Ethics and the Challenge of Secularism:
Russian and Western Perspectives

Russian Philosophical Studies, VI
Christian Philosophical Studies, IV

Edited by
David Bradshaw

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INTRODUCTION

DAVID BRADSHAW

The papers contained in this volume were presented at a conference entitled "Ethics and the Challenge of Secularism: Russian and Western Perspectives" held at the University of Notre Dame, Indiana, May 25-26, 2012. The conference was sponsored by the Society of Christian Philosophers, the Institute of Philosophy of the Russian Academy of Sciences, and the Biblical-Theological Commission of the Moscow Patriarchate, with the generous support of a grant from the John Templeton Foundation. The Philosophy Department and Center for Ethics and Culture of the University of Notre Dame served as gracious and genial hosts. It was the eighth in a series of joint Anglo-American/Russian conferences on various topics organized by the Society of Christian Philosophers. The proceedings are scheduled for publication in Russian in *Philosophy of Religion: An Almanac 2012-2013*, ed. Vladimir K. Shokhin (Moscow: Vostochnaya Literatura Publishers).

The papers are published here in the order of their presentation. Besides the conference papers, two invited commentaries at the end reflect synoptically upon the entire conference. The first paper, that by **Tim Mawson**, examines the grounds for philosophical interest in religion within a secular society, and in particular whether the issue of God's existence is intrinsically important in a way that would justify its continuing exploration even by convinced theists and atheists. Perhaps surprisingly, Mawson concludes that it can be shown to be intrinsically important in this way only given certain controversial assumptions regarding the relative value of different possible worlds. He suggests, however, that *thinking* about the question of God's existence may be intrinsically important apart from such assumptions, inasmuch as it brings one closer to a knowledge of the truth, and that this (together with various extrinsic benefits) is sufficient to warrant an important place for philosophy of religion even within a secular society.

The next paper, that by **Vladimir Shokhin**, turns more directly to the conference theme of ethics. It begins with a critical review of the contemporary philosophical literature on gratitude, contrasting the "juridical approach," which sees gratitude as a form of justice owed to benefactors, with the "contrajuridical approach," which sees it as a general outlook on life that is worth cultivating for its own sake. Both views offer something of value for understanding the further, and more specifically religious, practice of thanksgiving to God. Shokhin argues, however, that such thanksgiving cannot simply be subsumed within

gratitude (however understood), for it possesses a distinctive character in light of the categorical difference between creature and Creator.

Alexander Razin then offers a probing examination of the psychological processes involved in moral choice. Razin defends the classical (and especially Augustinian) view that evil is never chosen for its own sake, but consists most fundamentally in rebellion against legitimate authority. By the same token, to choose the good requires that one see one's choice not as an arbitrary assertion of will, but as submission to an "external authoritative source of good," which Christianity identifies with God. Razin argues that a metaphysical assumption of this sort is necessary to ground even such moral commonplaces as that there is a duty to perpetuate the human race. On the other hand, such assumptions remain assumptions only, and are always subject to revision in light of the progress of knowledge.

Ruben Apressyan examines a particularly problematic tenet of Christian morality, the commandment "Resist not evil" (Matt. 5:39). He argues that it is only one side of a coin, the other side of which is an "ethic of retaliation." The latter includes, at a minimum, submission to divine judgment ("Vengeance is mine, saith the Lord") as well as a duty to recognize evil and pray for God's judgment upon it. The ethic of retaliation thus illustrates the fundamentally dialogical – as well as pervasively theological – character of Christian morality, "a morality that even in this world is mediated by God." Apressyan adds that the ethic of retaliation also includes a corporate responsibility to resist evil by force, and that pacifists such as Tolstoy fundamentally misconstrue the dialogical character of Christian ethics, substituting for such an ethics their own form of moralizing utopianism.

Christian Miller turns to issues of moral psychology, in particular the prevalence of the virtues and vices. Drawing upon recent empirical studies of cheating, he describes the extent to which the behavior of most people can be modified by simple cues such as recalling from memory the Ten Commandments, signing an honor code, or even sitting in front of a mirror. He argues on this basis that both honesty and dishonesty, considered as enduring states of character, are in fact quite rare. Miller concludes by observing that – given the importance that most ethical theories place on becoming virtuous – ethicists must face what he calls the "Realism Challenge," namely that of describing realistic and empirically informed means by which people can improve their character.

The next two papers address the moral and religious situation in contemporary Russia. **Andrey Shishkov** argues that the distinctive form of secularization that Russia underwent under Communism has given a unique cast to its currently ongoing desecularization, one in which the privatization of religion and the return of religion to the public sphere

are inextricably linked. He adds that this process will inevitably be seen as a growth in the worldliness of the Church, even though it is essential to the desecularization of society. **Fr. Vladimir Shmaliy** provides a brief history of social and political discourse in Russia since the fall of Communism, emphasizing the contribution made by the Russian Orthodox Church through a series of documents presenting the Church's basic framework for understanding human freedom and dignity. He observes that both the religious and secular sides of the ongoing discussion need to make a serious effort to improve their mutual engagement: the Church by developing a more systematic moral theology, and non-believers by seeking to understand religious concepts and motivations in their own terms.

David Solomon continues the discussion of secularization and the reaction to it, focusing on the role played by academic philosophy (and especially ethics) in the West. He describes the sudden entrance of secular philosophy into public ethical debates in the early 1970's. Remarkably enough, in light of the ensuing history, this entrance was originally prompted by the hope that philosophical rigor and expertise could resolve disputes that had otherwise proven intractable. Solomon cites bioethics as an example of the failure of such hopes, and indeed the tendency of philosophy to intensify disputes by raising them to new levels of sophistication. He suggests that the sudden burgeoning and wide influence of applied ethics may be one cause of our current "culture wars."

The volume closes with two commentaries summarizing and reflecting upon the conference as a whole. **Robert C. Roberts** offers a number of perceptive remarks regarding the nature of secularism and the difficulties facing Christians within the secular world. Commenting upon Fr. Shmaliy's paper, he observes that, despite a sincere desire for dialogue between the Church and secular society, it is hard to see how such dialogue can avoid having "the character of *proclamation* on the part of the Church, and of polite *tolerance* on the part of the secular thinkers." Vladimir Shokhin's examination of gratitude and thanksgiving highlights part of the reason for this impasse, in that Christian and secular thinkers have not only different premises, but different ethical dispositions. Indeed, one of the challenges facing Christians is precisely to preserve and cultivate such a distinctive disposition despite their own immersion within secular culture. Roberts calls attention in this regard to the importance of the traditional spiritual disciplines of prayer, self-examination, and Scriptural meditation. He likewise takes one lesson of David Solomon's paper to be that Christians ought not simply to adopt secular ethical systems, but to use them as aids in sharpening their own reflective capacities while developing a distinctively Christian ethics.

Bruce Foltz concludes the conference with a number of searching questions regarding the foundations of ethics in a secular world. Drawing upon Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age*, he identifies the distinctive feature of secularism as the pervasive assumption that religious belief is optional and so cannot serve as the basis for a shared public understanding. Religion, then, cannot serve as a foundation for ethics – and if it cannot, what can? Reviewing briefly the succession of unsuccessful attempts to answer this question, Foltz observes the chilling nature of the ethics propounded by the most thoroughly secular contemporary thinkers, such as Peter Singer and the advocates of transhumanism. He finds it significant that a number of leading secular philosophers – Derrida, Vattimo, Habermas, Žižek – have urged, despite their own unbelief, the necessity of religion for the moral and political sphere. But if they are right, what does this say about the coherence of secularism itself?

On behalf of the conference organizers, I wish to thank the participants and the John Templeton Foundation for their contribution to producing a successful conference, as well as the Council for Research in Values and Philosophy for undertaking to publish the present volume. I also wish to thank my assistant, Tamara Patterson, for her assistance in organizing the conference and preparing these proceedings. I invite the reader to share in the fruits of this challenging and engaging discussion.

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CHAPTER I

IS WHETHER OR NOT THERE'S A GOD WORTH THINKING ABOUT?

TIM MAWSON

Those who believe that there is a God may be expected to agree with those who believe that there is not on many evaluative claims: for example, health and knowledge are important goods; disease and ignorance are important bads. And thus theist and atheist alike may be expected to cooperate in the pursuit of many ends: for example, supporting hospitals and universities. But of course there will be other issues on which we should not expect agreement to span the theist/atheist divide. For example, theist and atheist, by the very fact of their agreeing that divine worship is an intrinsic good only if there's a God worthy of worship, will thus disagree on the issue of whether or not it's intrinsically good to support synagogues, churches, or mosques in what most who regularly attend them would conceive of as their most important function. Perhaps atheists could be led to agree that divine worship encourages a healthy humility even if it's directed, as they suppose it is, towards a non-existent being. Perhaps they could be further led to agree that divine worship produces this benefit more effectively than any alternative. But even if so, that would be showing atheists an *extrinsic* good brought about by divine worship and thus giving them reasons to support it only indirectly. Worship would have been shown to be a good not in virtue of the thing towards which it was directed being worship-worthy, but in virtue of the activity of worshipping producing this other benefit. In this respect the psychological benefit would be similar to the economic benefit which might come from preserving a historically interesting church as a tourist attraction. The reasons would be similar to the reasons resultant from that about which theists and atheists might also agree, and, having agreed, thus cooperate in supporting acts of divine worship could these be shown to be the best means to the end of preserving the tourist attraction in which it takes place.

Ethics may be defined in a variety of ways. I shall take it rather narrowly, to mean the body of what are sometimes called 'first-order' moral evaluative claims, e.g. 'It'd be good to build these people a hospital'; 'We shouldn't burn down their church'. Secularism too may be defined in a variety of ways. I shall equate secularism simply with atheism. So understood, a challenge that secularism poses to ethics

generally is whether various ends which we were able to cooperate in pursuing in a less secular age will be able to be so pursued in the more secular age that many believe us to be entering in the West. Those of us who work in this area of the Philosophy of Religion will naturally find ourselves asking, 'Is philosophical investigation into the issue of whether or not there is a God more like health and knowledge? Can it be reasonably and directly supported by theists and atheists alike? Or is it perhaps more like divine worship? Can atheists only be brought to support it, if they can be brought to support it at all, indirectly, in virtue of demonstrating to them that it has some extrinsic benefit?' The answers to these questions may have implications for the place of this part of the discipline of the Philosophy of Religion within what we might think of as increasingly-secular academe. Should any respectable university be expected – even in a 'secular age' – to have at least some people working on and teaching this area, for – regardless of whether or not one believes in God – one can reasonably conclude that whether or not there is a God is, in its own right, an important issue and thus thinking about it is a worthy enterprise? Or can the issue only commend itself for attention across the theist/atheist divide for the extrinsic values that thinking about it promotes? If so, we might fear that we shall find this area of Philosophy stripped out from many if not all respectable universities. Seminaries and the like would be left to continue with philosophical reflection on the supposed fact that God exists and atheist think-tanks and the like would be left to continue with philosophical reflection on the supposed fact that he doesn't. Of course, such a fear would not survive reflection on the mutually-agreeable extrinsic reasons for studying the Philosophy of Religion for of these, I accept, there is a superabundance.

Let us grant for the sake of argument that natural theology may be taken to be a lot of arguments that don't work for something that doesn't exist and as such may be taken to be no more intrinsically worthy of our attention than the intricacies of the various conspiracy theories that explain how regular visitations by intelligent extra-terrestrials have gone largely unreported. Even so, theists and atheists should agree that the debates over natural theology have, when considered as an object of study, certain extrinsic advantages that alternatives (e.g. the study of conspiracy theories) do not have. As a subject, natural theology better hones skills in analytical reasoning; it better encourages the reading of the works of the great philosophers of the past; it better introduces students to a broad range of meta-ethical and metaphysical issues; and so forth. The case for the continuance of the investigation of whether or not there's a God within secular academe can be made to theist and atheist alike – made and, it seems to me, won – on these grounds alone. But can it also be made to theist and atheist alike – and won – on the grounds of

the intrinsic importance of the issue of whether or not there is a God? Is it important to think about whether or not there's a God not just because *thinking* about the issue brings important extrinsic benefits, but because *the issue* is intrinsically important? That's the question that I'm focusing on at the moment.

The question that I really want to make progress with then is this:-

> Can it be established that it's intrinsically worth thinking about whether or not there is a God prior to establishing whether or not there is a God?

Philosophical thinking is, I take it, the best sort of thinking there is, so this is really the question of whether or not this area of the Philosophy of Religion can be established as an intrinsically worthy undertaking prior to establishing that there is (or that there's not) a God. In order to proceed, we need then to see what can be done to establish the importance of the issue of whether or not there's a God.

So, the first question I'll look at is this:

> Can the question of how important it is whether or not there is a God be answered prior to answering the question of whether or not there is a God?

In answering this, our first task must be to obtain clarity over what we mean by importance. To this end, I want to draw a distinction between two different sorts of importance, impersonal and personal importance.[1]

My colleague Guy Kahane, to whose views I'll return more substantively later, is worth quoting as a starting point. He gives a good insight into how we would most naturally consider the notion of the impersonal importance of 'whether or not' issues when he says this: – 'If much is at stake in the question of God's existence – if different answers mean that things are far better or worse – but little is at stake in this way in the question of whether numbers exist, then disputes about the latter are, in one obvious sense, less important.'[2]

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[1] All cases of impersonal importance might necessarily be person-affecting; discovering whether or not they are would require elongated investigation.

[2] G. Kahane, 'Value and Philosophical Possibility', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, forthcoming, page 2. All page references are to the versions of his papers available to download from his webpage. (http://www.philosophy.ox.ac.uk/members/research_staff/guy_kahane)

Suppose, by way of a slightly more mundane example, that we're considering how important it is whether or not a relatively small meteorite will hit and kill a given person in five minutes time.[3] This issue has a certain level of importance from what we might roughly think of as 'the point of view of the universe', what I call 'impersonal importance'. It has it in virtue of its being the sort of issue that in itself affects the value of the world to a certain extent. If such a meteorite does hit, the world will be a worse place than if it does not but the world is in all other respects the same. It may be that, in addition, the issue of whether or not such a meteorite will hit has what we might call by contrast 'personal importance' for all of us individually – through the principle that no man is an island, entire unto himself; every man's death diminishes every other. It certainly has personal importance for the given person (unless, perhaps, he or she is indifferent over whether or not he or she lives). Be all that as it may, whatever it is that gives this issue the level of impersonal importance that it has must surely give the following issue even more impersonal importance: the issue of whether or not a relatively large meteor will in five minutes time hit the Earth and kill *all* its inhabitants. This issue certainly has personal importance for each of us (or at least each of us who isn't indifferent over whether or not he or she lives). If you are the given person who'll be hit by the first meteorite, then the first issue could have as much personal importance to you as the second. It could, but most aren't that narrowly egoistic – we'd prefer to be hit by a meteorite that killed just us (leaving those others we care about alive), rather than be killed by a meteor that simultaneously killed everyone else. But most of us probably would personally prefer a meteor to kill several hundred people in a far off country of which we know nothing than for a smaller meteorite to kill us. We would prefer this whilst not being so deluded as to our own grandeur as to think that a small meteorite taking us out would leave the world impersonally a worse place than would the larger one taking out several hundred.[4]

Now obviously whether or not there is a God is an issue which is personally important through being personally interesting to some – professional philosophers of religion, in particular. And obviously some of those to whom it is thereby personally important are theists and some

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[3] This person is in themselves entirely average, i.e. they are not some 'world-historical' individual.

[4] Thus it is that Victorian Englishmen were in the habit of reading with a certain sort of detached excitement – 'Impersonally, this is going to be important; personally, it's not' – articles under newspaper headlines, characteristic of their time and place, such as the following: 'Earthquake Kills Thousands in China. No Englishmen Affected.'

are atheists. But it's a fair assumption that the vast majority of those who take a great personal interest in the subject and thus generate for themselves its personal importance only do so because they think that it is impersonally important. And thus a discovery that it wasn't impersonally important would make it considerably less personally interesting to them. It wouldn't immediately make it less personally important to them, but it would with time make it so.

Consider, by way of illustration of all this, the philosopher who is the most personally important to me: me. I've devoted the majority of my working life to considering the issue of whether or not there's a God, but I've done so on the assumption that the issue of whether or not there is a God is a very impersonally important issue. There are other areas of Philosophy I could have specialised in and to which I could even now switch. (The terms of my fellowship oblige me only to teach and research Philosophy; they don't specify any area of Philosophy.) If the issue of whether or not there's a God is – contrary to my working assumption – not impersonally important, then the fact that it's not impersonally important is very personally important to me. It means that I've spent my working life looking at an issue which is not impersonally important when that's precisely what I wanted *not* to do and when I could have spent my working life looking at an issue which *is* impersonally important. (This is assuming *some* issue in Philosophy is impersonally important; surely there must be one![5]) But of course the discovery that the issue of whether or not there is a God is not an impersonally important issue would, in relatively short order, cease to be of pressing personal importance, as I resultantly shifted my attention to other areas of Philosophy. 'Discovering the subject matter of my earlier work didn't have impersonal importance *was* very personally important to me', I would soon say, 'in that it redirected me to more impersonally important issues, those on which I now dwell. But that it didn't have impersonal importance isn't of continuing great personal importance; *that*'s not something on which I now dwell.'

So, the interpretation of the question – 'Can the question of how important it is whether or not there is a God be answered prior to answering the question of whether or not there is a God?' – on which we should focus takes the notion of importance in the impersonal way. Taking it in the personal way affords an answer which is too easy – 'Yes, of course; after all, it's just obvious that some people take a great personal interest in the issue, so great an interest that it must be accorded personal importance to them (and that some such people are theists whilst some are atheists)'. It is too easy, but it is also an answer which reveals, on reflection, something cogent to the question as we should

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[5] Though see last note.

interpret it. Most of these people only take a personal interest (and thus generate this personal importance) in the issue because they suppose it to have great impersonal importance. Thus if we cannot settle the issue of how impersonally important it is whether or not there's a God in favour of its really having great impersonal importance prior to settling the issue of whether or not there is a God, we cannot reasonably hope that this personal interest will continue unchanged whilst the prevalence of belief in God changes. And thus we cannot reasonably hope that *any sort of importance at all* will continue to be reasonably accorded to the issue of whether or not there is a God.

Secondly, how are we to judge the impersonal importance of an issue raised by a whether-or-not-x-obtains question? The impersonal importance of such an issue is, I suggest, a matter of the extent and manner in which the world is better or worse if the particular hypothesis under consideration is true relative to how it would be if the hypothesis is false. This manner of thinking seems relatively non-problematic for everyday, contingent, issues. We might reconsider our two meteorites for an example. For another example, we could consider the following. We learn from the newspaper that ours is a world with a certain disease and we ask ourselves how important it is whether or not there's a cure for this disease. To find out the answer, we look into the nearest world in logical space in which there is a cure and see how much better that world is relative to the nearest world in which there's not. The better the first world is than the second, the more important is the issue of whether or not there's a cure. Thus I take it that we'll readily agree that the issue of whether or not there's a cure for a disease that affects relatively few and causes only minor skin blemishes in those whom it does affect (I presume there is one) is less important than the issue of whether or not there's a cure for cancer. Kahane has addressed the issue of God's importance in these terms, telling us that it 'turns on the comparative value of possible worlds; of worlds in which God exists … and worlds in which He doesn't'.[6]

Now this immediately sounds more problematic than Kahane seems to allow with these comments.[7] Both theist and atheist[8] will agree that God's existence is either necessary or it is impossible – the theist saying it's necessary; the atheist, it's impossible. In either case, one of the required comparator worlds is judged to be impossible, i.e. is judged not

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[6] G. Kahane, 'Should We Want God to Exist?', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, forthcoming, page 3.

[7] In fairness to him, it should be noted immediately that he *does* discuss this issue in other comments; we'll come to his discussion in a moment.

[8] Of course there are honourable exceptions, but I ignore them in what follows.

to exist anywhere in logical space. Thus theist and atheist alike will insist that no comparison can be made. It looks then as if *neither* theist *nor* atheist can say that the issue of whether or not there's a God is an impersonally important one as neither theist nor atheist can consistently think that much 'turns on' it, that the world would be a much better or a much worse place depending on whether or not there's a God. *Nobody* should think that whether or not there's a God is important and that thereby the question of whether or not there's a God is worth thinking about. This is, to me, a surprising result.

My surprise in this result is diminished by reflecting on the fact that this conclusion, should we let it stand (and in a moment I'll challenge it), is compatible with the theist consistently saying that the fact that there is a God is a very important fact. Indeed he or she can say that plausibly it is the most important fact in the actual (and every possible) world, in virtue of its bringing to the actual (and every possible) world various valuable properties. He or she may say that the fact that there is a God is worth thinking about, even more worth thinking about than any other issue is worth thinking about. It's just the issue of *whether or not* there's a God that's not worth thinking about, for which the necessary comparators are not all available. (Again, I speak only of whether or not it's worth thinking about because the issue is intrinsically thought-worthy; it may be – indeed I have suggested is – worth thinking about because the action of thinking about it brings extrinsic benefits.) Similarly, the atheist who accepts this conclusion may say, consistently with that acceptance, that the fact that there's not a God is a very important fact – though it's hard to see why he or she would say the most important fact – in the actual (and every possible) world. He or she can maintain this in virtue of maintaining that it brings to the actual (and every possible) world various valuable (or 'dis-valuable') properties. The fact that there's not a God is worth thinking about. It's just the question of whether or not there's a God that's not worth thinking about, for which the necessary comparators are not all available. (And again, I speak only about the intrinsic thought-worthiness of the issue; he or she can allow that thinking about it has various extrinsic benefits.)

In other words, one could accept this conclusion, yet still think that one set of the more 'partisan' thoughts going on in seminaries and atheist think-tanks is non-problematically worthy. And one could still think that the discipline can find a place in secular academe, agreed across the theist/atheist divide on *extrinsic* grounds. In virtue of the extrinsic benefits of thinking about it, both theist and atheist can then agree that *thinking* about whether or not there's a God may be important without whether or not there is a God being important. But the conclusion that whether or not there's a God isn't important (and through its importance thereby intrinsically worth thinking about), even

if it leaves all that in place, is still surprising. And it is still, to me, worrying. Can we resist it?

Kahane himself is alert to the fact that one might argue that one cannot compare necessities with any alternative and thus cannot think that anything valuable turns on whether or not they obtain. He believes though that that such an objection can be sidestepped. Indeed he seems to believe it can be sidestepped in three distinct ways.[9] None of these ways seems viable to me, for judgements of impersonal importance at least.

At one stage, Kahane suggests that we can value logical impossibilities.[10] But whilst this seems true for 'valuings' that may generate personal importance, it doesn't seem to be so for ones that we can reasonably think are reflective of impersonal importance. So, let's suppose that Goldbach's conjecture cannot be proved. This necessary truth might annoy me; my morbid reflection on it might be a cause of constant mental anguish. Conversely, I might take delight in it; it might please me continuously to reflect on it. That much is certainly true. But in doing neither of these things am I comparing my state in the actual world with my state in a world in which the impossible (there being a proof) is necessary (there couldn't not be a proof) and finding that I'm more or less pleased in the actual world than I would be in that other world. Insofar as I realize that it's a necessary truth that Goldbach's conjecture cannot be proved, I cannot think of my personal like or dislike of the fact as revelatory of the impersonal importance of whether or not Goldbach's conjecture can be proved.

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[9] Kahane's own position is somewhat unclear, perhaps due to its changing over the two papers in which he addresses the issue. His position may be that all three of these ways work (that's how I, on balance, read him). But it may be something weaker: that at least one works; that at least one probably works; that it's epistemically possible that at least one works and (somehow) that's enough. Kraay and Dragos discuss these *en passant* in their 'On Preferring God's Non-Existence', unpublished at this time. They 'assume that these comparisons can (somehow) be made' (page 4) and move on, though they note there are 'deep questions here'. I take it that they wish to indicate with this that they too worry that there are problems with Kahane's account and qualified-defence of Anti-theism (the view that it'd be bad – even if ultimately just personally for some people – were there a God) other than those which they then go on to detect in his argument.

[10] 'I shall assume that we can intelligibly value … impossibilities', G. Kahane, 'Should We Want God to Exist?', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, forthcoming, page 3.

At another stage, Kahane suggests that we can treat these as epistemic possibilities.[11] Naturally some very-convinced theists (and some very-convinced atheists) won't take it as even epistemically possible that there's not a God (or that there is a God). But that won't be true for most theists (and atheists); *a fortiori* for agnostics. This is true, but again irrelevant to judgements of impersonal importance. Judgements of what's to me epistemically-possibly impersonally important cannot ground judgements of what's really impersonally important any more than the judgement that it's to me epistemically possible that Goldbach's conjecture does have a proof can ground the judgement that it's possible that it has a proof and thus (given that the possibly necessary is necessary) necessary that it does.

Finally, Kahane suggests that we can evaluate distinct but 'adjacent' possibilities and extrapolate from these judgements to the impossibilities.[12] But it seems to me that when it comes to the difference between hitting a real logical possibility and missing any, a miss by an inch is as bad as a miss by a yard because one cannot distinguish inches from yards here. What really lies 'adjacent' – in Kahane's terms – to the logically possible? Nothing.

There is an alternative way in which one might seek space within which to say that the issue of whether or not there is a God is an impersonally important one: by taking what is perhaps a somewhat unorthodox view of the modal landscape, construing metaphysically possible worlds as a proper subset of logically possible.[13] On this view, worlds in which people use the sorts of time-machines that H.G. Wells introduced to science fiction, for example[14], are logically possible, but

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[11] 'They describe … epistemic possibilities – ways in which things might turn out to be (even to necessarily be), for all we know. These epistemic possibilities will still be open to agnostics, or even to uncertain believers.' G. Kahane, 'Value and Philosophical Possibility', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, forthcoming, page 8.

[12] 'Finally, even if impossibilities are resistant to valuation, our evaluative attitudes might still find a legitimate target. Suppose, for example that the concept of an omnipotent, omniscient and perfectly good being was incoherent. The existence of an immensely knowledgeable, powerful and benevolent being might still be a genuine metaphysical possibility, and value claims about theism could migrate to this adjacent possibility.' G. Kahane, 'Value and Philosophical Possibility', *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, forthcoming, page 10.

[13] I argue for this view in my *Belief in God* (OUP, 2005). Perhaps something like this is what Kahane had in mind with his last comment.

[14] Of course, one doesn't have to think that this particular thing is an example, just that something is. Another plausible contender for an example would be an actually infinite past.

they are not metaphysically possible. (Careful science-fiction writers can write consistent stories about such machines, but the fact that these stories can't be true is more than a contingency of the laws of nature.) So viewed then, when we enter in on the business of comparing the actual world with the closest possible world in which the claim that God exists has the opposite truth value, we must consider ourselves to be crossing the boundary between the metaphysically possible and the metaphysically impossible. But we can consider ourselves not yet thereby to have ventured outside the logically possible; there's still something to be doing the comparing with. How would this play out?

As a theist, I take it that in assessing how important it is whether or not God exists I must look to the closest world in which God does not exist, which is of course a long way out – past the last metaphysically possible world – and then judge of it whether it is significantly better or worse than the actual world. The border between those worlds which are metaphysically possible and those which are metaphysically impossible (whilst still being logically possible) is rather epistemically vague and, one must fear, arbitrarily drawn. If we put that batch of worries to one side for a moment and continue to have some confidence in our intuitions about what to say about happenings close to the border as responsive to the objective truth of what is happening there, we could see things in following fashion.

As a theist, it's perhaps most natural for me to say that in the closest world in which God doesn't exist, nothing else does either because it's a metaphysical necessity that there's a God and it's a metaphysical necessity that everything that's not God depends on God for its existence. So, get rid of the metaphysical necessity that there's a God (that's in itself taking me outside the metaphysically possible, of course), and I'm still left with the metaphysical necessity that anything that's non-God needs God if it's to exist. If so then, when I'm looking in logical space for the nearest world in which there's no God, the first one I'll come to is strict nothingness.[15] Now, if I have the view that value depends for its existence on God, then I'll say that there won't be any value in this world either. It won't, for example, be bad of nothingness that it doesn't have any free creatures in it basking in the beatific vision.

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[15] Kahane seems to want the theist to use as the comparator with the actual a world that is superficially exactly like ours – with e.g. planet Earth and people doing more or less what they are doing – but just without God and, I presume he'd say, without any metaphysical necessities that prevent there being a planet such as ours and so forth without God. But there's no real justification for choosing this as the comparator. That's a very distant world, deep in metaphysically impossible territory, that is well clear of the border between metaphysical possibility and metaphysical impossibility (if we think in these terms).

If I hold a person-affecting view of value, such that nothing can be good or bad unless there's someone for whom it's good or bad, then I'll again say that the world of nothingness won't have any value in it, for good or bad. But a theist who takes this view of the modal landscape; who holds one of the 'right' meta-ethical views (and there are several that would meet the bill here); and who has one of the right (and there are several again) first-order value judgements, e.g. that nothingness is worse than 'somethingness', can consistently think of the issue of whether or not there's a God as impersonally important. He or she may say of nothingness that it is significantly worse than the actual world. And the atheist of course will be in a similar position. In order to make the comparison, he or she can adopt this view of the modal territory, locating the nearest world in which there's a God outside the realm of the metaphysically possible, but yet inside the realm of logical possibility. And he or she too can have one of the 'right' meta-ethical views and a suitable first-order value judgement. The worries we put on one side earlier, that the border is epistemically vague and our judgements about it somewhat arbitrary, are cogent. And we may add to them the more basic worry that these metaphysical; meta-ethical; and first-order evaluative views seem 'under-motivated'. But despite all that, this is, I think, a way to preserve the intuition that whether or not there's a God is an impersonally important issue. Well, I say that it's 'a way'. Of course the views necessary to make it a way are – most of them anyway – the sorts of things that if wrong are wrong of necessity, and thus if they are wrong, it isn't really a way; it's just epistemically a way to those who haven't yet seen that it's not. So, unless you share these views, you should *not*, for the sake of consistency, after all think that this *is* a way to make the issue of whether or not there's a God come out as impersonally important.

Allow me to close by recapping. My title question is this: Is whether or not there is a God worth thinking about? I wanted to see if we could reach an answer to this question that was acceptable across the theist/atheist divide. Indeed, I wanted us to be able to do so and for the answer to be 'Yes'. Thus secularism as I'd defined it wouldn't threaten reflection on the issue. I haven't got what I wanted. First, I established that the issue of whether or not there's a God is only really going to be taken as important by theists and atheists alike if it can be shown to them to be impersonally important. Personal importance (which is easier to establish) just won't do the job, long-term anyway. But we cannot, I argued, reach agreement on the issue's impersonal importance across the theist/atheist divide. This is because neither theist nor atheist can come to any answer (unless the last way I sketched really is a way) as to how important it is. To decide that it's important whether or not A obtains, we have to find a significant value difference between worlds in which

A is true and worlds in which not-A is true, which means we have to conceive of both A worlds and not-A worlds as possible. But theists will think of worlds in which there isn't a God as impossible and atheists will think of worlds in which there is a God as impossible. Neither theist nor atheist then can do the comparison between worlds in which there is a God and worlds in which there isn't, the comparison required of them if they're to judge that whether or not there's a God is an important issue. Nor of course can an agnostic, who'll say of the relevant worlds that whilst they're all epistemically possible to him or her, of course at least one set must really be impossible.

