp; they are compelling reasons for Bp.

In 'Justification' above, an argument was developed from the universally agreed (within an internalist context, anyway) definition of empirical justification as S's giving of reasons for the truth of Bp, to its definition as S's saying how he came by Bp. Justification = df. 1: *S's showing the likely truth of Bp* = df. 2: *S's showing that p is probably the case* = df. 3: *S's saying why he thinks p is the case* = df. 4: *S's saying how he came to Bp and what else makes p credible for him.* On dfs. 1–3, Bp may be justified by producing semantic and probabilifying reasons for it, though something would be missing from its complete justification. On df. 4, however, justification must include the reasons S has for thinking that p in the first place, that is, the beliefs which originally cause S to believe p and not just the beliefs that sustain him in Bp. These last include semantic and probabilifying reasons as well as empirical reasons, but the originating causes of Bp are, by definition, empirical reasons.

Thus, in the example above, where Bp is the inferential empirical belief that the kettle is steaming, what causes S to think that this is the case is just that he can hear the kettle whistling, Bq — his empirical reason for Bp. If such reasons are held to be essential for the justification of all empirical beliefs, as seems correct, then we shall also have to say what S's empirical reasons are for a basic experiential belief like Bq, where there are no antecedent originating reasons. Here Bq is its own justification. Basic beliefs are the special case of beliefs that are, though defeasible, self-evident, and so prima facie justified. A full explication of these notions is beyond the scope of this paper, but basic beliefs so conceived are not a problem for the present definition of empirical justification; rather, they provide additional grounds for thinking it correct.

Basic beliefs are thus independent of any other beliefs for their justification, and the line of empirical justification terminates in them. This is incompatible with a coherentist account of justification on which every belief in a set enjoys the same justificatory status as any other. The coherentist usually gets past the difficulty, at considerable cost to his theory, by saying nothing about experiential beliefs. BonJour (1985:112–113), however, tries to accommodate observation beliefs in a coherentist account. His argument to this end demonstrates just what the coherentist makes of the definition of empirical justification set out above.

BonJour starts by explaining the problem that observation beliefs present for a coherentist view of justification: such beliefs are by definition noninferential; by the regress argument, there must be some noninferential beliefs, yet the coherentist maintains that all beliefs are inferentially justified. The solution to the apparent inconsistency lies in putting two different constructions on the term '(non)inferential'. An observation belief may be *arrived at* immediately and noninferentially, and yet *be justified* inferentially, by its relations to other beliefs in some set, so that it is noninferential in origin but inferential in justification. The means by which it is arrived at are thus distinct from, and quite irrelevant to, the belief's justification, and BonJour gives as an illustration of this possibility, a belief that S comes to have as a result of 'a spontaneous hunch' (i.e., there is nothing in its origins to justify it), which is 'subsequently ... seen to cohere with the rest of the system of beliefs in a way which would yield justification' (BonJour 1985:113).

It is hard to see how this could apply to a basic empirical or 'observation' belief, acquired by definition through the senses, but it might be true of an inferential belief, say the belief that Dad will arrive on the 12:30 flight. S might well arrive at such a belief by spontaneous hunch or wishful thinking (also a paradigm of unjustified believing), and subsequently find it to be justified by other beliefs of his. It could be justified by the belief that Dad has lately said he's too old to drive far, that he always prefers the midday flight and that generally gets in at 12:30 — reasons that make it probable that *if Dad's coming*, he's on the 12:30 flight. It could be justified by beliefs about the set of interrelated practices which form the institutions of air travel and the visiting of relatives — reasons which explain why S's belief *about a certain forthcoming event* has the particular form that it has. But if it is to be adequately justified, then S will also have to say what made him think in the first place that Dad would be visiting, that this particular event would be forthcoming. If his explanation is that he has a hunch about it, or that he hopes it is the case, S will be saying in effect that he does not have good reason to think that p is the case. In order to show that he is justified, he will have to say how he arrived at the idea in a way that reveals his evidence for it, where citing evidence is adducing one or more empirical facts which support the fact that p. S might remember, for instance, that Aunt Sal had said

that Dad would be coming (Bq), or he might realize that today is his birthday (Bq) and Dad always visits on his birthday. Bq is then the empirical reason for Bp.

What about the case in which S has a hunch that Dad is coming, comes to believe it, and then remembers what Aunt Sal said? Then the origins of the belief are a hunch, BonJour would want to say, and yet it is fully justified by an evidential, non-originating reason Bq which strikes S only after he has acquired Bp. Here, the foundationalist would want to say that Bp is psychologically overdetermined for S in that the hunch and Bq are both sufficient causes for it. The role that Bq plays is to give S a compelling reason to believe p, so that it is originative of Bp, whether S held Bp prior to Bq or not. Empirical reasons are those reasons without which S could not justifiably come to believe that p.

In reply to BonJour then, the foundationalist claims that the origins of an empirical belief, i.e., the reasons for which S comes to believe it are essential to its justification, and that this fact entails that basic beliefs are noninferential in both their origin and an essential aspect of their justification. Inferential beliefs must include empirical reasons in their justification, and by the regress argument these reasons must do likewise, until basic empirical reasons are reached. The structure of empirical justification is thus linear.

SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

The thesis of the above sections has been that there are at least three means of effecting the justification of an empirical belief, in terms of the distinctively empirical reasons for which S holds some content true, the semantic reasons which define that same content, and the probabilistic reasons which make it credible for S. We might say that the epistemic status of an empirical belief is of three kinds (at least). This is a view with powerful and interesting applications in fields other than the purely epistemological, though of course its primary deployment will be there. I can do no more here than sketch some possible lines of development.

In epistemology itself, the thesis invites fuller explication into a theory of the determining conditions of empirical belief; it offers a way of understanding the contentious *de re / de dicto* distinction, and of

accommodating differences among beliefs which have the same content, and so which, on the canonical 'propositional attitude' definition of belief, would have to be identified as the 'same' belief. In other fields, the thesis provides an argument for a metaphysics of realism: there is a real world to which a rational agent has access through the empirical relations of his beliefs; he is not confined to his own doxastic system. That perennial question in the philosophy of science as to the relations between observation and theory might be approached with a fresh eye from this perspective, since it is hardly controversial that science deals in empirical beliefs. The justification of moral, religious and aesthetic judgements might also be thought amenable to analysis in terms of a triplet of relations, if it be agreed that such judgements have an empirical element.

Notes

1 The context of this paper is the traditional mainstream of epistemology which takes knowledge to be paradigmatically the justified true belief of an individual epistemic agent.

2 It is widely agreed that the attempt to define *basic* beliefs with reference to the *contents* of the belief has failed. A more promising direction in which to look for such defining marks seems to be the *character* of the belief — its phenomenal aspects, especially its indexicality. 'Basic belief' will, however, have to remain an undefined term for lack of space, along with a regrettably large number of others — 'empirical belief' and relations of 'support' between reason and belief for instance.

3 The naturalistic epistemologist would wish to cut his cloth to fit real epistemic agents, and there's some doubt about imputing so many and such seemingly sophisticated beliefs (e.g. about the identity of objects over time) to a simple epistemic agent. The doubt may be dispelled by pointing out that the beliefs in question do not have to be occurrent beliefs of S or even beliefs that he has at any time in the past formulated to himself. The criterion for whether S believes something or not, is whether he would assent to some suitable formulation of the belief's content in a sentence.

4 Empirical justification is assumed here to be doxastic and internal, that is it is a function of the beliefs of the agent — something that S is not aware of cannot be effective in justification of a belief of his. This must not be misread as implying a coherence theory of justification; what is essential for such a theory is the like justificatory status of all the beliefs in a set. Thus Davidson (1986:310): 'What distinguishes a coherence theory is simply the claim that nothing can count as a reason for holding a belief except *another* belief (my italics). If one allows the possibility of *self*-justifying, basic beliefs though, then the doxastic and internalist conditions are seen to be compatible with foundationalism.

5 The difference between the original and the sustaining causes of a belief is crucial in the current debate between foundationalists and coherentists. The distinction is set out in Armstrong 1973:79–82 ('efficient' and 'sustaining' causes); and discussed in Haack (1988:ca 6). The exchange between Kvanvig and Lemke in *Analysis* (Kvanvig 1987) illustrates some of the difficulties of defining a causal requirement for inferential justification, without minimizing its intuitive plausibility.

6 A terminological note: *evidence* = df. empirical facts adduced in support of (the existence of) a further empirical fact; *grounds, reasons* = df. beliefs of S adduced in support of (the truth of) some further belief of S's. If we allow that the justification for Bp is the set J, then for S in his role of unreflective believer, it will consist of elements e_{1-n}, facts in an evidential relationship with the fact p. For S in his role of critical examiner of Bp, and for an observer, J will consist of elements r_{1-n}, beliefs of S's in a relationship of support with Bp. While evidence is essential to, it is not the only kind of justification for, an empirical belief, so that e_{1-n} will correspond to a subset of r_{1-n}.

7 See for instance Kornblith 1987:121, where 'background beliefs' of the agent concerning his eyesight are said to play a role in an empirical belief's 'justificatory status'. Kornblith thinks that justification is essentially a matter of originating beliefs, so that beliefs about S's eyesight are seen by Kornblith as part of the doxastic process by which S arrives at basic visual beliefs, that is, as originating beliefs.

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8

Not exactly making believe: an essay in the philosophy of literature

Jennifer Wilkinson
Department of Philosophy
University of South Africa

As humane beings who can feel pity and compassion for our fellows, we expect of all other so-called humane beings that should they in any way witness or come to hear of the terrible suffering of one or of a group of people, they should also be emotionally moved. We hear of the drought and starvation in Ethiopia and instead of sitting back and saying 'How terrible', some of us at least are motivated to action by the realization that the suffering of these people can be alleviated. We do whatever we can do to help. Alternatively, we might hear of a tragic event affecting a friend and are motivated in a similar way to assist in relieving her grief. This action or desire for action is apparently because of the pity and compassion that we feel for her.

Suppose, however, that we are now told that the event that has warranted the emotional reaction that was so appropriate in the first instance has not actually occurred and that in fact the whole thing has been a hoax designed to deceive. We would no longer be moved to pity or concern but may instead be angry because we have been deceived. That is something very different. We would no longer feel compassion because we would no longer *believe* that something dreadful

had happened to cause suffering. A change in belief seems to bring about a change in emotion.

If this is the case, then it seems that we can be moved by someone's plight only if we *believe* something dreadful to have happened to her. If we do not believe her to have suffered then we are not emotionally moved — at least we are not moved by the belief of her having suffered in any way that we know about. We grieve or are saddened by what we believe to be the case. We are horrified by the famine in Ethiopia or by the suicide of the desperate lovelorn friend. The way in which we might act on that feeling of pity or horror will depend very much on our situation and on the prevailing qualifying conditions on action such as opportunity, overriding reasons for acting in a different way or even on whether or not we draw the correct or appropriate inferences from the beliefs and desires that we have. These conditions notwithstanding, we will act or will desire to act in some way appropriate to alleviating or even preventing that suffering. If we are saddened by someone's plight then our compassion will motivate a desire to help. If we do not have this sort of desire then we may very well wonder if what we feel is real pity or real compassion.

There are numerous examples that one could give, but what does seem to be common to the examples that one could think of is that we seem to think it natural to be so moved and to act on the emotion that we experience — in whatever way that seems to be appropriate in the circumstances. In this way we seem to think it natural to feel concern and pity for the suffering of historical figures or for those who have suffered harm in the past even if we know that no action of ours could have prevented or alleviated that suffering. We believe them to have suffered, we pity them their plight and we probably wish that things could have turned out differently for them. Even if we ourselves are in no position to help there is nothing odd in wishing that someone else could have helped at the time, had he been in a position to have done so. Think no further than the 'if onlys' we feel about the Kennedy assassination — if only someone had observed Oswald acting strangely or if only Kennedy had cancelled his trip to Dallas, and so on and so on.

What does seem less intelligible, however, in fact it seems not only puzzling but actually paradoxical, is that there are situations where we can experience the same emotions as those discussed above and

yet without the belief requirement; also without any charge of irrationality. When we read *Anna Karenina* or watch *Othello* we feel compassion and pity for them as well, knowing all the time that the characters in these works do not exist nor have they ever existed, therefore, we cannot believe them ever to have suffered. We might even wish that Othello would come to realize Desdemona's faithfulness or that Anna would be less impulsive, knowing all the time that this can never be the case. When, finally, Othello smothers Desdemona and Anna jumps under the train, we grieve and might even weep but at the same time we have no real desire to save them. Instead, combined with our sadness may be a feeling of satisfaction because everything has turned out as it should. We might even sigh and say something like 'How beautiful' or 'Wasn't that marvellous!' Although we might smile at ourselves for reacting in what seems to be such a silly way, we might even actually weep. We look askance at those who admit to remaining completely unmoved. Although we may be overwhelmed by pity, we either laugh at the local yokel who jumps onto the stage to save Desdemona or we attempt to prevent him from interfering, furious that he is interrupting our pleasant experience!

Clearly this is a peculiar situation. If emotions are essentially tied to beliefs and if therefore we must believe someone to have suffered or something awful to have happened in order to be emotionally moved by their plight, and if that emotion is the motive for action or at least for the desire to act in ways appropriate to that emotion, how is it possible to be moved when we know not only that no one has actually suffered but that those whose fate has moved us do not exist and never have existed? Further, how is it possible, given that we can actually explain emotions with reference to the beliefs and desires that partially comprise them, and that we can predict and explain actions by these beliefs and desires and therefore by the emotions that they presuppose, that we can feel compassion and even weep real tears and yet at the same time have no real desire to act in any way appropriate to that grief? In other words, how is it possible for us to be emotionally moved by the fate of fictional characters? If we are so moved and if, at least in most cases, emotions can be said to motivate action, why is action either absent in the fictional situation or else inappropriate, as in the case of the local yokel?

There have been several attempts to explain this puzzle but I intend concentrating on only one of these. The reason for this is that this paticular theory has been widely embraced and endorsed by a variety of influential thinkers in an equally varied number of ways — from Coleridge and his willing suspension of disbelief to John Searle, Gareth Evans and David Lewis. It has however been presented in most detail by Kendall Walton in a series of articles (Walton 1974, 1976, 1978a, 1978b). The claim — and attractive and compelling it is on initial examination — is that what is going on in the fictional situation is a particular kind of pretending. The implication is that no beliefs are involved and that what we feel is not real emotion. At least one condition for emotion is absent. The expected consequences, therefore, cannot follow. Moreover, action is not only not required, it is not even considered. The move that is being made by proponents of this type of theory is that to claim that the belief requirement on emotion per se cannot be dropped and if there is no belief that would normally give the appropriate emotion, it must follow that there can be no emotion either. If there is no emotion it follows further that there is no reason to seek an explanation for the failure to act. We just do not act in ways that would be considered apt in the ordinary situation.

Now, pretending, as J. L. Austin has argued, is a way of not exactly doing things (Austin 1979). Pretending entails not doing or being what one is purporting to do or be. It seems that there are two main kinds of pretending, one of which involves deceit, the other not. Joe might, for example, pretend to do or be A while in actual fact he is not really doing or being A. He does this in order to get someone to believe (falsely) that A is the case. This will be for whatever purpose he may have — generally devious. This is the deceit kind of pretending. It is not, so it is claimed, the kind of pretending that we have in the fictional situation. At no time do we, as spectators, believe falsely that Desdemona is being murdered while she really isn't — in fact it is an important part of the puzzle that we should know that no murder is being committed. The *oddity* lies in the fact that it is in spite of what we know that we can respond in the way that we do. It is not the case that the actors — or Shakespeare — are trying to deceive anyone even though it is in place to talk of theatrical illusion. What is happening here, or so it is claimed, is that the pretending is of a different kind. We, as spectators, together with the actors and the author, are pretending

in a different kind of way. We are playing a game of make-believe in which we are supposing what it would be like if these events were actually taking place. There is no deceit — we are all knowingly part of a game and as willing participants we pretend that things are this way although we know that they really are not. Because we know that this is not the way things really are, we know that no one need suffer the consequences of a real tragic situation. We are all just playing a game which has its own rules of which we are at least implicitly aware.

I want to argue that persuasive and pervading as this account of the fictional situation and the spectator's role in it can be shown to be, it commits the holder of this view to certain logically unacceptable consequences. It therefore fails to answer the questions posed.

The argument that the fictional situation, that is the situation in which we read, view or otherwise come to experience a work of fiction, is none other than a more sophisticated version of the games of make-believe that children play, is developed most extensively by Kendall Walton in the articles already mentioned. First, Walton argues that make-believe worlds — that is the worlds we posit and become part of when we agree to adopt the rules pertaining to what it would be like if so and so were the case although we know that it really isn't — are not figments of the imagination. Make-believe worlds have a strong tie to fact in that within a particular make-believe world we can discover what is make-believedly the case. A children's game of mud-pies illustrates his point. The children agree that blobs of mud are make-believedly pies, that a designated area is make-believedly the oven and that blobs of mud with pebbles are make-believedly raisin pies. If the children put three blobs of mud, one containing pebbles, into the make-believe oven then it is make-believedly true (but not literally true) that make-believedly there are two make-believe plain pies and one make-believe raisin pie in the make-believe oven. It is make-believedly false that there are three plain pies or three raisin pies in the oven.

Walton extrapolates from this kind of make-believe game to fiction. If we are knowing participants in this conniving situation of make-believe, as he claims we are, then we are in a position to explain our original puzzle, he maintains. At no time does the author make literal truth claims which would entail believing on the part of the spectator, with the resulting appropriate action — or real emotion. Nor does the

author pretend to make truth claims — he makes claims that are true within the particular game of make-believe of which we are knowingly a part. Just as it is make-believedly true that there are two plain pies and one raisin pie in the oven, so it is make-believedly true that Othello murders Desdemona. Only taken as literal truth would it be false to say that Othello murders Desdemona. Within each fictional world certain events do or do not take place — make-believe depends on positing a world that is not the actual world, and as knowing participants in this game we all understand it not to be the real world. We make-believedly know that Desdemona is being murdered because we *really* know that make-believedly Desdemona is being murdered.

So we do not really pity Anna or Desdemona — real pity depends on beliefs about actual suffering and carries with it the desire to act on that pity. Besides, if we were really emotionally moved in that way how could we possibly find the experience beautiful or sublime at the same time as we grieve for and pity the poor victims because of their awful fate? This would seem to be, if not impossible, then certainly unlikely for the sort of genuinely humane beings that we fancy ourselves to be. However, it is not just because we do not really pity Desdemona that we do not act or do not even have the desire to act on that pity. We know that Desdemona's world is different from ours, that she is part of a make-believe world. Even if (odd as this may sound) we wanted to save her we could not — not because of the constraints on action as such, namely lack of opportunity, lack of intention or overriding reasons for acting differently. The real reason we cannot save Desdemona is because there is a logical barrier between her and us. We might jump onto the stage like the local yokel and we might intervene but even if we did we would not be intervening between Othello and Desdemona, only between two actors each playing a role. We can stop the performance but we cannot rescue Desdemona from her awful plight. Desdemona can only be saved by someone within the make-believe world of which she is a part although of course Desdemona cannot be saved at all — not if the play we are watching is Shakespeare's *Othello*.

According to Walton, then, what we feel is not real pity which must carry with it all of its consequences, but quasi or make-believe pity. Real pity results from the *belief* that someone really is or really has suffered, quasi pity results from the belief that make-believedly some-

one is suffering. Our satisfaction when the curtain falls is because we really want it to be make-believedly the case that Desdemona suffers and dies. Should the producer of a particular production change this in any way then our reaction would probably be one of indignation — Desdemona *must* die.

This view is compelling. After all, children's stories are generally prefaced with 'once upon a time' indicating that we are being invited to play along. The theatre also provides us with plenty of clues such as the raised stage and the proscenium arch to give us reason to treat this context as different from one in which the events actually occur. There is also a widely held theory that the arts, specifically the visual arts, are a form of play. However, there are sufficient problems with the make-believe theory to give more than adequate grounds for its rejection. I shall discuss these with the intention of discrediting the theory but I shall not attempt to replace it with the kind of explanation that I take to be acceptable. My aim in this article is therefore modest.

1   Part of the problem in trying to explain how it is that we can be emotionally moved by the fate of fictional characters is that the emotions in the two cases seem to be so alike. Emotions, it can be argued, can be distinguished on the basis of their phenomenological characteristics. Grief *feels* different from despair and one of the reasons we can give for claiming that we are experiencing a particular emotion is that it feels a specific way to the subject. Pity for Desdemona feels very much like pity for the poor friend whose husband is unjustifiably jealous of her. We can make no distinction between the two on the basis of what it is like from the first person point of view. Nor, it can be argued further, can we be wrong about the way things seem to us. Therefore, from the subjective perspective the two experiences are of the same kind. Thus the problem is that we can be really emotionally moved in spite of the fact that the beliefs and desires that are normally required for a particular emotion to be experienced are missing. We cannot, therefore, explain how this is possible on the basis that what we feel in the fictional case is not real pity — what we want to know is how we can feel what seems to be real pity when the conditions for pity — or at least one of them — are absent.

2   If we cannot feel real emotions with respect to fictional persons because it is logically impossible for us to influence their worlds, it

must be logically impossible for us to feel real emotions with respect to totally past persons since it is also logically impossible to influence the past. But we need only think of an example to show that this is not the case. If Mary's long-dead grandmother was raped as a young girl, it is quite in order for her to pity her grandmother's plight although there is nothing that she can do about it. She might wish that the dreadful event had not taken place or that the rapist had been caught but she can have no influence on the event itself.

3   The analogy with the mud-pie game is not just incomplete as all analogies must be, it actually breaks down in certain important ways:

(a)   In the mud-pie game we pretend that certain things are what they are not. Blobs of mud are pies and pebbles are raisins. Gareth Evans calls this an *existentially conservative* game (Evans 1982). We pretend that something which is there is other than it is. There are, however, other kinds of make-believe games. In the case of two boys making believe that they are cowboys, one may suddenly shout 'Watch out, there's an Indian!' although there is actually nothing there. This, says Evans, is an *existentially creative* game of make-believe where we pretend that there is something there when in fact there isn't. Fiction, if it is a game at all, must be a game of this sort.[1] This does not necessarily imply that Walton would object to saying that the make-believe involved in fiction must be existentially creative. What it does mean, however, is that Walton's central example which he uses as an analogy cannot sustain the weight that he places upon it. Actually I am not even sure that it can be a game of this sort. In an existentially creative game of make-believe we can have the possibility of someone make-believedly thinking or referring to anything, but in the mud-pie game all referential thought within the game involves reference to things outside the game. For example, when make-believedly the speaker is referring to a pie he is *actually* referring to a blob of mud.

(b)   It can be argued that the participants in the game of mud-pies make assertions within the game itself and only within the game itself. They may say something like, 'The queen won't eat burnt pies'. It is claimed that there is nothing that they can say beyond the game. Just how far this point can be pushed is debatable, however. It is possible for a participant in a game to compare a game-event quite directly with an event outside the game, that is with a real event. It is quite

in order for one of the participants to ask, 'Aren't these pies much better than the ones we had for lunch yesterday?' The game of make-believe might also be used by one of the participants to make a point about the real world. A parent might, for example, join in the game to teach his child about sharing or co-operation. The thrust of the point being made, however, is that in fiction we have something very different from a game of make-believe. When in Act V Scene II Othello says, 'For nought did I in hate, but all in honour,' his claim has reference beyond the events depicted in the play to what Shakespeare himself believed about honour in general. The comment is not just about Othello's own personal notion of honour — if indeed it could be possible for Othello as a fictional character to have a notion of honour at all and further, even if that were possible, for that notion to be divorced from the general themes of the play. It is an essential fact about fiction that the author does not just tell a story. The story is in fact the means whereby he actually does something else. *Othello* is not only about what happens to the characters in the play although it is about that as well. It is, more importantly, about themes such as jealousy as a human failing and its tragically destructive power when it becomes an all-absorbing passion. A game of make-believe can be about ideas or themes that go beyond the game itself but the point is that it need not be and in fact it generally is not.

(c)   Events in a game of mud-pies develop or change in such a way that things could have been otherwise. A host of possibilities are open to the children when the make-believe pies come out of the make-believe oven — they may make-believedly eat them, make-believedly put them on the make-believe shelf or make-believedly give them away. But whatever happens in a particular work of fiction, once it has been completed, is necessary if that piece of fiction is to be that piece of fiction and no other. Othello *must* believe Desdemona to be unfaithful, Desdemona *must* be faithful and events must occur as they do. This is not to say that the text can not be interpreted in different ways and that different actors are bound by one way of presenting the part that they are acting. What it does mean, however, is that there can be only one series of events and that these must occur as presented by Shakespeare — there is room for no other possibility.

4   Putting fiction under the general heading of pretending as make-believe is too hasty. Even if fiction can be shown to be a form of

pretending, and obviously I do not think that it can, then it need not be this kind of pretending, that is, it need not be make-believe. Closer examination shows that it is not. Barrett, in criticizing Austin's article 'Pretending', points to at least three kinds of pretending that are relevant to my argument (Barrett 1969). Austin's claim that pretending entails not really doing and being, and its converse, really doing and being entails not pretending, does not hold in all cases. This can be illustrated by using Austin's own example: Someone is pretending to clean the windows while actually noting the valuables in the room. The following variations can be considered:

(a) Someone merely performs cleaninglike actions. He pretends to clean but does not actually clean. The above entailment holds.
(b) Someone is doing (a) but is really noting the valuables in the room. The entailment still holds.
(c) Someone actually cleans the windows while noting the valuables. This is more problematic.

In the mud-pie game we have a situation of type (a). What is happening is that someone pretends to make pies but really doesn't. (He really makes mud-pies.) But is this so in the fictional case? What is it that the author pretends to do and doesn't? Maybe at first glance he is pretending to assert certain things but really isn't. He is just pretending to assert that there is a certain woman named Anna Karenina who lives in a particular place, and so on and so on. If we look no further at what pretending can involve then it seems plausible that all participants in the fictional situation are just pretending that the world is other than it really is.

However, a closer look at (c) shows that if any of Barrett's examples fits then this must be it. If this is the case then (a) cannot give us what we require and therefore fiction cannot be make-believe. The author tells a story while *really* saying something about his view of human nature or of some other aspect of the world. So far so good. Both the author and the would-be thief are doing one thing by doing something else. But the thief *really* cleans the windows and the author *really* tells a story. They are not pretending to do this. In the case of the would-be thief, however, he is cleaning the windows *in order to conceal his real purpose* which is to note the valuables in the room. The author, however, is at no time involved in concealing one activity by means of performing another. His telling a story is the means he uses

in order to suggest, hint at or in some other way say something about what he thinks of a particular aspect of reality.[2]

The important points here are that, first, the author is not pretending to do anything and, second, he *really* hints at or suggests something by really telling a story. In other words he really does A by really doing B. To claim that he is part of a game of make-believe is a serious misconstrual of his role. It is to claim that he pretends to do A by really doing B.

5   There is a further argument that can be used against the make-believe account of fiction. If, in the fictional situation, we posit worlds that are other than the real world, then maybe the way to explain this game of make-believe and to give it some philosophical respectability is via the notion of possible worlds. This view has not been fully developed as a theory. Given how possible worlds are explained, however, and given the requirements of the make-believe account of fiction, the proposal to see the latter in terms of the former is, at the least, attractive. I would not like to suggest that any of the particular philosophers whose ideas I discuss would adopt this view were he to give his full attention to the problem that is bothering me. What I am suggesting is that given the similarities between possible worlds and fiction as make-believe, such a view is attractive. Further, if an explanation of the paradoxical nature of the fictional situation were to be accommodated within such a particular overall view, this is what it would be most likely to look like. I therefore do not accuse anyone whose work I discuss in this connection (Evans 1982, Kripke 1980, Lewis 1973) of holding the position that I take to be a general consequence of certain other claims. Flint Schier (University of the Witwatersrand, 1985), in conversation, has suggested that possibly there are worlds that are fictions, but this is a different matter entirely. However, it is interesting to see how far we can get with what a possible worlds account of fiction would look like. There are various versions of just what possible worlds are. David Lewis (1973, 1978) gives a counterfactual account — a counterfactual being a supposition contrary to fact, for example, if kangaroos had no tails they would fall over. He claims that it is incontrovertibly true that things might have been other than they are — for every logical possibility there is a possible world. The actual world that we happen to inhabit is just one of an infinite number of possibilities. For Lewis, possible worlds are

just as real as our actual world and it is no more necessary that we should inhabit this one than that we should inhabit any other. The use of the notion of possible worlds has been mainly to solve problems of reference and causation, among other things. Unlike Kripke who uses the notion without any ontological commitment, Lewis is committed to the real nature of possible worlds and of the entities they contain.

Although it is difficult to piece together a proper argument for the claim that fictions are possible worlds, there are at least two reasons that can be given for this view. First, reasoning about fictions seems to be very much like reasoning about counterfactuals. We make contrary-to-fact suppositions but within that counterfactual situation we make use of fictional premises. So we suppose, contrary to fact, that there is a man Othello who comes to believe that his wife is being unfaithful, and we make comments like 'Othello's jealousy is driving him insane'. We go on to suppose that if Othello would only come to his senses, then he will not murder Desdemona. Second, following Lewis's account of the metaphysical nature of possible worlds, we can suppose them — and for each supposition there is a real possible world — but we cannot know what they are like because there can be no causation across worlds. This would explain why we cannot interfere with Desdemona's fate. Desdemona is logically unavailable to the causal laws operating in our world although, of course, she is subject to the causal laws operating within her world. (There can, of course, be possible worlds without any causal laws because the laws of physics are not necessary. This is, however, a different issue.) Now, if there is no causation across worlds, then the fate of fictional characters cannot cause us to be moved. Hence we cannot be *really* moved and the explanation of our original problem could be consistent with that given by Walton *et al.* It would seem quite possible that we are merely *pretending* to feel pity for Othello, Desdemona, Anna and all of the other fictional characters who seem to have a claim on our emotions. Evans goes as far as endorsing the view that there can be a counterfactual explanation of fiction. He argues that we formulate the rules in terms of these counterfactuals. To return to Walton's mud-pie example, if the objects had been real pies and if this had been a hot oven, then they would have been burnt pies. Evans, however, sees a problem in the counterfactual account of possible worlds when we try to explain

fictions, because in the make-believe situation all of the counterfactuals have impossible antecedents (Evans 1982). There simply are no possible worlds in which these mud-pies are pies. He suggests that it might be necessary to discard the counterfactual account of possible worlds on the basis of the fictional situation not being able to be accommodated within such a theory. Except for one point, I shall not examine Evans's account any further as the particular problem with which he is concerned is reference in fiction, a related but not identical issue. Although Evans endorses Walton's view of make-believe, he shifts the operator so that instead of getting 'S's utterance is true iff it is make-believe the case that p', we now get 'Make-believedly S's utterance is true iff it is make-believedly the case that p'. What happens here is that the initial pretence is that fiction gives us information about things. We know, however, that further make-believe truths are generated by the initial pretence and can be reported in the same way — the members of the audience do what they do within the scope of the pretence, they do not *pretend* to do anything. We pretend that there are people like Othello and Desdemona and within the scope of that pretence we pity them, admire them and so on. We *actually* cry or laugh or feel sad.

However, there is a problem with a possible worlds account of fiction — whichever way you look at it. Possible worlds are maximally comprehensive in that they include everything that is logically possible. They exclude all logical impossibilities. Fictional worlds, on the other hand, it can be argued, are essentially incomprehensive. The implication of this is that they can include logical infringements. For example, they do not obey the law of excluded middle.

Let me try to illustrate what I mean with an example:
(a) A either does or does not have a mole on his back.
(b) A has a mole on his back.
(c) A does not have a mole on his back.

No possible world could require (a) without also requiring (b) or (c). The law of excluded middle requires that everything is either p or not p. Any possible world which requires a state of affairs p v q therefore also requires the state that p or the state that q, that is p v q requires either that p be true or that q be true. We know that (a) must be true of Othello, that is we know that either Othello does or does not have a mole on his back. But the fictional world containing Othello, while

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requiring (a), does not require either (b) or (c) and this is because fiction is essentially incomprehensive — neither the presence nor the absence of a mole is in any way part of what is presented to us about Othello. And yet we could not have the situation in which it is not the case that either Othello does or does not have a mole on his back. In other words, a fictional world, because of its non-comprehensiveness, yields the result that such a world may require p v q without requiring either p or q. This is a logical impossibility.