The implications of this result should not be overstated. Accepting it is consistent with the theist maintaining that it is nevertheless absolutely valuable that there is a God. God's existence brings value, perhaps even all value, into the actual world and all possible worlds. And contemplating His existence is an intrinsically worthwhile activity. It's just that the theist cannot consistently say that it is 'relatively' good that God exists, in that it would have been worse if God hadn't existed. Thus nothing can turn on whether or not there's a God and thus whether or not there's a God cannot be worth thinking about for intrinsic reasons, as I have put it. And similarly, *mutatis mutandis*, for the atheist. The atheist can consistently say that philosophical reflection on the fact that God doesn't exist is intrinsically worthwhile; and so on. It's just that he or she cannot consistently say that philosophical reflection on *whether or not* there's a God is intrinsically worthwhile. And it is not even clear that we need to accept this result.

The view that we can think of the metaphysically possible as a proper subset of the logically possible offers some hope (at least for those epistemically uncertain about its impossibility, if it is impossible) for an alternative answer. It allows both worlds in which there is a God and worlds in which there is not inside logical space and thus allows them to be compared. With this sort of understanding of the modal landscape, one can in principle make the sort of comparison that is a prerequisite to judging that the issue of whether or not there is a God is an impersonally important one. But one needs to adopt in addition other controversial views, about trans-world value, and the right sort of first-order evaluative view. All of this will seem to many 'under-motivated'. Of course, if one has as one's starting point the 'obvious' truth that whether or not there's a God is a very impersonally important issue, one can run this part of the argument in reverse precisely to motivate them, concluding that the modal landscape and value is as it would need to be to make it come out true that whether or not there's a God is very impersonally important.

So, in short, if you want to maintain that the answer to my title question – 'Is whether or not there is a God worth thinking about?' –

can be agreed upon by theist and atheist alike as 'Yes' and you don't want to have to rely on such controversial assumptions, you'll have to do the following. Bring back into view the fact that thinking about certain issues that cannot agreed to be intrinsically worth thinking about can be agreed to be a worthwhile activity through a consideration of the extrinsic advantages of thinking about those issues. Even if it cannot be said (without relying on controversial assumptions) that the issue is worth thinking about because the issue is impersonally important, it can perhaps be said (without such assumptions) that the issue is worth thinking about because *thinking* about it is impersonally important. It's impersonally important to think about the issue of whether or not there's a God because thinking about it leads beyond it, to something of impersonal importance.

One thing theist and atheist can agree reflection on the issue of whether or not there's a God brings people closer to is knowledge of the truth-value of the proposition that there is a God. (Indeed what else could bring one closer to knowledge rather than just true belief?) Thus they can agree it facilitates people (perhaps of necessity better than anything else?) in knowing something which they may also maintain is intrinsically worthy of being known. The theist will identify this as the fact that there's a God (or possibly even just identify it as God). The atheist will identify it as the fact that there's not a God. The necessary first-order value judgement – that it's something impersonally important which people are thus brought to know – seems to me easier for the theist than the atheist. Theists have better (and more universally believed to be so within their community) arguments for the claim that, given theism, it is impersonally important to know the fact that there's a God. They have better arguments than atheists have for the claim that, given atheism, the fact that there's not a God is one it's impersonally important to come to know. So there'll be trouble reaching consensus spanning the theist/atheist divide this way. But then, as already mentioned, there are other – less troublesome – extrinsic benefits of thinking about the issue to which one can point. It hones skills in analytical reasoning; it introduces students to important thinkers; and so forth. Be all that as it may, I confess to finding this way of proceeding somewhat depressing. In particular, I confess to having found the conclusion that writing this paper has driven me to – that it's not impersonally important whether or not there's a God unless various controversial theses are true – somewhat dispiriting; that's certainly not what I'd *hoped* to show.

I'd hoped to show that all theists and atheists alike, not just ones who were willing to grant various controversial assumptions, could consistently count the issue of whether or not there's a God as very impersonally important and *thereby* worth thinking about. Thus I'd hoped to show that secularism as I'd defined it didn't threaten the

agreeable worth of philosophical reflection on the issue of whether or not there's a God. We who engage in this area of the Philosophy of Religion would then have no need to enter into the tawdry business of 'selling' our discipline on account of the extrinsic benefits it brings. And thus the place of this sort of Philosophy would have been relatively secured in an increasingly-secular academe. We wouldn't just be left with the activities of seminaries and the like on the one hand and atheist think-tanks and the like on the other, the common enterprise of investigating whether or not there's a God being justifiable to a wide body of theists and atheists alike solely through a consideration of its extrinsic benefits. But this hope has not been vindicated; it has been dashed. I have found what I have found and must reconcile myself to it. And I can do so – as yet only partially – by reflecting as follows. My hopes were based on a confusion (if my argument's right). The so-called 'world' in which it is important whether or not there's a God for theists and atheists alike without what are actually controversial assumptions needing to be true is an impossible world, logically so, i.e. is no world at all. My hoping that ours would turn out to be such a world was a bit like my hoping – as I did in fact hope when the conjecture was first put to me – that ours turns out to be a world where Goldbach's conjecture has a proof. By my own logic, it can't then be impersonally important whether or not my hope is vindicated; and now I've made that discovery, it will become increasingly personally unimportant to me that my hope is dashed. Or at least that is what I must now hope.[16]

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CHAPTER II

GRATITUDE AS THE FOUNDATION OF THEISTIC ETHICS

VLADIMIR K. SHOKHIN

When C.S. Lewis in the chapter of his *Mere Christianity* entitled "The Great Sin" insisted that no human vice is so revolting for others, imperceptible for ourselves, and surpassing in disruptiveness as pride or self-conceit, he was nearly right.[1] Right insofar as a person who is afflicted with this vice, which is a profound and highly infectious spiritual illness, crudely encroaches upon the dignity of others. A person sick with it does not mention it because it is enrooted in self-conceit, in illusion about oneself, and so is an impairment of which only a very rare person would make a declaration. But Lewis was not quite right because there is another vice that is partially connected with the former, but still more revolting. However unpleasant another person's self-conceit might be, we could sometimes suffer it when we find the least justification for it in that person's merits, while we admit no justification at all for ingratitude. Lewis was correct in his subtle observation that pride is more repulsive than other vices because of its "emulative character", which might lead one to seduce another's wife or ruin someone not because of one's insatiability, but only to abase one's neighbor; but ingratitude is something still worse, exploitation of someone as a thing to be thrown off after satisfaction of this or that need. Finally, as also in the case of pride, we very painfully sense ingratitude to us and very vaguely our own to someone else, but we feel it so keenly not only by reason of our self-esteem but also because it collides with our deep sense of justice which ensures a minimum of moral sense (at least at the level of estimation of another's deeds, if not of our own) in any human being, no matter how corrupted. Not only a person of mean morality but even a professional prostitute or killer would feel very hurt when betrayed, and betrayal is the last step of ingratitude.

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[1] *Lewis C.S.* Mere Christianity. Fiftieth Anniversary Edition. London: Harper Collins, 2002, p. 121-122.

Lewis was also justified in appealing to Christian morality and indicating the spiritual dimension of pride in his remarks that by it that "the devil became the devil" and that it was "the complete anti-God state of mind"[2]. But let us pay attention to some details of the Biblical narrative of the Fall. Even after Adam had been seduced by the offer *ye shall be as gods* (Genesis 3: 5) and broken the very first command given to him, God did not give up summoning him to self-restoration by the question, *Where art thou?* (3: 9). The catastrophe took place after Adam's answer, *The woman whom thou gavest to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I did eat* (3:12). Certainly, God was not led by a sense of revenge, because then he would not have been different from any limited creature, but more likely by his awareness that such evident ingratitude corresponded to a corruption that deprived man of communion with God. The Biblical story of the primordial sin has been regarded in Christian soteriology, beginning with the Pauline epistles, within the context of Atonement, the redemption of mankind from the devil's power (Colossians 1:13, etc.). But this very power has been understood not only in the juridical key but also in the "physical", as enslavement of mankind by means of a kind of "infection" which expressed itself, in the aforementioned words of the first man about his wife themselves, suggested, as it seems, from without. The fallen spirit who tempted man, in his own falling-away from God, also was not grateful to his Creator for the boons he had received, probably because he also, in accordance with his own logic, had not asked for them. So ingratitude entered the world, in the Christian perspective, before the first man.

It is only natural for any ethicist to work on what moral intuition suggests to everyone, and for a theistic ethicist also to listen to Scripture. So it would also be natural for the notions of gratitude and ingratitude to occupy a prominent place in both secular and theistic ethics. But this is only an assumption which needs verification, and to examine it will be among my purposes in this paper. First, I will classify the principal positions of contemporary English-speaking ethics on gratitude against the background of classical ethics. Then I will pass on to critical examination of the essential results of contemporary ethical reflection while paying attention also to the "challenges of secularism" to which the present conference is dedicated. Finally I will offer my own comparison between gratitude to people and thanksgiving to God in order to touch those horizons of the topic to which at best only scarce attention has been paid.

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[2] Ibid., p. 122.

1. Lacking time to scrutinize the basic positions of classical ethics on the topic of gratitude, I confine myself to observing that there was little work on the subject by comparison with that on others such as the cardinal virtues and vices, duty and obligation and the moral law, and that the main attitudes elaborated over many centuries can be schematized in a more or less transparent map. Such a map covers only gratitude to people, because thanksgiving to God has not been honored with attention from the side of philosophers, even Thomas Aquinas who dealt with gratitude more than anyone before and after him[3]. The main reasons for this neglect were that (1) all relations between man and God were considered as belonging properly to theology rather than to ethics, and (2) the lack of thanksgiving to God was not thought of (in my opinion, because of some lack of reasoning) as a mortal sin deserving separate consideration[4].

As regards gratitude to people, Spinoza's view, i.e., gratitude as an emanation of friendly love[5], can be opposed to those of the overwhelming majority who viewed gratitude as a dimension of justice, that is, a rational and more or less proportional retribution to a benefactor. The latter view has a solid historical foundation, as one can see in Aquinas's reference to Cicero to support his view that gratitude (*gratia sive gratitudo*) is a special kind of justice[6]. Within the framework of the gratitude-as-justice view two comprehensive attitudes can be distinguished. Whereas Aristotle regarded it as a justice based on a contract[7], Seneca, Aquinas, Hobbes, Smith and Kant emphasized charity from the side of a benefactor. Again, among the latter group we can distinguish between Hobbes[8] and Smith[9], who underscored outward recompense and calculation of moral debts owed by the beneficiary, Seneca[10] and Aquinas[11], with their emphasis on inner recompense, and Kant, who regarded both kinds of gratitude as equally fitting to the

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[3] See: *Summa Theologica* II/2, q. 106, a.1-6.

[4] The whole scheme of the seven (as in the West) and eight (as in the East) mortal sins includes such a comparatively innocent vice as a gluttony while omitting such infernal, in the final analysis, vices as will to power (which is not the same as pride) and its opposite servility or cruelty (which is not the same as anger). But this is a separate topic.

[5] *Ethics* IV.71.

[6] *Summa Theologica* Ibid., a.1. Cicero's early treatise referred to by Aquinas is: *De inventione* II.

[7] *Nicomachian Ethics* 1133a 1-5, 1167b 23-24, 1211b 22-24.

[8] *Leviathan* I.15.

[9] *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* II.1.1-4.

[10] *Epistulae morales ad Lucilium* LXXXI, 10, LXIII, 9, 21, 23; *De beneficiis* II.34-35, III.6-17, VI.9 etc.

[11] *Summa Theologica* II/2, q. 106, a. 5-6.

notion of moral duty[12]. Finally, within the context of so called ethical epistemology, one can oppose to Smith who, in spite of his sensualism, leant against calculative rational demonstration in cognition of justice in gratitude[13], and Hume, with his suggestion that a species of self-evident intuition should be a criterion in our judgments regarding gratitude and ingratitude[14].

In spite of contemporary analytical philosophers' lack of interest in gratitude (as compared with interest in duty, obligation, moral action, etc.), gratitude is being slightly thematised as a separate topic in ethics, and this novelty makes it understandable why it is only now that representatives of different approaches polemicize with each other, while in the classical epochs we have nothing like real controversy on the subject. Nor is there any deficiency in referring to the classics: contemporary philosophers not only discuss the views of Aristotle, Seneca, Hobbes and Kant, but the very format of analytical philosophizing (here as everywhere) reproduces that of scholasticism, particularly in the juxtaposition of opposite views on the same topic including polemics with not only real but also virtual opponents. There has also been a rise of interest in the social dimension of gratitude, for example, in controversy on whether we should comply with the law out of gratitude to the state[15]. This in turn raises a wider issue, that is, whether an individual can be grateful not only to another individual but also to institutions. In the same vein there is the question of whether we should also fulfill Divine commandments out of gratitude to God. But the basic classical polarization of approaches to gratitude remains, I mean the attitude of those who elaborate it as a specific kind of justice and those who somehow try to widen its "narrow juridical" understanding.

The "juridical approach" expresses itself in attempts to calculate accurately which motives on the part of a benefactor warrant gratitude, as well as the "matter and form" that would make gratitude suitable and proportional to the benefit received. In my opinion, analytical philosophers have not overcome Aquinas in this regard (in spite of their rarely referring to him) and only amplify what he has already discussed.

The Aristotelian understanding of gratitude in the framework of simple reciprocity is explicated rarely, one example being the well-known D.A.J. Richards' *A Theory of Reasons for Actions* (1971) where

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[12] *Metaphysic of Morals* II.1.2.1. § 31-32.
[13] See: *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* II.1.4.
[14] See: *Treatise of Human Nature* III.1.1.
[15] A. Walker who is a champion of this view refers to Plato (*The Crito*) and John Stewart Mill, but they touched the theme only in passing while discussing other topics.

the first species of obligations of gratitude is equated with fairness, when the question is about children's obligation to look after their aged parents or about obligations to reciprocate hospitality[16]. A more influential discussion has been Fred Berger's seminal article "Gratitude" (1975), wherein, in opposition to a "contractarian" understanding, he states that we may not demand gratitude and when we talk about a debt of gratitude at all, it is a debt of a very specific quality[17]. Nevertheless, to be grateful with good reasons some definite "indicators" are to be taken into account: (1) *Y* has done something for *X* that really benefits *X*; (2) what *Y* has done was voluntary and involved sacrifice or at least concession from his part, while a grateful response from *X* to *Y* should explicate that (3) X regards what he has received from *Y* just as a benefaction, and (4) *X*'s attitude to *Y* is of such a kind that their mutual relations, founded on reciprocity, could be built into the foundation of a moral society. What is of importance is that reciprocity should not be an exchange of "equivalents", but in some cases (e.g., in relations between children and parents) a simple "Thank you!" or simple gestures like handshaking[18].

A. Simmons in his book *Moral Principles and Political Obligation* (1979) specifies the conditions of justified gratitude as follows: (1) *Y*'s benefit must be intentional (not accidental); (2) it must be voluntary; (3) *Y* must not be motivated by self-interest; while (4) *X* should wish the benefit which is granted and not (5) not wish the benefit provided by *Y*. As to the obligation of gratitude, it consists in considering the interest of the benefactor in the future[19]. P. Camenish specifies, further, that gratitude loses justification when benefits are provided out of duty and insists that it is suitable only if *X* accepts what *Y* has done[20]. Claudia Card in «Gratitude and Obligation» (1988) wholly accepts Berger's main lines and tries to make out whether "debts of gratitude" can be paid off and in what sense they can be "payable" at all, especially bearing in mind that their payment "from duty" manifests just the lack of gratitude[21]. While rejecting "the paradigm of a debtor" in gratitude (that of Aristotle and Kant) and preferring "the paradigm of a trustee or guardian" (in her opinion, suggested by Hobbes), she raises a

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[16] *Richards D.A.J.* A Theory of Reasons for Action. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971, p. 173-175.

[17] *Berger F.R.* Gratitude // Ethics, 1975, Vol.85, N4, p. 306.

[18] Ibid., p. 301-303.

[19] *Simmons A.J.* Moral Principles and Political Obligation. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979, p. 171-172, 185.

[20] *Camenish P. F.* Gift and Gratitude in Ethics // Journal of Religious Ethcis, 1981, Vol.9, p. 2, 16.

[21] *Card C.* Gratitude and Obligation // American Philosophical Quarterly, 1988, Vol.25, N2, p. 116-117.

question about criteria of "deserved" and, correspondingly, "misplaced gratitude". Card's article is not too "transparent", but it leaves the impression that in, her opinion, gratitude is not due to benefactors who are not worried whether beneficiaries really want to be benefited[22]. A.D.M. Walker in "Political Obligation and the Argument of Gratitude" (1988), in controversy with Simmons on the question whether one should be grateful to the state, which he resolves in the affirmative, blames his opponent for regarding gratitude as a "requital" or "repayment" and emphasizes that it is more a unity of inner attitudes.[23]

According to Terrance McConnell, the author of the only monograph on the subject, *Gratitude* (1993), gratitude of a beneficiary to a benefactor results from three elements: (1) commensurate return in a proper time (though not equivalent in the strict sense), corresponding to real needs of the benefactor; (2) an action from "good reasons" and (3) appropriate inner attitudes along with cultivation of fitting feelings[24]. McConnell is concerned about two main "juridical" problems, that is (1) whether it is appropriate to praise anyone for gratitude and blame for ingratitude given that our feelings are not in our power, and (2) how gratitude could be combined with such a criterion of morality as impartiality? To be worthy of gratitude a benefactor should meet almost those conditions whereon also Berger insists. But McConnell is so careful as to put also a question whether a girl should be grateful to her rich benefactor if he is sponsoring her study in a college and she receives his benefits not because she wants to be educated but only to satisfy her parents (so their motives don't coincide). To this he answers "Yes". Nevertheless, he answers "No" (not without hesitations) on the question whether one can demand of someone to feel gratitude to anyone[25]. In turn, Gudrun von Tevenar in "Gratitude, Reciprocity and Need" (2006) answers in the negative the old question about the equality of requital and demonstrates why Kant was wrong in his insistence on it, leaning on the inability of the poor to be grateful to their benefactors in any proportion. In such a case she (jointly with Seneca whom she doesn't cite) considers a sincere "Thank you!" quite sufficient and, in addition, she tries to make out who would be here benefactors and beneficiaries. In opposition to Kant, for whom beneficiaries even grateful should forever remain debtors of those who have passed ahead of them in their benefits, Tevenar states that «benevolent agents, if they are indeed

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[22] Ibid., p. 124.

[23] *Walker A.D.M.* Political Obligation and the Argument from Gratitude // Philosophy & Public Affairs, 1988, Vol.17, N3, p. 200.

[24] *McConnell T.* Gratitude. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 1993, p. 52.

[25] Ibid., p. 59-61.

benevolent, would rightly be much concerned if, as a consequence of their benefit, recipients are put under obligations from which they could never be relieved»[26]. She insists on a clear separation of gratitude from reciprocity without denying that in some cases they can coincide with each other.

It was the afore-mentioned Walker who became the first to attempt a considerable widening of the scope of gratitude, firstly in his essay "Gratitude and Gratefulness" (1980-1981). Here he sought a middle way between the positions of Richards, attaching importance to outward manifestations of gratitude and ignoring feelings, and that of Berger, showing in some sense an opposite scheme. That Richards is not right is evident from the fact that reciprocity and requital are hardly to be combined with sincerity in gratitude, and therefore the superiority of Berger's position is evident. On the other hand, Berger's position prevents us, according to Walker, from being grateful to those who benefit us involuntarily (here he declares Aquinas as his ally), and from being grateful to our benefactors in secret, not for show.[27] But Walker's main point is that "the calculative approach" is in contradiction to our natural moral movement insofar as it does not take into account such cases when our gratitude must be *for anything* and not necessarily *to someone*. For example, I can be thankful in the doctor's consulting room that my illness turns out to be nothing serious; yet while I thank the doctor for telling me this, I should not be thankful to him personally. Likewise a sailor happily thrown out on the shore by a freak wave will not desist from expressions of gratitude to his fellow seamen or the local villagers. Similarly, we call ungrateful someone who grudges against everything in his existence even if we don't suppose that he should be grateful to someone for his life. Again, "what, for instance, of the cricketers who are grateful that the overnight rain has transformed the wicket and allowed them to use their spin-bowlers on the last day of the match; or the picnickers grateful that the sunshine has dispelled the mist and revealed the panoramic view from their picnic spot?"[28]. All of this makes us identify *gratitude* as a species and *gratefulness* as a genus, and the former as gratefulness with a personal focus. This genus is very wide and its limits are determined only by such considerations as that a "requital of gratefulness" should by no means be obligatory, and that it is connected with goodwill very closely.

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[26] *Tevenar G. von.* Gratitude, Reciprocity, and Need // American Philosophical Quarterly, 2006, Vol.43, N2, p. 186.
[27] *Walker A.D.M.* Gratefulness and Gratitude // Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society, New Series, 1980-1981, Vol.81, p. 41-45.
[28] Ibid., p. 45-46.

Saul Smilansky in the essay "Should I be grateful to You for Not Harming Me?" (1997) avows that the ethics of justice narrows the space of morality to interrelations of "human atoms" while leaving behind the scene the widest links of humans and reducing moral relations to something like bargains. He argues that the answer to the question stated in the title of his paper is yes if one takes into consideration that not only conscious benefits but also not harming others demands effort and self-sacrifice[29]. Having in view positions of Berger and Card (see above), Smilansky constructs the image of a hypothetical opponent who argues that this widening of recipients of gratitude could «overpopulate our moral world», making us debtors of people quite unknown for us, without taking into consideration that, for example, careful drivers only do their duty, that people chiefly care only about themselves, and so on. Nevertheless, he considers such arguments suitable only to show the difference between not harming and philanthropy, but not to repudiate his thesis.

But the most vehement assault on "moral legalism" was launched by Patrick Fitzgerald in his detailed manifesto, "Gratitude and Justice" (1998). The majority of publications on gratitude hold that we should be grateful to somebody only in a very limited number of cases. The author calls in question three basic foundations of the "juridical approach" as advanced by Berger, Card and their followers: (1) gratitude ought to be a response to a benefit; (2) such a benefit ought to be given from an appropriate motivation, usually benevolence; (3) such a benefit ought to be either wanted or accepted by a beneficiary. It is natural, therefore, that both gratitude and ingratitude are discussed usually in the context of legalistic concepts of desert, merit and debt. Meanwhile the main motivations for widening the application of the feeling of gratitude become evident from three types of counterexamples of "not legalistic gratitude". To begin with, Christianity teaches us to forgive our enemies, while Buddhism makes a further step and summons us to be grateful to them just for their evil deeds. The present Dalai Lama, e.g., declared many times his gratitude to his persecutors, the Chinese, because they have given him good opportunities to practice love for his enemies, and sometimes he also thanks them for their help in his cultivating patience and "his development as a person". There are no reasons, asserts Fitzgerald, to be suspicious concerning his sincerity[30]. Another example is the famous Japanese monk-dissident Nichiren (thirteenth century A.D.), twice banished and all but beheaded by the Japanese government

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[29] *Smilansky S.* Should I be grateful to You for Not Harming Me? // Philosophical and Phenomenological Research, 1997, Vol.57, N3, p. 587.

[30] *Fitzgerald P.* Gratitude and Justice // Ethics, 1998, Vol.109, N1, p. 124, 151-152.

because of his sermons on the significance of the *Lotus Sūtra*, which had been underestimated by contemporary Buddhists. He regarded his persecutors as his benefactors and their persecution a step necessary for his ascent to the state of enlightenment. It is evident that Chinese had no desire to benefit Dalai -Lama and that the Japanese authorities had no such motive in case of Nichiren[31]. Finally the acknowledgement of Dr. David Hilfiker, "I am beginning to realize that we in medicine need the poor to bring us back to our roots as a servant profession," also falls out the juridical context. In the latter case Buddhist counterparts are also helpful: our gratitude to those benefited by us does correspond to a bodhisattva's debt to all living beings without whom he couldn't have applied the whole mass of his charity[32]. To these main "contrajuridical examples" Fitzgerald adds others for illustrative purposes. So the girl Faye who suffered much when a child from her unjust and cruel father might be grateful for him in her adult life because of his involuntarily providing her with conditions for her training and perfection of her moral character[33].

This shift of focus provided by Fitzgerald's examples led him, I believe, to move attention from the question of *to whom* one should be grateful to that of *for what*. This is evident in his list of possible justifications of gratitude: (1) the promotion of justice inasmuch as ingratitude is to be regarded as unfairness; (2) the prevention of a harm or burden; (3) the acquisition thereby of a positive feeling of satisfaction; (4) promoting or preserving a special relationship such as that with a friend or lover; (5) promoting or preserving communal relationships and feelings of solidarity and personal links; (6) the development of virtues or prevention of vices. The last point is of most importance because the main profit from gratitude is, according to Fitzgerald, that it is an effective antidote to egocentrism, malice and wrath. The conclusion is that even "if gratitude is not owed but can nonetheless cause great benefit or prevent great harm or repair communal ties, then the agent has a good moral reason to be grateful"[34]. Even when certain concrete modes of expression of gratitude are unsuitable it does not follow that gratitude itself is, with the exception of only cases when what we are grateful for is without any good consequences for us[35].

Contrary to Fitzgerald, whose "contrajuridical approach" is inspired mainly by Buddhist models, religious philosophers within the Christian

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[31] Ibid., p. 125.
[32] Ibid., p. 127, 133.
[33] Ibid., p. 145-146.
[34] Ibid., p. 137.
[35] Ibid., p. 146.

tradition maintain "consequent legalism". Discussion of this point was inititated by M. Slote in his essay, "Obedience and Illusion" (1979). Slote avows that the popular view that one should be obedient to God out of gratitude, although close to the truth, is not entirely correct. The same is true with the parental analogy, i.e., that children should be obedient to their parents from the same motive. No one has a moral duty to show gratitude for unrequested benefits, and since "we didn't ask to be" we owe our parents nothing for our mere existence[36].

Joseph L. Lombardi, the author of "Filial Gratitude and God's Right to Command" (1991), calls Slote's conclusion into question. He observes that people often use benefits which they didn't ask for. But those who opine that one ought to obey parents and God also have to explain why only certain benefits confer authority on those who provide them. After listing the reasons for deserved gratitude presented by Berger and his followers, Lombardi notes that in the case of God at least one is lacking: for God to give life to a human being does not involve sacrifice or at least concession on his part, and the same is sometimes true even with parents. Furthermore, if life is a benefit, what shall we do with that condition that a benefit must be accepted, bearing in mind that not all humans consider their life a benefit?[37] Finally, given Berger's statement that no one ought to be obligated to hold certain feelings, one is justified in regarding only obedience to God (but not gratitude to him) as a moral duty[38].

But from whence, then, does even the duty to fulfill God's commands proceed? Lombardi finds a way out by referring to John Locke for whom the authority of parents over children is legitimate because of the parents' duty to raise the children, so that while fulfilling this duty the parents can rightly demand the children's obedience, for otherwise the duty cannot be performed. Given that this "parental analogy" is valid, God's right to obedience from humans is based on a similar duty to bring up humans, but it has nothing to do with gratitude. The only difference is that parental authority terminates when the offspring gain the right to autonomy, while God's authority does not. «God's duty to contribute to that formation might, therefore, give him an authority that could be asserted against morally autonomous adults . . . One implication of this view is that no human being, spiritually

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[36] См.: *Slote M.* Obedience and Illusions // Having Children. Ed. By O.O'Neil and W.Ruddick. New York: Oxford University Press, 1979, p. 319-326.

[37] *Lombardi J.L.* Filial Gratitude and God's Right to Command // Journal of Religious Ethics, 1991, Vol.19, N1, p. 105-106.

[38] Ibid., p. 108.

speaking, ever "comes of age.""[39] But if God has some rights, He also should have duties and, therefore, humans also have rights against God. In spite of the fact that "some theists would not find this presupposition acceptable", Lombardi suggests that it is illogical to state that God has only rights without duties[40].

2. Both those who develop the notion of gratitude as a specific kind of justice and those who endeavor to widen it offer many good ideas. At the same time, both pass by some evident and important moral intuitions.

Among the most incontrovertible trains of thought within the first approach are, first, the attempts to separate gratitude from relations of interchange that transform it into various kinds of requital no different from a "bargain". In reality, we either owe to someone regardless of any "proportion" or pay him off by accounts, and there is no space for gratitude in the second case. It is true that the conception of gratitude as "introvert justice" was developed already by Aquinas and even Seneca before him, but progress in philosophy (including moral philosophy) is very seldom expressed in inventions of something quite new, and much more frequent in more polished and argued elaboration of perennial issues. It seems that von Tevenar's subtle criticism of the Kantian principle of requital whereby, as she correctly pointed out, it follows that a debtor cannot redeem himself from the everlasting obligation[41] provides us with a good argument for this thesis. Further, basing themselves on the difference between reciprocity and gratitude, Berger and Card, as well as partially McConnell, rightfully place into question the very notion of "debt of gratitude", in other words, the possibility to treat gratitude as an obligation. Indeed, actions and behavior may be demanded, but to demand a feeling is almost the same as to demand from someone health (and the ability for gratitude may be the most important mark of spiritual health), which is impossible. In this light, Berger's and Simmons' conditions of "reasonable gratitude" as well as Card's distinctions between deserved and misplaced gratitude also appear to be sound. To be grateful to one who from the best feelings promotes our ruin, or who does us real good for mercenary ends, or renders us support which costs him nothing but makes it possible to get rid of us (or to pay a debt to oneself), scarcely corresponds to practical reason.

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[39] Ibid., p. 114.
[40] Ibid., p. 117.
[41] One has only to remember that Kant stated that a benefactor cannot be ever "paid off" just because he has left a debtor behind temporarily.

Nevertheless, calculations of "conditions for gratitude" and of claims to be an authentic benefactor or beneficiary, especially proposed tests of motives, are capable, I believe, of reducing the feeling of gratitude to nothing. For if I wish to calculate degrees of the authentic "inner benevolence" of my benefactor, "proportions" of egoism and altruism in his benevolence and then the effort exerted for implementation of the benefit, surely my feeling of gratitude will melt away as spring snow under the heat of such a calculus. And given that this takes place in every case, including that of whether I should be grateful to those who have given me life and then brought me up, I shall not be grateful to anyone for anything in the whole world. But this in turn will be in contradiction to our natural moral sense, which is more persuasive than any calculus. From a broader perspective this "calculative approach" participates in the problematic character of the ethics of motives, as opposed to the ethics of actions. Indeed, who can estimate with precision (desirable for "moral jurists") the purity of a benefactor's intentions, giving him the right for gratitude? Will it be an outward observer? But he is not God, able to read human hearts. Or a benefactor himself? But he, as any other human being, is inclined to idealize himself. Or a beneficiary? But he, again, is a weak and passionate being, who can either be enthusiastic about the benefits received, or, on the contrary, too suspicious in regard to the one from whom they come. Therefore, to consider motives is profitable in some degree, but one should not do so detail.