The conclusion we must reach is that, unlike possible worlds, fictions are not complete and because of this incompleteness they are able to endorse a logical impossibility that no possible world can endorse. However, it can be argued that if make-believe worlds are possible worlds and if it can further be argued that fictions are make-believe worlds, then fictions must be possible worlds. This is what I have just refuted. Fictions cannot be possible worlds because all possible worlds must obey the laws of logic and this is precisely what fictions do not or, at least, need not do.

I have made no attempt to present what I take to be an acceptable solution of the original puzzle. My aim has remained less ambitious. I have tried to show that a popular and widely endorsed and discussed account of how it is possible for us to be emotionally moved by the fate of fictional characters is unviable and I believe I have managed to do so in new ways. The evidence shows that the fictional situation is not the same as the make-believe one. I hope that I have managed to remove the temptation that most of our ordinary talk about fiction endorses. The make-believe theory has had a long history. If it can be laid to rest, the chances of a more fruitful explanation of what still remains an apparent paradox will be more likely to be forthcoming.

Notes

1 Wolterstorff argues that at no time is anything or anyone created in the sense that they must have some kind of existence as a result. He claims that what the author or the artist does is present a world for us to think about, look at, muse over, etc.
2 The would-be thief is also cleaning the windows in order to note the valuables in the room but he is doing this so that he can deceive anyone who watches him about the nature of his real purpose. There is a difference.

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9

A rethink in political philosophy

Zach Postma-de Beer
Department of Philosophy
University of South Africa

It has been suggested that there are new problems in politics and that modern political philosophy has thus far failed to address them. Such a view may, at first glance, appear to be somewhat presumptuous. Politics is so much a part of daily life and so many great thinkers have exercised themselves with its problems, how can there really be anything radically new to say about it?

In the first place such an objection overlooks the history of political theory. If one takes the philosophical career of any important concept, such as sovereignty, it becomes obvious that philosophical changes have either anticipated or followed change in political practice. There is very little resemblance between the Persian notion of sovereignty and that of the United States. The very notion of kingship has undergone radical transformations. The social conditions — and I am using the term to include all human interaction, economic, educational, religious — of human life are seldom static.

In addition to the above point it is important to add that change in political practice can be misunderstood and that such misunderstanding can literally be fatal to a society:

At every time and place, man is faced with the need to order his social existence in a way that allows him to survive in the world. But organic survival is not enough. In the construction of political order, man does not seek merely to erect a shelter against the pressures of a potentially threatening environment. He seeks to attune his existence to what he understands to be the true order of his being (Levy 1987:173).

Thus the political theorist must not merely consider material needs but must reflect on the nature of man, what the meaning of life is, in short, study philosophical anthropology.

What real changes have occurred in this century that may or should force a philosophical rethink about politics? I think that any diligent newspaper reader — who has some knowledge of history as well — will be able to present a frightening list of changes in our physical relations with our planet.

I think few people would quarrel with my first choice, the arrival of the nuclear age. Do classical approaches to such matters as warfare and economics have the intellectual resources to give advice on the use of nuclear weapons, nuclear power-stations, the disposal of nuclear waste? I rather think not. Nuclear waste leads naturally to another problem, or set of interrelated problems: the issue of the ecology.

Can the prescriptions of certain religions that one should have as many children as possible still be regarded as responsible? Overpopulation has brought in its trail pollution, the greenhouse effect, deforestation, desertification, growing imbalances of wealth, education and medical care, and corruption on a massive scale.

I am perfectly aware of the fact that there have always been wars, hunger and miseries of all kinds, but the scale and possible consequences have changed. Human agency alone, and not a stray asteroid, now possesses the power to wipe out almost every living being on earth. In these circumstances traditional philosophical theories of power simply begin to lose their significance.

To each of the qualitatively new or different problems mentioned above several more could easily be added. These problems are ones at the material level, but they have their effects on the conceptual level, the level of reflection. What I would now like to do is to take a few

modern philosophers — almost at random — who have begun to show an awareness of the philosophical vacuum which seems to exist in dealing with these issues. I shall pick up some of their concerns and try to indicate in which direction they appear to be moving.

In his book *Rethinking modern political theory* (1985) John Dunn launches a multi-pronged attack on political theory in general. He spares neither the Western tradition — although he finds consider-able merit in John Locke's work — nor the Marxist.

A few strands in his objections:

- He objects to what he calls the absurd overemphasis in political philosophy, ever since the constitution of political economy and the formation in reaction to it of socialist theories, upon distribu-tive justice. He regards this as a serious misjudgment of political reality and dangers. Of more importance is productive ability and arranging for the curbing of the power of politicians to do mischief to the people they rule. 'It is not merely life chances but also death chances with which political theory must finally make its reck-oning' (Dunn 1985:186–187).
- People quite rightly recoil from the sacralization of political pow-er and authority but a naive eudaemonism is not the way to achieve politically satisfactory arrangements. Modern state pow-ers have not diminished; the causal factors that set them in place still exist.
- The continued theoretical emphasis upon national sovereignty is an anachronism at a time when a man-made Armageddon is a real possibility.
- Modern political theorists tend to see contemporary state powers 'both capitalist and socialist ... predominantly in terms of an ex-culpatory or accusatory functionalism, as docile instruments for the reproduction of particular modes of production' (Dunn 1985:187). The rivalry between the two rival systems is thus un-satisfactorily seen in these terms and other potent factors in this rivalry are ignored.

There is much more along these lines but these represent the kinds of concerns Dunn has. It is clear that he has a very hard-headed view of the dangers as well as the advantages inherent in any political as-sociation.

Paradoxically, he reaches back in history to begin to rethink modern political thinking. On page 189, he reminds the reader that Hobbes can be represented as a theorist whose philosophy of society hinged 'more on the moral and practical benefits of rationally trustworthy cooperation than on the maximal satisfaction of intractable egoistic desires'. He says we must remember the ties between human agency and responsibility and acknowledge that agency is a causal category. Our limits as political beings are not infinite, and history is where we should search for those limits.

His chief recommendation stems from Locke and in modern terms it boils down to a theory of prudence. Political prudence is not a purely ideal value; it necessarily embodies a conception of how the world could, in historical reality and

> ... through real human agency, be changed to meet its requirements. A cosmopolitan and ethically alert conception of what it is for human beings, individually, collectively and as a species, to be prudent in the world which we now inhabit would have to take the measure of very much which political philosophers today make little (if any) effort to consider. Yet it is only with such a conception at its heart that a modern political philosophy could hope to be altogether serious (Dunn 1985:11).

Perhaps his observations about Locke's notion of trust — that it must be earned — and that we may never abandon 'responsibility for the exercise of power to ruler or government or party' (p. 4) are notions that we could re-examine in the light of our experiences in the 20th century.

Two articles appeared almost simultaneously in 1988, one by Isiah Berlin, the other by Joseph Epstein. In different ways they deal with an experience they both had: they became aware at a more or less advanced age that they had to rethink large areas of their political theories. Berlin's article was originally delivered at the award ceremony in Turin for the first Senator Giovanni Agnelli International Prize, and later published under the title 'On the pursuit of the ideal', in *The New York Review*, 17 March 1988. Epstein's, under the title 'A farewell to Utopia', appeared in *Encounter*, April 1988. They were aimed at a youthful audience and the authors spelt out how they had been led to change their minds about a virtuous or a Utopian world. Epstein

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was, in his own words, a 'down-the-line, pull-the-lever man of the left'. He no longer is, having substituted the verities of the left for the pleasure of being able to look at facts as he finds them. His arguments do not concern us here — they are well-covered by Berlin — but it is of interest that he rejects the idea of a perfect world completely and seems to adopt the Popperian view that one should deal with problems before us — no Utopian social engineering.

Let me give a brief exposition of Berlin's views, with which I associate myself completely.

He says that as a student he accepted the Platonic ideals that all genuine questions must have one true answer, all others being errors; secondly, that there must be a dependable path towards the discovery of these truths; and thirdly, that the true answers, when found, must necessarily be compatible with one another and form a single whole. In the case of morals and so also of political philosophy, we should, in principle, be able to conceive what the perfect life — state — must be, founded as it would be on a correct understanding of the rules that governed the universe.

What happened to shake this rather cosy view was his introduction to the works of Machiavelli. Put briefly, what shook him was Machiavelli's calm acceptance that the pagan values of pre-Christian Rome and the values of the Christian world were incompatible and that he could see no overarching principle which could unify them. You simply had to choose between the virtues of strength and power or those of humility and love. Machiavelli's own choice was clear.

The ancient ideal of the *philosophia perennis* was simply rejected by such a view. There can be conflict between *true* ends: therefore it does not make sense to ask for the central problems of life's true answers. We shall see that Ricoeur holds a similar view. (I may mention in an aside that one or two colleagues with whom I have discussed this viewpoint have tended to react with something like horror.)

For political philosophy, one of the implications is that each social world must be understood — the stress is on the word 'understood' — not necessarily evaluated in its own terms.

Berlin argues that he is not espousing relativism by holding this view. Here the argument becomes really interesting. Members of one culture

can, by imaginative insight, *entrare* (this is Vico's term) the values and ideals, the forms of life of another culture. Even having done so and understanding them, they may be found unacceptable. What modern feminist would be prepared to accept the powers of the Roman *pater familias?* Relativism would consist in simple disagreement: 'I like coffee, you prefer tea and there's an end to it.'

Berlin's preferred term is pluralism for that which he now accepts as desirable in a post-*philosophia perennis* world; I may add, also a post-Utopian world. All grand exportable theories, the result of brainstorm or revolution, come under the axe — or would guillotine be a more sensible term?

Pluralism then accepts that there are many different ends that men may seek and still be fully rational, fully men, capable of understanding each other and sympathizing and deriving light from each other, as we derive it from reading Plato, Shakespeare or studying Samurai society in Japan — worlds remote from our own.

We have recognized some values and behaviours in common with other societies — what Spengler's typology amounts to — otherwise there would be complete and permanent mutual incomprehension (as experienced so often between members of different political parties in South Africa). Intercommunication between cultures is possible because what makes men human is common to them and acts as a bridge. We can distinguish between *Homo sapiens* and the species *Canis lupus.*

To distinguish further between relativism and pluralism, Berlin goes on to state that there is a world of objective values, that is to say, ends that men pursue for their own sakes, to which other things are means. I might not like ancient Rome but I can see what it could have been like to have served in the Roman army. We too have an army and I have served in it. Boundaries are not infinite: military discipline would be understood by both a modern sergeant and a centurion.

If a desired end falls beyond the human horizon then true incomprehension may result and the people on the opposite sides of the argument fail to recognize each other as human. Berlin uses the following example: 'If I find men who worship trees, not because they are symbols of fertility or because they are divine, with a mysterious life and powers of their own, or because this grove is sacred to Athena — but

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only because they are made of wood; and if I ask them why they worship wood, they say, "Because it is wood" and give no other answer, then I do not know what they mean. If they are human, they are not beings with whom I can communicate' (p. 15). I suspect that the success of much propaganda dehumanizing the one or other group is due to that group's being stripped of all identity other than happening to belong to such and such a group. The atrocities committed in war, without any seeming emotion, could be explained in some way as this.

He goes on to repeat the earlier point that values can clash. They can clash within an individual and more so between different political societies. Which takes precedence: rigorous justice or mercy and compassion? Clearly a painful decision, or war, may be the result of such a clash.

From the points raised above, Berlin concludes that 'the notion of the perfect whole, the ultimate solution, in which all good things co-exist, seems to me not only unattainable — that is a truism — but conceptually incoherent ... Some among the Great Goods cannot live together' (p. 15). Every choice may lead to an irreparable loss. Only the fanatic or someone subjected to a code that knows no deviation is spared this experience. Thus, then, the theoretical objection to the notion of the perfect state as the proper goal of our theoretical endeavours. Political thinking for the future will have to absorb this objection and people will have to stop taking works such as *The Republic* and *Das Kapital* literally, as prescriptions for an earthly paradise.

In his concluding comments Berlin addresses himself to the question 'What is to be done?' How are we to decide on how to choose between different possibilities? There can be no clear reply given the route he has taken for future political philosophizing. He admits, too, that set against the grand, exciting theories of the past, what he proposes may sound dull and pedestrian. But what he says carries the ring of passion.

Collisions may be unavoidable but they can be softened. Claims can be balanced, compromises reached. Again one feels the influence of Popper: feed the hungry, clothe the naked — establish priorities but never absolutes. At all costs avoid extremes of public suffering. Do not push people into untenable positions of intolerable choices. That is the way to bloodshed and revolution. Decency should be a public

aim, so should humility, at least a modicum of it. The alternative to these modest aims to him can only lead to the gas-chamber, the gulag. He says that Kant, the most rigorous of moralists, once in a moment of illumination admitted: 'Out of the crooked timber of humanity no straight thing was ever made.'

Collisions there will and must be but an uneasy equilibrium can be strived for. One must recognise that such an equilibrium will always be threatened and in need of repair — an echo here of Pericles' dictum about freedom.

The next thinker I am dealing with was quoted at the beginning of this chapter, David J. Levy. In chapter eight of his book *Political order*, he deals with *his* version of 'the new problem of politics'. There are two aspects of the problem and these are closely related to one another:

- The first aspect he identifies has to do with the effect of technology upon the thinking patterns of modern man. The idea has taken root that technology is without limits and that all problems can eventually be solved by the miracles of modern science. Human limitations, recognized in agrarian societies with their attunement to the seasons, are now seen as infinitely extendable.
- The second, attributable at least in part to the first, is the decay in the social bond. The individual, increasingly isolated in his work and other relations from other people, has become increasingly de-institutionalized. That is, he is no longer informed about the human nature of the institutions that keep society going, and does not know what the irreducible needs of a civil society are.

I shall now trace his argument and conclude with suggestions he makes for possible new moves to be made by political philosophers in the light of these problems.

Levy is extremely concerned that people should realize just how fragile an achievement political order really is. Man lacks the instinctual guidance for behaviour possessed by animals and must substitute cultural order for the organic order enjoyed by the animal kingdom. Lacking the ontological security of an organic order the political order has to be kept in being by human care — the continuity of institutions sustained by education and an awareness of their roots. The success of these institutions is a contingent one. There are no natural or

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historical imperatives that can act as guarantees in the manner preached by fundamentalists or totalitarian ideologues.

Political thought and political practice are two aspects of a single project: the continuing attempt to imagine and realize the best possible form of life for human society. This was what was referred to in the passage quoted earlier.

Now in former times people reflecting on the best possible organization of their society had to recognize certain ironclad limitations on what they could expect. The already mentioned agrarian society's dependence on the vagaries of climate and the succession of seasons, each demanding a specific response in terms of tasks such as planting, irrigating, reaping, threshing, storing, gave a rhythm to their lives as well as an awareness of mutual dependence. Modern technology has broken both rhythm and direct awareness of dependence. The supermarket can supply almost any foodstuff at any time of the year — as long as it is paid for. As a result, what Levy calls the 'technological view of politics' has developed. Not only has this brought about an ever-rising level of consumer expectations but the physical effects of technology on the environment and the potential effects of modern warfare have put the survival of the planet at risk. Underlying this, or rather accompanying it, is the erosion of the social-psychological foundation of the stability of Western institutions. At present the problem is chiefly confined to the West, but the effects are felt in, for example, the exploitation of the resources of Third World countries.

The restraining power of social institutions, that is to say their ability to act as a check upon human demands, has been weakened. A person with a credit card feels entitled to access to all kinds of goods and services to which access was formerly unthinkable. The world order is no longer seen as beyond wilful control; the immediate environment appears to have been conquered. This new 'awareness' makes it extremely difficult to stop people from wilfully, if ignorantly, damaging the environment. Many examples come to mind: the destruction of rain forests to provide plywood to Japan, the use of 'recreational vehicles' on sand dunes in Namibia, with potentially lethal effects in the long run. A new ethical awareness in both practice and theory has become necessary to cope with these altered circumstances. Thus far political philosophy has merely been marking time.