The main advantage of those who are opposed to gratitude-as-justice is that they seem to have realized the above-mentioned faults of "the calculative approach". They are right to observe that the champions of the "juridical approach" are narrowing the "ethical horizon" into a space populated only by atoms of individual benefactors and individual beneficiaries. Smilansky, for example, is right to assert that we ought to be grateful also to those who do not damage us, because it not seldom costs them considerable effort, as well as in distinguishing what I'd call *mediated* and *immediate* benefactions. Walker is also right to emphasize by his distinguishing between "gratitude" and "gratefulness" that the "juridical bias" in calculations of *whom* we ought to be grateful *to* overshadows considerably *what* have we to be grateful *for*. And it is by no means accidental that this shift of perspective led him to the idea of mediated gratitude to people in his conception of gratitude to the state. Finally, Fitzgerald too is right in reviving the remarkable idea of Seneca that a grateful man benefits firstly himself and only secondarily his benefactor. The example of a doctor who is grateful because he sees in the needs of his patients the incentive for his moral development leads one to enroll gratitude within the wide gamut of moral sentiments, one of which is charity.

Yet there are legitimate questions to be asked about this widening of the notion of gratitude. The ingratitude of one who begrudges his own life, discussed by Walker, differs considerably from that of one who had all but drowned to the person who fished him out, or of one who was perishing from hunger to the person who gave him money. Therefore it is not too easy to see in "gratitude with a personal focus" only a species of gratefulness as genus (as Walker interprets the term), and nothing more. But still more mistaken, in my view, is Fitzgerald when he tries to build the ethics of gratitude upon the basement of utilitarianism which makes a "symmetrical extreme" to the deontological guidelines of his opponents. The confusion of "I'm grateful to someone" with "For me something is profitable" washes away the notion under consideration and, what is still more important, leads in some contexts to the dismantling of the limits between good and evil. Fitzgerald, summoning us to believe the politically sophisticated Dalai Lama who declares his unfeigned gratitude to the Chinese authorities, should acknowledge also the authentic gratitude of prince Vessantara from the Buddhist Jātakas who collected merit (pu□ya) through cultivating indifference while observing with benevolence the step-by-step plunder of his family by villains[42]. On such a view gratitude, which by definition is an intersubjective reality, is blended with its opposite, that is, the dismantling of the very personality of the subject of moral action[43].

Yet, something draws together these two mutually negating conceptions of gratitude. In Walker's examples of «gratitude to nobody» a man begrudging his own life turns out to be ungrateful only to life itself. Likewise a sailor, saved from almost unavoidable death in the waves, might be flooded by waves of gratitude to anyone with the exception of the One by whom *the very hairs of your head are all numbered* (Matthew 10:30). Also the girl Faye from Fitzgerald's tale, grateful to her cruel father who has promoted her moral progress, has not even the suspicion of how much she was owed to Him who already before her birth had counted all the circumstances wherein her progress could be actualized. And the doctor who develops by means of charity to his patients considers himself indebted only to them.

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[42] This narrative about one of the Buddha's incarnations makes the last and most voluminous story in the Pāli collection of Jātakas (No.547), but it is very popular in all Buddhist regions, as a standard textbook on "techniques of altruism".

[43] Thjs is in accordance with *anātmavāda* doctrine, basic for all of Buddhism, and is the real purpose of Buddhist "altruistic practices". That is why Dalai Lama's assertion that enemies make for "the development of his person" contradicts (despite the credulity of the outsider Fitzgerald) the foundations of Buddhism out of missionary goals, no doubt for the sake of propagation in the Western world.

It is true that this discussion has been conducted mainly by secular ethicists who are much more comfortable appealing to "the advanced religion without God" than to "outdated theism". But their opponents, whom they consider not without reason "ethical jurists" and who publish their articles in periodicals on religious ethics, go astray from theism still further. So Slote seems not to suspect how his negation of gratitude for life recalls the logic of the one who taught the first man to reproach God for his wife whom he also had not asked for (see **1**). Lombardi, who partially criticizes Slote, in the same vein maintains that the donation of life has not cost God great effort. But his genuine "discovery" is his idea that God may demand obedience, not because of the benefits he bestows, but by reason of his own educative duties before humans. Lombardi fails to ask a crucial question which one trying to follow the analytical style of philosophy has no right to ignore, that is, who has conferred these educative obligations on God? In answering we have only three options: 1) God himself, 2) the moral law, or 3) some outward power superior to God. If God himself, then uninterrupted gratitude to him is becoming from humans. If the moral law, then One who has created it cannot to be obedient to it, just as One who has created time cannot be himself a temporal being[44]. If something superior to him, then He is already not God, because God by definition (as formulated by Anselm but suggested long before him) is that Being than which no greater can be conceived. Lombardi is right inasmuch as God's duties are inferred from his rights, but this correct inference is based on an absurd premise. Rights again can be conferred on someone either by himself or from without. In the first case we have not rights of God but His sovereignty, which is by no means the same. In the second case Lombardi ought to indicate what institution has such an interest in the upbringing of humans by God and so could be the origin of God's rights – the United Nations, the Center for Security Policy, the American Legislative Exchange Council, or perhaps the Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (which no doubt would like the upbringing of humans by God to be such that the life of animals is most comfortable)?

However unimaginable such speculations are from the point of view of authentic theism, they are by no means fantastic within the context of postmodern theology. For example there is process theology, wherein God is not so much the personal and eternal Absolute and

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[44] The core of moral law being justice (and not, as with Kant, respect for this law itself), God in His attitudes to the world is directed by laws which are not ours and, therefore, are not transparent for us, and are not always just by human measures. See, among other parables, the one about the kingdom of heaven likened to a master who hired laborers into his vineyard (Matthew 20:1-13).

Creator[45] as mankind's Senior Partner, who can be thought therefore in notions of this world, including those of reciprocity. And this shift to one-sided "immanentism" at the expense of "transcendentism" is the profoundest source of that *challenge of secularism* which is our focus at this conference. If Lombardi is correct that only "some theists" would be reluctant to embrace his "ethical theology", this challenge is very serious – much more than that from an outspoken atheism, inasmuch as traffic in darkness is not so dangerous as in mist.

3. Since most ethicists dealing with gratitude and founding themselves in some degree upon the philosophical classics seem to hold that it is becoming to anybody and anything except God, it will be not misplaced to fill in this gap a little bit. That justifies me in concluding this presentation with some contours of thanksgiving to God in comparison with gratitude to humans.

Just as gratitude, thanksgiving is a kind of reciprocal feeling aroused by received benefits. Much like gratitude, this feeling is complex (here at least outward associations with the Lockean distinction between simple and complex ideas come into mind), both being combined from the instinct of justice and even of initial love to the source of benefits. Like authentic gratitude, genuine thanksgiving is not a passive feeling expressing itself only in acknowledgement of benefits, but passes into some kind of action, that is, rendering the benefactor his due.

The first difference is that the summum bonum in genuine thanksgiving is not this or that concrete benefit (however significant), but recognition in the inner spiritual sense of an unmerited gift as coming from a fathomless charity that is not of this world. The concrete "matter" of benefaction is felt only as a happy pretext for thankfulness and not, as with gratitude, its reason. Another difference is that requital in thanksgiving can by no means constitute a concrete compensation because the recipient is ontologically incommensurate with the Donor and the latter needs nothing with the exception of the heart of the former. A third is that, whereas the feeling of gratitude aims at some acknowledgement to the benefactor, the recognition of the personal charity of God is like a discovery of *treasure hid in a field* (Matthew 13:44), this discovery being felt as a secret between a man and God which the first would prefer not to divulge because of fear of losing it (and if he nevertheless resolves to do so, that would be not for the Donor but for confirming the faith of his neighbors). When these distinctive

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[45] See above concerning the issue of temporality. As to the conception of eternity of God the seminal ideas of Boethius in his incomparable *Consolation of Philosophy* (chapters 5 and 6) have by no means gone out of date.

features of thanksgiving change to the contrary, i.e., when God is perceived as a means for receipt of some good, when one wants "to pay" Him something for His benefits or when His generosity is displayed publically, thanksgiving lowers not only to gratitude but, still further, to a sort of bargain. Just such a false thanksgiving is depicted in the story of the pharisee and publican (Luke 18:9-14). As so often, this very discovery that we read of ourselves in Scripture serves as confirmation that not only do we comment upon Scripture, but that it comments upon us[46].

The next line of demarcation between gratitude and thanksgiving could be defined with regard to the places occupied by them in human life. Gratitude incites one to live according to conscience, and to say more, conscience rather than obedience is its proper "locus", although no one among the previously mentioned ethicists has paid appropriate attention to this[47]. But in spite of the fact that a moral person ought to live *with* an attitude of gratitude to other people (this is a mark of moral health), one cannot live *by* it, whereas thanksgiving to God should be the main content of the genuine religious life. A truly religious person is able to experience uninterrupted and great benefits from God many times daily, while benefits from humans are scarce, limited and very seldom disinterested. To such persons the desire to carry out God's will is the *one thing needful* (Luke 10: 42). Much less numerous are those who achieve, by recognition of God's benefits, a real awareness of their sins[48] – just from seeing the contrast between the benefits received and their own indignity. And only some of the latter are able to thank God also for humiliations, sufferings and even martyrdom, in other words, the whole cross laid on them, and about them one can say that they live in the mystery of Atonement.

For all of these reasons, gratitude and thanksgiving occupy very different places in respect to worldview. It is true that one cannot be genuinely grateful to God whom he sees not if he is not grateful to his neighbors whom he does see[49], and, correspondingly, one cannot be authentically and constantly grateful to one's human benefactors without endeavoring thereby to please God. Nevertheless, normal gratitude is

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[46] Cf. in this regard already Hebrews 4:12..

[47] What is surprising for me mostly in this regard is that even Kant proved not to be an exception to this rule, especially bearing in mind that conscience takes a very important place in his ethics. It seems, therefore, that his localization of gratitude in the relations of reciprocity could be explained only by the whole "formal coldness" of his deontology.

[48] One recalls here the revelation given to St. Isaac the Syrian (sixth century A.D.), for whom one who has seen his sin is more blissful than one who seen an angel.

[49] Cf. the same about love (I John 4:20).

accessible to people of very different outlooks, including atheism, because it is rooted in basic moral instincts. By contrast, genuine thanksgiving to God is relevant only to an authentically theistic world-outlook – not one where God is deemed as the inner self of everyone, as in different versions of monism (wherein one can be grateful, in the final analysis, only to oneself) and not where "the senior partner pattern" is implemented (see above -- **2**), but only where the Creator is viewed as the transcendent Source of all goods. And just as in secular ethics "the argument from gratitude" is sometimes used as justification of obedience to the state (see above -- **1**), the same argument in the theistic context is suitable for some theological implementations – those of apologetics in the first place, however scarcely its resources have been so far estimated.

To give only one example, in contemporary writing on theodicy one not seldom comes across arguments from the "hiddenness" of God as an answer to atheists and "friendly atheists" who deny the benevolence and even existence of God from the fact of «undeserved evils»[50]. However, one rarely encounters parallel arguments from the abundance of «undeserved benefits» which can be detected in one's life by every person endowed with the least faculty of inner seeing. The reason for the lack of this argument is, in my opinion, the insensibility of man to received benefits in comparison with that to bad things, much as the capacity to breathe is not appreciated before this capacity is somehow hindered[51]. But it would be much more reasonable to begin such apologetic arguments with the quite gratuitous benefactions in everyone's experience in order to then pass on to the "hiddenness" of God in the outward universe. With this hope for widening the horizon of ethico-theology by taking into account a proper understanding of gratitude and thanksgiving, I conclude this presentation.

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[50] Today's arguments from "gratuitous sufferings" went back to: *Rowe W.* The Problem of Evil and Some Varieties of Atheism // American Philosophical Quarterly, 1979, Vol.16, p. 335-41; *Idem.* Evil and the Theistic Hypothesis: A Response to Wykstra // International Journal for the Philosophy of Religion, 1984, Vol. 16, p. 95-100.

[51] One would not be too mistaken in treating the story of "ten men that were lepers" as an indication that only one out of ten men make efforts to become grateful to God for His benefits (see Luke 17:12-19).

CHAPTER III

FREEDOM OF CHOICE AND PRINCIPLES OF PERSONAL SELF-DETERMINATION

ALEXANDER V. RAZIN

Moral self-determination presupposes the freedom of the individual in decision-making. It is a simple logical consequence of the assumption of moral responsibility and the idea of moral autonomy. But this problem has always been considered in Ethics and Philosophy in connection with the causation of choice, and in this regard we can mention two opposite solutions:

(1) Freedom of choice is basically an illusion, an epiphenomenon, since in the causal world nothing happens by accident. This is a very well known position called Laplacian determinism, the position of Descartes, Spinoza, and many other thinkers. The two last thinkers referred practical choice only to the lowest level of empirical human existence. On the highest level a human being acquires a Stoic attitude to reality that follows from an understanding that in the causally determined world nothing can be essentially changed.

(2) The opposite position is most clearly demonstrated in existentialist philosophy, which considers a moral choice as really free only in case it is not determined by any system of values, any authority coming from either social structures or some kind of transcendent reality. This philosophy compares moral choice with creating works of art.

The first position in its logical continuation leads to the denial of moral responsibility. If everything is predetermined and a person does not have an influence on reality it is not possible to select anything in some deep, essential sense.

The second position reduces moral choice to an unmotivated decision. Such a choice is similar to the work of a random-number generator, and in fact, does not correlate with specific forms of moral responsibility, although the existentialists claim that man's responsibility is extremely high. It is the incapability of existentialist philosophy to work out common positions before the face of modern threats – the threat of nuclear war, environmental crisis, poverty, alienation and so on – that reduced its attractiveness in the modern world.

It is clear that the resolution of the problem arising here lies somewhere between these opposite positions. In my opinion, the way to a solution is associated with the fact that a person consciously chooses a normative (regulatory) program for his or her own development. This means that a person limits himself within some range of the accepted program. Nevertheless freedom does not disappear. It is manifested in the rational arguments put forward in support of this program, in the free acceptance of the living experience of other people, and to some extent in reference to the point of view of common sense, which always presents the fundamental concepts of morality.

Next, I want to emphasize that moral choice is always a difficult decision that requires effort from an individual, associated with deep reasoning and deliberation on intentions. This is different from a situation of choice associated with the execution of the law, obedience to traditions, customs, etiquette rules, etc. Even the performance of simple rules like "Thou shall not kill," "Thou shall not steal," and "Do not lie" requires an understanding of the situation in the instrumental sense, searching for ways of acting that will not demand violation of rules or justification as exceptions.

In professional ethics, we constantly face the question of how to distinguish the competence of the law and matters of personal moral responsibility. There is, for example, the law of ethics of a public servant and that public servant's own moral code. There is a law relating to police, and there is the ethics of a police officer. The difference lies in the fact that law cannot take into account the individual nature of the situation, or at best can consider it only slightly (mostly in the decision on punishment), whereas morality can do so.

Here arises a new problem which is one of the central issues in theoretical ethics. It is the problem of correlation between freedom of choice and the obligatory character of moral demands. And I must say that even such prominent thinkers as Kant did not avoid some simplification in addressing this problem. In my opinion, it is not enough to say that freedom consists in the fact I accept a norm (even known to me from some authoritative sources), as articulated by myself and freely executed. If the norm has an absolute and rigid character it simplifies moral choice, releases a person from her or his unique individual responsibility, and in this way the norm loses the features that allow us to characterize it as a moral norm. For example, the categorically expressed commandment, "Do not lie," factually exempts a person from worrying about how to act in relation to another. This brings us to a contradiction that clearly can be seen in the Kantian work, "On the Alleged Right to Lie from Philanthropy".

The contradiction can be illustrated by a well known example from the time of the Second World War. I hide in my home a Jewish boy.

There comes a fascist, and asks: Is there anyone in your house? From the standpoint of Kant, in order not to violate the categorical requirements I would have to answer – yes. But it is clear that such a response from the general humanistic position is unacceptable. Furthermore, it does not answer to the second formula of the categorical imperative.

In order to understand the limits of moral choice and at the same time to avoid turning it into some automatic procedure for the proper submission to duty, we must formulate a correct idea of the good. And I think that the best answer here lies in Christian ethics. Christianity asserted the reality of goodness, as that of value of having an ontological status, and the derivative nature of evil, as a subject which has no ontological status. Embedded within this thesis was a historical perspective upon the nature of right decision.

Unfortunately, if we refer to common consciousness, we will constantly be faced with the lack of understanding of this truth. In science fiction films heroes constantly talk about choice between the forces of good and evil, light and darkness, and so on. But all this corresponds to some ancient consciousness or world outlook, in accordance to which the cosmos and the chaos are fighting each other and people just try to adapt to this fight – or perhaps to a fight between the god Ra and the evil serpent Apopo who, in the mythology of ancient Egypt, tries to prevent Ra's boat from passing through the dark cave that resulted in the sun rising.

Actually nobody chooses evil consciously because it does not have positive features. It is no more than deviation from the good, a diminishment of good that may end in complete destruction. If a man were in the position of choosing between two roads, one of them to eternal life and the other to nothingness, to complete distraction, would it be possible for him to choose the road to nowhere? The field of moral choice is not situated in the field of the alternatives, good and evil, but in the field of good itself, in the searching for an optimal way to achieve the good. This is reflected in the very definitions of good and evil within Christian ethics.

Sin is always a diminishment of the good. It is not committed because people deliberately want to produce evil, but because somebody is susceptible to temptation, because he cannot immediately understand and adopt a program of social development, nor properly respond to social restrictions assigned by authority, whose plans he initially is not able to accept and understand. Thus his own resistant behavior turns out to him as evil.

In his commentary on the Psalms, Aurelius Augustine notes that it is not possible to think that God in His ineffable peace and light seeks from himself how to punish sins. No, he passes such a nature to the sin, that what a man takes pleasure in becomes an instrument of God's

punitive action. Consequently, it would be correct to say that a man punishes himself by the nature of his own sin, by its consequences. Therefore, in the Psalms is said: "he was digging a pit, and dug it up, and fell into the pit which was prepared. Anger was turned on his head, and his wickedness fell on his crown" (Psalms 7:16-17).

In such famous works as *On Free Choice*, *On Repentance and Remission of Sins*, *Confessions*, and *The City of God*, Augustine reveals the deep psychological formation of self-determination on the basis of goodwill, striving for the highest wisdom and understanding of good. Such a will is focused on the normative principle given by the highest authority, that is, by God. If a will does not recognize the importance of this principle, it turns to itself, and inevitably becomes sinful. Analyzing the behavior of a child, including his own childhood sins, Augustine wrote that babies are innocent not because of their souls but because of their bodily weakness: "The weakness then of infant limbs, not its will, is its innocence"[1]. His general conclusion is as follows: "The child seeks to satisfy his desire and runs into confusion and resistance of adults, that cause it annoyance, resentment and desire for revenge. His first reaction to this world is the memory of offenses and anger. He perceives his environment as being hostile: he is initially in dissonance with the world and with himself. This moral disorder predisposes to further errors. The child's behavior in the future is already spoiled: it is due to the nature of his initial encounters with the world and his temperament leads more to the evil than to the good"[2].

From this observation can be drawn a very important conclusion: evil, sin, actually consists not only in the fact of violation of the prohibition, but more in the wrong initial reaction to the prohibition. At the same time the prohibition itself, represented in the restrictions on the child's behavior by adults, is good. In fact, here lies a deep problem that appears in connection with the question of how a person identifies himself in respect to his own nature.

The major difficulty is that man as a biological individual does not have a specific nature. His relationship with the world is not given on the basis of instinct, and he can form his real nature only due to the influence of society, that is, through the commandments of other people. As the survival of the society as a whole is positive, the cultural nature proposed for the individual (nature reflected in the rules of cultural life) is the good for him. Therefore it turns out the good is suggested to each individual as the unique opportunity of his life, and he has no real

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[1] The Confessions of Saint Augustune. Translated by Edward Pusey. Book 1, 11. //http://www.sacred-text.com/chr/augconf/aug01.htm.

[2] Сергеенко М.Е. примечания к книге: Аврелий Августин. Исповедь М.: Ренессанс, СП ИВО – СиД, 1991. С. 407.

alternative to it. This confirms that the field of moral choice in fact is not between good and evil. It is within the very good. But what in this case is evil, what is the cause of its generation?

From a psychological point of view, it turns out that evil is an inevitable result of deviations from the good, that is, the cause of evil lies in the contradictions within the formation of socially caused human nature. These contradictions are manifested in the fact that people in their social development transcend some properties of their initial biological pre-determinations that can be obstacles on the way of social life. For example, any individual has to overcome laziness and the unwillingness to intensify of his own activities; he also has to accept many social taboos (such as monogamy) that limit the expression of his primary biological properties – aggressiveness, the desire for haphazard sexual contacts, and so on.

Augustine was well aware that a person resists social development, that historically developed new needs and capabilities are not accepted easily by an individual. He acknowledges that without physical punishment, he himself because of his own laziness would never have been successful in learning Greek and Latin. In his famous "Confessions," he wrote: "In boyhood itself, however (so much less dreaded for me than youth), I loved not study, and hated to be forced to it. Yet I was forced; and this was well done towards me, but I did not well; for, unless forced, I had not learnt"[3]. However, confessing the positive results of punishment and compulsory involvement in studies, Augustine supposed that his teachers also acted in a wrong way. He thought that his teachers sinned as he had because they thought only about enrichment through application of knowledge. The result, from his point of view, was positive only because God has provided everything in advance. "Yet neither did they do well who forced me, but what was well came to me from Thee, my God. For they were regardless how I should employ what they forced me to learn, except to satiate the insatiate desires of a wealthy beggary, and a shameful glory"[4].

Therefore the sin of those who forced Augustine to learn was in the fact that they did not see the proper goal of learning. But even assuming that they were aiming at a proper goal, they nevertheless would have been faced with resistance from the side of the student and coercion that would have been necessary for its overcoming. The solution of the problem lies in realizing that moral relations between people are not based on their individual likeness of unlikeness, nor in their wishes to do something good to another, but caused by external authorities asserting a

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[3] The Confessions of Saint Augustine. Translated by Edward Pusey. Book 1, 19. //http://www.sacred-text.com/chr/augconf/aug01.htm.

[4] Ibid.

particular, historically caused image of good. An individual should not be the measure of good. Christian Ethics reflects this fact by introducing the notion of the external authoritative source of good in the form of God's will and the image of God as the absolute good. So, only God knows what is really good for a person in the final sense.

In this regard it is possible to say that even the famous Golden Rule (treat others as you want to be treated) cannot be a universal scale of moral relations (the moral attitude of one man to another). It is quite possible that somebody does not wish to be forced to learn and he agrees to not act the same in relation to other. But social existence will not be possible in that case because the welfare of all people depends on the particular ability of each person to contribute to the general good. So everybody has to have socially valid capabilities and these capabilities should be developed in each person independently of individual wishes.

Thus, it is possible to conclude that moral relations between people are always mediated by their attitude toward society, to the culture, to the standards that are set from the side of social life. God also can be considered as the external authoritative criterion of moral good that shows the standards of moral behavior, including standards referred to a public life. In religious thought those standards only acquired strong obligatory character because they are sanctioned by the sacred will.

In general, the secular and Christian understandings of evil are the same (substantially coincide). In the psychological plan evil appears as evasion of the good. It is represented as an imperfect way of formation of the secondary, historically developed social nature of an individual that is not represented in his biological organization. From this psychological point of view it is possible to give a rational interpretation of the main Christian dogma concerning original sin. In my opinion the idea of an initially sinful human nature due to Adam's fall into sin reflects the inevitable process of overcoming the initial properties of primary biological human nature for the sake of the highest social development.

In this overcoming a huge role is played by the ban, the requirement of society that directs an individual towards formation of the new nature which is good for him. From the side of primary nature is the resistance to such development. This resistance is a sin (ban violation). Therefore the person in principle cannot be innocent. But at a certain stage of development the human being consciously supports the process of his new nature formation. This reflects the efforts directed at overcoming sin, and only at this stage--that is, in the field of strengthening of the good and not in a simple initial alternative between good and evil--is there real moral choice.

It is this situation that reflects the assertion of good as the ontologically valid reality and evil as matter, existing only in correlation

with the good. "And it was manifested unto me, that those things be good which yet are corrupted; which neither were they sovereignly good, nor unless they were good could be corrupted: for if sovereignly good, they were incorruptible, if not good at all, there were nothing in them to be corrupted. For corruption injures, but unless it diminished goodness, it could not injure. Either then corruption injures not, which cannot be; or which is most certain, all which is corrupted is deprived of good. But if they be deprived of all good, they shall cease to be. For if they shall be, and can now no longer he corrupted, they shall be better than before, because they shall abide incorruptibly"[5].

But here, of course, arises the problem of relation to so called external evil. There are epidemics, earthquakes, wars, and accidents in the world. These events are quite real. Should they be defined as evil? We know that initial moral estimates were connected exactly with definitions of this kind, with the opposition of "We" and "Others", the classification of events of the outside world as favorable or adverse for a human. Only Christianity looked at the problem of good and evil in the perspective of personal self-reflection in the scale of an individual action's evaluation.

It is quite clear that there is a necessity to identify the relation of a human to the external world, classify these events as favorable or unfavorable, and organize mutual actions oriented to terminate negative events or restrict the scale of their influence on human beings. In this sense the notions of good and evil can be referred to more than just the actions of one person in relation to other.

But I think that there is no a specific contradiction between Christian and secular moral doctrine even if the definitions of good and evil are expanded to the natural world. It is hardly possible to suspect that God supervises all processes that develop in the world. It is hardly possible to suppose that the goal of God was to create the world as convenient in every respect for man, because in such a world man would have nothing to do. The simple world would not have the conditions for human development and the enhancement of human creativity. And creative capabilities are one of the main qualities by which humans can aspire to acquire godlikeness.

Man certainly has to deal with so-called "external" evil. But appearances of the external world, and favorable or unfavorable external conditions, are not directly subject to moral judgment. They became morally relevant only in cases when a human being realizes that he can develop the ability to withstand adverse conditions of life, or when he sees that the very negative effects occur as a result of his own activity.

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[5] The Confessions of Saint Augustune. Translated by Edward Bouverie Pusey Book VII, 18. //http://www.sacred-text.com/chr/augconf/aug01.htm.

This means that a person should pay repeated attention his or her own qualities in order to develop new skills that can be applied in socially valuable activities. Development of the kind is one of the requirements of Virtue Ethics. Moral choice in this type of Ethics is seen in connection with difficult decisions concerning questions of whom to be and what to do. Those decisions and their realization in life demands great power of will as well as a rationally substantiated, socially accepted goal. It is not by accident that Paul Tillich noted that in the act of courage the more essential part of a human being triumphs over the less essential.

By accepting the program of his own development a man to some degree overcomes his initial features, turning away from lower desires in order to give range for the development of the highest ones. In supporting this process and performing his reasonable choice, a man uses the whole totality of available knowledge, practical wisdom and positive experience of previous generations. So, realizing the program of one's own moral development, one must think not only about how to do no harm to others, but also about how to become a full-fledged developed personality.

Moral choice inevitably appears within alternative paths of personal development and cooperation with others in the general program of realizing the good. A deviation from this program will be a reduction of the good, that is, evil. Such evil is perfectly well represented as an inadequate good not having an independent ontological status.

The normative program suggested to a person has a various character. It is represented by numerous public authorities and public institutions. But it is also presented in practical wisdom, in common sense based on the accumulations of living experience of many people represented different cultures.

Any theory of morality based solely on rational utilitarian considerations encounters difficulties when it tries to answer the question of why, in principle, we need to continue the human race, why should we care about future generations, why in some critical situations personal interest should be clearly subordinate to the public one. In terms of a simple, vulgar materialism, certainly it would not be possible to explain why we need to have children. Why couldn't we ask: is not it better just to live beautifully, indulging in sensual pleasures, without care about the future?

But people do not behave this way. Of course procreation is inherent in our genetic program, but humans have done much to get out under from the control of faceless genes. They need theoretical explanations that can give confidence in the future. But theory is powerless here. Therefore, in religion and ethics are made philosophical

metaphysical assumptions about the world as an organized whole, fulfilled with human meaning.

The Russian philosopher Vladimir Soloviev, for example, wrote: "The question is only: does that from which I depend make sense or not? If not, then my existence is dependent on nonsense and is meaningless too, and in this case we cannot speak of any kind of reasonable moral principles and goals. They would be relevant only given confidence in the sense of my existence, only under the condition of the rationality of the world, the predominance of sense over nonsense in the universe. If there is no purpose in the general course of world events, the part of the whole process concerning human actions also cannot be rational, defined by moral rules, and in this case cannot sustain these rules, for it leads to nothing and is in no way justified"[6]. Hence it is very clear that if there is no rationality in the world (which for Soloviev must be introduced to the world through God's will), morality is impossible.

For this reason the teleological idea should be taken on the grounds of its practical meaning. However, in my view, the metaphysical assumptions that are asserted in philosophy and Ethics are not absolutely arbitrary. They are determined by all the achievements of culture, including science, religion, traditions, and even mythology.

It is well known that early modern mechanics helped inspire a deistic conception that provided a new way of understanding the relationship of man, God and the world. But the discoveries of Copernicus, Kepler, Galileo also influenced the formation of a pantheistic conception. "The idea of many worlds, the existence of a common law which governed all parts of the universe, gave rise to a pantheistic concept, which was not alien to ancient thought, but which now, after many years, appeared in several European countries simultaneously"[7].

Pantheism was the central starting point in Shaftesbury's reasoning about morality, which in turn had an influence on Kant. No doubt the hypothesis that above the visual phenomenal world there is a different, noumenal world, inaccessible to direct vision, and this world has his special type of causality, was central in Kant's reasoning about morality.

The "intelligible world" is merely the supposition about the nature of interpersonal communication combined with the idea of human freedom. The special, invisible (to us) causality inherent in the

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[6] Соловьев В.С. Оправдание добра //Соловьев В.С. Соч. в 2-х т. Т.1. М.: Мысль, 1990. С. 179.

[7] Виноградов Н.Д. Философия Давида Юма. Этика Юма в связи с важнейшими направлениями британской морали XVII – XVIII вв. Изд. 2-е. М.: Книжный дом «ЛИБРОКОМ», 2011. С. 15.

intelligible world enables us to resolve the paradoxes of Pure Mind – in particular, to resolve the contradiction between the pure moral will, free from inclinations, and the highest good associated with the idea of happiness.