It should be the role of political order, as embodied in authoritative institutions, to ensure that the increased power of technology works towards the survival rather than the destruction of the group by regulating the uses to which tools and weapons are put. But, as Levy puts it, 'the new problem of politics presents itself in the lack of balance between the unrestrained innovatory dynamic of modern technology and the declining ability of institutions to order the conduct of life' (p. 177). One of the reasons for this is that the 'modern de-institutionalised individual, caught up in the pursuit of his own short-term private satisfactions, is no substitute for the collective wisdom that finds expression in the institutions of moral and political life and in the sense of meaning they traditionally embody' (pp. 177–178). Levy here echoes Ricoeur's lament that there has been a loss of concern for the wider public good, a so-called 'apolitical' attitude, a total privatization of ends and means. He observes 'that the great number of our contemporaries feel themselves first to be consumers, then workers, and only then citizens — is this not the most telling sign, the most striking caricature of a great project gone astray?' (Ricoeur 1987:43–44). As Plato and Aristotle knew, the existence of any kind of particular policy depended directly on the type of adult who is available to maintain it. Modern political structures should re-accommodate 'informed', participating adults.

However, there has been a shift in political priorities. The State is no longer seen, in for example the work of Habermas, as the *necessary* complement to human insufficiencies (which includes inter alia as a *sine qua non* the function of defence), but it is judged in terms of its ability to satisfy the material aspirations of its inhabitants — inhabitants, not citizens. Legitimacy then becomes a matter of satisfying material expectations only. Interestingly a revolt against the materialism implicit here has started in the wealthy nations of the West. The first rather idiosyncratic manifestation was probably the hippy movement of the sixties. More recently, more serious, is the 'Green' movement in Western Europe. These are people who want a system more responsive to the balance required between the demands of man and the possibilities of nature.

But Levy remarks somewhat bitterly that recent political practice has created an electorate which sees the disciplines of political existence not as an integral aspect of man's earthly vocation but as external

and barely tolerable curbs upon the aspirations of the authentic de-institutionalized self. Thinkers such as Habermas have given intellectual weight to this aberrant view.

An earlier point bears repetition: the fact that human desires lack an inherent instinctual restraint (ask any psychiatrist) is the source of the institutional imperative with its restraining authority. As Levy puts it, 'human identity is not a given fact but a lifelong quest that achieves itself in culturally specific forms' (p. 191).

So much for the problem. What solutions does he propose? I am afraid that here Levy offers little of comfort for the political philosopher as theorist. His suggestions have the air of practical political programmes.

First of all he criticizes the gap that has opened up between the public sphere, dominated by so-called experts such as know-all ministers of finance, and the private universe of a population that is alienated from the process of decision-taking that affects its life. He calls for 'participation' in public life by as many people as possible. Politics should be seen as a common human vocation. One should not be an 'expert' to participate in politics, merely be of sound mind.

Next he argues that political judgement is not a technique that can be taught but a practice which can only be perfected by experience — a further reason for broad participation. People should not feel cut off from the political process, the sphere of judgement. Politics must not be something that happens to them, but rather something they help to make happen. This is all very edifying, but in view of his own analysis of modern society it is difficult to see how this is to be implemented. In the dangerous world of technology, prudence in political decision-making is obviously of great importance, and Levy acknowledges the point. But here, too, he has to admit that he cannot see how even an informed citizenry could be expected to make the correct decisions in the complex world of multiple choices.

His only sop to the theoretician, and a rather desperate one at that, is the following: 'in a world in which the conditions of life no longer produce a spontaneous acceptance of the political imperatives of human existence and fulfilment, it may be that only theoretical analysis can provide any sort of replacement at all' (p. 195). But he rather undercuts this view with the observation directly thereafter that

theoretical arguments 'will only exert any influence at all to the extent that they find a place in the general rhetoric of political persuasion. And that is the task, not of the theorist, but of the statesman.'

Now a brief recapitulation. One point emerges very clearly, and that is the total eclipse of 'grand theory' in the thinking of the few writers so far mentioned. One such attempt was made by Rawls in his work *A theory of justice* (1972) which excited much comment but does not seem to have had the practical effect on political practice that the thinkers I have quoted seem to want to flow from political philosophy.

Because of their perception of the political impotence of modern political thinking they aim at exactly that: having an effect, and urgently too. That does not imply a return to the dogmatic certainties of 'grand theory'. Not one, as far as I can make out, has any time for an uncritical acceptance of any of the major traditions which have dominated political thinking in the West. Dunn may look with favour upon the work of Locke; one cannot after all neglect the ways by which the present impasse was reached. The old dictum that those who ignore history are doomed to repeat it is as true in philosophy as anywhere else. So it is that none of these writers can be called a platonist, a marxist, a traditional liberal, utilitarian, or rationalist of the Enlightenment.

I would like to quote just one comment made by Levy which bears on the relevance of liberalism:

> The liberal order, and the Kantian morality that is its ethical equivalent and on whose practice its preservation as order rather than as anarchy depends, is itself historically and culturally dependent upon preliberal institutions and on the habits of thought and practice that these encouraged among our forebears, who took them for granted as part of a divinely created cosmic order. Liberal-democratic order therefore can be said to live off a moral and political capital for whose care it has little respect ... (Levy 1987:189).

To some extent this kind of comment can be made a generalization amongst these writers. There is an air of pessimism about the very possibility of political argument. Ricoeur speaks of the 'fragility of political language'. Epstein quotes Swift saying that 'you cannot reason a person out of something he has not been reasoned into'. He says few of us have been reasoned into or out of our politics. Does one ever really win a political argument or feel that you have lost one?

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Instead a respect for the notion of prudence is grasped at. Both Berlin and Ricoeur evince signs of having taken to heart Popper's notion of piecemeal social engineering and wishing to apply it to political theorizing. It is an ameliorative, eirenic approach with an emphasis on damage control. Neither man can be accused of naiveté or the lack of a historical perspective. Ricoeur pleads for a return to a philosophical anthropology in all its historical and symbolic dimensions. He wants people to be aware of the long timespan of the human adventure — the *longue durée*, a point also made very forcefully by Brenda Cohen in her book *Education and the individual* (1981:70). Criticizing the marxist relativizing of education in terms of prevailing economic modes, she refers to 'the timespan and continuity of Western culture, in which ethical and epistemological discussion have progressed without reference to the many different economic orders of society which have succeeded each other over the course of two milleniums'.

The search for new ways of dealing with new problems thus clearly does not preclude, indeed it seems to require, looking at the past. Ricoeur insists on studying the roots of our heritage, going back to the Torah, the teaching of the early Christian church and the Greek ethic of virtue and the political philosophy that goes with it. However, coupled with this must go the possibilities of what Epstein calls 'political deprogramming', in his case from dogmatic socialism. Having been 'deprogrammed', he says he now feels free to criticize anything and anyone. And better still, the right *not* to have to criticize. This double-barrelled aim seems to me to just about sum up the task of the political philosopher.

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10

Drama and the notion of scheme-role meaning*

Michael Macnamara
Department of Philosophy
University of South Africa

Jeanette Ferreira-Ross
Department of English
University of South Africa

INTRODUCTION (Michael Macnamara)

This paper explores the topic of *existential meaning* in relation to *drama*. 'Existential' meaning here signifies the meaning of *life*, of human existence. Within this concept, the present focus will be on one *type* of existential meaning. This type may, for brevity's sake, be called '*scheme-role* meaning', that is, meaning conceived of as the *orientation* provided by a *role* in a *scheme* or project. An everyday example would be the orientation given to a mother's life by her role in the family framework.

The way in which this inquiry *came about* may also be mentioned here, though merely *en passant*, as a further topic for possible pursuit elsewhere. The inquiry arose from the question: Can one, in the philosophy of drama, draw a distinction between 'theoretical' and 'experimental' dramatists, analogous to the contrast drawn in the philosophy of science between theoretical physicists (such as Einstein)

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and experimental ones (like Faraday); and, if so, do the two kinds of dramatist have fundamentally different philosophical orientations toward the world, that is, different world views, or visions of the meaning of life? As such high-level questions, while interesting, can generate several different and lengthy lines of investigation, the present inquiry has been limited to considering the relation between only a *small sample* of plays and primarily the scheme-role *variety* of meaning.

Part I of this article introduces the topic of existential meaning as such, with special reference to scheme-role meaning (abbreviated SRM). Part II discusses a sample of plays in relation to SRM. Part III reviews the preceding parts and suggests a theme for later possible pursuit.

I EXISTENTIAL MEANING (Michael Macnamara)

It may be as well to pose certain root questions at the outset. *Why* consider drama in relation to existential meaning? Why think about existential meaning at all? This may be answered briefly and with a deliberate *double entendre:* What could be more significant in life than what makes the whole show meaningful? But, for that matter, what *is* 'meaning' in this context?

Two main philosophical usages of the term may be distinguished here. First, the notion of meaning as in '*the theory of* meaning', that is, *semiotics,* which is the theory of signs and is usually divided into syntactics, semantics and pragmatics. And of course one trend in contemporary dramatic theory is precisely the semiotic one (Bassnett-McGuire 1980; Elam 1980). Second, there is the concept of meaning as in 'the meaning *of life*' or 'meaning *in* life' (Wisdom 1965; Britton 1969; Macnamara 1976 & 1977), and this is the type which is, for brevity, called *existential* meaning in this article, the name implying the meaning of human *existence* as opposed to the meaning of a *sign.*

The term 'existential meaning', as used here, is not simply *equivalent* to meaning as it is interpreted by thinkers in the philosophical trend of existentialism, represented by say Sartre (1943): the general topic of existential meaning *subsumes* the existentialist's particular idea of meaning as one among many other past and present conceptions of the meaning of life. Certainly Sartre (1938) and Camus (1942) were deeply concerned with the question of the meaningfulness or

meaninglessness of life; but so, among many others, were logicians like J. S. Mill (1873, ch. 5), scientists like J. Huxley (1948), novelists like Tolstoy (1886), and playwrights like S. Beckett (1965). Indeed, this question of meaning in life crops up repeatedly, in various guises, throughout the long history of the world's prose and poetry classics.

Various *avenues* for approaching the subject of existential meaning exist, three of which are as follows:

First, the approach via the diverse *senses of the term* 'meaning' that have been implied by various thinkers when they use the expression 'meaning of life'. For example, when someone says John's or Jane's life is meaningful/meaningless, it may be meant that his/her life is senseful/absurd (cf. the idea of absurdity in writers like Dostoevsky (1866), Sartre or S. Beckett); or it may be meant that it is purposeful/aimless (involving such goals as material success, social power, aiding the needy, or artistic achievement); or it is authentic/false [think of writers like W. Pater (1885), Camus, E. O'Neill (1947)]; or identified/alienated (marxism, or the contemporary concern over estrangement); or good/bad [the matter of moral worth, going back via Dante (c. 1320) to Aristotle (4th century BC), or even the early Egyptians]; or caring/uncaring [Tolstoy (1886), or the ethical theists]; or spontaneous/mechanical [Sappho (c. 600 BC), or say Nietzsche (1883)]; or social/lonely (Lewis 1971, ch. 1, regards loneliness as the most recurrent theme in contemporary theatre). Or in another category, perhaps, his/her life is socio-politically avid/tepid.

Second, the meaning of life can be considered in terms of one or another set of *vectors* or determinants of meaning. One such set has the following seven vectors [see Macnamara & Postma-de Beer (1988) for one particular application of this set, or 'viewing apparatus']: (1) the *logic* of the *concept* of existential meaning itself (involving, inter alia, interpretations such as those in the first approach above, and in the third approach below); (2) the state of *arrest of life* ['To be or not to be', that famous question posed in various forms by Hamlet, J. S. Mill (1873), Tolstoy (1888), and Chesterton (1936) among others]; (3) *authenticity* [avoidance of alienation and deception — topics with which existentialists like Sartre (1943), and the marxists, were much concerned]; (4) *freedom* of the individual (fatalism, determinism, libertarianism); (5) *conceptions* or images of *man* (materialistic, idealistic, and so on); (6) *care for others* (egoism, altruism, commitment,

detachment); and (7) *death* as a determinant of meaning [mortalism, immortalism, states of life/death — see, for instance, the Chinese poet Chang Hêng (c. 130 BC)].

Third, and most relevant to the present inquiry, existential meaning can be considered in terms of a distinction between two *kinds* of question about life and meaning: (a) the *general* or cosmic question: What is the meaning of *life as such*? (b) The *particular* or individual question: Is there meaning in *Susan's* life, or *Peter's* life, that is, in the life of a specific person?

An example of a well-known world view, the adherents of which answer Yes to the *cosmic* question, is ethical theism: in this view, human life is part of a divinely ordained *scheme* for the cosmos; a person has a *role* in this cosmic plan, and the orientation given by this role *is* what people call the meaning of life. Among those who take an opposing position are existentialists of the atheistic variety, such as Sartre and Camus: they argue that there is no such divine scheme, so that life is meaningless — it is absurd — when viewed in relation to the traditional theistic sense of meaning; they do, however, maintain that one can *give* life meaning by accepting responsibility squarely and living on resolutely in the teeth of this absurdity. The support or rejection of either of these opposing views of meaning involves a cluster of problems, including the several much-debated arguments for and against the existence of deity; but these are not, as such, at issue here.

As regards the other question, the *particular* question, about meaning, the kind of distinction drawn by Sellars (1926:176) has come into use: he contrasted meaning in the sense of a cosmic plan with 'intrinsic meaning' in the sense of 'satisfactory objectives', and asked whether our lives may not have meaning in the intrinsic sense even if not in the cosmic one. Concerning the relation between the cosmic and particular senses of meaning, it may be said in overview that a person may deem life meaningful in both cosmic and particular senses, or in either sense though not the other one; or, pessimistically, in neither sense.

The focus of the present article is on *scheme-role* meaning (SRM) in relation to *drama*. But how are SRM and drama connected? That is the subject of the next section, but it can well be prefaced by a clearing away of some conceptual undergrowth at this point.

Taking the first patch of this undergrowth: when people talk about SRM, they seem only to think of a 'scheme' as a divine, supernal one. But, whether or not there exists a *supernatural* cosmic scheme, there are certainly schemes (and roles) in several other senses of these terms. To mention some of them: for materialistic determinists and non-theistic fatalists, there exists a quite natural *pattern* according to which all the events of the physical universe unfold necessarily. For Hobbes (1651), again, there was the socio-politically meaningful role of a rational citizen in a peaceful monarchal *state*; for Sartre — in his last phase — there was the role of a collectivistically committed citizen in a communist society. There are many such roles: people may be seen as having roles in a global *poetic vision*; soldiers have roles, august or modest, in military *operations*; a salesman plays his part in the business *project* of a firm; a father has a function within a family *framework*; a player has a role in the *structure* of a team; an oboist, a role in the *score* performed by an orchestra; and a director or an actress has a role within the total *parameters* of a particular play — apart from a role in any of the other senses mentioned above.

Second, as will be evident from the preceding paragraph, one has to consider the matter of similarities and differences between the concepts 'scheme' and 'role', on the one hand, and their various related concepts, on the other. Is a scheme similar to all of an arrangement, plan, schedule, programme, venture, enterprise, operation, project, formula, scenario, pattern, blueprint, structure, or set of parameters? And is a role similar to all of a part, impersonation, function, capacity, office, vocation, occupation, job, duty or performance?

Third, how are the notions 'role' and 'scheme' related to each other? Can each notion exist quite independently of the other, as do the concepts 'good' and 'round'; or are they *polar* concepts, that is, are they intelligible only in terms of contrast with each other, as are the two concepts 'good' and 'evil'?

Fourth, if meaning is said to be the *orientation* given by a role in a scheme, just what is this 'orientation': does it mean alignment toward the goal(s) of the scheme, and is it being implied that the degree of meaningfulness varies as the degree of alignment? Can one speak acceptably of an actress as orientated toward a dramatic goal? What goal? The imputed goal of a play-text, be it socio-political revolution, aesthetic instruction, conceptual exploration, or plain entertainment?

Or are we referring to the goal(s) of drama as such, considered at some deeper level? And what *is* 'the goal' of drama — is there any common, fundamental goal, or are there several different goals for diverse kinds of drama?

Let us move on directly to considering SRM specifically in relation to a selection of actual dramatic works. This pursuit will be of the reconnoitring, region-mapping kind, as opposed to the kind that could well follow it on a later occasion, namely the sinking of shafts, by those interested, at one or a few of the points brought to light on this regional map.