Modern science recognizes nonlinear interactions that are compatible with the idea of parallel worlds. I think that modern metaphysical assumptions about the world are important scientific achievements in the field of physics, such as the concept of the Big Bang and the submission of an expanding universe. If we are all descended from one small point, this already means that we are united in some way. Modern physics presents numerous principles that allow us to make some assumptions about man's place in the universe, for instance, the weak and strong anthropic principles and the teleological anthropic principle. All of this can be used as new grounds for metaphysical speculation, which can be fruitful in modern ethics. But in all such metaphysical assumptions there is necessarily presented the point of view of common sense. Common sense would surely be found in religious Ethics. The commandment to love your father and mother relies on common sense. If a person has no respect for his father and mother, he will be unable to accept any other type of love. Common sense is also presupposed in scientific hypotheses. It is no accident that the founder of pragmatism, Charles Peirce, said that all science based on the assumption of the existence of the external world.

Common sense and the experience of human existence in the face of many generations shows that human life must go on, manifesting that supporting of life is the sacred duty of every person. So a person through his moral quest has to find meaning for his own life in the context of the life of generations, to establish his individual connection with human history and with the life of his country.

In conclusion I want once more to emphasize the tendency of moral development represented in my reasoning. This is to increase the role of positive rules related to the requirements of the ethics of virtues. Many people believe that there are very simple commands such as "You should not kill" or "do not lie," and that for their execution it is not necessarily to have profound knowledge and special skills. The person performing these simple commandments can be considered as highly spiritual and moral, even if he is completely illiterate. I do not agree with this position.

Certainly the commandment "Thou shalt not kill" is very simple, but the modern human faces the problem of how not to kill, if it seems to be necessary, for example, during a war or in self-defense, and how not to lie if it is seems to be necessary for the salvation of many lives. With such difficult choices is correlated a real moral choice. As for the

ordinary situations of life, requirements like "do not kill" became natural, and so are meaningless if there is no desire to kill.

The complexity of moral choices manifests itself in the virtues of ethics, when we are faced with the development of professional skills, professional competence, the need to make responsible decisions in unusual situations. This becomes crucial due to the fact that people have to deal with complex technical systems. Humanity has even invaded the sphere of the divine, solving the problems of life and death, considering the possibility of improving his own nature at the genetic level. Moral decisions in situations of such a kind require profound knowledge and a high degree of responsibility.

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<center>CHAPTER IV</center>

ON THE COMMANDMENT, "RESIST NOT EVIL"

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My interest in normative-ethical analysis of the commandment "Resist not evil" has been rooted in and associated with my studies in: (a) the Commandment of Love, or the principle of agape, (b) the ethics of nonviolence, and (c) the Golden Rule in its relation to *Lex Talionis* and the Commandment of Love. The last two were mediated by my study of Just War Theory, owing to which I came to an understanding of Just War principles, particularly the principles of *jus ad bellum*, since these have the *Lex Talionis* in their background. By this preamble I wish to explicate the purely ethical and secular context of my discourse and my approach to the Bible as an ethical-normative text.

For the purpose of this analysis I consider the whole Bible through the perspective of the Gospels, although I realize quite clearly that neither the Old Testament nor the New Testament contains a full system of ethics. There is certainly no homogeneous ethic of the Bible. I consider the principle "Resist not evil" contextually: firstly, in light of all immediate and mediated (or secondary) marginal references in the Bible; secondly, in light of its different implications.

My main point is the following: although the commandment "Resist not evil" together with the Commandment of Love and (closely related to it) the commandment "Love your enemies" are usually considered as expressing the paramount content of Christian ethics, they are surely insufficient for an entire moral system, which definitely requires – in any version – an ethic of retaliation. No single system of ethics is sufficient without some kind of ethic of retaliation, even if it is not given in an explicit or general form, like *wrongdoing should be nipped in the bud* or *harm (especially intended harm) should be suppressed*.

Christian ethics preserves an ethic of retaliation even though the *Lex Talionis* was unequivocally rejected. The function of retaliation was merely alienated from humans and reserved to God as the guarantor of justice and righteousness.

Thus the commandment "Resist not evil" is actually supplemented with the statement "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, saith the Lord". These principles are two sides of the same coin. Understanding of this normative relation has very important ethical and practical implications.

In the Sermon on the Mount as it is presented in the Gospel according to Matthew, the commandment "Resist not evil" is declared in

direct opposition to the rule of retaliation: "You have heard it said, an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth. But I tell you, resist not evil" (Matt. 5:38-39). This teaching is extended by the commandments of forbearance, meekness, indulgence, generosity, and magnanimity. Here Jesus develops a line of thought that is already formulated in the Book of Leviticus and developed in the Proverbs of Solomon – a manner of thinking according to which force and anger should be opposed first of all by mercy and forgiveness. Undoubtedly, the Christian ethic of forbearance, forgiveness, and mercy was a result of an evolution that had already taken place in the moral thinking and teaching of the Prophets. Jesus, however, radicalizes his opposition to the rule of retaliation, first, by decisively rejecting the very possibility of personal vengeance, and, second, by counterposing *nonresistance* to retaliation. His ethic is distinguished from the ethic of the Old Testament by its categorical rejection of retaliation. The commandment not to resist evil mediates the commandments of forbearance, forgiveness, and love (including love for enemies), and others. Comparing the commandment not to resist evil with the broader context of the Sermon on the Mount, it is easy to see that it complements the proclaimed blessedness of those who are persecuted and defamed for the sake of righteousness.

The commandment "Resist not evil" is not only counterposed to the rule of retaliation but also contrasted with another demand that is fundamental to the ethic of retribution – the demand for gratitude. The Old Testament consciousness is extraordinarily perturbed at ingratitude – more precisely, at the black ingratitude that finds expression in the infliction of evil in response to good. The Book of Proverbs contains a direct warning against evil in response to good (17:13). Indirect warnings – as narrative, lament, or judgment – can be found in various books of the Old Testament, starting with the Book of Genesis (44:4) and the Psalms (35:12; 38:20; 109:4-5). In the Book of Jeremiah this proposition acquires a normative content – true, expressed not imperatively but descriptively – that comes closest to the commandment of Jesus: "Should good be repaid with evil? And yet they dig a pit for me. Remember how I stood before You to speak good on their behalf, so as to avert Your wrath from them" (18:20). This instance is all the more deserving of attention given that the prophet seems to be speaking here not simply of the possibility of not repaying evil for evil – moreover, for the double evil that is evil in response to good, that is, black ingratitude – but of the possibility of repaying good for evil; in its degree of self-sacrificing mercy this goes further than merely nonresistance to evil. However, this verse is followed immediately by verses that fully restore the true normative context of the Old Testament: "So give their children over to famine and deliver them up to the power of the sword; and let their wives become childless and widowed, their men smitten to death,

and their young men struck down by the sword in battle. May an outcry be heard from their houses when You suddenly bring raiders upon them, for they dig a pit to capture me and hide snares for my feet. But You, Lord, know all their designs against me; do not forgive their iniquity or blot out their sin from Your sight. But may they be overthrown before You; deal with them in the time of Your anger!" (18:21-23).

Thus, the commandment "Resist not evil" might have been proclaimed in the following form: "You have heard it said, repay not good with evil. But I tell you, resist not evil."

The commandment not to resist evil receives further clarification in the commandment that follows it – to love one's enemies (Matt. 5:43-44). Leo Tolstoy noted that the meaning of this commandment lies in the universalization of the commandment of love, in its extension to all people. For "it is impossible to love personal enemies. But people belonging to a hostile nation can be loved in exactly the same way as one's own people."[1] Not only in this commandment but also through the whole spirit of the Sermon on the Mount, Jesus affirms the universality of his doctrine. He addresses the Jews, but his teaching is universal; this is confirmed not only by his commandment to love one's enemies – that is, people of different faith and ethnicity – but also by the fact that he addresses his listeners not as Jews, people of a particular nation, but as people of the world, "the salt of the earth." The Parable of the Good Samaritan indirectly conveys the same message, and although it is narrated in response to the question of who is one's neighbor it indicates that a person customarily considered an enemy may also be one's neighbor.

Although Jesus says, "You have heard it said, love your neighbor and hate your enemy," nowhere in the Old Testament do we find such a demand; indeed, there was no need for it against the background of the traditional practice of invariable hatred for enemies. One finds non-reconciliation and evil-willing in commandments regarding particular enemies, for instance, Ammonites or Moabites, the Semitic peoples which lived next to the Jews but were not Jews: "You must not seek peace and prosperity for them all your days, forever" (Deut. 23:6). The Lord ordered the Jews once they conquered the peoples of Canaan to "smite them, and utterly destroy them", and to "make no covenant with them, nor show mercy unto them" and not to "make marriages with them". Instead the Jews were ordered to "destroy their altars, and break down their images, and cut down their groves, and burn their graven images with fire" (Deut. 7:2-5). Such demands, although particular and

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[1] L.N. Tolstoi, "V chem moia vera?" ("What is my Faith in?"), L.N. Tolstoi, *V chem moia vera?* Tula: Priokskoe knizhnoe izdatelstvovo, 1989, p. 97.

contextualized in a narrative, had clear imperative potential as a part of sacred text. Jesus understood this well, rejecting hatred to enemies not only as a habit but as a moral imperative.

Yet in the Old Testament not only hatred and cruelty towards enemies were demanded. Under the conditions of peace and close proximity, when the hostile peoples had been conquered and become real neighbors, solidarity and benevolence towards their representatives were recommended. Only under these conditions could there be meaningful demands to assist one's enemy (Exodus 23:4-5). It is worth comparing these demands with verses in which the same behaviour was prescribed towards brothers, i.e., kinsmen (Deut. 22:1-4). Doing so reveals that under the condition of peaceful coexistence one's enemy should be treated like one's neighbor. But in general, in the Old Testament there are numerous verses that describe and require an extremely cruel and bloody attitude toward real enemies – that is, wartime adversaries, aggressors, and rebels.

At the same time, the text of the commandment proclaimed by Jesus in the above-cited verse shows that when he called on people to love their enemies he had in mind not only ethnic aliens but also those with whom a person is in active enmity. This is precisely the import of his call for a benevolent and heartfelt disposition toward those who curse, hate, insult, and persecute us. Nothing of the sort, of course, is to be found in the ancient law. But even the Gospels say nothing about what to do in the face of destructive evil – evil that not simply inflicts humiliation and suffering but poses a real threat to life, and especially to the life of those near and dear to us. Are we obliged even then not to resist?

The commandment not to resist evil is reproduced in modified form – "Repay not evil for evil" – and in local contexts by the Apostles Peter and Paul. What the Apostles definitely say is: *do not repay evil for evil*; from this may be inferred the more definite *repay good*. Jesus's commandment "Resist not evil" in itself may be taken as an instruction not to resist in general, and such interpretations have sometimes been adopted. From the general context of the Sermon on the Mount and from the sequence of commandments it may be conjectured that "Resist not evil" means: relate to everyone with love. But this formulation of the commandment, especially viewed retrospectively in light of Old Testament precepts, has more in common with the prohibition on personally wreaked vengeance (Prov. 20:22).

Peter's call not to repay evil for evil was addressed to members of the Christian community – believers living among pagans. Above all, Peter calls on them to tum directly to the teaching of the Lord, to "thirst for the pure milk of the word" in order to prepare themselves thereby *for salvation* (1 Pet. 2:2). For this it is necessary to "set aside all malice and

all deceit, and hypocrisy, and envy, and all slander" (2:1).[2] Among (and toward) pagans Christians should behave virtuously, "so that when they slander you as evildoers they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation" (2:12). In other words, the response of Christians to slander from pagans should be to act virtuously toward them. Next Christians are told to "submit to every human authority for the Lord's sake" (2:13) and to look favorably on such authority, "for it is God's will that by doing right you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish people – like free people, not like people who use their freedom as an excuse for doing evil, but like slaves of God" (2:15-16). Then, following exhortations to virtue in daily life, slaves are ordered to obey their masters, "not only those who are kind and gentle but also those who are harsh" (2:18). The example here is Jesus himself (2:23). And wives are commanded to obey their husbands, who in tum are commanded to be solicitous of their wives. Finally, after all these exhortations, Peter appeals to the community as a whole: "All of you be harmonious, sympathetic, brotherly, merciful, courteous, and humble. Return not evil for evil or insult for insult; on the contrary, give your blessing, knowing that you were called to this, to inherit a blessing" (3:8-9). This is again followed by warnings against slander and deceit, and the encouraging assurance that suffering for the sake of righteousness leads to blessedness (3:13-14).

Paul too twice pronounces the commandment "Repay no one evil for evil" when he addresses the members of Christian communities and formulates rules for a Christian life. Speaking specifically of what relations among *brothers* should be like, Paul warns them against lawlessness, selfishness, and disobedience, and exhorts them to peaceableness, brotherly love, and propriety (I Thess. 4:6-12). Calling for admonition of the unruly, encouragement of the fainthearted, help for the weak, and patience with all, Paul concludes: "See that no one should repay another evil for evil, but always seek that which is good for one another and for all" (5:15). In his Epistle to the Romans, Paul speaks of the same virtues – brotherly love, sincerity, respect, hospitality, piety, companionship (12:9-13, 14-16). Having considered relations within the community, he tells believers how they should behave toward their enemies: "Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse" (12:14), and the commandment not to repay evil for evil is presented as a principle for dealing both with brothers and with all people (12:17). He proceeds to recommend peaceableness: "If it is possible for you, live at peace with all people" (12:18). He forbids revenge, and in words already

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[2] Undoubtedly, the exhortation to be indulgent toward slanderers was in opposition to the Old Testament, which regarded slander as a crime. Slander against the Lord was subject to cruel punishment (Leviticus 24:13-14, 16).

well known from the Old Testament, advises kindness toward enemies (12:20). In the following chapter, Paul speaks of the inadmissibility of resistance to the governing authorities; moreover, submission to them should be "not only from fear of punishment but also as a matter of conscience" (13:5), because rulers are God's servants and service to them is service to God. All these exhortations are summarized in proclamation of the commandment of love, which is linked unambiguously to the commandment not to resist evil (13:10).

Thus, the Apostles too, following in Jesus's footsteps, affirm the commandment not to resist evil in connection with exhortations to virtue: (a) among brothers in the faith, (b) with neighbors, (c) with those who impose obligations – priests and Caesar's people, that is, the pagan authorities, (d) with those who persecute for the faith, that is, also people fulfilling obligations. Like the authors of the Gospels, the Apostles say nothing about how to deal with an enemy in the most threatening sense of this word – an armed attacker, foreign aggressor, or brigand. Are we really not to resist but merely to cringe and beg for mercy? That cannot be excluded. For having spoken of the aid due to those who are our enemies (but, again, in a state not of active confrontation but of peace), Paul adds: "Be not overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:21). And this must be understood in the sense of the commandment, "Repay not evil for evil": by responding to evil with good, you overcome it without allowing evil to enter into your soul.

Following this observation, one can conclude that the New Testament ethic took to its logical limit that normative tendency toward restricting the degree and nature of vengeance and expanding the sphere of forgiveness, mercy, and charity that had developed over a millennium and found reflection in various texts of the Old Testament.

There is a point frequently raised in discussion of these questions, whether by skeptics, specialists in biblical texts, or knowledgeable Christians: Jesus himself through his actions demonstrated more than once that it is necessary to resist evil – to resist it with good and even with good force. Reference is usually made here to the episode in which Jesus drives the traders from the Temple; moreover, the traders in oxen and sheep and the moneychangers were driven out with the aid of a suddenly discovered *whip,* as were the animals (John 2:13-16). We know of one instance of determined resistance to evil: when the officers of the guard came to arrest Jesus, one of his disciples pulled out his sword and, striking one of the officers, cut off his ear (John 18:10). The disciple was not seized only because Jesus by his touch restored the officer's ear (Luke 22:51).

However, we are to understand that Jesus committed the acts of resistance and retaliation not as an ordinary agent, but as the Son of God, and in this capacity he was guided by a special ethic (if one can speak

about any ethics regarding God) that intersected with the ethic of the commandments – that is, with the ethic given for humans – but did not coincide with it. Such a normative shift became possible as a result of a fundamental change in the 'sphere of justice.' The customary view is that the Bible provides a normatively complete ethic, with the Old Testament encompassing mainly the sphere of justice and worldly ethics (as reflected at least in Genesis and the Pentateuch and in the teachings of the Prophets) and the New Testament encompassing the sphere of mercy and the ethics of salvation. This is so and not so. On the one hand, there is a place for mercy and for personal salvation in the ethics of the Old Testament. On the other hand, the ethics of the New Testament retains a place for justice, even though it is not to be realized in this world. Biblical authors place emphasis on the idea that the restoration of justice and, therefore, vengeance against enemies – the bearers of evil – are the prerogative of God rather than humans. This is why Jesus was able to enter the Temple, overturn the tables of the moneychangers and the benches of the pigeon sellers, and with whip in hand drive the traders from the Temple. This episode was retained by the compilers of the Bible without fear of any contradiction, because Jesus as the Son of God was acting in accordance with His own law.

This mode of normative thinking was also adopted by Christianity from Judaism. Already in Deuteronomy we find "Vengeance is Mine, and recompense" (32:35), and this is echoed in Isaiah (35:4) and again in Nahum (1:2). The Psalmist calls upon God as God of vengeance (Ps. 94:1), showing that he understands that "with the merciful You are merciful . . . , and with the crafty You are crafty; for You save the afflicted but haughty eyes You abase" (18:26-27). The son of Sirach confirms his verses on the necessity of distinguishing between the pious and the wicked and doing good only to the good and pious, "for the Most High hates sinners and will repay vengeance to the wicked" (Sirach 12:7; see also Psalms 11:5-6).

So when Paul orders that no one should repay evil for evil or exact revenge, he adds the well-known words: "But leave room for the wrath of God. For it is written: Vengeance is mine, says the Lord, I will repay" (Rom. 12:19). Similarly, when he urges the Christian to give his enemy food and drink he explains that "in so doing you will heap burning coals on his head" (Rom. 12:20). Paul's metaphor "burning coals on his head" corresponds exactly to the rule of retaliation with its motifs of threat, vengeance, and unconditional hostility toward the enemy. On the other hand, even Stephen, the first Christian martyr, wishing his tormentors to be forgiven, appealed not to them but to the Most High: "Lord! Lay not this into their charge" (Acts 7:59-60). And this merely confirmed the general understanding of who casts judgment and maintains justice. So the appeal to the Most High might also be an appeal for judgment, as it

was in the case of Paul himself when in one of his letters, incidentally as it were, he exclaimed: "Alexander the coppersmith did me much harm; the Lord will pay him back for his deeds" (2 Tim. 4:14). Incidentally, but not by chance. In his First Epistle to Timothy, Paul mentions other brothers who are not steadfast in the faith, Hymenaeus and Alexander, whom for their impiety he "delivered unto Satan, that they might be taught not to blaspheme" (1:20). It is hard to believe that in apostolic times "delivery unto Satan" might have been understood as resistance by means of good.

In the Gospels there is not so definite an indication that the Lord governs by justice. The Lord of the Gospels is, above all, merciful (Luke 6:36). But in the Gospels, as we have seen, the task of rendering justice was assumed in part by Jesus Himself.

Our picture of the Christian ethic will not be complete unless we take into account the fact that Orthodox and Catholic editions of the New Testament are always accompanied by a Psalter. The Psalms are the best-known and most popular book of the Old Testament. Their attachment to self-contained editions of the New Testament is an obvious indication of what role the Psalms play even today in Christian devotion, and for a long time in the past also in Christian education and upbringing. The analysis of the content of the 150 Psalms shows that over a quarter of them contain direct appeals to the Lord for the destruction, punishment, condemnation, or humbling of enemies – impious, sinful, evil, or lawless persecutors and oppressors, including lawless judges and former friends turned enemies. In this sense, the Psalter, although in general it adds nothing new to the image of morality conveyed in other books of the Old Testament, introduces additional communicative and emotional emphases into the Christian worldview, and on no account should this be overlooked in analysis of the Christian ethic.

Thus, the commandment "Resist not evil" ("Repay not evil for evil") in the ethic preached by Jesus only seems to be of an absolute nature. This finds expression, *inter alia*, in that in two cases out of four it is not expressed in universal form, while in one case its application is explicitly made conditional when Paul, having expressed it in universalized form ("Never repay anyone evil for evil"), adds: *"If it is possible for you, live at peace with all people"* (Rom. 12:18). The commandment is absolute within those restricted bounds within which, according to early Christian ideas, man bears personal responsibility. But these bounds do not fully encompass the sphere of the ethical either in the Christian ethic or, especially, in the contemporary understanding of morality – that is, in that which took shape in the modem era and which in its main features still pertains, even though it has been criticized and exposed from a Nietzschean or pro-Nietzschean point of

view. Christian morality is of a different kind: it is a morality not of individual responsibility and personal autonomy, but of individual salvation, complete accountability to the deity, and the responsibility that arises therefrom; it is a morality divided into a human and a divine domain, a morality that even in this world is mediated by God. Thus, a complete perception of the normative content of the Christian ethic – for Christians themselves, of course, this is obvious – requires recognition of the purely religious character of this ethic as constructed in the certainty of God's co-presence with man. It is the duty of man to concern himself with his own salvation and, as a prerequisite of this, with his own inner purity, which is impossible without fulfilling the commandments that God has given. To interpret the Christian ethic in a spirit of indifference to eschatology, to conceive of it only as an ethic, in isolation from the properly Christian – that is, numinously mediated – view of the world, is to condemn it to the simplicity of moralizing utopianism.

By means of the above analysis I wish to demonstrate – exclusively from normative-ethical positions, without claiming to express the Christian point of view (and understanding that the Christian point of view may be expressed in various ways depending on confession) – that Christianity does not propose an "ethic of nonresistance." The commandment "Resist not evil" represents only one part of it, the other being expressed in the warning: "Vengeance is mine, I will repay."

It was not the moral elevation and perfection of man, but the developmental needs of a society that was no longer a church community but a Christian state, that led to a reconsideration of the teaching of Jesus and the Apostles that decisively took responsibility for justice away from man. As a politically active state religion, Christianity could not permit itself an ethic of nonresistance. In the same way, Christians living in societies in which now they – and not, as in the first centuries of Christianity, non-Christians – bore the entire plenitude of political and legal responsibility could not permit themselves the principle of nonresistance, especially as it was interpreted by Jesus and his disciples. Christians who had come to power, Christians belonging to a church that was increasingly acquiring the features of a basic political institution, could not but repudiate this principle.

It is not by chance that within the framework of Christianity, although on the broader basis of the philosophical tradition of antiquity, there should have developed with such ease and coherence a different tradition regarding the question of legitimate behavior in face of the threat and reality of injustice. According to this tradition, the use of force to resist an aggressive and destructive hostile power is not only permissible but even morally required. This tradition goes back to Ambrose of Milan and Saint Augustine, who relied greatly on ancient

authors, particularly Cicero. It obtained its most notable expression in later Scholasticism – in Thomas Aquinas, Francisco de Vitoria, and Francisco Suarez – and acquired its modem form thanks to Hugo Grotius, whose treatise *On the Law of War and Peace* laid the foundation of international law. This tradition was embodied in the doctrine of the just war or justified war, whose principles were derived from the norms of permissible self-defense, and their purpose was not to justify the use of force, but – in opposition to militarism, realism, and pacifism – to establish constraints on its use. In Russian philosophy, the moral permissibility of the use of force in certain instances was substantiated by Ivan Il'in in his conception of resistance to evil by force. In its various forms, this approach was also shared by other thinkers – for example, by Vladimir Soloviev and Nicholas Berdiaev.

The absolutist ethical consciousness, which thinks in categories of ideal moral forms, supreme perfection, and the radical opposition of good and evil, views this tradition as an ethically contemptible attempt to justify violence by means of moralizing contrivances. On the contrary, however, the theory of the "just war" insists upon strict moral constraints on the use of force, realistically recognizing the necessity of its use in earthly affairs, which are far from perfection. It is worthy of attention that philosophers, starting with Augustine, have directed their efforts toward making the use of military force possible only with the sanction of legitimate authorities. This reflected their understanding that the use of force is a socially and politically conditioned action that goes beyond the narrow bounds of personal relations. The same is true of the use of force to maintain domestic order. The fact that throughout the history of mankind the use of military and police force has, as a rule, been associated with dramatic humanitarian and social costs, and not infrequently also with political and personal abuses on the part both of politicians and force structures, merely confirms the necessity of such constraints. For modem democratic ethical-political thought, it is by no means politicians and generals but society that acts as the subject of these constraints. A refusal to recognize, to quote Berdiaev, "social forms of the struggle against evil and social forms of the creation of life and culture"[3] may reflect either an anarchistic individualism – moreover, of an extremely antisocial kind (Berdiaev's verdict on Tolstoy) –or statism, which also has a tendency toward extreme forms such as totalitarianism.

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[3] Nicholas Berdiaev, "Vetkhii i Novyi Zavet v religioznom soznanii L. Tolstogo," ("Old and New Testament in Tolsoy's religious consciousness") in N.A. Berdiaev, *Filosofiia tvorchestva, kul'tury i iskusstva* (Philosophy of Creativity, Culture, and Arts), Moscow: Iskusstvo; Liga, 1994, vol. 2, pp. 464–65.

It is interesting to note how the absolutist ethical consciousness in its own peculiar fashion reproduces the normative logic of the early Christian "ethic of nonresistance." Just as in the Bible the commandment "Resist not evil" has as its complement the words of the Lord, "Vengeance is mine, I will repay," so the absolutist ethical consciousness perceives people's moral orientation toward invariable resistance to evil as a manifestation of the virtually supra-human ambitions of man. Such ambitions are so ignoble, according to this view, as invariably to be associated with the desire to perpetrate violence.

Typical in this light is the well-known practical argument made by Tolstoy: "Let us suppose that a brigand is raising his knife over his victim; I see him and am armed with a revolver, so I can kill him. But I am not absolutely certain what the brigand will do. He might not strike, while I would surely kill him. That is why the only thing a man can do in such a case is to follow his invariable rule of conduct, dictated by his conscience. But his conscience may demand his own life, but not that of another . . . This reasoning can be applied with striking proof in international relations."[4]

Thus, the person is denied the ability to determine what is evil and what is good, and the very attempt to make such a determination is already regarded as violence. Tolstoy directly says this, with reference to Jesus's teaching, more than once.[5] Only if morality is understood in an exclusively absolutist sense does the conviction arise that it is extreme to make any moral judgment or that a person performs every act as though it will be the sole determinant of his admission to heaven. But this is not all. To believe that a person is unable to distinguish between good and evil – what is more, that he has no moral right to express a judgment on the matter – means to deny man the status of a moral subject. Of course, a person's morality is made manifest in his ability to act morally. But is moral action possible without reflection and decision? Without decision based on choice – the choice between good and evil? That is, based on moral judgment?

Another tendency in the argumentation of the representatives of absolutist thinking against resistance to evil is that, failing to examine the potential of various means of resistance apart from self-sacrifice,

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[4] Leo Tolstoy, *The Law of Love and the Law of Violence*, trans. Mary Koutouzow Tolstoy. New York: Rudolph Field, 1948, pp. 105, 107. It is worth noting that Tolstoy, while in principle denying the possibility of precisely determining the nature of an action that in essence has already begun, nonetheless calls the man with the knife in his hand a "brigand": if we are capable of understanding the character of a person, why can we not foresee, at least approximately, what kind of deed he will commit?

[5] L.N. Tolstoi, *Put' zhizni* (*The Way of Life*). Moscow: Respublika, 1993, p. 170.

from the most innocent (which also may be effective) to the most decisive and forceful, they regard any kind of decisive resistance to evil as fraught with murder. In Tolstoy's simplified and schematic example, the only alternatives considered for the person with the revolver facing the "brigand with a knife" are to rush to shield the possible victim with his body or to shoot the brigand on the spot. Tolstoy is convinced that "violence, by its very essence, inevitably leads to murder"; he justifies this thesis on the grounds that any attempt to compel a person to do something by threatening force presupposes the readiness and ability to use force, up to and including its most extreme forms.[6] Although authors writing about nonviolence appear to understand that forcible resistance is not limited to the use of physical force, they place their chief emphasis precisely on physical force – on, moreover, its most radical expression, murder. Thereby they overlook the fundamental assertion made by advocates of just war theory that the use of force is justified only in the last resort, after persistent attempts to resolve a given conflict by peaceful and nonviolent means.

Another proposition connected with ethical absolutism concerns the interpretation of the nature of violence. According to Tolstoy, "all violence consists in some people compelling others, under the threat of suffering or death, to do what they do not want to do."[7] A more exact definition of violence, in counterposition to love, is that it consists in "some people compelling others by force to live in accordance with their will."[8] Such definitions of violence do not provide a rigorous and universal criterion by which any given act can be categorized as violent or nonviolent. An objective criterion, I think, follows from an understanding of violence as action that – unlawfully and against a person's will – lowers his moral (spiritual), social (economic, civil, political), and life status, or that threatens to do so. The boundaries of violence thus defined, while perhaps broad, are at least clearly demarcated. "Unlawful" should be understood in the literal sense of this word, as incommensurate with law. Lawfulness is not someone's (subjective, accidental) point of view; it is the point of view of law. "Lowering the status" of a person should be understood on the objective plane to mean depriving him of life or property, inflicting harm on his health, property, or position, or flouting his rights – that is, any violation of the status quo; and on the subjective plane to mean violating or destroying the individual's identity. Nonviolence is the opposite of violence in the sense that it confirms the status quo. It means relating to others in such a way that harm is not inflicted on them, their rights are

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[6] L.N. Tolstoi, *Put' zhizni,* p. 177.
[7] Leo Tolstoy, *The Law of Love and the Law of Violence*, p. 105.
[8] L.N. Tolstoi, *Put' zhizni,* p. 168.

not violated, and minimal justice is therefore done. Nonviolence is not solicitude, not charity, not mercy, and not even respect. It is merely not inflicting injury. In this sense nonviolence is *ahimsa,* which in Sanskrit means literally "doing no harm." And if it is still appropriate here to speak of the inherent value of the personality, then this is so only in the sense of its autonomy or sovereignty. So violence is the opposite not of love, as Tolstoy thought, but of nonviolence. The opposites of love are hostility and indifference.

Finally, yet another thesis of the representatives of ethical absolutism is that violence cannot be fought and evil uprooted by means of force. Is the assumption here that violence and evil can be fought by means of nonviolence and good? To clarify this problem, I would have to expand the theoretical framework of the discussion and tackle the question of the nature of moral and social evil; this cannot be done in the present article. I merely note the obvious: the fact that people may be poorly informed, deluded, selfish, or driven by inner malice fails by a wide margin fully to encompass the sources of evil. As for the thesis that evil is overcome by good, it suffices for now to examine it in the same light as the other thesis considered above – the thesis that in taking a stand against evil a person is compelled to pass moral judgment on another and that he has no moral right to do this. Only moralists, hypocrites, and romantic revolutionaries suppose that in performing concrete deeds, albeit virtuous ones, they are taking a stand against evil in general. In worldly affairs, resistance to evil finds expression in various kinds of action – in action to prevent injury, stop insolence, counter aggression, repulse the hooligan and rapist, expose fraud, and so on. In the ordinary speech of everyday morality, the word 'evil' is an expressive signifier of such things as imprudent negligence, wrongness, irregularity, injustice, and villainy. People resist specific acts of specific individuals as they uphold their own interests and seek to preserve or change agreements that they have concluded, prevailing customs, and accepted standards. One must distinguish this from the activity of ideologists and moralizing politicians or intriguers who manipulate the words 'good' and 'evil' to induce people to act in ways advantageous to them.

We should not, of course, repay evil with evil. We should not do harm in response to harm, intrigue in response to intrigue, or deceive in response to deception – let alone respond to insolence and crime with insolence and crime. But not to resist evil is immoral. For damage inflicted, especially intentionally inflicted, for an infraction or crime the culprit must be made to answer in accordance with the norms upheld in a given community at a given time. Evil (in the just-mentioned diversity of its concrete manifestations) must be resisted. Otherwise it cannot be stopped. To resist means to undertake active efforts – moral, social,

political-legal, and involving the use of force –aimed at creating conditions that make it impossible for anyone to perform dangerous actions. Resistance may take the form of shaming and awakening the conscience of those whose actions unjustifiably violate the interests and rights of others; it may, perhaps, take the form of a prayerful appeal to the *Powers* and *Forces* (in the esoteric sense of these words) to stop wrongdoers (if any of them are capable of doing so); but it may also take the form of the peremptory shout that interrupts a crime, the sounding of the alarm, the raising of all sorts of organizational and physical obstacles, or forcible constraint and suppression. At the same time, those who resist evil must understand the full measure of the responsibility that they assume and, consequently, be prepared to be held answerable to others, to society or to the law, if the efforts undertaken by them to resist evil should prove disproportionate. This pertains to the *pragmatics of resistance* and requires separate analysis.

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CHAPTER V

DO PEOPLE HAVE VIRTUES OR VICES?
SOME RESULTS FROM PSYCHOLOGY

CHRISTIAN MILLER

The central focus of my current research has mainly been on empirical issues about character.[1] More specifically, I have drawn on the extensive work in psychology over the past fifty years which examines morally relevant thought and behavior. One of the conclusions I have arrived at on the basis of examining this research is the following:

(C1) Few people today have any of the traditional moral virtues.[2]

Examples of such virtues include compassion, honesty, and courage. Now perhaps this claim might not be so surprising – turn on the nightly news or read a few pages of human history and you can find ample support for it. But along with (C1), I also claim that:

(C2) Few people today have any of the traditional moral vices.

Examples of such vices include cruelty, dishonesty, and cowardice.

(C1) and (C2) are very broad claims, and there is no way I can properly support them here. Instead what I will do in this paper is focus on just one area of our moral lives, namely cheating motivation and behavior, and briefly examine whether there is any empirical support for the relevant virtue of honesty or vice of dishonesty. My conclusions in this area generalize to other domains of moral concern, although I will not be able to show that here.

In section one of this paper, I review some of the leading research on cheating behavior, and in section two I do the same for cheating

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[1] This research has culminated in two forthcoming books with Oxford University Press entitled *Moral Character: An Empirical Theory*, and *Character and Moral Psychology*.

[2] This claim should be qualified to apply only to people in Western industrial societies, since published psychological studies in leading journals are almost always conducted using participants from either North American or European populations. My picture of character *may* apply more universally than this, but clearly a lot more research would need to be done first before I would feel comfortable making such a claim.

motivation. Section three then outlines several requirements for honesty and dishonesty, and I explain why, in light of the current psychological evidence, these requirements do not seem to be met. Finally in section four I step back and consider an important implication if my conclusions are correct.

CHEATING AND BEHAVIOR

By 'cheating behavior,' I will mean behavior which intentionally breaks the relevant rules in a situation (whether moral or non-moral) in order to gain an advantage using deceit or fraud. Athletes who use performance enhancing drugs are intentionally and deceitfully breaking certain rules of their respective sports in order to acquire a competitive advantage. Taxpayers who underreport their income are intentionally breaking tax rules in order to benefit financially in a fraudulent way. Students who plagiarize their essays are intentionally breaking educational rules in order to come out ahead academically while fraudulently representing the work as their own. And so on. Note that this characterization does not require that the cheater be the one who necessarily is getting the advantage. A student may let a friend copy his homework, for instance, not for the student's own academic advantage, but for that of his friend's.[3]

At an antidotal level, news reports are filled with stories of cheating. In the financial world, prominent leaders such as Charles Rangel, Bernard Madoff, and Kenneth Lay have been found guilty of cheating. In the athletic world, numerous football, baseball, and cycling stars have been suspended for doping. Extramarital affairs are commonplace among celebrities – Bill Clinton, John F. Kennedy, Tiger Woods, Eliot Spitzer, John Edwards, Elizabeth Taylor, Prince Charles, Hugh Grant, Kobe Bryant, and Jude Law headline a long list.

More systematic attempts to document cheating behavior are found in the now sizable research literature on academic cheating. Three recent studies reported that at the time the average cheating rate of students while in college was 70 percent, 86 percent, and 60 percent respectively.[4] Apparently these rates have increased dramatically over

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[3] I do not claim that the characterization of cheating behavior I have offered provides either strict necessary or sufficient conditions. Perhaps, for instance, there are cases of cheating where a person breaks the relevant rules, but does so unintentionally. Or perhaps some cheating can be bald-faced without deceit or fraud. My goal here is only to offer a characterization which encompasses most of the familiar cases from ordinary life and from the psychology literature on cheating.

[4] See Klein et al. 2007, McCabe et al. 2006, and Rokovski and Levy 2007.

time, with Ogilby (1995) reporting an increase in self-reported college cheating from 23 percent in 1940 to 84 percent in 1982. Yet according to one study, of the students who say that they cheated, only roughly 3 percent report getting caught.[5]

Rather than just report broad averages, here are two more focused studies. Taradi and colleagues (2010) surveyed medical school students in Croatia about their academic cheating while in high school. Out of 472 participants, only three reported that they had never cheated in one of the nine ways listed on the questionnaire, and 78 percent reported to have cheated often in at least one of these ways.[6] For instance, on "Getting exam questions from someone who already has taken the test," 94 percent admitted to doing this at least once but only 5 percent considered it serious cheating, while 28 percent said it was not cheating at all and 46 percent considered it trivial cheating. Similarly, 90 percent admitted to "Copying from another student during a test or exam with his/her knowledge", with only 4 percent counting this as serious. In fact, even 68 percent said yes to "Taking a test for someone else," but still only 33 percent saw this as serious cheating.[7]

An even more focused study by Faulkender and her colleagues (1994) had to do with an incident of cheating in an introductory psychology course at the University of Southern Mississippi. The second test of the semester was stolen from the printer and photocopied in mass. Compared to the first test, students finished taking this exam comparatively early and scored much higher. A formal investigation was launched, and a mandatory retake announced. Faulkender decided to survey the 633 enrolled students, and found that 22 percent anonymously self-reported cheating using a copy of the test, while an additional 35 percent reported that they would have gotten a copy of the test if they had been given a chance to. So 57 percent reported that they were highly disposed to cheat on this test if they could get away with it. Similarly, students in a math course at the same university (where this time there was no evidence of cheating) were asked if they would get a stolen copy of their test ahead of time if given a chance, and 49 percent said that they would.[8]

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[5] Singhal 1982. For additional data on academic cheating, see Smith et al. 1972: 644, 646, Haines et al. 1986: 345, McCabe and Treviño 1993, 1997, Faulkender et al. 1994, Newstead et al. 1996, McCabe et al. 2001, Anderman and Murdock 2007, Williams et al. 2010, Simkin and McLeod 2010, O'Rourke et al. 2010: 53, 55, and Taradi et al. 2010.

[6] Taradi et al. 2010: 667.

[7] Ibid., 668.

[8] Faulkender et al. 1994: 212.

The upshot of this and other research on academic cheating is that such cheating is widespread among at least Western students today. As Valerie Haines and her colleagues remark in an often cited paper, cheating at college campuses is an "epidemic," and I suspect most researchers in the field would agree.[9] But there is nothing special about *academic* cheating per se. Rather, the evidence suggests that most people are disposed to cheat in a variety of circumstances, whether these are academic, athletic, financial, or some other setting. These dispositions, furthermore, can be explored in controlled experimental settings, as a number of published studies have shown. I will only briefly mention two examples in this section.[10]

Diener and Wallbom (1976) had participants take an anagram test, only about half of which could be completed during the five minute time limit. The experimenter informed each participant that he would have to leave for ten minutes in order to help other participants, and he then set a timer bell for five minutes with the warning to, "Remember not to go any further after the bell rings."[11] A two-way mirror off to one side of the participant was used to see whether he or she would indeed stop after five minutes. 71 percent of participants kept going after the bell sounded.[12] This was actually the control group for the study; I will return to the experimental group in the next section.

In one of the conditions in a recent study by Lisa Shu and her colleagues (2011), participants received $10, a worksheet with 20 problems, and a collection sheet where they recorded their performance on the problems. Participants were given four minutes to do the problems (which was not long enough by design), and were told that they could keep $0.50 per right answer. In the control condition, the experimenter checked the answers and oversaw payment. In the shredder condition, the participants were told to count the number of correct answers, record this total on the collection sheet, shred their worksheet, and then pay themselves the correct amount. The experimenter did not check any of this. In other words, participants in the shredder condition could write down whatever number of correct answers they wanted, get

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[9] Haines et al. 1986: 342. Murdock and Stephens describe cheating as "rampant across society" (2007: 248), while DeSteno and Valdesolo call it "rampant" and "commonplace, practically expected" (2011: 173).

[10] In addition to the below, see also Dienstbier and Munter 1971, Houston 1978, Bloodgood et al. 2008, Vohs and Schooler 2008, Mazar et al. 2008a, Gino and Pierce 2009, Gino et al. 2009, 2011, Mead et al. 2009, Zhong et al. 2010, Gillath et al. 2010 , and Gino and Margolis 2011, although many more studies could be cited (see Blasi 1980: 21-23 for a review of some earlier studies).

[11] Diener and Wallbom 1976: 109.

[12] Ibid., 110.

paid accordingly, and no one would know the difference. Here were the results:[13]

| No Opportunity to Cheat | 7.97 problems answered correctly (group average) |
| Opportunity to Cheat | 13.22 problems answered correctly (group average) |

It is hard to believe that the participants in the second group were that much better at anagram problems! Rather, on average they clearly took advantage of an opportunity to cheat and get away with it.

In sum, while I have only focused on the details of four studies in this section, they are representative of many additional findings in the research literature. Cheating appears to be widespread, and can be evoked in most of us given the right situations.

CHEATING AND MOTIVATION

Why do so many of us go down this path of cheating? What is the best research evidence on the motives behind such behavior? There does not appear to be a simple story to tell here. A person can cheat in very different ways for the same reason, and two people can cheat in the same way for very different reasons.

To begin to make sense of cheating motivation, let me start with the important point that most people say they believe cheating in general is wrong, as are various specific forms of cheating such as copying off another person's test. So the correct moral beliefs seem to be there, and often they can lead to motivation to not cheat when an opportunity arises.

One way to examine the presence and role of moral beliefs with respect to cheating is to conduct experiments which manipulate their salience. For instance, Mazar and her colleagues (2008a) ran an experiment in which members of the control group first had to write down the names of ten books they read in high school (non-moral reminder), while the experimental group had to write down from memory the Ten Commandments (moral reminder). Then they completed a problem solving task with 20 problems that had a similar design as the Shu study – either an experimenter checked their results, or they recycled their worksheet and could submit an answer sheet with any number of correct answers they wanted to without the experimenter checking. It turned out that for the control condition it did not matter

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[13] Shu et al. 2011: 339.

which recall task was performed – an average of 3.1 problems was solved. However, when books were recalled in the recycling condition, cheating was noticeably higher (4.2 problems solved). But when the Ten Commandments were recalled in the recycling condition, performance dropped to an average of 2.8 problems solved – the lowest of all.[14]

The implication should be clear enough – the moral reminder served to make the importance of moral standards increasingly salient to the person, and so in his own mind made it much more difficult to justify doing the wrong thing by cheating. So the beliefs against cheating seem to be there, alright, but often we seem to not be mindful or aware of them at least in some ethical situations.[15]

This particular study may not be very applicable to preventing cheating in real-world situations, but it does relate to an important topic in discussions of academic cheating, namely the use of an honor code. Studies have repeatedly found that honor codes are correlated with reduced rates of cheating. For instance, during 1990-1991, McCabe and Treviño (1993) found that 28 percent of college students at schools without an honor code self-reported helping another person on a test, whereas only 9 percent did at schools with an honor code. Similar trends were found with plagiarism (18 percent versus 7 percent), unauthorized crib notes (21 percent versus 9 percent), and unpermitted collaboration (39 percent versus 21 percent), among other forms of cheating.[16] In particular, they found that to be effective, an honor code cannot be, in their words, mere 'window dressing,' but rather, "a truly effective code must be well implemented and strongly embedded in the student culture."[17]

In fact, a significant effect of honor codes on cheating behavior has been shown to exist even in simple laboratory manipulations. In another study Mazar varied the initial setup by dropping the recall task, and having the control condition just involve the experimenter checking the participant's performance on the task. The recycle condition was as before in providing an opportunity to cheat. But now in a third recycle + honor code condition, at the top of the test sheet was the statement, "I

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[14] Mazar et al. 2008a: 636.

[15] Ibid., 635.

[16] See McCabe et al. 2001: 224. Part of the explanation that McCabe and Treviño (1993) provide for this effect is that, "wrongdoing is more clearly defined under honor code systems. When the definition of wrongdoing is made clear, it becomes more difficult for potential cheaters to rationalize and justify cheating behavior, and the incidence of cheating may be lower as a result" (525).

[17] McCabe et al. 2001: 224. For additional discussion and data on honor codes and cheating, see McCabe and Treviño 1993, McCabe et al. 2001, and Thorkildsen et al. 2007: 191.

understand that this short survey falls under MIT's [Yale's] honor system," under which participants had to print and sign their name.[18] No threat of external punishment was at work here, Mazar reasoned, since neither school did in fact have an honor code at the time.[19] Here were the results:[20]

	Solved Matrices ($0.50 per correct answer)	Solved Matrices ($2 per correct answer)
Control Condition	3.4	3.2
Recycle Condition	6.1	5.0
Recycle + HC Condition	3.1	3.0

So even though nothing changed in the third condition in terms of their ability to get away with cheating, participants on average performed even slightly worse than the controls. Nor did the additional reward of $2 per correct answer seem to tempt them to cheat.

Suppose that most people do in fact think that cheating is morally wrong in general and/or in a variety of particular cases.[21] Nevertheless, despite the presence of these beliefs, cheating is still rampant. What explains the disparity? There is no single answer; different motives to cheat will be at work in different individuals and situations. But let me at least mention a few broad categories of motivational factors. One is a desire to cheat so as to avoid failure (and, relatedly, embarrassment or shame).[22] Another is a desire to cheat in order to succeed or to achieve

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[18] Mazar et al. 2008a: 637.

[19] They also replicated the experiment at an institution with a "strict" honor code, and found identical results (Ibid.).

[20] Ibid. In the study by Shu and her colleagues (2011) that was reported in the previous section, they also varied the role of an honor code, although in the honor code conditions participants only read rather than signed the code. In the recycle plus no honor code condition, participants reported 13.22 problems solved on average, versus 10.03 in the recycle plus read honor code condition. Still, this was higher than the 7.97 problems in the control condition with no honor code (Shu et al. 2011: 339). Merely reading versus signing an honor code perhaps makes a difference, which will be explored in more detail in section eight.

[21] See also Haines et al. 1986, Murdock and Stephens 2007: 229, Gino et al. 2009, O'Rourke et al. 2010, and DeSteno and Valdesolo 2011: 173.

[22] See, e.g., Smith et al. 1972, Newstead et al. 1996: 233, Murdock and Stephens 2007: 244, Thorkildsen et al. 2007: 193, and Rick and Loewenstein 2008.

certain competitive advantages, ambitious goals, or other benefits.[23] Still another is a desire to cheat because cheating (or the risk of getting caught) is fun or interesting.[24]

These desires can be lumped together as broadly egoistic, involving the costs and benefits for the person (so he thinks) if he were to successfully cheat. At the same time, there are the moral norms which stand in opposition to these desires and which oppose cheating. So when these two elements are brought together, the natural motivational story to tell is that a person will have greater motivation to *comply* with her moral norms if the perceived net benefits of cheating in this situation do not outweigh the perceived net benefits of doing the morally right thing. On the other hand, if the person thinks it is more beneficial to cheat instead of doing the morally right thing, then there will be greater overall motivation to *cheat*.

This is a fairly commonplace story – doing the morally right thing comes into psychological tension in some cases with what is thought to promote self-interest.[25] But it turns out to be a story that is contradicted by recent empirical findings. In particular, the story predicts that, if they know they can get away with it, people who cheat because they think it is in their own self-interest would not just cheat a little bit, but would try to benefit themselves as much as they could. This might involve, for instance, trying to maximize their financial gain or their athletic advantage.

Yet look back at the Mazar results above – an average of 3.1 problems was solved in the control conditions, while 4.2 problems were solved in the recycling condition. But this was out of 20 total problems! Since the experimenter would not know the difference, why didn't participants in the recycle condition push the limit more and thereby immediately earn greater financial rewards for themselves, knowing full well that their cheating would go undetected? Similarly in their honor

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[23] See, e.g., Smith et al. 1972, Newstead et al. 1996, Thorkildsen et al. 2007: 192, Murdock and Stephens 2007: 248, Rick and Loewenstein 2008: 646, Williams et al. 2010: 299-303, Simkin and McLeod 2010, DeSteno and Valdesolo 2011: 172, and Gino and Margolis 2011. For related discussion of motives for cheating, see Newstead et al. 1996 and McCabe et al. 2001: 228.

[24] See, e.g., Tibbetts 1997, Nagin and Pogarsky 2003, and Thorkildsen et al. 2007: 183.

[25] For a nice example of this story being told by psychologists about cheating, see Smith et al. 1972. As they note, "Clearly moral rules are not the only determinants of moral behavior, expectations of gain or punishment also play an important role. A person who believes cheating is immoral may nevertheless cheat if the expected gain is sufficiently great, while a person who does not regard cheating as wrong may, nevertheless, refrain from cheating because of fear of punishment" (656).

code study, the recycle condition with a $0.50 payout per correct answer had a higher average score (6.1 problems solved) when compared to the recycle condition with a $2.00 payout (5 problems solved). Why did the second group only stop at an average of 5 out of 20 problems? Indeed Mazar ran another study with four different payments ($0.10, $0.50, $2.50, and $5) – there was some dishonesty compared to controls in the first two recycle groups, but *none* in comparison to controls for the last two groups.[26] In fact, across six experiments and 791 participants, only 5 were found to cheat the maximum amount.[27] Their behavior at least makes sense to us; everyone else's behavior is puzzling![28]

The explanation that Mazar and others have proposed to solve this puzzle,[29] and which I will also adopt here as well, is that these participants were typically willing to cheat so long as doing so did not threaten their conception of themselves as honest. In other words, while they wanted some of the benefits of cheating (in this case financial rewards), the increased marginal benefit for themselves at a certain point was not enough to outweigh how important it was to them to continue seeing themselves as honest.

This leads to a revision to the simple story about cheating motivation. It is not just that most people have a desire to cheat when the benefits of complying with the relevant moral norms against cheating are (significantly) outweighed by the costs. Rather, it is that they have such a desire to cheat, *while also* desiring, as much as possible, to still appear to be moral both to others and *to themselves*. People, in other words, tend to care about being honest, and very much want to think of

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[26] Mazar et al. 2008a: 642.

[27] Ibid., 643.

[28] For similar results, see also Vohs and Schooler 2008: 52, Gino et al. 2009, 2011, Mead et al. 2009: 595-596, Zhong et al. 2010: 312, Gino and Margolis 2011, and Shu et al. 2011. One hypothesis that would be in line with the original model has to do with fear of detection. When the payments are larger, perhaps participants feared that the experimenters will somehow figure out that they are cheating if they claim to have solved 15 problems (which would make for a sizable reward), and so limit their cheating to try to minimize detection. Mazar tested this hypothesis in another study by (mis)informing participants that the average student solves eight problems in the time limit. But even then, the average number of problems solved in the recycle condition was only 4.8, which was higher than for controls (3.4) but less than what they could have claimed without looking out of the ordinary (Mazar et al. 2008a: 640).

[29] Mazar et al. 2008a, 2008b.

themselves that way.[30] That will be quite difficult to do if they are also aggressively cheating whenever the opportunity arises.[31]

Let me take this thought one step further. In the last section, the Diener and Wallbom (1976) study was reviewed which found that 71 percent of participants cheated by going over their five minute time limit when alone completing an anagram test. This, as I mentioned, was the result for the control group. In the experimental group, the participants were seated directly in front of the two-way mirror and, "thus saw themselves whenever they glanced up."[32] The result? Only 7 percent of participants cheated in this condition.[33] This is a startling difference, and the preceding discussion can help make sense of it.

Surely most of the participants in the control group had certain moral norms against cheating that were to some degree salient to them – after all, they had been told directly and more than once to not go over the five minute limit. Yet most of them did. Why? Because the benefits for themselves of cheating outweighed the benefits of doing the right thing, and there was a negligible risk of being caught since the experimenter had left the room. But what about the threat that such behavior would have to continuing to see themselves as honest people? Surely it would be hard to maintain such a self-concept while continuing to work after the buzzer goes off.

That is where a kind of self-deception comes into play. If a person can (subconsciously) deceive himself into not comparing this act of cheating with his moral norms, then the treat to his self-concept is diminished. That is why a seemingly trivial variable like the placement of a mirror can have such a dramatic effect on behavior. The mirror gives the person much less room to hide. With increased self-awareness, the difference between what the person's moral beliefs require and his temptation to cheat is made especially salient, so that it becomes that much more difficult for participants to deceive themselves into thinking that they are still honest.

This proposal can also shed more light on why the saliency of a moral norm, as in the Ten Commandments recall study, can have such an impact on improving compliance with that norm. Part of the reason might simply be that when salience is increased, it reliably increases motivation to comply with the norm. But now I think we can also say

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[30] For studies related to the extent and importance of thinking of oneself as honest, see Gordon and Miller 2000: 47.

[31] For a similar story about lying as opposed to cheating, see ibid., 46-47.

[32] Diener and Wallbom 1976: 109. There was also an audio manipulation as well in the experimental condition which was designed to increase self-awareness.

[33] Ibid., 110.

that increased salience makes it even harder to perform actions which would threaten one's conception of oneself as honest. As Mazar writes, "when moral standards are more accessible, people will need to confront the meaning of their actions more readily and therefore be more honest…"[34]

Two final points about the importance of thinking of oneself as honest are worth noting. The first is that this proposal should not be taken too far. Clearly some people do aggressively cheat. If the perceived benefits to the self from cheating are so great (unlike in the simple experimental setups where only a small amount of money is at stake), then they can trump both motivation to comply with the moral norms against cheating and motivation to continue to think of oneself as honest.[35] Such a person might concede that he was dishonest, but also claim that it was worth it.

Secondly, self-deception is only one way in which people can continue to maintain their self-image as honest while cheating. Another common strategy is to rationalize their behavior. They can say that, for instance, copying homework for a friend is not really wrong. That may be what is going on with the Croatian medical students, the majority of whom admitted to repeat cheating but who did not see even getting test questions from someone who had already taken it as serious cheating.[36] Or another approach to rationalizing behavior is to take advantage of ambiguity and use certain categories as opposed to others in order to label an action so that it does not seem (as) morally problematic.[37]

Yet another strategy for maintaining the self-concept is to lessen or deny personal responsibility for the cheating, perhaps by saying that everyone else is doing the same thing. In fact, the extent to which other students are thought to be cheating is one of the leading predictors of the likelihood that a given student will engage in academic cheating.[38] And

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[34] Mazar et al. 2008a: 635.

[35] For relevant discussion, see Ibid., 642, 2008b: 651 and Rick and Loewenstein 2008: 646.

[36] As Taradi writes, "most students did not see their cheating actions as out of the ordinary or morally wrong" (Taradi et al. 2010: 669).

[37] See Mazar et al. 2008a. For instance, in another study they added a recycle + token condition to the familiar recycle and control conditions from earlier. In this condition, participants would earn one token per correct solution, which would then be exchanged moments later for money. The thought was that a token could lead to a more ambiguous interpretation of one's action as to whether it is really morally wrong, thereby leading to increased cheating. And this is what they found – the group averages for problems solved were 3.5 (control), 6.2 (recycle), and 9.4 (recycle + token) (638).

[38] See Smith et al. 1972: 655, Haines et al. 1986: 350-351, McCabe and Treviño 1993: 527-528, 532-533, 1997: 383-384, 391-392, Newstead et al.

still other strategies, such as denying that cheating occurred at all or blaming the accuser, are no doubt employed as well.[39]

Before ending this section, I want to register one corrective to the picture about cheating motivation which has been sketched here. That motivation has been connected to egoistic benefits for the person doing the cheating. But not all cheating is aimed at immediately benefiting the person who cheats. For instance, in academic contexts many students give their homework to a classmate to copy, or let a friend see his answers during a test. Newstead and his colleagues (1996), for instance, surveyed 943 students and found that 14 percent of those who admitted to cheating gave as one of their reasons, "to help a friend."[40] They also found that 16 percent of these students reported doing another student's coursework, and 29 percent marked another student's work more generously than it deserved.[41] Such actions can significantly help out the other person, to be sure, but they do not immediately benefit the cheater. Of course, it does not follow that other-oriented cheating is *ultimately* motivated by altruistic concerns, a topic which I will return to in the next section.

For now, I have sketched a picture of motivation to cheat which is supported by a number of recent studies and which should also apply to many cases of actual cheating behavior.

CHEATING, HONESTY, AND DISHONESTY

To me anyone who behaves and is motivated to act in the ways described in sections one and two, is clearly not honest (with respect to

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1996: 233, 239, McCabe et al. 2001: 222, Taradi et al. 2010: 669, DeSteno and Valdesolo 2011: 172-175, and especially O'Rourke et al. 2010. For controlled experiments which examine the effect of peer cheating on financial rather than academic cheating behavior, see Gino et al. 2009. For denial of responsibility and cheating more generally, see Murdock and Stephens 2007: 238-243.

[39] These are all strategies for what is often called 'neutralization' or 'moral disengagement.' While I have focused on strategies that are employed after the performance of an action the person believes is wrong, neutralization can occur before, during, or after such behavior (Haines et al. 1986: 344, 346 and Shu et al. 2011: 330-332). For related discussion in the context of cheating, see Haines et al. 1986, Faulkender et al. 1994: 215, Newstead et al. 1996: 229, McCabe et al. 2001: 227, Murdock and Stephens 2007: 233-248, Simkin and McLeod 2010: 444, O'Rourke et al. 2010, and Taradi et al. 2010: 669. For more general discussion of mechanisms of neutralization and moral disengagement, see in particular Sykes and Matza 1957, Bandura et al. 1996, Murdock and Stephens 2007, and Shu et al. 2011.

[40] Newstead et al. 1996: 233.

[41] Ibid., 232.

cheating). At the same time, although perhaps less clearly, such a person is not dishonest either (again, with respect to cheating). To try to support both of these claims, I will outline various requirements for honesty and dishonesty that must be satisfied in order to have them to even a weak degree.

But first, here is one more study which ties together much of the previous discussion of cheating and which can be used to help focus the evaluation of peoples' moral character. In another study by Shu and her colleagues (2011), there was also the control and recycle conditions, as well as the no-honor-code and sign-honor-code conditions. Shu also added another variation, where participants read but did not sign the honor code. In addition, the experimenters secretly coded each test sheet so that they could recover them from the recycle containers later and match them up with the answer sheets. That way they could not only calculate group averages but also determine exactly who did and did not cheat. Finally, in the post-test questionnaire participants were asked, among other things, a few questions designed to test their memory of what the honor code said. Here were some of the results:[42]

	Reported Problems Solved	Actual Problems Solved	Honor Code Items
No Opportunity to Cheat:			
No Honor Code	7.79	7.79	
Read Honor Code	7.39	7.39	3.39
Signed Honor Code	7.38	7.38	4.00
Opportunity to Cheat:			
No Honor Code	13.09	7.61	
Read Honor Code	10.05	7.23	2.82
Signed Honor Code	7.91	7.45	4.27

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[42] Shu et al. 2011: 341.

This is a lot to digest, so let me note what I think are the most interesting findings. First, there was definitely significant cheating going on in the recycle condition when no honor code was involved (an average of 13.09 reported versus 7.61 actual problems solved). In fact, 57 percent of participants overreported. In contrast, there was less average cheating in the read-honor-code condition, but still some. 32 percent overreported. But in the sign-honor-code condition, only 1 person out of 22 overreported.[43] Hence, while reading an honor code made something of a difference to combatting cheating, actually signing it eliminated cheating almost entirely. This is perhaps not surprising – merely passively reading is different from actively committing oneself to something.[44]

Also, note that while an average of 13.09 in the no-honor-code recycling condition is a much higher average than the actual performance, it is still significantly lower than the 20 correct answer maximum. Participants ended up costing themselves roughly $3.50 on average by not cheating as much as they could safely get away with. Finally, consider the number of items of the honor code that were remembered correctly on average – it was significantly lower in the read-honor-code (2.82 items) versus the sign-honor-code (4.27 items) recycle conditions. Another study found a similar trend.[45] Apparently some kind of rationalization strategy is at work here, where participants are motivated to forget what they had read when it opposes their actual behavior.[46]

With these results freshly in mind, here is one requirement on honesty (with respect to cheating, which from now on will be assumed):

> (a) A person who is honest, when acting in character, will refrain from regularly cheating in situations where he is a free and willing participant and the relevant rules are fair and appropriate, even if by cheating he is assured of acquiring some benefit for himself.[47]

The Shu study illustrates that many people are not like this – they cheated even though they were volunteers in a research study aimed at improving scientific knowledge whose rules were clearly stated, fair,

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[43] Ibid., 342.

[44] Shu et al. 2011: 344. See also McCabe and Treviño 1993, 1997 and Mazar et al. 2008.

[45] Shu et al. 2011: 336-339.

[46] Ibid., 344.

[47] See, e.g., Hursthouse 1999: 10 and Adams 2006: 121.

and appropriate.[48] Many other studies reviewed earlier could also be cited here, and note that these are typically studies of actual cheating behavior rather than just self-reports.

Now (a) might not hold as a general principle. Perhaps there are some cases where by cheating under these conditions a person can also bring about a great moral good for other people, such as friends or loved ones. Consider, for instance, a spy who has infiltrated a company as an employee and needs to break its standard operating procedures in order to retrieve some piece of information that is vital to stopping a terrorist attack. Then while she would still be cheating the company, it does not necessarily follow that all things considered she was doing anything morally wrong or acting in opposition to the moral virtue of honesty.