I should emphasize that, while this section defines a certain *conception* of existential meaning, the author of the next section was not asked to adhere exclusively to it, but rather to 'stand loose to it' wherever this was thought fruitful.

II SCHEME-ROLE MEANING AND DRAMA
(Jeanette Ferreira-Ross)

In applying the idea of scheme-role meaning to drama, many possibilities present themselves. Similarly, the notion of existential meaning in drama can be approached from various angles. I have chosen to concern myself with drama as significant action intended for performance by actors in the presence of spectators. The significant action, or drama, on which I wish to focus involves the acting out of *roles* in which the relationship between man and his world is explored. Implicit in the definition given is the acknowledgement that drama necessarily involves the creation/realization of *roles*, that is, a character or characters 'on stage' who are perceived by a *body of onlookers* and to whose actions/spoken words the onlookers respond. The immediacy of this interaction between *die Rollenträger* and *die Rollen erlebende Gemeinschaft* (Eberle 1953–1954) is what links drama to ritual. There is a communal element operative in both so that drama, like ritual, tends to focus on the central preoccupations in the life of the culture, group or community for whom the performance is intended.

Methodologically, one can approach the subject synchronically or diachronically. I have opted for the latter because what interests me are the *shifts* in the *scheme* component, understood in terms of a particular world view *(Weltanschauung)*, and the *consequent orientation*

given to the *role* component in order to communicate what is experienced as the sense or *meaning of life.* The process of communication involves the interaction between role projection and role reception within the parameters of an implied world view, or even of a set of schemes in juxtaposition. What I propose to examine are the ways in which *adjustments* within the *scheme* component entail adjustments of perspective concerning the *role* component which, as the experiencing consciousness interacting with the audience, is the purveyor of meaning.

The choice of samples must necessarily be selective and to some extent arbitrary. For example, I shall not deal with the drama of classical Greece with its emphasis on an inexorable fate bearing down on the life of an individual so that, in spite of the fact that in nearly all the great tragedies of the period the cause of the hero's downfall is a compound of his capacity for error or misjudgment *(hamartia)* and his overweening pride or arrogance *(hubris)*, it remains true that in Greek tragedy there is less question of the protagonist's moral culpability than in Renaissance drama. The shift in the pattern of scheme-role meaning from Greek tragedy to the Renaissance drama is indeed an interesting one, but there is enough material here for a study on its own. Similarly, one might explore the shifts in scheme-role meaning that led to the creation of Romantic Drama in which the iconoclastic hero of what has aptly been termed the 'Theatre of Messianic Revolt' (Brustein 1969) rebels against the restrictions of an older order, hoping to replace it with a new heroic order.

I shall also not pause to consider the political theatre, notably the seminal plays of Bertolt Brecht. The revolutionary theatre of Brecht is a new departure, based as it is on the ideology or scheme of the historical (-materialistic) dialectic which runs as follows: the structure on which all human relationships are built is socially determined; social relations are relative and subject to historical change; therefore, the structure of human relationships can be changed. Here too the implications of the shift in perspective from what Brecht refers to as the fatalistic pessimism of the 'Aristotelian drama' (Brecht 1967), with its closed, autonomous action and empathic role-identification, to his own 'epic theatre', which necessitates a critical stance *vis-à-vis* the events and characters portrayed, are fascinating but too wide-ranging to be included in the present context.

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As the framework of this study is limited to a conceptual exploration of the interrelationships between the concepts constituting scheme-role meaning in drama, I consider it justified to ignore the distinctions between ritual and drama as an artistic form, based on specifically literary and theatrical conventions.

The significance of role-playing as the *acting out of relationships perceived to be fundamentally meaningful* has been stressed by anthropologists. Frobenius has seen role-playing *(jouer son rôle)* as the source of all civilization: 'L'homme est acteur; le jeu est l'expression de la réalité qu'il vit'[1] (Frobenius 1933:146).

It is evident that, from earliest times, man has striven to understand the meaning of life; to understand the *world* and man's *place* in it. Accordingly, he builds models of reality using, as frames, such terms of reference as are at his disposal. He constructs a *scheme* and assigns to man a *role* or roles in relation to this scheme. As part of his adjustment to his universe, man *dramatizes* his world view; that is, by means of rituals he plays, or actualizes by representation (Huizinga 1949), a higher order of things, expressive of the *value system* which pertains to the group (Wilson 1954) but is outside the sphere of ordinary life.

A feature of ritual performances among non-literate peoples is active participation by all those who are involved. But the central position is that of the 'ritual expert'. In African tribal societies the ritual expert is the witchdoctor. He is the main actor or performer: his *role* is clearly defined. At crucial times, or when misfortune or illness strikes, he is called upon. It is he who stages the performance of a magical rite, and in doing so he acts out the 'rapport' with the unseen forces. For the time being and for the prescribed purpose of the rite, he believes himself, and is believed, to be the medium by which the inimical forces can be controlled. This affords release of tension in the sense that the performance of the rite restores the confidence of those involved or of those for whom the rite is performed, for the dramatization of the witchdoctor affirms the value system of the tribe and demonstrates the underlying ordering. In short, the rite is the scheme *in action*. The flow and equilibrium of vital forces necessary for the health and well-being of the group as a whole, and the individuals as members of the group, are believed to be under the *control of ancestral spirits*. In ritual performances these supernatural

presences are concretized in some way or another (role *projection*) and the community participates as an actively involved, experiencing consciousness (active role *reception*). In this way there is interaction, and so, drama.

We may understand this theorizing better if we consider in some detail an actual example of a rite I have been privileged to watch. It is one performed by the Xhosa witchdoctor [*gqira*(m) — *gqirakazi*(f)] to propitiate the spirits believed to live at the bottom of deep river pools.

Among the AmaXhosa there is apparently a definite tradition of the ancestral spirits *(amathonga)* being connected with rivers.[2] In this particular case of a rite, misfortune in the form of a strange illness had dogged a certain woman. A master-diviner of great repute was consulted. He decided that the cause of the trouble was the anger of the 'river people'. Matters could only be set right by a propitiatory offering to them. First, a hut was prepared by the master-diviner. It is clear that the preparation of this hut must be interpreted as a dramatic act of setting it apart in the religious sense: it is what we would call 'holy', dedicated to the ancestors. Into the hut the diviner carried a bundle of willow branches collected from the river pool, from whence he returned after having solemnly made his report concerning the offering of the morrow to the ancestral spirits. Some of the willow branches he brought from the river were deposited for a bed, and some at central points to keep out evil spirits. After her ritual purification, the afflicted woman was led into the hut where she was to remain until the diviner instructed her to come out. One can see what is at work here: the powerful suggestion of significant symbolism. Imaginations are stirred by the intensely felt presence of the force of the ancestors.

The symbolic line which identifies the 'river people' with the branches fetched from the pool can be drawn still further by analysing the subsequent dramatic action. The woman must sleep on the branches. This, together with the visual symbolism, inevitably suggests the working of a magic process: the sickness (evil) must be drawn out and vital force absorbed from the ancestors. For, to the participant and onlookers alike, in accordance with their mythical, analogical way of thinking, the branches represent the 'river people', that is, the ancestors; they *are* the ancestors.

Before daybreak on the day of the ceremony, a silent and solemn procession of five threaded its way towards the river. The diviner, cloaked in a blanket and carrying the patient's bedding of the previous night, led the way. The arrival of the procession at the river was so timed that it coincided with the rising of the sun, for the African has a strongly developed sense of *stage technique*. The setting was also ideal: it was a spot where lush green ferns fringe a deep pool which darkly mirrors the rugged walls of rock rising sheer and weirdly shaped in the background. This 'primitive' witchdoctor had not learned the tricks of the spotlight, the back-cloth or the drop curtain; but he knew how to stage his performance so that the background would be most effective, and he also knew how to exploit the emotional effect of the predawn and the first rays of the rising sun. Everybody knelt down, facing the pool. The diviner stepped forward and solemnly addressed the river people, offering all the items brought along. The procession then turned round and filed home in silence. There, a full report was given of the performance at the river in the presence of the clan to which the woman belonged and their neighbours.

Judging by its outer form, this is a simple enough rite. Yet, if one probes down into the meaning of the performance, it becomes an important *dramatic statement* in which the interest of the group as a whole is involved. In accordance with the operative scheme involved here, the drama that unfolds is clear. The witchdoctor acts as the mediator between the afflicted woman (and, by implication, her clan) and the ancestral spirits whose continued and powerful life force can work either for, or against, effecting either an increase (health), or decrease (sickness), in the vital force of the individual or group of their descendants. The action is carried out to restore the health of the protagonist, which means the effort to gain the co-operation of the supernatural so that the disrupted balance of vital forces, necessary for well-being, may be restored. By the effort to ward off evil from one clan member, the well-being of the whole is sustained, and something is contributed towards attaining a peaceful way of life. In this way, a rite performed for one individual becomes an act of public worship in the form of a ritual drama in which the whole community can participate. For the performance is a communal experience which links both participants and spectators, or listeners, to the report of the performance at the river, as members of a *Gesamtorganismus*.

From the point of view of dramatic technique and structure this rite is also fascinating. The antagonist (the supernatural, explained in Xhosa belief in humanized, personal terms) is invisible. But the mysterious presence is vividly evoked by means of associative suggestion which is made to work by purely theatrical means. An application of Greimas's 'actantial model' (1972) is illuminating here in showing the interrelationships of SRM in ritual drama. The ancestral spirits fulfil more than the role of *opposant* (opponent). They are, simultaneously, the *destinateur* (sender) as well as the *destinataire* (receiver) within the total context of the action. The role of the witchdoctor is that of *tritagonist* [Greimas: *adjuvant* (helper)]. He is the mediator who performs the significant action whereby the crisis is resolved. But as *intercessor* he also replaces the protagonist in actually confronting the supernatural. In fact, the *sujet* (subject) of the rite includes *the group as a whole* who therefore also becomes the *destinataire* (receiver).

In short, the *scheme* in the present example consists in the *conduct* which — according to the witchdoctor — is *prescribed by the transcendent ancestors*. Among the several roles identifiable in this context, the key ones are those of the witchdoctor, who *mediates* between ancestors and people, and the afflicted woman who, in somehow *deviating* from the prescriptive scheme, has angered the ancestors and now seeks their pardon. The spectators (who also have their roles in the general scheme) are *affected* (reassured) by viewing, or participating in, the rite. As we shall see, several of these notions are to be found — developed, modified or discarded — all along the historical course of drama.

When we turn to the ritual drama of Europe in the Middle Ages, we observe the same relationship between the components of scheme-role meaning. Here, the *scheme* is *ethical theism circumscribed by the dogma of medieval catholicism*. In a comparatively late morality play such as *Everyman* (c. 1500), the link with ritual is still evident. Although the protagonist is used as an exemplum in a simple drama whose aim is moral teaching, Everyman's progress to death closely follows the stages of the catholic ritual. The play's vision is based on the closed medieval system or scheme of good and evil, in which good entails obedience to the established Christian dogma and evil represents man's neglect of his responsibilities towards God. The

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characters are allegorical figures representing basic human traits. Everyman himself, as the name indicates, is clearly a plural person, representing mankind as a whole. As Death says to God at the opening of the play:

> Lord, I will in the world go run overall,
> And cruelly outsearch both great and small;
> Every man will I beset that liveth beastly
> Out of God's laws, and dreadeth not folly.
> (*Everyman* 1956, lines 72–75)

As a result, Everyman and the other allegorical figures in the play exist mainly in terms of the *theological truths they are meant to demonstrate.* The figure of Knowledge, for example, is inseparable from spiritual awareness and is therefore by definition a means to self-purification. This is enacted in the play when Knowledge leads Everyman to Confession who administers the sacrament of penance. Thereafter Everyman dons the garment of contrition upon which his Good Deeds, now restored to vigour, declares their reckoning to be clear. This is in accordance with medieval church doctrine. As is the case in the African ritual described, the mediating role of the ritual expert is central in *Everyman*. In the latter, the role of tritagonist is assigned to Priesthood, who administers the sacraments through which alone the protagonist may reach *salvation*, which is perceived as the ultimate meaning of life.

Towards the end of the 16th century, drama in Western Europe had evolved into an autonomous art form distinct from early ritual. But the shifts in the interrelationships within the pattern of scheme-role meaning are not only due to the secularization of drama, that is, to the break with the ritual pattern. From one perspective, a Renaissance play such as Marlowe's *Doctor Faustus* may still be seen as an inverted morality play. It is based on the traditional scheme of ethical theism. Like *Everyman, Doctor Faustus* (c. 1589) affirms the immortality of the soul whose passage to either heaven or hell depends on God's judgement of the individual's religious state. *Doctor Faustus*, in a series of inverted rituals, then traces the progress of the protagonist not to salvation but to damnation, dramatically enacted in true medieval fashion when the devils appear at the end to drag him off to hell. *Doctor Faustus* relies, too, on allegorical figures such as the Good and Bad Angel. But, whereas the Good Angel represents Faustus's

religious conscience, the Bad Angel projects his proud instinct to rebel against human limitation. Here, then, more than one scheme is introduced. The role of the protagonist is therefore no longer simply that of an exemplum within the parameters of one scheme. Faustus, as a typical Renaissance figure, is a scholar steeped in classical learning; he is also an ambitious and wilful power-seeker, a man proud of his individuality which is constituted by his independent, enquiring mind. He has two roles: that of an inverted morality figure, and that of an aspiring humanist thinker and, in the *tension* between the two, another dimension of meaning is generated.

In Shakespeare, this notion of role in relation to various and conflicting schemes reaches a peak of sophistication. The classic example is, of course, *Hamlet* (c. 1601). On one level, the opposing claims of the *revenge ethos* and *Christian ethic* constitute the tragic conflict. Hamlet's inability to reconcile his roles as 'scourge' and 'minister' dislocates his sense of being. In the splitting of roles in this example, meaning becomes ambiguous and indeterminate. It has been pointed out that even the use of the term 'scourge and minister' by Hamlet himself 'is an example of [his] existential irresolution, for the roles of *Flagellum Dei* and *Christian medicus* are virtually irreconcilable: ... a scourge is a human agent so steeped in crime as to be past salvation, while a minister is a virtuous agent of divine retribution who eschews private vengeance in pursuit of public justice so that his hands will not be stained with crime' (Brown 1988:87).

Hamlet is called upon by his father's ghost to assume the role of revenger. But the Ghost's moral position is ambiguous. He bases his demand on the 'natural' bond of filial duty:

> If thou didst ever thy dear father love —
> ... Revenge his foul and most unnatural murder.
>
> (I.v.23–25)

However, the revenge code, exacting as it does 'an automatic response of blood and honour' (Gurr 1978:72), is morally dubious. In its appeal to nature, to instinct, it provokes 'reckless foolhardiness and ... ruthless self-promotion' (Brown 1988:68). Moreover, as it is based on passion, not reason, it is spiritually corrosive in that it panders to man's lower nature which is propelled by the baser, predatory, animal instincts. Tamora in *Titus Andronicus* (c. 1590) sums up the revenge code:

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> I am Revenge, sent from th' infernal kingdom
> To ease the gnawing vulture of thy mind
> By working wreakful vengeance on thy foes.
>> (V.ii.30–32)

In *Hamlet*, the roles of Fortinbras and Laertes demonstrate the kind of behaviour dictated by the imperatives of honour and revenge. Fortinbras is prepared to sacrifice thousands of lives to regain

> ... a little patch of ground
> That hath in it no profit but the name.
>> (IV.iv.18–19)

Hamlet assesses the situation with devastating clarity of insight, ironically undercutting his ostensible admiration for Fortinbras's spirit

> ... with divine ambition puff'd
> ......
> Exposing what is mortal and unsure
> To all that fortune, death and danger dare,
> Even for an egg-shell ....
> .....   I see
> The imminent death of twenty thousand men
> That, for a fantasy and trick of fame,
> Go to their graves like beds, fight for a plot
> Whereon the numbers cannot try the cause,
> Which is not tomb enough and continent
> To hide the slain ....
>> (IV.iv.49–65)

The role of Laertes, whose situation closely parallels that of Hamlet — he too has had a father killed — functions as a direct foil to that of the Prince. His response is a single-minded dedication to revenge at all costs and an unbridled submission to passion:

> To hell, allegiance! Vows, to the blackest devil!
> Conscience and grace, to the profoundest pit!
> I dare damnation ....
>> (IV.v.131–133)

Hamlet, on the other hand, is incapable of such univocity. Although his initial reaction to the appearance of the Ghost is to question its identity, its resemblance to his father seduces him into a state of over-

wrought passion. But Horatio, the man of reason ('... not passion's slave'), who acts in a sense as Hamlet's alter-ego, sounds the note of warning against the insubstantial and possibly changeable shape of a ghost

> Which might deprive your sovereignty of reason,
> And draw you into madness ... *Think* of it [my emphasis].
>
> (I.v.73–74)

This is precisely what Hamlet does and, in spite of his avowed assumption of his role as 'scourge', it soon becomes evident that this role is at variance with the pull of his 'conscience', both in the sense of Christian conviction of right and wrong and knowledge within oneself which is related to a sense of one's own being. When Hamlet ponders the question 'To be or not to be', the implications go deeper than merely being alive or not. It involves the awareness of man as an active rational being. According to Sydney Bolt, 'This meaning of "to be" was common intellectual currency at the time the play was written. The being of a thing was its essence — which, in its derivation from the Latin word *esse*, "to be", literally means "being". To be therefore involved realizing one's essence, which called for moral effort' (Bolt 1985:52). Hamlet's insistent self-questioning therefore not only undermines his role of revenger; it also touches on the question of integrity or authentic being — not, in the existentialist sense of self-creation through individual freedom of choice, but in relation to the whole moral framework of that which constitutes the essence of *man*, which was part of the Elizabethan 'scheme' or world view.