If there are counterexamples like this to (a), I am not too worried. Suitable revisions could be made. The key point here is that these revisions would not apply to the cases of cheating in the experiments by Shu, Mazar, and others, nor to other research on academic cheating or athletic doping or financial abuse.

Here is another requirement:

> (b) A person who is honest, when acting in character, will not allow his honest behavior and cheating to be dependent, at least in many cases, on the presence of certain enhancers and inhibitors (such as anticipated punishment or anticipated failure), especially when important moral matters are at stake.

In other words, an honest person would not have his cheating behavior vary depending on the likelihood of his getting punished, or his being embarrassed for failing at something.[49] And yet there is experimental research to suggest that people are indeed like this.

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[48] Are many people disposed to cheat 'regularly'? There seems to be good reason to suspect this is the case, in that high numbers of people in these studies have been found to cheat in a variety of different situations where cheating opportunities arise. Furthermore, I would suspect that there would also be regular cheating by the same people in repetitions of, for instance, the recycle, no-honor-code condition, especially once they saw the first time that they could get away with their cheating. Both of the these claims, however, outstrip the available evidence, the first because the same participants were not studied in different cheating situations, and the second because the same participants were not followed longitudinally over time in repetitions of the same (nominal) cheating situations.

[49] Here again there may need to be exceptions for certain extreme cases, say when a person suddenly starts cheating when he thinks he will not get caught, in order to prevent his family from unjust starvation. Such cases might

Next I turn to a motivational requirement:

(c) An honest person's trait of honesty will typically lead him to refrain from cheating primarily for motivating reasons that are morally admirable and deserving of moral praise, and not primarily for motivating reasons which are either morally problematic or morally neutral.[50]

Yet I have already mentioned that avoiding punishment for being caught cheating is one important motivator for not cheating. Another, more subtle motivator has to do with being able to still think of oneself as honest. It could form at least part of the explanation as to why participants in the Shu study averaged 13.09 correct answers and not 20. But clearly that kind of motivator is not morally admirable.

Here is another requirement:

(d) A person who is honest, when acting in character, will not exhibit cheating behavior which varies with whether her moral beliefs about the wrongness of cheating (when it is wrong) are salient.

In other words, a person who cheats regularly when the relevant moral norms prohibiting cheating are not salient in her mind, but who refrains from cheating when they are salient, has not achieved an honest disposition yet. But that is exactly what the Shu study suggests is true of many of us, as did the earlier study by Mazar using the Ten Commandments as well as the bulk of the research literature on honor codes and academic cheating.

Finally, here is one more requirement:

(e) A person who is honest will, when he cheats in ways that are clearly morally wrong, typically attempt to prevent the cheating from happening again and be disappointed in himself for cheating in the first place, rather than using self-deception or rationalization to avoid having to confront his cheating.[51]

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be compatible with the person still being honest. But those are not the kinds of cheating cases that are being discussed in this paper.

[50] See, e.g., Hursthouse 1999: 11.

[51] See, e.g., Hursthouse 1999: 11. For this requirement with respect to the virtues in general, see Kupperman 2009: 245.

But there is strong empirical evidence that many of us do not live up to this standard either. Earlier I discussed at some length how self-deception can keep a person's actual cheating behavior and his moral disapproval of that behavior separate. I also briefly alluded to several ways people also tend to rationalize their cheating, making it seem as if it was really not morally wrong, or at least not their fault. Now also note the data in this section on participants' memory of the honor code. It seems that when they cheated, they were motivated to forget the honor code, thereby lessening the feeling of disapproval of their action. As Shu writes, "We find that bad behavior motivates moral leniency and leads to the strategic forgetting of moral rules…we suggest people could set off on a downward spiral of having ever more lenient ethics and even more unethical behavior."[52]

Cumulatively, then, these requirements on honesty do not seem to be met by most people today in the populations that were studied, and this inference is based not on self-report data but on actual behavioral results. Furthermore, these requirements are not the only ones which could be mentioned here.[53] The picture of character which thus begins to emerge can again look rather bleak from a moral perspective.

But that is not the lesson I take away from the research findings. Indeed there seem to me to be at least four quite positive aspects to most peoples' characters in this area, aspects which conflict with their possessing the vice of dishonesty (with respect to cheating). Here is the first one:

> (f) A dishonest person does not have moral beliefs to the effect that cheating is wrong in general, as well as wrong in most particular instances of what are widely considered to be acts of cheating. Or if he does happen to have such beliefs, he will not care much about them and they will not play a significant motivational role in his psychology.

Why, for instance, would a dishonest person believe that cheating researchers out of a few dollars in the problem solving task is morally wrong? Yet when their moral norms were made salient using something as simple as recalling the Ten Commandments or reading the honor

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[52] Shu et al. 2011: 344. See also 332.

[53] For instance, there is some evidence that dishonest behavior is 'contagious' when someone else who is a member of an in-group is observed acting dishonestly (Gino et al. 2009, DeSteno and Valdesolo 2011:173-175). But an honest person would not typically become increasingly dishonest in her behavior when seeing someone act like this.

code, most people did not cheat as much if at all. That is quite an astounding testament to their moral strength, in my opinion.

Another requirement is that:

> (g) A dishonest person, when acting in character, would not genuinely commit himself to behaving honestly prior to a situation where (he thinks) he can cheat in a way that is completely undetectable, and do so for financial or other gain.

Now this might not be true in general – perhaps the dishonest person could benefit in all kinds of ways if it became known to others that he had made this pledge. Fair enough. But that is not the kind of case I have in mind here – suppose instead that he is the only one who would know about this pledge. Then what would be the point of making the commitment, in so far as he is dishonest? Yet that is what Shu found most people did – only 1 out of 22 participants cheated in the condition where they had to sign an honor code.

Again,

> (h) A dishonest person, when acting in character, would try to maximize the benefits from cheating when he can cheat in a way that (he thinks) is completely undetectable and is beneficial overall to him.

But overwhelmingly, it turned out that participants did not do this. Most engaged in only a limited form of cheating.

To this last requirement in (h) it might be claimed that these people could still be dishonest because they were trying to jointly maximize both external benefits such as financial gain *and* internal benefits such as the preservation of their self-concept as honest. But here is the final requirement on dishonesty I will mention here:

> (j) A dishonest person, when acting in character, might desire that *others* think he is honest, but he would not be strongly committed to thinking of *himself* as honest.

Yet this is precisely the kind of thought that is being postulated in some of the most recent research on cheating that was reviewed earlier.

I do not know how to argue for this requirement. I guess one could try to object to (j) by trying to imagine a dishonest person who nevertheless wants to think of himself as honest. Now if he wanted to actually *be* honest, then it is not clear that he would count as a dishonest person. But perhaps if he just was content to only *think of himself* that

way (say, self-deceptively), then the objection is that he could still be dishonest. I am not sure what to think of this possibility, besides noting that it could lead to all kinds of psychological tension in his life, where his dishonest impulses pull him to cheat more, whereas this desire tries to curb the cheating so that he can still think of himself as honest. But then there would be psychological tensions that are not traditionally thought to be present in either the vicious person or the virtuous person, who are said to act wholeheartedly in one direction or the other. Clearly more would need to be said here, and so I will not put too much weight on (j).

One final possibility worth exploring is that of altruistic cheating. As I alluded to at the end of the previous section, there are cases of cheating where the immediate motivation is other-oriented rather than self-oriented. This is easy to see in cases of academic cheating,[54] although it is not limited just to that context. If it turned out that in at least some of these instances, the *ultimate* motivation was altruistic too, then that would seem to be in tension with how a dishonest person is thought to be normally disposed. Especially promising in this regard might be cases of empathetic cheating, which might be ultimately done on behalf of what is good for another person regardless of whether it benefits the self.[55] Unfortunately, though, there is so little research done to investigate this issue that on empirical grounds it remains idle speculation at this point.

SECULARISM AND VIRTUE

Given the research that I have considered, my conclusion is that when it comes to cheating most people are neither honest nor dishonest. Rather they have some positive moral qualities and some negative moral qualities in this area of their lives. Elsewhere, I also consider a wealth of additional research on other areas of morality, such as helping and harming others, and their implications for whether most people possess traits such as compassion or cruelty.[56] Again, my overall conclusion is that:

(C) Few people today have any of the traditional moral virtues or traditional moral vices.

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[54] See, e.g., Newstead et al. 1996.
[55] For some suggestive initial findings, see Gino and Pierce 2009.
[56] See Miller forthcoming a and b.

Let me assume in this final section of the paper that this claim is correct. What does it have to do with the topic of secularism? Here I will briefly explore one connection.

Most leading ethical theories today claim that at least one central ethical goal is to become a virtuous person. This is especially true for versions of virtue ethics which draw their inspiration from Aristotle. But it is also true of sophisticated secular forms of Kantian and consequentialist ethics as well.[57]

If this is one of their central goals, then all such views should address the following:

(1) A central ethical goal according to most ethical theories is to become a virtuous person.

(2) But most of us fall far short of being virtuous people in the ways outlined in (a) through (e) with respect to honesty, for instance.

(3) Hence secular ethicists need to outline realistic and empirically informed ways for most human beings to improve their characters, and so far they have not done so.

(4) Therefore an important challenge exists that needs to be addressed.

Call this the *Realism Challenge*. Less formally, the idea is that secular ethicists need to develop some account of how we can start with most people whose characters are deficient in various ways, and outline steps to best help them gradually transform into virtuous people who, for instance, reliably help when needed for the right reasons and independently of what mood or state of guilt they happen to be in.

The Realism Challenge should not be underestimated. Habituating oneself to resist immediate and familiar forms of temptation (or to not have them serve as temptations in the first place) is one thing. Perhaps most of us have techniques to strengthen our wills against temptation to, for instance, eat excessively or look inappropriately at an attractive person. But the real concern here is with trying to regulate the subtle and often subconscious influences on our moral behavior, examples of which were outlined in sections one and two.[58] These include a vast array of powerful egoistic motives, some of which are working subconsciously.

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[57] For a Kantian discussion of virtue, see Baxley 2010. For a consequentialist discussion, see Adams 1976.

[58] As Flanagan writes, "In addition to fantastic scenarios involving unrestricted license, and in addition to those everyday and well-understood situations in which the temptation to knavery is expectable, and thus a certain amount of knavery is too, there are subtle, mundane, and largely unnoticed forces that produce odd moral effects" (1991-292).

The Realism Challenge applies far more broadly than just to Aristotelian forms of virtue ethics. As noted already, most leading ethical theories would accept some version of (1). In addition, I take the features of being virtuous such as those outline for honesty in (a) through (e) to be platitudes of ethical thought – commonsense and largely uncontroversial features that are not specific to any particular ethical theory, but rather can serve as *constraints* when thinking about virtue that any such theory should respect (other things being equal).

But we should not stop just with professional ethicists. While I have no empirical evidence to support the claim, I suspect that most people in general, regardless of whether they have studied ethics or not, *already* accept that one central ethical goal is to become virtuous or a person of good moral character, and that a virtue like honesty involve, among other things, something roughly like the features in (a) though (e). So if I am right at the descriptive level about most of us not being virtuous, then just about *everyone*, whether an ethical theorist or not, has to address this challenge. It needs far more work than it has received so far, and calling attention to it is one of the main goals of my research.

It is important to stress that the above argument in (1) through (4) is only stated as a *challenge*, not as an objection to the truth of any ethical account. It can be posed succinctly in the following way:

> *Question*: Are there secular approaches to character development which, if followed carefully, would enable most people to develop the virtue of honesty (along with the other virtues)?

I have offered no reason to think that the Realism Challenge could not eventually be met, only that it will be very difficult to do so. Unfortunately, it is also a challenge that has gone almost completely neglected in the secular philosophical literature on moral development.[59]

When we turn from a secular to a Christian perspective, it might be thought that Christian ethicists will have an easy time addressing the Realism Challenge. In particular, they can claim that the entire notion of "acquiring" and "cultivating" and even "having" virtuous traits is wrongheaded from a Christian perspective. Rather, on this way of thinking, these traits are bestowed on us by God, perhaps through the internal workings of the Holy Spirit.

I do not have space here to enter into a discussion of God's role in character development. Instead let me make two simple points. First, even if the important work in character development is not done by human beings but by God, there are presumably various things that human beings can do (and refrain from doing) in order to *facilitate* that

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[59] For an exception, see Samuels and Casebeer 2005.

development. For instance, certain situations should be avoided, certain temptations resisted, and certain role models celebrated.

Secondly, many Christian ethicists will agree that there are acquired as well as infused moral virtues. Here I cannot consider historical disputes about how to read various theologians on this point or about whether honesty, for instance, has typically been counted as an acquired or an infused virtue. My only point is that, for the acquired virtues at least, there is still a Realism Challenge that Christian ethicists also have to address.

Given these points, premise (3) above can be revised as follows:

(3*) Hence Christian ethicists need to outline realistic and empirically informed ways for most human beings to both (i) improve their moral characters with respect to the acquired moral virtues, and (ii) take steps to facilitate the divine cultivation of the infused virtues. So far they have not done so.

At the end of the day, my hope is that much more interdisciplinary work will be done by philosophers, theologians, and psychologists to better understand how to realize the virtue of honesty in particular, as well as the other virtues in general.[60]

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DESECULARIZATION IN POST-SOVIET RUSSIA

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It has been more than ten years since the academic vocabulary of sociologists and political philosophers incorporated some notions that, while genetically linked with secularization, designate completely different and often even opposite processes. These are the notions of 'desecularization', the 'post-secular', and even 'asecularization'. All these notions are linked with the phenomenon of the rebirth or return of religion observable throughout the world. Here I will speak about the process of desecularization as it applies to the Russian post-Soviet reality. Before considering specific processes, however, we should clarify which working definition of desecularization will be used. I will start from the thesis on desecularization proposed by Peter Berger (2008) and will build on the conceptualization of this notion proposed by Vyacheslav Karpov (2010).

Peter Berger defines desecularization as primarily a counter-process against secularization. Vyacheslav Karpov goes farther than Berger and introduces the necessary clarifications. According to Karpov, *Desecularization is a process of counter-secularization, through which religion reasserts its societal influence in reaction to previous and/or co-occurring secularizing processes* (Karpov 2010). Unfolding his definition, Karpov enumerates the tendencies which, if combined, are believed to form the process of desecularization. He singles out the following tendencies:

- a rapprochement between formerly secularized institutions and religious norms, both formal and informal;
- a resurgence of religious beliefs and practices;
- a return of religion to the public sphere ("de-privatization");
- a revival of religious content in a variety of culture's subsystems, including the arts, philosophy, and literature, and in a decline of the standing of science relative to a resurgent role of religion in world-construction and world-maintenance;
- religion-related changes in society's substratum, including religiously inspired demographic changes, redefinition of territories and their populations along religious lines, reappearance of faith-related material structures, growing shares of religion-related goods in the overall economic market, and so on (Karpov 2010).

In addition, Karpov points to the non-integration of various components of desecularization, building on Kazanova's view of secularization, and to the possibility of secularization and desecularization processes going on simultaneously. He also introduces the notion of Multiple, Overlapping, and Clashing desecularizations, pointing to the complexity arising in the global context when counter-secularization processes overlap.

All these components make it possible to form a notion of desecularization. Below, on the basis of Karpov's conceptualization, I will make an attempt to describe basic aspects of the desecularization process in post-Soviet Russia and to supplement the tendencies he identified.

1

The starting point for describing desecularization processes is normally provided by the secular situation that preceded their emergence. And a description of the desecularization in post-Soviet Russia should begin with an account of the specific Soviet secularization.

Traditionally, in discussions on secularization, two types are indicated, namely, European (classical) and American. These types of secularization have been studied and described adequately by others. There is another type to be added however, which has been characteristic of countries with Communist regimes. Let us call it 'Soviet secularization' for convenience, since it appeared first precisely in the U.S.S.R. It cannot be said that singling out this type of secularization is something essentially new; for instance, Peter Berger mentions it in his famous article on desecularization (2008). However, this type as compared to the two others is the least studied both factually and theoretically. In my description of the Soviet type of secularization and desecularization processes, I will develop the basic points set forth in the study made jointly by Alexander Kyrlezhev and me (Kyrlezhev and Shishkov 2011).

Among the central characteristics of Soviet secularization is the 'hyper-privatization' of religion. In the Soviet case, the basic vector of secularization was directed to the efforts to oust religion not only from the public sphere but also from people's private life, since any inconsistency of private life – individual, family or group, with the truths of Soviet ideology was seen as an antisocial fact threatening the state. Individual religiosity in the situation of Soviet society proved to be a serious obstacle for one's professional career and any form of one's active participation in public life and work.

As a result, religion ousted from a person's life went even deeper into his secret private life. There are examples of those who, being believers, led a double life of ordinary Soviet citizens while being, for instance, secret priests or monks. Their disclosure led immediately to repression. It is in this sense that it is possible to speak of hyper-privatization. It is one of the distinctions of Soviet secularization from that in Europe, in which private forms of religious expression could exist without obstruction.

The Soviet-type secularization was effected through the actual oppression of religion and religiosity. The oppression had the following forms:

- Institutional (destruction and reduction of religious organizations, religious buildings, etc.).
- Administrative (control of the activities of religious organizations, suppression and limitation of intra-institutional religious activity, repressive fiscal policy in relation to religious organizations, obstacles for believers in terms of professional careers, etc.).
- Criminal (prosecution for illegal religious activity: organized religious education, including education for children, distribution of religious literature, etc.).
- Psychiatric (forced "treatment" of believers, especially "religious dissidents")
- Psychological (public pressure on the faithful – at school, at work, in the army, the media, etc.) (Kyrlezhev and Shishkov 2011).

In addition, religion was excluded from cultural and educational spheres through the reinterpretation of its role in history and de-sacralization of art (all religious content of works of art is interpreted as a "thematic") and through the suppression or criticism of the religious-philosophical and theological tradition (Kyrlezhev and Shishkov 2011).

However, religious organizations continued to exist in the Soviet Union, though on a limited scale defined by the authorities, and religious practices continued among those who can be described as 'legitimate believers'. This group was mostly made up of people with the following characteristics: poorly educated, low social status, elderly people (pensioners); women as an overwhelming majority; and finally, professional ministers of the Church in a broad sense – not only clergy but also all those who worked in religious organizations (the latter were dumped into the social ghetto). As an exclusion, which generally only confirms the rule, there were regions of people's mass religiosity, namely, western Ukraine, western Byelorussia, some parts of Moldavia (regions which provided the continuing production of clergy in the

Russian Orthodox Church), as well as North Caucasus and Central Asia with its Islam. But even in these regions it was impossible for openly religious people to take an active part in the country's public life and to take advantage of means of social advancement.

Secularization of the religious consciousness of such legitimate bearers of religiosity was another very important characteristic of Soviet secularization. Together with Kyrlezhev we define the essence of this process as *distillation of religious consciousness* (Kyrlezhev and Shishkov 2011). 'Distillation' means that the religious meanings, values, and motivations of legitimate believers was gradually separated from the rest of the socio-cultural whole.

2

The collapse of the Soviet Communist regime removed the restrictions on religious life and activity imposed by the Soviet secularization. Religion has begun to play an increasingly significant role in Russian society. As the influence of religion has grown (desecularization) in Russia there have emerged two counter-secularization processes, namely, a) restoration of the private sphere and shift to the European secular paradigm, and b) inclusion in the global counter-secularization processes (Kyrlezhev and Shishkov 2011).

The first process implies the privatization of religion, but in contrast to the European situation, for which a similar result was reached in the course of secularization, in post-Soviet Russia the same result was achieved through desecularization, since the transition from hyper-privatization to the privatization of religion is an explicit counter-secularization process. Expansion of the influence of religion has happened by dint of the fact that believers got the opportunity to practice religion in their private lives openly. This corresponds quite well with the above mentioned definition of desecularization.

The second process is linked with the return of religion to the public sphere. In the period from 1990-2000, religious institutions, especially the Russian Orthodox Church as the dominant religious community in Russia, have restored and increased their presence in the public sphere. An especially strong upsurge of the Church's public activity has been observed in recent years under Patriarch Kirill. Church spokesmen (and those of other confessions) have made public statements on significant issues in the social and political life of the country, including in official documents. Church officials have made proposals on bills under preparation (for instance, the bill 'On Bio-Medical Cell Technologies'). This situation is fully consonant with the definition of desecularization and the tendencies describing this process.

It has turned out that the return of religion in Russia is going on *simultaneously* in private and public spheres. The intertwining of private religiosity and the public presence of religion is visible in attempts to resolve a number of concrete problems in the following institutions:

- School (how to ensure the right to receive knowledge of religion within general education, without violating the principle of the secular nature of public education?);
- Army (how to ensure the right to faith in the army without reproducing the pre-Soviet practice?);
- Prison (the same problem);
- Church and museums (how to ensure the return of religious valuables and artefacts to the Church while ensuring the preservation and accessibility of museum collections?);
- Property (whether and how to realize the restitution of church property in the absence of the general restitution of property?) (Kyrlezhev and Shishkov 2011).

All these issues continue to be discussed in active public debates in Russian society, and regardless of their outcome they point to the on-going desecularization processes. At the same time, it often happens that the restoration of individual rights to religious confession in the situation of an underdeveloped private sphere itself immediately becomes a problem of religion's influence on society in the public sphere. For instance, the right to receive knowledge about religion within general school education, which is an individual right of a citizen guaranteed by the law on freedom of religion in Europe, in the Russian situation becomes a matter of religion's penetrating into a public institution contrary to the principles of the secular state. A similar situation has developed with regard to the problem of religion's presence in the army. Among the issues discussed most often is whether it is acceptable that the highest leaders of the country should publicly participate in church services, as in televised services attended by state leaders.

3

Now let us address the phenomenon of the 'distillation' of religious consciousness we mentioned above. If 'distillation' is a product of the Soviet type of secularization, then the saturation of this consciousness with 'salts' will represent a process of desecularization. But the irony is that, from the point of view of the 'distilled' religious tradition, which was formed in the Soviet time, this 'saturation' will appear as *secularization* or growing *worldliness*, that is, penetration of secular

problems into church life. In this case, worldliness is understood as a process of reorientation to the solution of worldly problems at the expense of highly spiritual tasks. From the point of view of conservative religious consciousness, it is a negative process. Religion always returns, if it does, into secular public space. Indeed, where there is no secular space there is no need for religion to return. Restoring its influence in a previously secular society, religion inevitably becomes involved in a secular agenda, which begins to transform it from inside.

A good example is the reaction we see to the policy of Patriarch Kirill of Moscow and All Russia centered on active mission. During the very first year of his patriarchal office, he set as a priority the task to increase the Church's influence on society. He said that 'the work of the Church should now be assessed not only according to the number of churches and monasteries but also according to the influence it makes on the life of people and society' (Patriarch Kirill's statement on March 11, 2009, in Tula, cited in Filatov 2012). Active mission became a means for achieving this goal. Russian expert in religious studies Sergey Filatov believes that almost all the concrete decisions and actions of the new patriarch have been linked with mission (Filatov 2012). In his study on the first years of Patriarch Kirill's patriarchal office, he shows that in the first year and a half, almost all the important reforms introduced by Kirill were founded on this task (Filatov 2012). Public and political problems have occupied a considerable place in the preaching of the head of the Russian Church. The very first Bishops' Council to take place after the patriarchal elections adopted three official documents concerning relations between the Church and the state and society.

This activity was met with criticism in the conservative wing of the Russian Church. This criticism was based on the accusation that the Church has become worldly and that the spiritual aspect of Orthodox proper was being belittled in favour of 'missionary creativity' and 'social activity'. Critics see in the policy adopted by Patriarch Kirill for active presence in society a threat that secular values would penetrate into Orthodox tradition, which would inevitably lead to spiritual relativism. Conservative Orthodox journalism has often compared the new policy to Vatican II and its consequences, and Orthodox critics have borrowed arguments from the Catholic critics of Vatican II. Representative for this discussion is the resonant article by Orthodox publicist Dmitry Danilov (Danilov 2009).

The sentiments of the conservative part of the Church have been reaffirmed by comments of some analysts. Thus, Filatov writes that the character of mission as launched by Patriarch Kirill is essentially secular and political: 'Regardless of their faith in God, Kirill and those who hold the same views do not preach faith in God but a neo-Slavophil ideology of national revival, essentially secular' (Filatov 2012). Alexey

Malashenko, speaking about Patriarch Kirill's strategy, points to its two major thrusts – mission and 'the Church's active penetration into socio-political life, its growing worldliness' (Malashenko 2009).

It should be noted that in older times, too, there were periods in the life of the Church when the link between its growing influence on social and political life and its growing worldliness or secularization became visible. First of all, this happened in the fourth century when the Church in the Roman Empire underwent a rapid evolution from being persecuted to becoming official. The mass inflow of people into the Church and the active involvement of its hierarchs in socio-political life led to growing worldliness and the development of monasticism as a response to it. Russian theologian Alexander Schmemann writes, 'Monasticism arose as an almost unconscious and instinctive reaction against the secularization of the Church – not only in the sense of a reduction of her moral ideal or pathos of sanctity, but also in the sense of her entrance, so to speak, into the 'service of the world' – of the Empire, civic society, natural values; into the service of everything that (after downfall of paganism) was waiting to receive from Christianity a religious 'sanction' and 'sanctification'' (Schmemann 1986). The similarity with the post-Soviet church situation is complemented by the fact that in the present period there is a shift from the Church being persecuted to the Church being actively involved in the life of society. It is noteworthy that Viacheslav Karpov in his work on desecularization believes the shift from the late Roman 'sensate' secularity to a Christian 'ideational' era (in the term of Pitirim Sorokin) was similar to the desecularization process (Karpov 2010).

Thus we can see that the active restoration of the Church's influence in society is by some viewed as its growing worldliness or secularization. This worldliness happens first of all when religion goes out into other spheres of the socio-cultural whole, such as politics, science, and the arts.

4

In summarizing the case of the Russian Orthodox Church, it can be presumed that religious institutions which are coming out of their ghetto into public space will undergo transformations through getting involved in the secular agenda, which will be seen as growing worldliness (or secularization) contrary to the tradition which was formed under the influence of secularization. This effect is bound to manifest itself especially vividly in the case of fundamentalist communities, similar as they are to the above-described Soviet phenomenon of 'the distillation of religious consciousness'. It is important to bear in mind that this process of growing worldliness will be that of desecularization. This affirmation

can be added to the list of the tendencies which form the process of desecularization proposed by Karpov. However, this thesis needs further study and verification since it is still not quite clear whether it is applicable to contexts other than the post-Soviet one, in which religion has been subjected to the impact of secularization of a the type different from the European and American.

Biblical-Theological Commission of the Moscow Patriarchate

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CHAPTER VII

ETHICAL DISCUSSION IN POST-SECULAR PERSPECTIVE: THE RUSSIAN SITUATION

ARCHPRIEST VLADIMIR SHMALIY

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THE RUSSIAN CONTEXT

For over seventy years from 1917 to 1991, Russia was ruled by Communist ideology and a totalitarian Communist system built on its basis. The domination of Communist ideology and the Communist party was ensured constitutionally:

> The leading and guiding force of the Soviet society and the nucleus of its political system, of all state organizations and public organizations, is the Communist Party of the Soviet Union . . . The Communist Party, armed with Marxism-Leninism, determines the general perspectives of the development of society . . . directs the great constructive work of the Soviet people, and imparts a planned, systematic and theoretically substantiated character to their struggle for the victory of Communism.[1]

The Communist Party clearly prescribed the struggle with 'religious prejudice' via atheistic propaganda:

> The Party uses ideological media to . . . overcome religious prejudices . . . It is necessary to conduct regularly broad atheistic propaganda on a scientific basis, to explain patiently the untenability of religious beliefs, which were engendered in the past when people were overawed by the elemental forces and social oppression, and did not know the real causes of natural and social phenomena.[2]

In the sphere of ideology, the Soviet Union was dominated by Communism, while in the sphere of relations with religion by official atheism.

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[1] Constitution of the USSR, 1977, Article 6.
[2] III Program of the Communist Party of the Soviet Union II.V.2.e.

After Communism collapsed and the USSR disintegrated, the Constitution of the Russian Federation of 1993 proclaimed ideological diversity:

> In the Russian Federation ideological diversity shall be recognized . . . No state or obligatory ideology may be established as one».[3]

Russia was declared a secular state:

> 1. The Russian Federation is a secular state. No state or obligatory religion may be established. 2. Religious associations shall be separate from the State and shall be equal before the law.[4]

It should be noted that the meaning and volume of the notion of secularity introduced by the Russian Federation Constitution was not clarified. Legal commentaries and textbooks on constitutional law[5] in commentaries on Constitution Article 14 refer to various models of relations between religion and the state including models of secularity which recognize and support the official religion of the state.

The 90s saw an unpromulgated consensus established concerning the reasonableness of all possible forms of favoured treatment in relations with the Church, especially in returning and restoring churches ruined in the Soviet period. One reason was that Russia's new authorities were staffed to a considerable extent by people from among the former Soviet bureaucracy. Their attitude to the Church was affected by a sort of 'guilt complex' for having persecuted religion under Soviet rule.

In addition, an ideological vacuum which developed in the post-Soviet time proved to be of no less importance. The attitude both to the historical past as it was before the 1917 Revolution and the Communist period of Russian history was not yet specified. Orthodoxy was seen by many as a sort of candidate for the '*locum tenens'* of the national idea. Among important characteristics of the early 90s along with the ideological void was the absence of a nation-wide system of values and priorities. The 90s are popularly described today as 'hard times' since for many Russians that period, along with its economic hardships, is

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[3] The Constitution of the Russian Federation, Article 13.

[4] *Ibid.*, Article 14.

[5] See., for instance, *М. В. Баглай,* Конституционное право Российской Федерации, «Норма», Москва, 2007, *Р.В.Енгибарян Э.В.Тадевосян,* Конституционное право, «Юристъ», Москва, 2000.

remembered for an unprecedented surge of crime and pubic moral decline. Furthermore, beginning in the second part of the 90s, an enormous political influence began to be exercised by a small group of 'oligarchs' – politically and economically influential businessmen who used their connections with officials for cynical promotion of their own interests.

After the hard 90s, in the 'zero years' (decade after 2000) Russia, thanks to the high prices for energy resources, experienced a period of economic growth and relative welfare. The authorities managed to change the balance of power in relations with the oligarchs. As a result, there developed a relatively stable socio-political situation based on a balance of interests in relations between the powerful bureaucratic system, including power bodies, and the oligarchic capital. The political protests of the 90s with their economic basis actually tailed off. The ruling elite succeeded in creating a version of 'controlled democracy' under which election results became quite predictable. They managed to establish control over the major mass media and to tame independent experts. The powerful political party they created, United Russia, became for the most part a party of bureaucracy. This party was ensured a constitutional majority in Parliament. The rest of the parties accepted the established rules, submissively making themselves out to be a real parliamentary opposition. The protest movement of the non-parliamentary opposition was marginalized and fragmented.