As 'minister', Hamlet's role is equally ambiguous. What is emphasized at the outset is Hamlet's deep moral awareness. Suspecting his uncle of foul play, he invokes his belief in a providential universe:

> ... Foul deeds will rise,
> Though all the earth o'erwhelm them, to men's eyes.
>
> (I.iii.257–258)

But when he is made the agent of moral redress, the task appears an impossible one. Firstly, the world which he is called upon to 'set ... right' is hopelessly corrupt. The court of Denmark is rotten to the core. Hamlet is surrounded by deceivers and sycophants, by debauchery, lechery and betrayal. Thus he experiences a sense of universal deception, of the whole cosmos as fraudulent, and this makes him

unsure of everything. That is why he adopts the role of madman and malcontent in order to achieve an ironic distance and so, paradoxically, to preserve his sanity and integrity. Secondly, he is specifically asked by the enigmatic Ghost to act without violating his integrity:

But howsomever thou pursuest this act,
Taint not thy mind ....

(I.v.84–85)

Yet, in spite of his at times almost hysterical revulsion against his mother's sin, Hamlet, in identifying himself with the universal corruption of man's fallen state, sees his own mind as already tainted: he is acutely aware of his own dual nature. His self-questioning is ruthless. This, says Philip Edwards, is revealed in his language which 'is teasing, riddling, punning, looking two ways at once, never directly serious or directly jesting. In almost everything he says, he reveals his incapacity for or refusal of single vision and single evaluation' (Edwards 1983:50). No sooner has Hamlet adopted one stance or role than he devalues his performance by debunking its motivational impulse. It is only at the end that he seems to acquiesce, with quiet composure, in the providential nature of the universe. But this is less an acknowledgement of his role as 'minister' than an acceptance of human limitation and a final acceptance of the elusive mystery of being: '... the rest is silence'. Hamlet's conflict is not resolved; in a sense it *cannot* be resolved: he can only come to 'rest' in the silence of death.

In the classical tragedy of 17th-century France, the prevalent notions of *purity of form* led to a refocusing of scheme-role meaning. Or, conversely, as it has also been argued (Moore 1961; Goldmann 1964) the specific cultural climate which obtained in 17th-century France encouraged a preoccupation with form, pattern. If it was then a matter of form, this was a corollary of the underlying need of the whole culture at the time for the principles of *order and rationality*. It was the same climate, after all, that brought forth Descartes and Pascal. Whichever way it came about, in the two outstanding tragic dramatists of the age, Corneille and Racine, a dramatic form of extraordinary concentration, never equalled since, was evolved. Indeed, the rigours of form and the 'rules' they adopted proved a perfect vehicle for the world view communicated. In the case of Corneille, the *scheme* is narrowed down to the *heroic ideal of duty*. Accordingly, the whole orientation of the protagonist's *role* is towards a *measuring*

up to this sublime ideal. The attitude of the hero is typically summed up by Rodrigue in *Le Cid* (1637):

> J'ai fait ce que j'ai dû, je fais ce que je dois.
> (III.iv.910)[3]

The conflict is between the very human passions and the almost inhuman, hence fanatic, pursuit of a calling [cf. in particular *Polyeucte* (1642)]. The action hinges on a single situation of choice in which the roles of the characters are defined in a series of patterned confrontations and reflections.

Racine, in turn, uses the same kind of situational 'plot' and patterning but he focuses on the *ravages of human passions*. He explores the obsessive, if necessarily catastrophic, pursuit of self-interested passion setting itself hopelessly against a 'higher' order. In *Phèdre* (1677), it is significant that both Phèdre and Hippolyte are outsiders whose impulses propel them beyond the ken of 'normal' society and relationships represented by Thésée and Aricie. Hippolyte, as the votary of Diana, and Phèdre, as the offspring of Minos and Pasiphaé — of her who was enamoured of the bull — are possessed figures. In her uncontrollable passion for her stepson, Hippolyte, Phèdre sees herself as a monster. As she dies, having taken poison, she utters a final self-condemnation which acknowledges the darkness of her soul. Her very eyes — the windows of the soul — have soiled the bright light of day, the realm of reason and order:

> Et la mort, à mes yeux dérobant la clarté,
> Rend au jour, qu'ils souillaient toute sa pureté.[4]

Bérénice (1670) is, in a way, the most interesting of Racine's plays because the tragedy does not end with the death of the protagonists. Again the situation hinges on a single moment of crisis: in order to assume his role as Emperor, Titus is required to renounce his union with the alien princess, Bérénice. Here the external conflict centres on the opposing claims of passion and reason, the irreconcilable split between private and public roles. Bérénice confronts Titus with the equal claims of both:

> Rome a ses droits, Seigneur. N'avez-vous pas les vôtres?[5]

The Emperor, in turn, pleads:

> ... Forcez votre amour à se taire;
> Et d'un oeil que la gloire et la raison éclaire
> Contemplez mon devoir dans toute sa rigueur.[6]

The fluctuating movement in the series of confrontations between and reflections of the lovers is from the *irrational and private* 'amour' to the *rational and public* 'gloire'. But the real conflict hinges on the act of renunciation, on love as sacrifice. Within the rigours of Racine's Jahnsehnist vision of the world there can be no authentic being without a radical *rupture of whatever belongs to the world.* The admirable concentration of Racine's classical form renders the climax and the dénouement simultaneously. Bérénice rises majestically, as the incarnation of desire, articulating what she represents:

> J'aimais, Seigneur, j'aimais: je voulais être aimée.[7]

But she is already speaking in the past tense. Then by a supremely dramatic *switch* of roles, she effects the act of renunciation:

> Je vivrai, je suivrai vos ordres absolus
> Adieu, Seigneur, régnez: je ne vous verrai plus.[8]

The paradox is not resolved:

> Je l'aime, je le fuis; Titus m'aime, il me quitte.[9]

But the final emphasis is on *régnez*, carrying the full weight of the imperatives of absolute, transcendent values to which both Titus and Bérénice are bound.

The 18th-century fascination with society and social standards of conduct is clearly reflected in the drama of the age, making this the great age of comedy. In the notable plays of the early 18th-century the scheme could be said to be society, and the role-fulfilment or adjustment of the characters *vis-à-vis* the social context within which they function is what determines their sense of being. In Congreve's *The way of the world* (1700), for example, the struggle of the protagonists, Mirabel and Millament, is between acceptance of their socially determined roles (as prospective husband and wife respectively) and the demands of their own individuality. There is an amusing yet poignant interplay of social values and individual integrity, of public and private roles, and a play on the interrelationship between the two. An

even more complex and pessimistic view of role-identification versus personal identity emerges in Marivaux's *La double inconstance* (1723). The ingenuous lovers, Silvia and Arlequin, are subjected to the sophisticated machinations of the Prince and his confidante, Flaminia. The Prince, who has fallen in love with Silvia, is determined to win her consent to marry him. At first the young lovers, held captive but showered with luxuries, resist the seductive ploys to alienate their affections. But gradually they are *corrupted by the new roles* into which they have been cast. By the end of the play they have not only transferred their affections to the Prince and Flaminia respectively, but they have also lost their innocence and sense of true identity.

The serious drama of the late 19th and early 20th centuries focuses on man's role within the scheme of a universe perceived as *implacably hostile*, denying him the fulfilment of his being. In the plays of Ibsen, Chehov and O'Neill the roles of the characters are to a greater or lesser extent those of helpless *victims* rather than active *agents*. They are at the mercy of overwhelming *social realities* over which they have little or no control.

The orientation of the roles, and indeed the movement of the whole action, for example, in Ibsen's *Ghosts* (1881) and O'Neill's *Long day's journey into night* (1941), demonstrate that the characters become *what their past has made them*. They struggle in vain to free themselves from, or are unavoidably trapped within, ingrained attitudes or modes of behaviour conditioned by their environment which includes their social and familial circumstances. The weight or pressure of the past (the 'ghosts' in Ibsen's play to which Mrs Alving refers explicity) impinges on the present, determining the inevitable journey into night, the hopeless fate of Oswald in *Ghosts* and Mary Tyrone in *Long day's journey*. Ibsen's overriding concern with inheritance or, more precisely, inherited guilt is developed by O'Neill in terms of the oppressive, life-denying puritanism of Ephraim Cabot in *Desire under the elms* (1924) and the Mannons in *Mourning becomes Electra* (1931). Freedom is a fantasy, like Hedda Gabler's desire to see Lovborg with 'vine-leaves in his hair', or the dream of the South Sea Islands in *Mourning becomes Electra*. At best it is a transitory, epiphanic moment as described by Edmund in *Long day's journey*.

Chehov's plays are also concerned with the death of freedom. His figures are surrounded by a weary atmosphere of frustration, futility, apathy. Invariably they find themselves in an impasse. The present is dominated by a sense of loss, a lack of fulfilment, a nostalgia for the past [*The cherry orchard* (1904)] or an elusive, ever-receding hope for a better future, like the dream of going to Moscow in *The three sisters* (1901). A fascinating aspect of Chehov's conception of role-playing, which anticipates the *ironic mode* of modern drama, is the manifest *self*-dramatization of many of his characters. Often a character's pose is deflated by himself, another character or the context. For example, in *The cherry orchard* Madame Ranyevskaia's sentimentality and romantic posturing is shown up as not only anachronistic but futile within the kind of world in which the rough pragmatism of Lopahin has taken over. In Chehov's plays, again, there is *no one central role* that dominates all the others. The various characters — and there are many — in each play all represent different shades of helplessness, uncertainty and bewilderment in the face of life. What they all share is a feeling of dislocation, a sense of life petering out, a loss of existential meaning.

This scheme, in which the *possibility of any transcendent self-realization is denied*, is inevitably anti-heroic. The focus is on ordinary mortals, broken by life. The only hope of survival, in a restricting world in which freedom to change one's life is virtually absent, is to withdraw from the world, to avoid any kind of confrontation, including self-confrontation, and to cling to 'pipe dreams'; that is, the adoption of an acquiescent role based on *comforting delusions* which shield one from the unbearable nature of reality. Ibsen's *The wild duck* (1884) and O'Neill's *The Iceman cometh* (1947) explore what happens when sustaining illusions are destroyed. The role of Gregors *(The wild duck)* and Hickey *(The Iceman cometh)* is that of the inverted messiah. They are the missionaries of 'truth'. But Larry Slade, who is in a sense the central consciousness in the microscopic 'society' of misfits gathered in Harry Hope's hotel — this 'Bottom of the Sea Rathskeller' (p. 27) — anticipates the outcome:

> To hell with truth ... the lie of the pipe dream is what gives life to the whole misbegotten mad lot of us.
>
> (pp. 15–16)

Larry himself has adopted the facile posturing of the cynical intellectual who watches life from the grandstand of philosophical detachment. But his real problem is that 'of projecting value in a world devoid of absolutes — the "existential dilemma": man's chief struggle is not with something, not with Evil but with the valueless which is neither good nor evil' (Falk 1958:163). His anguished realization of the nothingness that lies beneath appearances leads him to an impasse of moral paralysis. His compassion exposes him to the pain of being, that of others and his own. Significantly, Larry, who sits alone staring into space (that is, nothingness), is separated at the end from the pipe dreamers who return to the oblivion of their inauthentic but comforting mode of existence. In this way, O'Neill's vision anticipates not only the existentialist differentiation between authentic and inauthentic being; also, in Larry's perception of meaninglessness, he approaches the absurdist vision of the world.[10] However, in O'Neill as in Ibsen and Chehov, the emphasis is still on the impossibility of authentic being owing to the tension between man's deepest aspirations and the *hostile* nature of the world within which he finds himself. Because of the predominantly naturalistic mode in which their plays are cast, this world is socially contextualized and sympathetic identification with the plight of the characters is encouraged.

By the time we come to the existentialist drama of Sartre and Camus, the universe is no longer perceived as hostile, but *meaningless, absurd*. There is no metaphysical scheme against which to measure human conduct. It is here that the notion of role *becomes central*. One can *give* meaning by creating, assuming or becoming one's freely chosen role and then squarely accepting the responsibilities it entails. This is the only path to human freedom. Thus, in creating one's role, *a new scheme and kind of meaning are created*. A brief look at Sartre's *Les mouches* (1943) will serve to illustrate the point. The plot derives from the *Oresteia* (458 BC). But whereas, in Aeschylus, Orestes's crime falls within the fatalistic pattern or scheme of Greek tragedy, in Sartre it is prompted by freedom of choice. What Oreste discovers is that man is free and that *chaque homme doit inventer son chemin*[11] (Sartre 1947:113). The sense of fatality which oppresses the people of Argos is therefore false: it is an invention of the representatives of power. The role of Électre after the murder of Égisthe epitomizes the human tendency to allow oneself to be

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obsessed and finally annihilated by an egocentric sense of guilt and remorse, instead of choosing the path of freedom. She is therefore an example of *mauvaise foi* (bad faith). Oreste, on the other hand, disclaims remorse and this enables him to triumph over Jupiter. He alone, the authentic being, has the courage to assume responsibility for his act:

> Vous me regardez, gens d'Argos, vous avez compris que mon crime est bien à moi; je le revendique à la face du soleil; il est raison de vivre et mon orgueil, vous ne pourez ni me châtier, ni me plaindre, et c'est pourquoi je vous fais peur.[12]
>
> (Sartre 1947:120)

Freedom is frightening because the liberated being accepts his isolation and the fact that *'la vie humaine commence de l'autre côté du desespoir'*[13] (p. 114). However, if man accepts, like Oreste, that he creates himself through his actions, that is, that he is the sum of his actions, then he announces the twilight of the gods, that is, of false projections of external powers. At the same time, creating one's role and assuming responsibility for one's actions is far from easy. This is dramatically enacted at the end of the play when Oreste leaves Argos, pursued by the flies (the Érinnyes) representing the responsibility and anguish of the liberated being.

In the subsequent so-called theatre of the absurd (Esslin 1966) the *very notion* of meaningful action is undermined. The emphasis is on human limitation and man is seen as the victim of an absurd world which eludes full comprehension. Characters have no 'identities'; in other words, the roles become *depersonalized*. We are back at the emblematic figures of the morality plays, but the frame of reference, the *scheme* within which the characters function, has undergone a fundamental change. In Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* (1952) the protagonists are, in fact, reduced to '*clochard*-clowns'. Here, the role of protagonist is, significantly, the antithesis of the hero, a royal or prominent figure, pitting his forces against an intrinsically meaningful universe. An added irony is that, as the inversion of the king, the buffoon or clown constantly struggles with the material world over which the king has absolute control (De Vries 1974).

Beckett's use of the role of clown is interesting and significant. The clown is traditionally the licenced fool, speaking truth under the guise

of folly. Furthermore, the clown has *no social identity.* By stripping his clownlike tramps of social identity, Beckett succeeds in enlarging their significance so that they come to represent an *elemental facet of the human condition.* In Beckett's own production of *Waiting for Godot* for the Schiller Theater in Berlin in 1975, he underlined this emblematic aspect of the characters by adding a significant symbolic touch with regard to the costumes. Rolf Michaelis (1975:18) reports in *Theater Heute*:

> Im ersten Akt trägt Didi zur passenden, gestreiften Hose eine schwarze Jacke, die ihm viel zu klein ist und offensichtlich Gogo gehört; der wiederum trägt zur gut sitzenden schwarzen Hose eine viel zu grosse Streifenjacke aus Didis Garderobe. Im zweiten Akt sind die Kleidungsstücke dann vertauscht. Ein gleicher kreuzweiser Bezug besteht in der Gewandung des anderen Paares: Pozzos Hose mit dem Rautenmuster des Zirkus-Clowns passt zu Luckys Weste. 'Wir sind die Menschheit' — dieser Satz wird durch die Kostümierung augenfällig. [14]

Michèle Foucre (1970:18–19), in an interesting theatrically orientated study called *Le geste et la parole dans le théâtre de Samuel Beckett*, has drawn attention to the dramatic effectiveness of the 'silhouette' by which Beckett's *clochard*-clowns are concretized:

> Le costume n'est pas harmonieusement proportionné. Les détails exagérés, saugrenus, esquissent une silhouette mal équilibrée, mal adaptée au monde, ou plutôt, correspondant à l'univers en marge du monde qui est créé sur la scène. Le corps, le vêtement sont eux-mêmes geste et signification. Le personnage est, mieux que défini, concrétisé par la silhouette qui le dessine. [15]

On one level the absurd, animated silhouettes of the two tramps in the 'landscape' of nothingness evoke a sense of inappropriateness. Their presence does not 'fit' into the world as it is depicted. Or, to see it in another way, it corresponds to the whole universe lacking in proportion and definition which is created on the stage. Secondly, the 'silhouettes' we are watching constantly evoke a sense of precarious balance, as when Vladimir and Estragon try to do the 'tree', a balancing exercise from yoga, or when all four characters end up prostrate in a heap and they are unable to get up. Furthermore, the awkwardness which characterizes the clown and, in particular, the clumsiness

of gesture which forms part of the role are used by Beckett to *create significance.* Especially effective is the sense of physical discomfort which centres on Estragon's struggles with his shoes and Vladimir's difficulty with his hat. The ill-fitting boots and dilapidated derby hats which Beckett's tramps clearly inherited from Charlie Chaplin become a means of concretizing half-mockingly, half-seriously, the struggles of essential man with the material world which he cannot control, his sense of discomfort with his physical presence in the world, his 'thereness' or being in the world.

Finally, the role of clown in which Beckett casts his characters has yet another interesting implication which J-J. Mayoux (1967:20) explains as follows:

> Le clown, c'est justement, l'acteur pur, non point l'interprète d'un rôle, mais celui qui fait son 'numero', entendons sa parodie personelle de l'homme, de la vie, des comportements.[16]

As clown, the actor is separated from an 'impersonization' of a particular individual. His parody of life, man and human behaviour in general is non-illusionistically 'enacted' in the presence of *spectators who are included in the 'act'.* The kind of *Verfremdungseffekt* we have here is, however, very different from that aimed at by Brecht. In case the spectator should be tempted to sit back and merely laugh at the antics of two clown-like tramps on the stage, the scenic illusion is deliberately broken on several occasions by the sarcastic humour of the actor. For example:

> *Estragon*: Endroit délicieux. *(Il se retourne, avance jusqu' à la rampe, regarde vers le public.)* Aspects riants. *(Il se tourne vers Vladimir.)* Allons-nous-en.[17]

(Beckett 1952:16)

or:

> *Vladimir (regard circulaire):* L'endroit te semble familier?
> ... *Tout de même* ... cet arbre ... *(se tournant vers le public)* ... cette tourbière.[18]

(p. 18)

And once again, once more referring to the 'place' where they find themselves:

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Estragon (soudain furieux): Reconnais! Qu'est ce qu'il y a à reconnaître? J'ai tiré ma roulure de vie au milieu des sables! Et tu veux que je vois des nuances! *(Regard circulaire.)* Regarde-moi cette saloperie! Je n'en ai jamais bougé![19]

(pp. 85–86)

The laugh is clearly on the spectator as well, who is uncomfortably made aware that he is *part of* the bleak landscape evoked. In other words, the *regard circulaire* of the actor encompasses the inner landscape which is the basic condition of 'unaccommodated' man, shared by stage characters and spectators alike. A feature of absurdist drama is, then, its conception of role as parody. The character/actor, ironically aware that he is playing a role, is an essentially modern phenomenon. What is achieved is an *undercutting of any role-identification* and, by implication, *any value system underpinning the role.*

In Fugard's *Boesman and Lena* (1969) the elaborate self-parody of the characters has a dual function. They mock the whites and the 'system' by affecting an exaggerated servility, but they also mock themselves in their degradation. The sarcasm or irony implicit in their 'role playing' undercuts the underlying scheme and hence its intrinsic meaning.

Pinter, in *The homecoming* (1965), debunks civilization itself. The play seems to start on a solid naturalistic base. Initially both the set and the behaviour of the characters lead one to expect a mundane drama with a conventional familial role distribution. However, the tensions created through the dialogue and telling gestures soon shatter this illusion as the hidden motivations of the characters are allowed to surface. Pinter's use of the *ironic mode* becomes evident: underneath the seemingly ordinary, civilized behaviour of the characters primitive passions are revealed, and each situation develops into a dramatically powerful struggle for dominance. The contradictions in the references to Jessie (the dead mother) and Ruth (the 'visiting' daughter/sister-in-law) are operative on two levels. On the surface there are the conventional clichés, the ready-made 'romanticism' of the idealized mother figure. But beneath the conventionalized roles and relationships lie the primitive impulses, desires and confrontations of the male and female principles. Ruth, who functions on an instinctual level, recognizes the need of the males for the female who functions both as whore and mother and this increases her

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manipulative power. From another angle, but on an equally basic or primitive level, the males are locked in a power struggle. Max, the aging male, is dimly aware of his diminishing powers. His position is threatened by the younger males. So what Pinter is actually showing are areas of *interaction* that lie beneath the veneer of civilized behaviour with its set roles underpinned by societal conventions, norms, so-called moral values. He exposes the *subliminal desires and conflicts* that operate beneath the *clichéd responses* mouthed by the characters.

Finally, a playwright such as Genet *questions the reality of any role and consequently any underlying meaning.* His is a theatre of total illusion. Whereas Pirandello, throughout his oeuvre [cf. in particular *Cosi è se vi pare* (1918)], and Max Frisch [cf. *Andorra* (1961)] also explore illusion in relation to the problem of identity, showing the interchangeability of appearance and reality by means of dramatic parables, Genet assumes that identity can only exist *as* a role one chooses to play. The role is, however, determined by *the image formed by 'les Autres'* (the Others). In Genet's scheme man does not create meaning by fully assuming his chosen role, and so creating himself. He merely *plays* at being what he is, acting out a role assigned to him by himself and others. But he does not become the role; he acts out the image of the role. Coe (1968:19) sums up Genet's vision as follows:

> Appearance *is* reality, argues Sartre. Appearance is *more* than reality, counters Genet: the mask is more real than the face; to pretend to act, or to act a pretence, is more essential than sincerity — in a word, all reality is theatre, and the subtleties of showmanship are the *ne plus ultra* of integrity.

The act or gesture seems to exist for Genet as an autonomous power (Magnan 1966:136–137). Its essential symbolic significance lies in its potentiality to transform whoever performs it into the *archetypal image* portended by the act or gesture in question. But, as Genet insists equally on the blankness behind every action, his 'personae' can never *be* the Image. They can only reflect the image of the Image. Hence his obsessive interest in *travesty*. 'My characters,' says Genet, 'are all Masks. How do you expect me to tell you whether they are true or false?' (Quoted by Hassan 1971:280.) He cannot, because the mask and the face present a dichotomy. The mask is the image and behind the image is the void.

The *theatre* is the *perfect symbol* for Genet's vision. That is why his plays are concerned with the theatrical event as a theatrical event. The actors playing their roles project an image which we, the audience, attribute to them. They are only projections of what we condemn them to be. As Archibald, who compères *Les nègres* (1958), subtitled a 'clownerie' by Genet, states:

> Nous sommes sur cette scène semblables à des coupables qui, en prison, joueraient à être des coupables.[20]

<div align="right">(Genet 1963)</div>

The roles of the Blacks projecting the image of Blackness can only be played out as the mirror-opposite of the Whites (the audience) whose presence is required to confirm and ratify the image of Blackness. The audience is deliberately identified as 'white' and attention is drawn to the role-playing of the actors:

> Vous êtes Blancs. Et spectateurs. Ce soir nous jouerons pour vous .... La distance qui nous sépare, originelle, nous l'augmenterons par nos fastes, nos manières, notre insolence — car nous sommes aussi des comédiens.[21]

The roles of the Blacks project the image of Blackness by a white audience. Conversely the Blacks on stage also have their image of Whiteness. As Martin Esslin (1966:170) points out:

> The white audience in the theatre is confronted by a grotesque mirror image of itself on the stage. The Negro actors stand between two audiences of whites. The stage audience consists, however, of the Negroes' fantasy image of the white man, embodied in the hierarchy of power in a colonial society — the queen, haughty and remote; her governor; her judge; her missionary; and her valet, who plays the part of the artist or intellectual who lends his services to the hierarchy of power while not strictly belonging to it. It is significant that queen, judge, bishop and general (the governor is a military man) are identical with the figures of the hierarchy of power in *The Balcony.*

The 'spectacle' which is to be performed will be a symbolic rejection of 'whiteness'. The play will be a rite of death in which the nostalgia and sadness which is all that remains of 'white' values will be 'embellished', that is to say ritually done to death. However, the outrage

upon the sensibilities of the Whites is seen as necessary for the self-realization of the Blacks:

> *Archibald*: ... Puisqu'on nous renvoie à l'image et qu'on nous y noie, que cette image les fasse grincer des dents.[22]

(p. 57)

What is more, the opposition of Black and White must be seen as polarities: 'white' is positive, 'black' is negative; love is 'white', hatred is 'black'. Hence for the Black, love is a temptation which has to be repulsed. The force of *rapprochement* must be resisted through deliberate effort in the opposite direction. Against the 'white' world of necessity, harmony and law, Genet posits the opposing principle of gratuity, chaos and irrationality, symbolized by hatred and the dream of the ultimate gesture of revolt and rejection, murder. But in spite of the intricately worked out symbolism involved in the black/white dichotomy, the 'ceremony' derisively draws attention to itself as a mockery in order to make the audience feel that what they are watching is merely a distorted mirror-image, a grotesque clownerie. Even the form of the play moves against itself: form becomes anti-form and ritual anti-ritual as Genet pursues his dialectic of rejection with ruthless consistency.

The whole series of masquerades which make up the play is, in fact, a *parody of role-identification*. That is why the drama is constantly transformed into a play within a play, within a play. Archibald reminds the audience:

> Un comédien ... Un Nègre ... s'ils veulent tuer, irréalisent même leurs couteaux.[23]

(p. 164)

The 'distantiation' which Genet labours to achieve is part of his *reduction* of all *reality* to the *illusory nature of the theatrical event*. Genet's whole play is, in fact, a brilliant exploitation of the topos in which the world is compared to a theatrical performance. The theatre is based on illusion, and so, Genet implies, is the world. Behind the illusion is the Void. This is visually enacted when the central symbol of the play, the catafalque, is at a given moment suddenly revealed as two chairs over which a white cloth has been draped. This revelation, of course, deflates the last vestige of dramatic tension built up round

the idea of the 'murder' of a white woman by the Blacks, thus helping to reduce the whole spectacle to empty clowning. At the same time the very element of clowning, which is operative throughout the play, becomes an aesthetic medium through which Genet can stylize his vision of the world. In other words, the clownery 'corporealizes' the *reductio ad absurdum* of reality itself. Not only the actors, however, but also the audience are cleverly drawn into the circle of factitious 'role playing'. The simultaneous interaction of three separate groups — the Blacks, the Court , and the Audience — is almost Pirandellian. At one point the audience is directly drawn into the action when a member of the public has to step on to the stage to hold the knitting of Diouf as the *petite bourgeoise* while 'she' gives her imaginary performance of a Gounod melody on an invisible piano. At the end of the elaborately worked out dramatic game of masques which is the play, we have watched Diouf as well as the other *dramatis personae*, that is, the different members of the cast, pass through a bewildering array of travesties, each one of which has merely served to lead us deeper into Genet's Hall of Mirrors.

In *Le balcon* (1955) Genet focuses even more specifically on the notion of role-playing. The setting is Madame Irma's brothel, the Grand Balcony, which is really a 'house of illusions' — a hall of mirrors to which the customers come to act out their fantasies of power and sex. The brothel is 'also a kind of theatre, with Madame Irma as its producer and impressario' (Esslin 1966:164). The element of theatricality is evident in the emphasis on the props to be provided and the supporting cast which is necessary for the role transformations. In accordance with Genet's vision, the role can only be realized as a mirror-reflection of the image determined by 'the Others'; so there has to be *reciprocal role-playing between spectator and actor*, between paying customer and pandering performer. What is implied by the play as a whole is that all the world is a brothel. The role-playing of the characters in Madame Irma's brothel-theatre is no more real — or unreal — than that of their counterparts in the 'real' world. The actress who plays Madame Irma makes the point explicitly in her parting shot at the audience near the end of the play:

> ... il faut rentrer chez vous, où tout, n'en doutez pas, sera encore plus faux qu'ici ... [24]

<div align="right">(Genet 1968:135)</div>

III REVIEW (Jeanette Ferreira-Ross and Michael Macnamara)

What considerations has this reconnaissance of SRM, done in relation to drama, brought to light? Many different veins could be traced, but to offer just a few examples:

1 In *general* terms, it is suggested that SRM may be used as an explorative 'viewing apparatus' through which various aspects of drama may be considered from a new perspective and be more sharply perceived. Two such aspects are the shifts in focus on, and depth of attention to, the various components of SRM.

To exemplify this:

(a) Drama, by its very nature, is public and — in a sense — a communal art form. It therefore necessarily reflects, or comments on, the central preoccupations, or the very conception of existential meaning, of the group or society whose presence is implicit. (Cf. the satirical elements in the comedies of Shakespeare, Jonson or Molière — not dealt with in the present context.)

(b) The SRM viewing apparatus reveals a clear shift, in attitude, from a simple acceptance of an existing motivating scheme — say an early ancestral type — to the scrutiny and even rejection of an extant well-developed scheme. An instance is the criticism and dismissal of the traditional ethical-theistic scheme by the non-theistic existentialists.

(c) Also revealed is a wide ontological shift in underpinning schemes, from the paternalistic medieval one, through the late 19th-century vision of a hostile world, to the 20th-century conception of an absurd universe.

(d) Quite noticeable is the increasing complexity, concomitant with the increasing complexity and/or fragmentation of the underpinning scheme, of the role component. This component ranges from the simple and complete role-identification of earlier types, through the splitting of the representative univocal role into a multivocity of roles, to the conception of role as parody.

(e) Then there is the variation, during the history of drama, of another kind of factor: the nature and degree of involvement of specta-

tors/audience, say from the group-bonding involvement in early ritual, via the subsequent conception occurring in the 'two worlds' (fourth-wall) approach to drama, to various techniques of distantiation. The effect of audience distantiation is to stimulate critical awareness and objectivity, to jolt the audience into a recognition of role manipulation within the parameters of the presented scheme, so that the scheme itself is undermined and the spectators'/audience's own role is reassessed.

(f) Moving to a different dramatic-theoretic level: individuals have roles in a project or play; but, as anticipated in Section I and illustrated in Section II, drama itself has a role in the framework of society, and perceptions of this role have varied widely according to times and dramatic trends. The earlier manifestations of drama almost invariably confirm the spectators'/audience's world view, whereas later drama tends to encourage a questioning of any underpinning scheme.