Since society at large including its political active part acquiesced in the situation, it was generally accepted as the achievement of an unpromulgated contract between society and authority described as 'loyalty in exchange for stability'. Its essence is that the authorities ensure a certain level of law and order in society, a minimum of social guarantees, a stable income, and non-interference in people's private life, while the people agree to forego participation in political life and to accept a restriction of their constitutional rights.

For the last eight months, after the Putin-Medvedev tandem changed places on September 24, 2011, and especially after the State Duma election on December 4, 2011, Russia has lived in a situation of considerable animation in public activity. Among important elements of this activity has been a sharply grown interest of the educated urban class in politics. Moscow, St. Petersburg and a number of large cities in Russia have witnessed powerful protest actions of 'angry urbanites'. A specific characteristic of these protest actions is that, although its participants were 'professional oppositionists' from microscopic parties with popular support within statistical error in sociological studies, their pacemakers were citizens who had never been interested in politics and had not participated in any actions of this kind before. The protest sentiments of this category of citizens were not motivated by economic

or even special political demands but by moral principles. The protesters demanded that the authorities ensure fair and honest parliamentary elections, the results of which they believed had been grossly doctored to ensure to the ruling United Russia party a majority in the State Duma.

In response, the social authorities viewed the previous 'social contract' as having been violated and no longer valid. According to the protesters, the level of Russian corruption including political corruption and the level of cynicism and demagogy on the part of the authorities surpassed the measure of patience. From a larger perspective, it is plain that during the time of stability and prosperity when this 'social contract' had worked, there had grown and matured a new generation of young professionals who can think independently and have high civic self-evaluation and self-esteem. Many of them believe that the 'social contract' was unfair from the beginning, demand its radical review, and express their readiness to take an active part in political life.

In its annual report on the state of the civil society in the Russian Federation in 2011, the Public Chamber of the Russian Federation stated in particular:

> The public rallies have shown that there has developed in society a demand for a new quality of political system, state governance and dialogue with the authorities. There has formed 'a class of angry urbanites' – relatively well-off and educated segments of the urban population for whom the values of human dignity and civic-mindedness has considerably grown.[6]

In the course of protest actions, exceptional importance was acquired by social networks in which a hot public discussion was held, important decisions were made as to the organization of protest activities, and supporters were recruited.

The eruption in political activity by people who demanded a review of the established 'social contract' and the socio-political system could not but involve the Russian Orthodox Church as well. In the zeros, the Church began to show an increased social activity and to broaden her presence in various spheres of public life including education, the army, social aid, and the penitentiary system. In addition, the Church often made rather tough statements on burning issues in public life.

With the election of Metropolitan Kirill of Smolensk and Kaliningrad as Patriarch of Moscow and All Russia, the social activity of the Church became even more vigorous. Thus, in his report to the

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[6] Report on the State of the Civil Society in the Russian Federation, 2011. Moscow: Public Chamber of the Russian Federation, 2012.

Russian Orthodox Church Bishops' Council in 2011, His Holiness the Patriarch stated in particular:

> Church institutions have actively worked with representatives of various bodies and levels of power . . . It can be firmly stated today that no sphere in the life of the socium remains out of the Church's field of vision, no problem disturbing society remains without a clear moral assessment by the Church'.[7]

In the situation of frozen political life and discussion, the Church's public position, which has become more noticeable against this background, has often been read by critics as a conservative quasi-political and quasi-ideological stance.[8] The Church, in the person of her leaders, has distanced herself from protest actions, an act which some have seen as concealed support for the authorities.

In this connection, a review of the 'social contract', in the opinion of the protesters, should lead not only to a change in the socio-political system, clarification of the values foundation of Russian society, and liberalization of the country's political system, but also to a re-definition of the secularity principles of Russian state and society. As stated in the report of the Russian Federation Pubic Chamber,

> In our country today, we see the shaping of a social coalition of those who are concerned for 'a life according to rules'. . . There is a unique chance for making use of the growing civic activity as a powerful impulse for modernization as a means of strengthening society-state dialogue.[9]

THE POST-SECULAR PERSPECTIVE

The upsurge of civic activity has opened up new prospects and opportunities for the development of Russia. If the protest movement does not get radicalized and its energy continues and becomes transformed into peaceful civic dialogue, serious prospects can be

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[7] Official website of the Moscow Patriarchate, http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/1402889.html.

[8] *Sergey Filatov.* 'Patriarch Kirill – Two Years of Plans, Dreams and the Inconvenient Reality'. In The Orthodox Church under the New Patriarch, ed. A. Malashenko and S. Filatov. Moscow, Carnegie – Moscow: Russian Political Encyclopaedia, 2012, pp. 54-67.

[9] Report … p. 140.

opened up for discussion on a number of issues which were not clarified before.

Among the problems significant for both state and society, the most important are the issues of values, national identity, and the secular nature of society. The discussion on the secular character of the Russian state was held before and is still held on the basis of mere imitation of external examples adopted by particular states. Generally speaking, the most radical participants in the polemic who seek to make religion as marginalized as possible cite the example of France; proponents of the development of cooperation between the Church on the one hand, and the state and society on the other, cite the examples of Italy and Germany; and representatives of religious minorities set their hopes on the American model.

And yet it is evident that the Russian understanding of secularity should not be a mere copy of important but still alien patterns which developed in socio-historical situations different from those in Russia. If the secularism of the state in contemporary democratic countries were universal, it would have been realized in a form unified for all. But this is not the case, since we see different models of secularism and different types of discourse concerning secularity.

Russian society, particularly its educated class, need today to undertake a thorough study and hold a substantial discussion on the secular nature of society and the place of religion within it. In recent years, there has appeared in Russia an interest in the study of various aspects of secularism and secularization – philosophical, sociological, political, and theological. Thorough reading has been accorded to the texts of such researchers as Peter Berger, José Casanova, Charles Taylor, Bryan Turner, Brian Trainor, John Rawls, Jürgen Habermas, Shmuel Eisenstadt and others.

Sociological studies have shown that the secularist affirmation that religion will fall into decay in the course of modernization has proven false. Today, they increasingly refer either to 'a return of religion'[10] or to its sustainable presence in the contemporary situation.[11] This situation is described as 'post-secular'. At the same time, the concept of the secular is being reconsidered and the ideology of secularism is being deconstructed.

Russian liberals, proponents of tough secularism, ought to understand that the situation of post-secular society as described by

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[10] *Peter L. Berger,* 'Secularization falsified', First Things, February 2008.

[11] *José Casanova,* Public religions in the modern world (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994).

Jürgen Habermas[12] has not developed as a result of betrayal of secular and liberal principles, but as a natural result of secularization itself as it developed within the inner logic of liberal communities. The liberal logic implies liberation from the diktat of any worldview, including the diktat of militant secularism understood as ideology. In a sense, the process of secularization as privatization of ideology eventually reaches secularism itself. Thus, the description of the post-secular situation refers not so much to religion itself but to the attitude to it held by secular society. Post-secularism is a critical view of secularism as an ideology which discriminates against believers and excludes their full-fledged participation in public space precisely as believing people, not just citizens.

Under post-secularism, believers and non-believers are invited to enter into a complex and responsible dialogue as a process of mutual education in which believers, in order to be heard, translate their statements into the language of public discourse while non-believing citizens abandon their secularist utterances.[13] The idea of a dialogue of religious and non-religious worldviews, both as 'comprehensive doctrines', has also been proposed by John Rawls in his article 'The Idea of Public Reason Revisited.'[14] This goal of dialogue between believing and non-believing citizens concerning socially significant problems, in the first place, those of morality and the basic values of society, is shared by the hierarchy of the Russian Orthodox Church.

THE RUSSIAN ORTHODOX CHURCH'S SOCIAL STAND ON ETHICAL ISSUES

In recent years, the ethical and socio-ethical position of the Russian Orthodox Church has been expressed in the following significant church-wide documents:

1. The Basis of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church.[15]
2. The Russian Orthodox Church's Basic Teaching on Human Dignity, Freedom, and Rights.[16]

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[12] *Jürgen Habermas*, 'Notes on a post-secular society'. New Perspectives Quarterly, Volume 25, No. 4 (Fall 2008), pages 17-29.

[13] *Jürgen Habermas*, 'Religion in the Public Sphere', European Journal of Philosophy 14, no. 1 (2006).

[14] *John Rawls*, 'The Idea of Public Reason Revisited', University of Chicago Law Review, Vol. 64, No. 3 (Summer, 1997), pp. 765-807.

[15] http://www.mospat.ru/en/documents/social-concepts/

[16] http://www.mospat.ru/en/documents/dignity-freedom-rights/

3. The Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church's Participation in Combatting the Spread of HIV/AIDS and Its Work with People Living with HIV/AIDS.[17]

In addition, ethical issues have become a subject of consideration by Bishops' Councils of the Russian Orthodox Church and have often been dealt with by His Holiness the Patriarch and representatives of the supreme authorities of the Russian Orthodox Church in their addresses and statements. An important platform for church-public discussion on issues of public morality has been provided by the World Russian People's Council which has elaborated, in particular, a document on 'Basic Values – the Foundation of Common National Identity'.[18]

The key element of the stand taken by the Church in the ethical discussion has been criticism of the state of public morality. The criticism of the moral condition of Russian society is not only a rhetorical move by church representatives; it is a statement of fact. Thus A. Yurevich, a corresponding member of the Russian Academy of Sciences and deputy director of the RAS Institute of Psychology, confirms this conclusion: "The moral degradation of today's Russian society is stated by representatives of diverse social sciences and it can be considered a truly 'interdisciplinary' fact".[19]

He cites the following statistical data. The number of murders per every 100 thousand people in Russia is almost 4 times as many as in the USA and approximately 10 times as many as in most European countries. According to this indicator, Russia occupies the first place in Europe. The number of suicides per every 100 thousand people in Russia is three times that of the USA, with Russia occupying the second place in Europe and the former Soviet republics (the Commonwealth of Independent States, or CIS) not only with regard to the population as a whole but also to the youth under 17 years of age. In the rate of death caused by accidental alcohol poisoning, Russia occupies the first place in Europe and the CIS. In the number of deaths in road traffic accidents, Russia occupies the third place in Europe and the CIS. In the number of children abandoned by their parents, Russia occupies the second place in Eastern Europe and the CIS. In the number of divorces per 1 thousand

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[17] http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/81695.html

[18] http://www.vrns.ru/docs/detail.php?nid=1305&binn_rubrik_pl_news=163

[19] *А. В. Юревич*, Нравственное состояние современного российского общества. Социологические исследования, № 10, Октябрь 2009, С. 70-79. (*A. V. Yurevich.* The Moral State of Contemporary Russian Society. Issue 10, October 2009).

people – the first place in Europe. In the number of abortions per 1000 women – the first place in Eastern Europe and the CIS.[20]

A characteristic example of the Church's critical reaction to the moral degradation of society is the Preamble to 'The Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church's Participation in Combatting the Spread of HIV/AIDS and Its Work with People Living with HIV/AIDS':

> Social and medical factors and phenomena contributing to the formation of the so-called risk groups are only indirect and secondary causes of the HIV epidemic. The true first cause and source of the rapid spread of the epidemic, which has reach unprecedented scale, is the multiplication of sin and lawlessness, the loss by society of fundamental spiritual values, moral traditions, and guidelines. All these destructive processes point to the grave spiritual and moral illnesses that have affected society and which, if persistently developed, may lead to a greater large-scale catastrophe. The Church clearly testifies that . . . alienation experienced by the sick and disdain shown by those around them are consequences of sin and neglect of God-commanded moral norms and the welfare of neighbours. While condemning sin, the Church, following the example of her Lord, accomplishes the service of mercy with regard to the sick . . .[21].

The Church, however, criticizes not only the state of public morality but also the principles and causes which have led to its decline, especially the loss of the notion of moral norm, ethical relativism, and vulgar liberalism. There are no institutions of moral control in society, as the state and school have actually withdrawn from educational work while the mass media uncontrolledly propagate the worst examples of violence and immoral behaviour.

In this situation, it is the problem of freedom and its limits that becomes one of the key issues in the ethical discussion. The Church's ethical discourse in this case is based on a theological and anthropological foundation. 'The Basis of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church' states:

> Life is observance of the divine laws, as God Himself is life endless and abundant. Through the original fall, evil and sin entered the world. At the same time, fallen man has

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[20] Ibid. (data as of 2006).
[21] http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/81695.html

retained the freedom to choose the right way with God's help. In this effort, the observance of God-given commandments asserts life. But deviation from them leads inevitably to damage and death, as it is nothing else but deviation from God, hence, from being and life, which can be only in Him.[22]

A fully more developed teaching on the human being, human dignity, and freedom is given in 'The Russian Orthodox Church's Basic Teaching on Human Dignity, Freedom, and Rights'. On the one hand, man has an absolute foundation for his existence, for he is created in the image of God and called to communion with God, to deification. On the other hand, his nature was corrupted by sin and the present state of man is characterized by his susceptibility to sin and the difficulty he finds in making moral decisions and doing good deeds.[23] Yet although corrupted by sin manifested as weak will in doing good deeds, man still preserves the ability to discern good and evil and to wish good and to oppose evil.

The Church supports and shares the humanistic vision of man only in the perspective of his salvation in God. The notion of dignity is made directly dependent on the righteousness of a person. At the same time, the Church is against any absolutization of man's present sinful condition and any absolutization of freedom of choice because only the

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[22] The Basis of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church, IV.1.

[23] *Ibid.*, I.2. ' In Orthodoxy the dignity and ultimate worth of every human person are derived from the image of God, while dignified life is related to the notion of God's likeness achieved through God's grace by efforts to overcome sin and to seek moral purity and virtue . . . the idea of responsibility is integral to the very notion of dignity . . . in the Eastern Christian tradition the notion of 'dignity' has first of all a moral meaning . . . Considering the state of human nature darkened by sin, it is important that things dignified and undignified should be clearly distinguished in the life of a person.'

I.3. 'Dignified is a life lived according to its original calling laid down in the nature of the human being created for participation in the good life of God . . . Human life . . . lies in seeking 'God's likeness in all virtue so far as it is possible for man', as St. John of Damascus says in his Exact Exposition of the Orthodox Faith. The patristic tradition describes this elicitation of the image of God as deification . . . Thus moral norms inherent in humanity, just as moral norms set forth in the divine revelation, reveal God's design for human beings and their calling. These norms are guidelines for a good life worthy of God-created humanity. It was the Lord Jesus Christ Who showed the greatest model of such a life to the world.'

I.4. 'A life in sin is unworthy of the human person as it destroys him and inflicts damage on others and the world around him . . . Under the influence of sin, a person in his relations with others acts as an egoist preoccupied with indulging himself at the expense of others . . .'

freedom of improvement is absolute.[24] In her document the Church does not offer society any concrete recipe for improving public morality. She rather speaks of principles. Thus, she firmly insists on the limitations of the secular principle of human rights and the secular vision of human nature. The Church calls society to think over the need to restore balance between freedom and virtue. The Church insists that it is inadmissible to relativize the notions of good and evil. It is also inadmissible, in the Church's opinion, to recognize vices condemned in Holy Scripture as lawful and admissible in society.

The document strongly advocates that any manifestations of blasphemy and sacrilege towards shrines are inadmissible in society, even as works of art.[25] It also states that basic values and rights are seen

[24] *Ibid.*, II.1. ' Freedom is one of the manifestations of God in human nature. According to St. Gregory of Nyssa, 'Man became Godlike and blessed, being honoured with freedom (αὐτεξουσίῳ)' (Sermon on the Dead). For this reason the Church . . . takes so much care of the inner world of a person and his freedom of choice. Subjection of human will to any external authority through manipulation or violence is seen as a violation of the order established by God . . . Having rejected God to rely only on themselves, the first people found themselves under the sway of the destructive forces of evil and death and handed down this dependence to their ancestors. Having abused the freedom of choice, human beings lost another freedom – ἐλευθερία, the freedom to live in goodness that they had had in their primordial state . . . It is impossible to find freedom from sin without the mysterious unity of man with the transfigured nature of Christ . . . '

II.2. 'The Lord Jesus Christ says, 'And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free . . . Whosoever committeth sin is the servant of sin' (Jn. 8:32, 34) . . . The Church affirms that this freedom will inevitably disappear if the choice is made in favor of evil. Evil and freedom are incompatible.'

'In human history, the choice made by people and societies in favour of evil led to the loss of freedom and to the enormous loss of lives. And today humanity may follow the same path if such absolutely vicious things as abortion, suicide, lechery, perversion, destruction of the family, the worship of cruelty and violence are no longer given a proper moral assessment and justified by a distorted understanding of human freedom.'

[25] *Ibid.*, III.1. 'Every individual is endowed by God with dignity and freedom. The use of this freedom for evil purposes however will inevitably lead to the derogation of one's own dignity and humiliation of the dignity of others. A society should establish mechanisms restoring harmony between human dignity and freedom.'

III.2. 'A Christian puts his faith in God and his communion with Him above his earthly life . . . No reference whatsoever to the freedom of expression and creative work can justify the public defilement of objects, symbols or notions cherished by believers.'

III.3. 'It is inadmissible to introduce in the area of human rights the norms that obliterate or altogether cancel both the Gospel and natural morality. The

from the Christian point of view in a perspective different from the secular one. Thus, although unconditionally recognizing the human right to life and condemning killing, the document states that for a Christian earthly life is not an absolute value. Absolute value belongs rather to a person's eternal destiny. In this connection special mention is made of the feats of the martyrs.[26]

Church sees a great danger in the legislative and public support given to various vices, such as sexual lechery and perversions, the worship of profit and violence. It is equally inadmissible to elevate to a norm such immoral and inhumane actions towards the human being as abortion, euthanasia, use of human embryos in medicine, experiments changing a person's nature and the like.'

III.4. 'The acknowledgment of individual rights should be balanced with the assertion of people's responsibility before one another . . . The spiritual experience of the Church however has shown that the tension between private and public interests can be overcome only if human rights and freedoms are harmonized with moral values and, most importantly, only if the life of the individual and society is invigorated by love.'

III.5. 'The rejection of divinely-revealed guiding lines in the life of both the individual and society leads not only to disorder in interpersonal relations but also to people's disastrous clash with nature, which has been given to human beings by God to own (cf. Gen. 1:28). The unlimited desire to satisfy material needs, especially excessive and artificial, is essentially sinful, for it leads to the impoverishment of both the soul and its environment . . . Human dignity is inseparable from the calling of the human beings to take care of God's world (cf. Gen. 2:15), to be moderate in meeting their needs, to preserve the richness, variety and beauty of nature.'

[26] *Ibid.*, IV.2. 'Life is a gift of God to human beings. The Lord Jesus Christ preaches: 'I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full' (Jn. 10:10). God gave the Prophet Moses a commandment that 'you shall not kill'. Orthodoxy does not accept terrorism and condemns it, as armed aggression and criminal violence just as all other forms of the criminal taking away of human life. At the same time, life is not restricted to temporal limits in which the secular worldview and its legal system place the individual. Christianity testifies that temporal life, precious in itself, acquires fullness and absolute meaning in the perspective of eternal life. Priority therefore should be given not to the efforts to preserve temporal life by all means but to the desire to order it in such a way as to enable people to work together with God for preparing their souls for eternity. The Word of God teaches that giving one's earthly life for Christ and the gospel (cf. Mk. 8:35) and for other people will not hamper one's salvation but, quite to the contrary, will lead one to the Kingdom of Heaven (cf. Jn. 15:13). The Church honours the feat of martyrs who served God even to death and the feat of confessors who refused to renounce Him in face of persecutions and threats. Orthodox Christians also honour the heroism of those who gave their lives in battlefield fighting for their homeland and neighbours.'

The teaching expressed in the document 'The Russian Orthodox Church's Teaching on Human Dignity, Freedom, and Rights' sums up and gives a theological foundation to the position which has been taken by the hierarchy on topical issues of church-society relations since the early 1990s. This is an essential step for the development of dialogue between the Church and society on ethical problems.

PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS OF THE CHURCH'S ETHICAL DIALOGUE WITH SOCIETY IN THE POST-SECULAR PERSPECTIVE

Among the difficulties faced by the Church in conducting dialogue with society on problems of morality and values are methodological problems involved in what is traditionally called 'moral theology'. The reason is that today the Russian Orthodox Church has no commonly recognized exposition of Christian ethics. It is true that moral theology as a special area of theological thought and an academic discipline was actively cultivated in the Russian theological academies of the nineteenth century. However, this development took place, as in many other branches of theology, on the basis of studies in Western theological works.

Beginning around the turn of the twentieth century, this approach was seriously criticized by scholars who demanded a return to Orthodox patristic thought, especially the tradition of Orthodox spirituality and asceticism. In the words of Archpriest George Florovsky, nineteenth-century Russian academic theology was declared a result of the 'Western captivity' of the Church. Fr. Florovsky his *Ways of Russian Theology* subjects to annihilating criticism the basic moral theology courses of that period. He believed they resulted from the secularization of church life in the nineteenth century, when there appeared 'a cult of domestic virtues and comfort' characteristic of the Protestant tradition. The moral theology courses, instead of being textbooks on patristic spirituality, were imbued with abstract moralism. Based on natural law, they set forth a natural morality instead of the transformed life in Christ.[27] The stand taken by Florovsky seriously challenged the possibility for applying natural law concepts to Orthodox moral theology, insisting instead on their reconstruction on the basis of Orthodox spiritual and ascetic tradition.

Nicholas Berdiaev was another authoritative critic of traditional courses in Christian ethics. His *On the Destiny of Man* severely

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[27] *Прот. Георгий Флоровский.* Пути русского богословияю YMCA Press, Paris 1983, с. 388-390 (*Archpriest George Florovsky.* Ways of Russian Theology).

criticized the idea of a 'moral law' arbitrarily extracted from the Gospel. He affirms that abstract moralism is not inherent in Christianity; it is rather characteristic of all kinds of Pharisaism and normativism. The authentic morality of the Gospel, according to Berdyaev, denies the legalistic Pharisaical morality of the self-salvation of man through implementation of moral law. Christian morality, he believes, is not based on moral law but on love. It is a love for a particular person rather than for abstract goodness.[28]

The ideas offered by Florovsky and Berdiaev have been developed by the contemporary Greek theologian and philosopher Christos Yannaras in his work, *The Freedom of Morality*. Rejecting authoritative ethics and conventional ethics, Yannaras seeks to describe in the language of systematic theology the 'ethos' of Orthodoxy as the existential truth of man who finds his salvation in the Church.[29] His work is important and interesting from the theological point of view, but it seems to be poorly correlated with ethical problems and even with the practical issues they pose within the Church. Thus, Yannaras asks:

> We are trying to demonstrate the ontological content of the Church's ethos or morality, and how it relates directly to the salvation of life from passions, corruption and death, not to illusions and conventional projects for "improving" corporate life. But the transcendence of any corporate expediency or utility, the refusal to connect morality with improvement in the objective conditions of human life, gives rise to the reasonable question: do not the ethics of the Orthodox Church result merely in an abstract idealism or mysticism, a subjective experience unrelated to the immediate reality of life, to its social and historical realization?[30]

Unfortunately it would seem that the version of Orthodox ethics set forth by Yannaras would require a positive answer to the same question.

The attempt to take up the challenge posed by the above-mentioned theologians and philosophers, who sought to overcome the limitations of nineteenth-century moral theology, has been valuable and important. It has made it possible to open up new horizons in Christian ethics and to express the demand for an interdisciplinary approach involving Biblical studies, patristics, and systematic theology. The task of constructing a

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[28] *Н.А. Бердяев.* О назначении человека. М.: Республика, 1993, с.100-106 (*N. A. Berdyaev.* On the Destiny of Man. Moscow, Respublica Publishers).

[29] *Christos Yannaras*, The Freedom of Morality, SVS Press, N.Y. 1996.

[30] Ibid. p.195.

methodologically sound and holistic systematic course of moral theology, however, remained unfulfilled. Nor has there been any advance in the problem of positioning Orthodox ethics in relation to the major schools of twentieth-century ethical thought. Finally, and most importantly, the language proposed by these thinkers for the exposition of Orthodox morality has failed to facilitate, and has in fact made more difficult, dialogue between the Church and society on ethical problems. Orthodox moral theology set forth as a personalistic ethics of love which cannot be universalized, based instead on spiritual and ascetic experience and set forth in esoteric teachings about 'the existential truth of man', is hardly likely to be understood with ease by non-believers.

At the same time, among the positive results of the 'deconstruction' of nineteenth-century moral theology was the development of a sort of Orthodox virtue ethics based on the systematic description of ascetic practices, narration of the lives of saints, and homilies by holy ascetics. This type of exposition of Christian ethics, which has precedents in the history of Russian and European spiritual culture, appears to have its own advantages for today's dialogue between the Church and Russian society. According to O. Kharkhordin in his recently published book, *Basic Notions of Russian Politics*:

> Concern for virtues rather than value guidelines . . . enables us to see where Russia is and where she is going to morally. Many speak of the loss . . . of value guidelines; some maintain that Russia needs a moral reform and a search for a new type of ethics. A study of the virtues could give an answer to the question how this can be done.[31]

[31] *О.Хархордин* «Основные понятия российской политики». М. Новое литературное обозрение. 2011. с.308 (O. Kharkhordin, 'Basic Notions of Russian Politics'. Moscow. New Literary Review. 2011. P. 308). As an example of how precisely it could be done, O. Kharkhordin, not without irony, suggests that 'instead of exposure . . . (so characteristic of Russia today) of the gangster or forcible discourse as false representation necessary for achieving certain aims . . . a theoretician of virtue can try to help society to do what Aquinas helped to do with thirteenth-century Christianity. Thomas helped to build Christian theological virtues on the basic foundation of cardinal virtues once shared by ancient warrior rulers and the Germans, Norwegians, Icelanders, and Irishmen of his time who were so suitable for description. Certainly, he sought not only to build theological virtues on military ones but also to subject military valour to the valour of charity and mercy. As MacIntyre has noted, in twelfth-century European society, there were no institutional mechanisms for settling conflicts, and Thomistic ethics became a very sophisticated way of integrating militant nations into a world of Christian morality and thus into a world of more or less predictable and, with time, peaceful behaviour. It can be

Yet the problem of translating Christian ethical affirmations into a language intelligible to society remains a vital problem for the Church's ethical dialogue with society. As was noted above, Habermas regards such translation as a duty of religious members of society. We find important reasoning on this matter in the address made by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, head of the Moscow Patriarchate's department for external church relations and chairman of the ROC Biblical-Theological Commission, to professors and students of the Russian Christian Humanitarian Academy on June 3, 2010:

> The move made by some secularists from the attitude of militant animosity towards religion, especially Christianity, to the attitude of dialogue does not yet mean that they recognize the full equality of all parties to it. This absence of equality is linked with the fact that it is secular language that is still supposed to be the common one, that is to say, representatives of the secular worldview demand that representatives of religious consciousness, being in dialogue, translate their religious beliefs and ideas into a language of secular ideas as the only commonly intelligible one. [32]

Metropolitan Hilarion believes that we deal here with another attempt to suppress the religious worldview in its specificity:

> The problem of translation is a false one. It is imposed by proponents of the allegedly comprehensive secularity of modern life who place responsibility for the fruitfulness of dialogue between secular and religious worldviews on adherents of religious faith. It is assumed that it is bearers of religious consciousness who should make special intellectual efforts to explain to the secular world the meaning of their religious beliefs and their religious experience. This is not always possible, however, because a religious meaning cannot always be translated into secular

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assumed that similar tasks could be fulfilled by a moral reform of the existing regime of basic virtues in Russia' (p. 310).

[32] Выступление Митрополита Волоколамского Илариона, председателя ОВЦС МП, председателя СББК в Русской христианской гуманитарной академии (Санкт-Петербург, 3.06.2010г.). http://www.patriarchia.ru/db/text/1173779.html (Address by Metropolitan Hilarion of Volokolamsk, DECR chairman and chairman of the SBTC at the Russian Christian Humanitarian Academy (St. Petersburg, June 3, 2010).

language. Indeed, religious people and those of an anti-religious worldview use different conceptual apparatuses. Secular language is not only unsuitable for communicating religious truths, but in attempts to communicate them, it considerably distorts and re-interprets them.

Metropolitan Hilarion cites as an example the notion of sin, which cannot be expressed in the terms of secular ethics as merely a moral ban. Even less can it be expressed in such terms as 'guilt', which is immediately associated today with some areas of modern psychology:

> The term sin and the opposite term commandment of God cannot be reduced to the status of elements in the system of moral guidelines, although they bear an express moral content. This content represents an aspect of the religious life of a person in the face of the living God. It implies above all a way of spiritual life in the context of both the life of a religious community and its sacramental practice; that is to say, it is the way followed by a believer in the Church and together with the Church.

Metropolitan Hilarion believes that for dialogue to take place it is necessary for non-believing members of the community to begin studying religious meanings as such, so that they can understand religion and religious consciousness in their special and unique quality. Only if there is mutual comprehension among different worldviews is dialogue possible and fruitful.

'How feasible is this goal?' Metropolitan Hilarion asks. He replies:

> It seems to be feasible, because not all that is said in religious language is untranslatable into a secular idiom. Besides, despite the difference between these languages, the very situation of man in the world is still common for all people . . .

This points the way forward to re-considering the metaphysical bases of ethical discourse in a dialogue of different worldviews.

Finally, a few concluding remarks about some practical and organizational aspects of the dialogue between Church and society on ethical problems. Yes, this discussion can be held in various public platforms including public chambers, councils, and hearings. However, to achieve really meaningful results it should be conducted first of all within the basic academic institutions. The Synodal Biblical and Theological Commission I have the honour to represent here has

accumulated a positive experience of meaningful discussion with representatives of the secular academic community. Especially fruitful has been the experience of cooperation with the Russian Academy of Science's Institute of Philosophy and Moscow University's Department of Philosophy. We have held seminars and conferences together. I will assume the risk of saying that had Jürgen Habermas participated in our meetings, he would have appreciated the atmosphere of trust, openness, and at the same time academic thoroughness in which they are held. So I believe we have already made an important beginning on 'mutual education' and 'responsible dialogue', which should be used in the future to broaden the geography and themes of the dialogue.

Biblical-Theological Commission of the Moscow Patriarchate

CHAPTER VIII

FILLING THE VOID:
ACADEMIC ETHICS AND SECULAR MEDICINE

DAVID SOLOMON

 I am going to explore a narrative in this paper about the interaction among Anglophone academic ethics, religious approaches to ethics and secularism in the last half of the twentieth century. Although the particular events in this history are already well-known to anyone familiar with the development of academic ethics in recent decades, I hope that setting these events in relation to one another in the way I do will shed new light on their broader cultural significance. The story is worth telling, I think, and I will even provide some evidence--though not nearly enough – for believing that it is true. Here are the main claims in the story set out baldly. The remainder of the paper will try to put some flesh on these bones.

 1) Academic moral philosophy has been recruited in the last half century to fill a void in our culture left by the retreat – or the expulsion – of religious approaches to disputed questions of conduct on fundamental matters.

 2) Academic moral philosophy has allowed itself to be so recruited and has done well in the bargain.