2 From a *philosophical* viewpoint, the following further sample of considerations may be offered:

(a) Reference to examples from drama has thrown light on the scheme-role *model* of existential meaning itself. To instantiate:

 (i) As shown in both Sections I and II, each of the key terms 'scheme' and 'role' is substantially multivocal. Neglect of this fact would (as analysts have long been generally aware) easily lead to conceptual confusion and the manufacture of pseudo-problems in talk about existential meaning.

 (ii) A single-role/single-scheme model of meaning is inadequate: multiple roles and schemes — existing in harmony, isolation or conflict — occur both in drama and real life (apologies to the absurdists). Where there is a tension between roles, this strain can result in either a loss (cf. Hamlet) or a generation (cf. Everyman) of existential meaning. Nor need one role dominate the others (cf. Chehov). Moreover, there are roles within roles within ... (cf. Genet).

(b) Though one can focus attention on either of the concepts 'scheme' or 'role' to the seeming exclusion of the other, the two concepts are, in at least one interpretation, really polar: one could not have the notion of an operative human scheme without the notion of

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people having roles in it; nor could one have the parameters of a going, non-closet drama without actresses/actors performing roles in it. Looking at the other side of the coin: if an actress is said to have some role, then *in what* scheme or drama is her role defined? In similar vein, one may question whether certain dramatists can justifiably imply, without further ado, that a mask can be false or 'true' (Genet), or that appearance and reality are interchangeable (Pirandello). *What* is it that a mask conceals or disguises? And what is it that something is an appearance *of*? Have there, or have there not, been inadvertent terminological shifts in the dramatists' theorizing?

(c) There are, besides the 'epistemological' considerations above, also moral ones. To indicate two:

  (i) The imposition of roles — engineered in whatsoever fashion — can have a decidedly corrupting effect by bringing about a loss of identity or a lapse into bad faith (cf. Marivaux's Silvia and Arlequin).

  (ii) As the big schemes that power the conduct of individuals, or even societies, change — for instance, from the medieval Christian world view to the existentialist or absurdist ones of the 20th century — so the very conception of the moral role, 'the moral life' itself, alters accordingly. And sometimes a change in schemes itself results from an individual's electing to act outside the received roles.

Several questions that are implicit or explicit in Sections I and II have, of course, been left dangling for want of elbow-room. To end with one such dangler, though one of the more elevated and comprehensive kind: What would a depth study of the revealed facets of the SRM concept, made with specific reference to two major world views — say the ethical-theistic world view as well as the scientific-deterministic one — bring to light, both as regards the two world views and the scheme-role model itself?

Notes

1 Man is an actor; play is the expression of the reality which he lives.
2 I am indebted to Prof E. J. de Jager and Mr V. Z. Gitywa of the University of Fort Hare for background information, detailed observation, as well as for the exact words and their translation as used in the ceremony.

3 I have done what I had to do, I do what I must. (My translation)
4 ... and Death, that rots
My eyes of clearness, to the day they soil
Restores its purity. (Racine 1960c:225)
5 ... Rome has her rights
My lord; have you not yours? (Racine 1960c:161)
6 Compel your love to silence: with an eye
Enlightened both by honour and by reason
Look on my duty in its sternest guise. (Racine 1960c:158)
7 ... I loved, my lord.
I loved, I wanted to be loved ... (Racine 1960c:171)
8 ... I shall go on living now.
I shall obey your absolute commands.
Farewell, my Lord. Reign. I shall not see you more.
(Racine 1960c:171)
9 I love him, and I flee him. Titus loves me,
And he forsakes me ... (Racine 1960c:172)
10 For the crystallization of these insights I am indebted to D. W. Lloyd, *The tragic sense of Eugene O'Neill*, MA dissertation, Unisa, 1982.
11 Each man must invent his path.
12 You see me, men of Argos, you understand that my crime is wholly mine;
I claim it as my own, for all to know, it is my glory, my life's work, and
you can neither punish me nor pity me. That is why I fill you with fear.
(Sartre 1962:315)
13 Human life begins on the far side of despair.
14 In the first Act Didi wears a black jacket, which is much too small for him
and which obviously belongs to Gogo, with his well-fitting, striped trous-
ers; Gogo, in turn, wears a much-too-big striped jacket from Didi's
wardrobe with his well-fitting black trousers. In the second Act the arti-
cles of clothing are switched around. A similar inverted relation applies
to the costumes of the other pair: Pozzo's trousers with the lozenger pat-
tern typical of the circus clown go with Lucky's jacket. 'We are mankind'
— this sentence is made evident through the costumery.
15 The costume has no harmonious proportions. The exaggerated, ridiculous
details sketch an unbalanced silhouette, misadapted to the world, or
rather, corresponding to the marginal universe created on stage. The body
and the clothing in themselves convey the elements of the gestural and
the meaning. The character, more than being defined, is concretized by
the silhouette which designates him.
16 The clown, precisely, is the actor pure and simple, not the interpreter of
the role, but someone who performs his 'act', that is, his personal parody
of man, life, behaviour.
17 *Est:* Charming spot. *(He turns, advances to front, halts facing auditori-
um.)* Inspiring prospects. *(He turns to Vlad.)* Let's go. (Beckett 1955:13)
18 *Vlad: (looking round).* You recognize this place?
... All the same ... that tree ... *(turning towards the auditorium)* ... that
fog. (Beckett 1955:14–15)

19 *Est: (suddenly furious)*. Recognize! What is there to recognize? All my lousy life I've crawled about in the mud! And you talk to me about scenery! *(Looking wildly about him)* Look at this muckheap! I've never stirred from it! (Beckett 1955:61)

20 On this stage we're like guilty prisoners who play at being guilty. (Genet 1960:32)

21 You are White. And spectators. This evening we shall perform for you .... We shall increase the distance that separates us — a distance that is basic — by our pomp, our manners, our insolence — for we are also actors. (Genet 1960:12)

22 *Arch:* ... Since they merge us with an image and drown us in it, let the image set their teeth on edge! (Genet 1960:32)

23 An Actor ... a Negro ... who wants to kill turns even his knife into something make-believe. (Genet 1960:86)

24 ... You must now go home, where everything — you can be quite sure — will be falser than here ... (Genet 1962:96)

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Curriculum vitae

Michael Raymond Harley Macnamara

PERSONAL

Born in Bloemfontein, 1925.
Schools: Waterkloof House Preparatory School and Pretoria Boys' High
School.
Married to Amy. Two sons, Robert and James.

DEGREES

Studied for all his degrees through Unisa. BA (1961) cum laude; BA
Hons (1962) cum laude; MA (1963) cum laude; DLitt et Phil (1969).

THESES

M: *Ryle's concept of philosophical analysis.* xiii + 157 pp.
D: *Trying: a conceptual analysis.* vii + 161 pp.

LECTURING, RESEARCH AND COMMUNITY SERVICE

(1)   Joined the Philosophy Department, University of South Africa
in 1964. Lecturer 1964–67; Senior Lecturer 1967–74; Professor
1974–89; Head of Department, 1981–89; Emeritus Professor, from
1990. Co-ordinator, master's and doctoral studies in philosophy,
1981–89.

(2)   Doctoral research at University of Oxford, Director Gilbert Ryle,
1966.
Origination and co-ordination of joint small-group research in
philosophy, University of South Africa, 1983–89. The latter research
involved co-operation with members of several other Unisa depart-
ments and members of external bodies, including the CSIR (physics
and fundamental standards), University of the Witwatersrand (Zoo-
logy Department), and Transvaal Museum (palaeontology and evolu-
tion).

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(3)   Community service included contributing the opening lecture, 'What is a "great philosopher?" ', to the first of an explorative series, *Six great Western philosophers*, presented publicly by the Institute for Continuing Education, Pretoria, 1989.

(4)   Started interdisciplinary discussion group (T-group) at Unisa, 1976. Responsible for selecting themes, organizing programmes and meetings and leading discussions. This informal inter-departmental group ran annually for 13 years (1976–88) and had a floating membership drawn from primarily the following Unisa departments: African Languages, Chemistry, Classics, Communication, English, Geography, German, History, History of Art and Fine Art, Library and Information Science, Linguistics, Mathematics, Musicology, Philosophy, Physics, Political Science, Psychology, Romance Languages, Semitics and Sociology. There were various spin-offs, for example into books, articles and study guides.

PUBLICATIONS

Books, contributions & communications

Philosophy

1976. *Philosophy, life and meaning.* Pretoria: Unisa (Miscellanea No. 7). vi + 28 pp. Inaugural lecture.
1977. *Life and meaning* (editor and contributor). Johannesburg: Ad Donker. 188 pp. Paperbook edition. 1987.
1980. *World views* (editor and contributor). Pretoria: Van Schaik. viii + 333 pp.
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Creative writing and arts

1976. *The falls run back* (poetry volume). Johannesburg: Ophir/Ravan. 48 pp.
1981. *Joggo & Jezz*, including *The butterflies* and *Twelve J/J fragments* (poetry volume: 4-decker, in *Bateleur Poets* series). Johannesburg: Bateleur. 53 pp.

1985. *Walter Battiss.* Co-editor (with K. Skawran). Johannesburg: Ad Donker. 222 pp., 57 colour plates, 100 black-and-white figures. Including co-authorship (with J. Wilkinson & I. Powell) of chapter 2, 'Battiss and understanding: the philosophy of art', pp. 30–39.

Articles and academic letters

These include the following:

1955. Variable high-pass filters. *Electronics & Wireless World,* 61(2):71.
1965. The psycho-physical problem. *SA Journal of Philosophy* (old series), (2):1–8.
1965. On the pattern a:b::c:d in analogical reasoning. *SA Journal of Philosophy* (old series), (3):91–96.
1967. Can machines produce art? *De Arte,* 1(2):28–35.
1967. A look at truth. *Unisa English Studies,* (4):41–58.
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1973. The meaning of L: return of another exile? *Unisa English Studies,* 11(3):33–43.
1977. The inception of the research project. In A. Louw (ed.), *Perspectives on post-graduate tuition.* Pretoria: Unisa, pp. 20–25.
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1984. Homer's wine (puzzle of the wine-dark sea). *Nature,* 307 (5952):590.
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1986. World views and mathematics (co-authors W. Kistner & J. Boers). *SA Journal of Philosophy*, 5(3):75–82.

1987. Logic and poetry (co-author W. Kistner). *Journal of Literary Studies*, 3(2):78–93.

1988. Hobbes and existential meaning (co-author Z. Postma-de Beer). *SA Journal of Philosophy*, 7(1):9–17.

Unisa study guides

Dates of first editions only are quoted:

Philosophy II & III:

1968. Metaphysics: a conceptual-analytical approach. vii + 156 pp.

1970. Logical atomism. iv + 23 pp.

1971. Materialism and atomism. vi + 271 pp.

1972. Life and meaning. Guide 1. v + 156 pp.

1973. Meaning in life. Guide 2. A survey of views. viii + 154 pp.

1976. World-pictures. vii + 123 pp.

Philosophy honours:

1973. Existentialism. 11 pp.

1974. The empiricists. 43 pp.

1974. Imagination. 21 pp.

Papers read at various institutions, congresses and symposia

These include the following:

1967. 'Machines and art'. Symposium, University of South Africa.

1968. 'Imagination'. Annual Congress of Philosophical Society of Southern Africa, University of Lesotho.

c. 1969. 'Effability and ineffability'. Seminar, University of South Africa, English Department.

c. 1970. 'Representation (in art)'. Seminar, University of South Africa.

c. 1971. 'Atomism'. Address to students, University of the North.

c. 1971. 'Censorship'. Association of Arts, Pretoria.

c. 1971. 'Censorship'. PEN, Cape Town. Trip funded by anonymous donor.

1972. 'Tolstoy and meaning in life'. Rotary, Pretoria.

1975. 'Life and meaning'. University of Natal, Philosophy Department, Durban campus.

1981. 'Time standards'. Annual Congress of Philosophical Society of Southern Africa, Rand Afrikaans University, Johannesburg.

c. 1981. 'Tolstoy's Ivan Ilych'. University of the Witwatersrand, French Department.

1982. 'Logical positivism and existentialism'. Philosophical Society, University of the Witwatersrand.

1982. 'Determinism, fatalism and freedom'. RAU, English Department.

1983. 'Evolutionism'. Annual Congress of Philosophical Society of Southern Africa, University of the Witwatersrand.

1987. 'Legitimacy (in political philosophy)' (co-reader Z. Postma-de Beer). Annual Congress of the Philosophical Society of Southern Africa, Rhodes University.

1989. 'Drama and scheme-role meaning' (co-reader J. Ferreira-Ross). Annual Congress of the Philosophical Society of Southern Africa, Human Sciences Research Council, Pretoria.

Talks at departmental philosophy seminars (Unisa)

1981. 'Creation and representation, with reference to high-fidelity sound reproduction'.

1982. 'Concept of trying'.

1983. 'Theory assessment'.

1985. 'The "substratum" in physics, with reference to Dirac'.

1986. 'Logic and poetry'.

1987. 'Concepts of mystery and wonder'.

1988. 'Logic, art and transformation'.

1989. 'Energy in physics' (based on an earlier discussion with the physicist E. Halliday).

Talks to interdisciplinary discussion group (Unisa)

Discussions led included the following first-of-series talks:

1976. 'An LP lyric' (analysis).

1979. 'Imagination'.

1980. 'Evaluation'.

1982. 'Concept of revolution'.

1983. 'What is "What is 'What is X?'?"'?
1986. 'Is "relevance" relevant?'
1987. 'Towers and market-places'.
1988. 'Form and content: a notional reconnaissance'.

Poetry (creative writing)

(1) About 180 poems published in local and overseas journals and magazines, including: *Bloody Horse, Contrast, De Arte, Edge* (Canada), *English Academy Review, Expression* (England), *Labris* (Belgium), *New Coin, Ophir, Purple Renoster, Unisa English Studies, UpStream,* and *Workshop* (England).

(2) Poems reprinted in local and overseas anthologies, including:

1968. *Poet* (India), eds K. Srinivas & D. Botes.
1968. *Unisa English studies,* ed. R. Beeton.
1974. *Central almanac* (New Zealand), ed. P. Davies.
1979. *New book of SA verse in English,* eds G. Butler & C. Mann.
1981. *Century of SA poetry,* ed. M. Chapman.
1981. *Twenty-three SA poems,* eds R. Beeton & W Saunders.
1983. *Quarry,* ed. W. Saunders.
1986. *Celebrating friendship* (England), eds B. Frost & P. Webb.
1986. *Paperbook of SA English poetry,* ed. M. Chapman.
1988. *Give me words,* ed. A. Stones.

(3) Poems reprinted, or translated by others, in journals, magazines, newsletters, study guides and tutorial letters (English), and the press.

GENERAL

Unisa exhibitions for honours and master's studies. Grants for postgraduate research at Oxford University from British Council, Ernest Oppenheimer Memorial Trust, and Unisa.

Member inter alia of Philosophical Society of Southern Africa, English Academy of Southern Africa, Unisa Art Gallery Management Committee; one-time member of the Philosophical Society, Oxford, and Aristotelian Society, London; one-time member of Poets' Workshop, London, and Workshop Two, London.

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External examiner, levels bachelor to doctor, at various times and for various universities, including Natal (Durban and Pietermaritzburg campuses), Witwatersrand, and RAU.

Initiator, visiting professor (overseas) programme in Unisa Philosophy Department, 1983–88. Visitors: Brian Farrell (Oxford), Richard Hare (Oxford/Florida), Richard Rorty (Princeton/Virginia) and Joseph Bocheński (Fribourg).

Chairman, Pasquino Society (formed to promote access to the arts in South Africa), 1969 & 1970.

Co-origination (with W. Saunders & P. Horn) of the poetry 'little magazine' *Ophir*.

Poetry read by invitation at various venues, including English Academy Conference (Rhodes, 1969), SA Institute of Race Relations, Johannesburg, and University of the Witwatersrand. Poems broadcast in various SABC series.

Chief pre-academic experience, 1942–63: technical posts (electronics, physics) in coastal and airborne radar (Special Signals Service, SACS, SA and Egypt, World War 2), SABS, and CSIR (Research Institute for Mathematical Science).

Private cultural trips: Egypt and Palestine, 1945; Britain, Eire and France, 1949; Britain and Europe, 1966; Greece, 1983.

Interests: many, including literature, drama, art, music; physics, electrical and mechanical engineering, scientific cosmology.