 3) In allowing itself to be recruited, philosophy promised – either implicitly or in some cases explicitly – that it could more successfully bring about consensus on the great cultural debates of our time than had the traditional religious systems of belief and practice (as well as other centers of cultural authority) that it replaced.

 4) Academic moral philosophy largely failed in its task of bringing about consensus. It was certainly no more successful than religious systems of thought in doing so. Instead, it simply reproduced at the level of theoretical disagreement the more concrete moral and cultural disagreements it was recruited to resolve.

 5) Evidence for this failure is found in the desperate attempts by moral philosophers to find ways to show that the theoretical disagreements apparent in normative theoretical debates are not deep (i.e., the turn to reconciliationist strategies in moral philosophy).

 6) The area of applied ethics where this particular narrative is most evidently true is contemporary bioethics.

7) Developments in recent bioethics – especially the dignity wars and the rise of "progressive bioethics"– suggest that the chickens are coming home to roost.

I will begin by giving a brief account of some familiar material concerning the transformation in academic moral philosophy in the 1960s-70s that allowed it to return to playing a significant role in the great contemporary moral and cultural debates.[1] The relationship of mainstream Anglophone academic moral philosophy to culture generally has been utterly transformed in the last half century. To confirm this one need only reflect on what was on offer in academic ethics in the early 1960s at the leading universities in England and North America. Perhaps the most influential and most discussed figure in academic ethics of the time was R.M. Hare, soon to be the White's Professor of Moral Philosophy at Oxford. His sophisticated elaboration and restatement of the non-cognitivism of Ayer, Stevenson and other earlier emotivists dominated discussions in academic journals and set a target for those who were already hoping to broaden the agenda of academic ethics.[2] Hare, whose writing style was a model of clarity, confidence, and straightforwardness, left no doubt about either the methodological commitments or the substantive conclusions of his work.

Methodologically, Hare worked within the constraints of what might be called classical metaethics, an approach to ethics that had been largely set in place by G.E. Moore in his classic 1903 book, *Principia Ethica*, still widely regarded fifty years later as setting twentieth century ethics on the right methodological path, a path that focused ethical theory on the most abstract semantic, epistemological and metaphysical questions about the ethical. Hare insisted that all the results of his moral philosophical theorizing were morally neutral, and that he was merely

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[1] There are a number of recent histories of contemporary bioethics which broadly follow the account I give here. Perhaps the best of them is Jonsen (2003), though the more sociological accounts of Fox and Swazey (2008) and Evans (2011) give more empirically informed accounts – and accounts that take more fully into account the various institutional pressures that have shaped this history. Perhaps not surprisingly, the historical accounts given by philosophers and theologians focus almost exclusively on developments in styles of arguments and conceptual breakthroughs. Sociological accounts of this history seem to me both more realistic and more informative.

[2] Of special significance in shaping the spirit of moral philosophy in the decades of the 50's and 60's are Hare's two enormously influential books, *The Language of Morals* and *Freedom and Reason*. The standard formulation of emotivism is found in the famous Ch. 5 of A.J. Ayers' *Language, Truth and Logic* and in Charles Stevenson's more comprehensive statement of the view in *Ethics and Language*.

following Moore in insisting on this.[3] Moore had declared that the fundamental question in ethics is, "What is the definition of good?" Until we settle questions of meaning, he argued, we have no hope of making progress in answering the genuinely substantive questions of value and conduct that form the original motivation for inquiry in moral philosophy. The sharp distinction between the semantic and the substantive that Moore's work embodied was his main legacy to twentieth century ethics, and a legacy that would have enormous consequences for larger questions about the relation of academic ethics to cultural matters in the decades that followed.

Moore thought that the semantic questions that drove the discussion of the famous first chapter of *Principia Ethica* were mere preliminaries to substantive questions of value and conduct, but the answer that he gave to the semantic question made the substantive sequel largely empty. After concluding in Chapter One of *Principia Ethica* that the term 'good' names a simple, non-natural property, and thus that it cannot be given a definition of the sort he set out to discover, questions of ethical substance turn out to be, in the case of judgments of intrinsic value, matters of intuition (where genuine philosophical reflection is beside the point) or, in the case of judgments of obligation, matters of the simplest consequentialist reasoning which can only have practical significance by building on judgments of intrinsic value. Again, philosophical reflection is beside the point. Substantive ethics is simply a matter of putting together intuitions about the intrinsically valuable with the mechanisms of consequentialism – neither of which requires either the distinctive aptitudes or the developed skills of the moral philosopher. The upshot of Moore's work was essentially to put philosophers out of the job of bringing their skills to bear on the substantive ethical concerns of the culture.

It is worth emphasizing, I think, the radical nature of the transformation that Moore wrought in the place of the moral philosopher in culture. Although Moore makes use of many of the methods and analytic techniques of his great teacher at Cambridge, Henry Sidgwick, the dominant moral philosopher of the late Victorian period, the flavor and tone of his work is light years distant from that of Sidgwick.[4]

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[3] The notion of "moral neutrality" as applied to an ethical theory can be confusing. Hare, and most of his contemporaries, understood it in a relatively straightforward sense – an ethical theory is morally neutral just in case that the theory, even taken together with any set of factual claims, doesn't entail any substantive ethical claims

[4] Sidgwick's greatest work is *The Methods of Ethics*, revised regularly over a period of almost forty years and appearing in its definitive edition in 1907. The most significant recent account of Sidgwick's moral views is in Jerome Schneewind's magisterial *Sidgiwck's Ethics and Victorian Moral*

Sidgwick was a full-bore Victorian intellectual with the earnestness and civic engagement that that role implied. He regularly took the train from Cambridge to London to consult with the prime minister. (One can hardly imagine Moore finding his way to 10 Downing Street – or imagining for a moment that he might have some reason to do so.) Sidgwick's conversation partners, on the other hand – Spencer, T.H. Green, Bradley, Huxley, W.G. Ward – were all participants in a serious and wide-ranging conversation about foundational questions concerning ethics, politics, the fate of religious belief in a rapidly secularizing (as it seemed) world, and endless schemes of practical and detailed social reform.[5] Moore lived in a quite different world.

Since the applied ethics revolution in moral philosophy in the late 1960s we have returned to an approach to moral philosophy that is certainly closer to the world of Sidgwick in important respects than to the world of Moore. It is worth recalling, however, how recent is the revival of a conception of ethics that allows it to be engaged fully in the problems of culture, and that allows philosophers to take an active interest in "real world problems" in ethics. I began my undergraduate education in 1960 and completed my dissertation in philosophy in 1970. For the entire decade of the 1960s I was studying, with varying degrees of intensity, philosophy, and for most of that time concentrating on the study of ethics. I can't recall a single time during that period when any concrete normative issue of serious concern was broached in the philosophy classroom. If genuine normative questions came up at all, we would almost certainly make do with examples that took up the difficult ethical questions of whether library books should be returned on time – and why – and what one should say to elderly aunts who asked to comment on the beauty of their outrageous hats. In the decade of the 60s which saw some of the most tumultuous social changes in the troubled twentieth century – the civil rights revolution, the sexual revolution and a long and simmering debate about the moral aspects of an unpopular war – Anglophone academic philosophy for the most part stayed on the side-line. And in doing so they were simply following a pattern that had been set in the first half of the twentieth century. During a period that had seen two world wars of unprecedented scale and ferocity, a global economic depression of brutal harshness, and the rise of two monstrous totalitarianisms, Anglophone academic ethics had little to say. And it was not simply some accidental feature of the philosophers of the period

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Philosophy (1997). An even more insightful account of Sidgwick's interaction with cultural concerns more broadly is found in Bart Schutlz's recent *Henry Sidgwick – Eye of the Universe: An Intellectual Biography* (2004).

[5] Sidgwick and his wife were especially instrumental in schemes of reform associated with the rights of women.

that explained this disengagement from culture and philosophy's failure to even concern itself with these events in the professional work of moral philosophers. Rather, there were deep assumptions about the very nature of moral reasoning and the cultural role of philosophy that kept philosophers out of the cultural fray.

Mainstream academic moral philosophy, at least since the revolution wrought in the subject by G.E. Moore and other early twentieth-century intuitionists, had a conception of its subject matter that barred it from engagement in these great issues. Academic moral philosophy, at least and especially in the Anglophone world, had been engaged for most of the century in the discussion of a number of technical issues about the meaning of central moral terms and about the nature of moral knowledge. This focus on semantics and epistemology in ethics had been accompanied by an almost complete neglect of more practical issues. Indeed, moral philosophy in this period was dominated by its own two dogmas.[6] The first, the thesis of moral neutrality, claimed that the conclusions of moral philosophy, properly done, will always be neutral with regard to concrete normative issues. A sharp distinction was drawn between metaethics – the investigation of abstract conceptual issues in ethics – and normative ethics, the investigation of the truth of particular moral judgments or the rules, principles or set of goods that might entail particular moral judgments. It was generally accepted that the proper work of moral philosophers is confined to metaethics thus understood, and, in accord with the thesis of moral neutrality, that the results of metaethical inquiries have no relevance for normative matters.

The second dogma, associated with what was called the fact-value problem, claimed that there was a logical barrier between factual judgments and value judgments, preventing anyone from drawing legitimate conclusions about what ought to be done from premises about the way things are. According to this dogma, which had proponents as far back as the eighteenth century, no set of factual claims such as the conclusions of the natural sciences, the social sciences, or history, taken alone, can entail any normative claims. To put it bluntly, in the twentieth century, most Anglophone moral philosophers concluded that moral judgments could draw no meaningful support from an account of the way the world is.

The practical effect of these two widely shared commitments of twentieth century moral philosophers was devastating for those who might turn to philosophy for a response to the moral crisis of the 1960s.

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[6] These two dogmas are clearly adumbrated in the work of positivists like Ayer and Stevenson, but are brought to their clearest and most forceful statement in the work of R. M. Hare, especially in *The Language of Morals* and *Freedom and Reason*.

The first dogma, the thesis of moral neutrality, ensured that the work of moral philosophers themselves would be irrelevant to practical moral issues. The second dogma, the sharp separation of facts and values, went further and seemed to imply that no other discipline anchored in "factual" investigations could be relevant either. Moral philosophers in the late 1960s were confronted then with demands that, according to their own principles, they were unable to satisfy.

The demands had their origin in the widely-shared sense in the 1960s that authoritative guidance in matters of ethics was needed. There was a sense of moral crisis. The 1960s were a time of deep cultural dislocation in this country and Europe. Many formerly respected institutions lost their cultural authority, an energetic and market-driven youth culture thumbed its nose at its elders, the professions (e.g., law, medicine, and the clergy) lost power and authority within their institutional settings, and the family with its interlocking set of obligations and rights among parents and children was transformed almost beyond recognition. These aspects of the great social sea-change of the 1960s add up to a kind of ethics revolution. The social dislocations associated with the civil rights movement and the Vietnam debate, the new technologies, and the rise of individualistic approaches to human life and the consequent pressure on traditional loci of moral authority led to significant changes in the way our culture deals with ethical issues. Instead of relying on traditional centers of ethical authority distributed across such diverse institutions as the family, the church, and the traditional professions, there was a turn to specialists in ethics and the academic settings in which such specialists made their homes. In particular, philosophers were called on to bring their expertise to bear on what was increasingly perceived as a crisis in our culture.[7]

And nowhere was the crisis more pressing than in bioethics.[8] The loss of cultural authority by traditional institutions arrived at the same time that revolutionary advances in biomedicine were raising ever more difficult questions for the culture. Who is entitled to have his or her life saved by a kidney machine if there are too few kidney machines to go around? Are we required to use all of the medical means at our disposal to save the lives of seriously disabled children? Is it sometimes permissible to shorten deliberately the lives of infants whose continued life promises nothing but pain and slow decline? How should we

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[7] There are, of course, a number of different – and competing – accounts of the social dislocations of the 1960s. Among the most instructive, especially as concerns developments in academic ethics, are Fox and Swazey (2008) and Evans (2011).

[8] An excellent account of the changes in bioethics is found in Jonsen (2003).

regulate the use of human subjects in medical experiments? And perhaps most controversially at the time, should women be afforded legal protection in the name of personal freedom for the act of killing their unborn children for any reason whatsoever? These questions were widely asked at the same moment that events such as the Harvard Ad Hoc Committee's redefinition of death became widely known, the scandals of the Tuskegee syphilis experiments were uncovered, and the Roe v. Wade abortion decision made the right to abortion universal and beyond legislative means of correction. These fundamental moral questions, together with this series of earth-shaking events in biomedicine and our culture's inability to provide compelling and authoritative responses to them, provided much of the impetus for the revival of applied ethics in general and bioethics in particular.[9]

Academic moral philosophy, then, confronted by the culture's demand for ethical assistance, felt enormous pressure to change–and beginning in the early 1970s it did so. Although there had been a number of challenges to the reigning orthodoxy of the two dogmas in the 50s and 60s (especially by a triumvirate of remarkable British philosophers, Phillipa Foot (1973), Elizabeth Anscombe (1958) and Iris Murdoch (1967)), it was the publication of John Rawls' magisterial *A Theory of Justice* in 1971 that marked a sea-change. Rawls abandoned the exclusive attention to conceptual issues that had characterized most moral theory in the first half of the century (at the same time abandoning the two presuppositions of mainstream moral philosophy), and revived the older Enlightenment tradition of foundational normative ethical theory which attempted to ground substantive moral and political principles in rational procedures. Rawls and his students developed their normative theories out of the classical German rationalist theory of Immanuel Kant. Following in their wake were others who revived competing classical normative theories other than Kantian rationalism – Derek Parfit and friends developed full-scale defenses of classical utilitarianism, and others, like Alasdair MacIntyre, following in the footsteps of even earlier work by Elizabeth Anscombe, revived comprehensive Aristotelian approaches to normative ethics and the new natural lawyers revived classical natural law theory.[10]

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[9] An important part of this story, of course, which shall remain largely unmentioned here, is the disarray in the ranks of moral theologians in the major Christian traditions at this time, a disarray that reduced further their influence and cultural authority. Catholic moral theology, especially, in the wake of disturbances following the Vatican Council – and especially after the deep disputes over *Humanae Vitae* – found it difficult to bring a single voice to the cultural debates.

[10] Parfit's most important work in re-energizing a form of Sidgwickian utilitarianism is *Reasons and Person*, while MacIntyre's most influential neo-

This return of academic moral philosophy to the normative arena constituted another genuine revolution in moral philosophy and it had implications both for the academic disciplines involved (not only philosophy, but also moral theology, political theory, jurisprudence and those aspects of social science that are integrated with moral philosophy) and for the culture at large. The revolutionary nature of this change was noted in a number of publications, but also in the development in a very short time of the entire institutional structure of so-called "applied ethics" within the academy. Among the significant publications that celebrated the revolution was the young Peter Singer's remarkably prescient piece in the *New York Times Magazine* in 1974 entitled, "Philosophers Back on the Job."

Singer's piece was a celebration of what academic moral philosophy could be now that it was unleashed on normative questions.[11] It is a victory call, joyfully announcing the end of a long period of irrelevance and stagnation of philosophy and philosophers. It explains how philosophy had broken free of an overly-rigid scientism and fixation on linguistic analysis in the first half of the twentieth century, and how, now that these pathologies are overcome, philosophy can venture into debates about morality and politics and take its proper place in policy discussions. This development, he suggests, holds great promise for a people previously bound to political leaders like Richard Nixon (that was the season of Watergate) and sexually obsessed priests as bastions of moral authority. Philosophy and its appeal to reason, and its validation within the citadels of reason, modern universities, can finally provide the secure authority we need to deal with the contemporary crisis in ethics and can help us think through the ethical conundrums latent in rapidly advancing technologies. And, of course, he cites Rawls' *A Theory of Justice* as showing the way back to relevance on the part of moral philosophy.

The institutional response to this revolution in moral philosophy was the creation of the entire institutional apparatus of applied ethics (including, of course, primarily bioethics). New applied ethics centers sprang up everywhere (in bioethics, most notably the Hastings Center

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Aristotelian work is *After Virtue*. John Finnis was the most significant of the new natural lawyers and the best expression of his views is found in *Natural Law and Natural Rights*.

[11] One of the many ironies of Singer's emergence as a cheerleader for the cultural relevance of academic moral philosophy was the fact that he was a student of R.M. Hare, who had so vehemently defended the thesis of moral neutrality.

and the Kennedy Center[12]), textbooks in applied ethics – almost non-existent outside the Catholic world until the early 1970s – multiplied beyond counting, applied ethics courses appeared on the curriculum of philosophy departments in great numbers, chairs in applied ethics were created, and a great deal of foundation and private donor money was called forth to build up applied ethics. And, of course, a number of new journals in applied ethics appeared – including the prestigious new journal (dominated by Rawls and his students), *Philosophy and Public Affairs*, edited and produced at Princeton.

If the hope of those revolutionaries who dragged moral philosophy back into the heart of cultural debates was that the refurbished post-Rawlsian normative theorists would have the kind of cultural authority that would bring deep and fundamental moral disagreement to an end (in, for example, the abortion debate), they were to be disappointed. Indeed, it seems that as arguments on both sides become more sophisticated and more comprehensively articulated, the disagreements become deeper and more intractable. This should not surprise us, nor should it have surprised those like Singer who celebrated the revival of normative ethical theory as providing a kind of royal road to cultural consensus based in reason on the deep matters that divided us. As we have seen, Rawls was not alone in formulating a foundational normative theory rooted in one of the rich traditions that inform contemporary ethical sensibilities. Utilitarians, new natural law theorists, and Aristotelian virtue theorists followed Rawls through the door (a door he opened but couldn't close fast enough) to rich and contentful normative ethical accounts, but their accounts were in deep conflict with Rawls's – and with one another's. From having too little normative theory in the first half of the twentieth century, we came to have too much in the second half. The turn to academic moral philosophy to escape the conflicting and ill formulated demands of religious perspectives seems not to have paid off in the way it had been hoped at the time of the applied ethics revolution. The carefully formulated positions by secular moral philosophers in defense of particular sides in the great normative debates of our times seem only to have sharpened and deepened those debates. It seems hardly too much to say that philosophers helped our culture to move from "mere" normative disagreements to the much more malignant culture wars that now beset us.

Alasdair MacIntyre has argued that moral language is so disordered and fragmented today that when philosophers approach difficult ethical questions with their most sophisticated philosophical tools, they end up

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[12] Both founded, significantly, I believe, by Catholics or former Catholics eager to approach bioethics in a secular manner. Jonsen (2003) and Fox (2008) give good accounts of this institutional change.

establishing that the problems are not, after all, difficult to resolve, but rather impossible to resolve – at least in the terms in which we articulate them.[13] The evidence provided by the entry of academic moral philosophy in many of these debates seems to suggest that he may be right.

There is no area of applied ethics where the narrative I have explored plays out more clearly than in bioethics. A number of recent historical accounts of the development of bioethics since its founding in the late 1960s emphasize how its early years involved strong influences in shaping the field from such powerful religious voices as Paul Ramsey, Joseph Fletcher, Richard McCormick, Jim Gustafson, William May and others. As the field developed, these religious voices faded as the secular vocabulary of Anglophone academic philosophy became dominant.[14] Alan Verhey, one of the early and significant religious voices in the field, speaks of the early "renaissance" in bioethics largely inspired by religious contributions, followed by the bioethical "enlightenment" which stills those voices. He says of the bioethical enlightenment that it embodied "an enlightenment suspicion of particular traditions, and enlightenment confidence in the progress of human science and unqualified reason, and an enlightenment celebration of individual autonomy over against the 'authority' of priest and politician and that new figure of arbitrary dominance, the physician. The importance of an arena of 'privacy' was underscored, a space for autonomy and preference, but it was also underscored that what mattered publicly was simply that there be such space, not how it was filled. Talk of God was assigned to the private arena, and theologians ended up talking with themselves . . . People trained as Christian moral theologians still wrote on medical ethics and contributed to public discourse about the new powers of medicine, but their distinctively theological voice was muted; they were more easily identified as followers of Mill or Kant than as followers of Jesus" (Verhey (1990) 23-24).

Daniel Callahan, the founder of the Hastings Center, and one of the most distinguished and influential of contemporary bioethicists, could say in 1990, looking back on the then twenty year history of contemporary bioethics, that "The most striking change over the past two decades or so has been the secularization of bioethics. The field has moved from one dominated by religious and medical traditions to one now increasingly shaped by philosophical and legal concepts. The

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[13] MacIntyre's most powerful expression of this view is found in the opening chapters of *After Virtue* – especially Ch. 2, which focuses on the nature of contemporary moral disagreement.

[14] Among the most important of these historical accounts are Jonsen (2003), Fox and Swazey (2008), and Evans (2011).

consequence has been a mode of public discourse that emphasizes secular themes: universal rights, individual self-direction, procedural justice, and a systematic denial of either a common good or a transcendent individual good" (Callahan (1990) 3).

Callahan goes on to reflect autobiographically, and in a bittersweet way, about the secularizing transformation that overtook bioethics – and overtook himself. He says, "When I first became interested in bioethics in the mid-1960s, the only resources were theological or those drawn from within the traditions of medicine, themselves heavily shaped by religion. In one way, that situation was congenial enough. I was through much of the 1960s a religious person and had no trouble bringing that perspective to bear on the newly emergent issues of bioethics. But that was not to be finally adequate for me. Two personal items were crucial. My religious belief was by then beginning to decline, and by the end of the decade had all but disappeared. My academic training, moreover, was that of analytic philosophy, and I wanted to bring that work to bear on bioethics. Was it not obvious, I thought, that moral philosophy, with its historical dedication to finding a rational foundation for ethics, was well suited to biomedical ethics, particularly in a pluralistic society? Just as I had found I did not need religion for my personal life, why should biomedicine need it for its collective moral life?" While Callahan seemed largely content in 1990 with what academic moral philosophy had brought to bioethical disputes, hardly anyone surely would agree with him today that it is *obvious* that "moral philosophy, with its historical dedication to finding a rational foundation for ethics, was well suited to biomedical ethics" (Callahan (1990) 4).

I have suggested that there is little evidence that the entry of academic moral philosophy into bioethics – and the general secularization of the field – has been successful in bringing about the societal consensus on fundamental moral questions that its earliest advocates had hoped for. There are even signs in recent years that discussions in bioethics are becoming even more acrimonious, and that consensus is receding even further. Of special note in this regard are the bitter disputes over the notion of dignity that have come to be called the "dignity wars." At stake here is the deployment of the concept of dignity especially in the context of the discussion of the moral status of the human embryo.[15] Bioethicists have taken sides in this debate in ways that currently seem to make discussion across the space that divides these sides impossible to carry on. Journal articles on this topic are filled

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[15] The most important shots fired in this war are Ruth MackLin's article, "Dignity is a Useless Concept" (Macklin, 2003) and Steven Pinker's article raising the stakes on Macklin's claim, "Dignity is a Stupid Concept" (Pinker, 2008).

with *ad hominem* attacks. Increasingly, both sides seem tempted to abandon moral discussion altogether in favor of political strategies to achieve their objectives. This is too large a topic to take up on this occasion, but this contemporary impasse surely provides more evidence that all is not well in the "clean well-lighted" world of secular bioethics.

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COMMENTARY:
ETHICS AND DESECULARIZATION

ROBERT C. ROBERTS

The main topics touched on in our conference have been: (1) the nature of secularization and desecularization and the gap or possible avenues of communication between the secular and the religious (in particular, the Christian), (2) the nature of ethics both as a practical outlook and as a philosophical or theological discipline of reflection, and (3) the nature and norms of human freedom. In this short paper I will offer some reflections on the papers and discussions of the conference.

Secularization and Desecularization

Tim Mawson begins the conference by asking whether the question of God's existence is even important enough, intrinsically, to secular people to be a topic of serious philosophical inquiry. Reluctantly he answers in the negative because, given the general agreement that God, if he exists, exists necessarily, atheists will think it impossible that God exist, while theists will think it impossible that God does not exist. It seems to me that this feature of the dialectical situation is emblematic of a persistent gap between the interests of a secular society and the Christian community. It is a gap with numerous bridges of common interest, to be sure, but the precise nature of those bridges is such as to make them illusory, or if not wholly illusory, at least elusive and problematic.

Andrey Shishkov, following sociologists Peter Berger and Vyacheslav Karpov, discusses desecularization primarily in terms of the church's renewed involvement in public affairs after the collapse of Soviet rule in Russia, though he notes that "the return of religion in Russia is going on *simultaneously* in private and public spheres." Shishkov speaks of the "distillation" of religious consciousness that was produced by the Soviet repression of religion, which went so far as to rule out even "private" devotion as subversive to the state's ends. 'Distillation' here seems to mean the removal of all expression of religious consciousness, whether "public" in the ordinary sense or not. If expression in ethical action and verbal declaration, as well as liturgical practice, is necessary for the ongoing vitality of Christian faith, then successful "distillation" will be a fundamental degradation of religious

consciousness and an essential secularization of believers' hearts. Desecularization will then be a revitalizing both of the role of the Church in society and of the reality of religious experience in the lives of the Church's members.

Archpriest Vladimir Shmaliy reports on dialogue between the Russian Orthodox Church and secular authorities since the establishment of the Russian Federation, under which Russia became officially religiously pluralistic. Partaking of the new freedom of religious expression, the Church is critical of the low state of public morality in contemporary Russia, for which Fr. Shmaliy cites statistics that are endorsed by social scientists of diverse disciplines. He notes that in the document "The Basis of the Social Concept of the Russian Orthodox Church,"

> the Church does not offer society any concrete recipe for improving public morality. She rather speaks of principles. Thus, she firmly insists on the limitations of the secular principle of human rights and the secular vision of human nature.

The Church's alternative to those secular principles is Christian theology, which is an account of God as Creator, Lawgiver, and Redeemer, and thus of human beings as creatures subject to God's rule and potential recipients of the redemption that God has wrought for us in Jesus Christ.

Ruben Apressyan similarly protests against Tolstoy's abstraction of the principle of non-retaliation from the larger context of Christian theology:

> To interpret the Christian ethic in a spirit of indifference to eschatology, to conceive of it only as an ethic, in isolation from the properly Christian – that is, numinously mediated – view of the world, is to condemn it to the simplicity of moralizing utopianism.

And here, it seems to me, we see the dialectical situation that is emblematized by Tim Mawson's reluctant observation. The Church does well to insist on its own ethics in the dialogue with secular thinkers, and it does well also to *be in* dialogue with such thinkers. But despite the outward context of rational and civil discussion, the underlying dialectical fact remains that, unless either the secular thinkers or the Christians are moving toward conversion to the other viewpoint, the discussion will have the character of *proclamation* on the part of the Church, and of polite *tolerance* on the part of the secular thinkers (or of

secular proclamation and tolerant listening on the part of the Church). Metropolitan Hilarion is right to reject Jürgen Habermas's claim that the Church has a duty to "translate" its ethics into the language of secular ethics, because translation is entirely out of place where the two "languages" are actually incompatible *doctrines*. Metropolitan Hilarion is also right, of course, that the Church has a duty to make its ethics as comprehensible as possible to secular thinkers. That is but a principle of responsible proclamation.

Ethics as Practice and as Discipline of Reflection

Vladimir Shokhin's "Gratitude as the Foundation of Theistic Ethics" nicely illustrates the fundamental character of Christian ethics vis-à-vis "the secular principle of human rights and the secular vision of human nature." 'Ethics' is of course ambiguous as between (a) a dimension of practical life (to speak of a person's "ethics" is to speak of ways in which he habitually acts, thinks, and feels), and (b) a body of reflection *about* such a dimension, a conceptual way of *construing* that dimension, or *theory* about it (Kantian ethics, Utilitarianism, ethical egoism, Christian academic theology as it bears on Christian ethics in the (a) sense).

Gratitude is not a principle like *You shall not kill* or *Always so act that you can universalize your action's maxim*, but an attitude, an emotion, and a way of "seeing the world" which, when it becomes habitual, amounts to a virtue, the grateful disposition of a person. Shokhin makes several important points about gratitude that bring out the distinctiveness of Christian ethics. One is that gratitude is a non-"juridical" attitude. In this way, gratitude is a kind of attitudinal acknowledgment of some good thing that one *wasn't owed*. Similarly, when the grateful person responds with thanks or with some token of recognition of the gift, he is not *paying* for the good thing, but merely signaling his acknowledgment in an act of reciprocal generosity. Another of Shokhin's important points is that gratitude is acknowledgment that a *person* is the source of one's blessing. When we are grateful, we are grateful *to* someone *for* his gift to us. Gratitude is fundamental to Christian ethics because the Gospel (a gift) is at the center of our faith: Christian thanksgiving is above all the acknowledgment that God is our benefactor for all the good we have, but above all for Jesus Christ and the redemption that he has accomplished for us. It is a generous acknowledgment of God's generosity.

Deeply developed Christian gratitude transforms a person's life away from attitudes of requirement and entitlement and autonomous self-sufficiency and a need to get ourselves out of debt – a "juridical" conception of life – and toward a spirituality in which the fundamental

fact about the universe is that of a generous God whose nature we are called to imitate and reflect in our similarly generous attitudes toward our neighbors.

But I do not think it is quite true that gratitude is the one and only foundation of Christian ethics. It is one of a family of such attitudes that take God and his providential care and his call to us as their objects. Other members of the family of spiritual attitudes that are fundamental to Christian ethics are hope for our ultimate transformation into children of God, contrition for the sins we have committed against the Lord and his creation, and the peace in the Gospel that passes understanding. If we take Shokhin's proposal about the foundation of Christian ethics seriously, we have an explanation of the gap between the Christians and the secularists in discussions of public morality. The public morality of Christians is based in the Gospel, and it is exactly the rejection of the Gospel and its replacement with an abstract notion of universal rights and a naturalistic conception of human nature that define secular ethics. This is, I take it, what the Russian Orthodox Church has in mind when, in its document on public ethics, it "insists on the limitations of the secular principle of human rights and the secular vision of human nature."

Christian Miller's report on the results of empirical studies of honesty (mostly among Americans) uncovers a certain congruence with the state of public morality in Russia about which Fr. Shmaliy cites statistics. The studies that Miller cites do not distinguish between Christian and secular populations, and it would be interesting to know whether churchgoers generally are more or less honest than their secular counterparts in the context, say, of exam-taking. But let us suppose that churchgoers fare as badly as others. Some of the studies seem to show that most people, including ones who act dishonestly, want to think of themselves as honest. Thus in the interest of gaining certain advantages from acting dishonestly, they protect their self-concept by self-deception, rationalization, or inattention to the moral quality of what they are doing (thus avoiding the penitential attitude that is so characteristic of Christian maturity). This seems to be shown by the striking reduction in dishonest action that can be achieved by having the exam-taker sign a pledge not to cheat, or have to look at herself in a mirror while she is taking the test, or be reminded of the Ten Commandments just before the exam.

These findings suggest some very traditional Christian ways of combating sin and growing in holiness. Christians have long practiced daily disciplines of self-examination in which they explicitly and more or less ruthlessly ask themselves to what extent they are falling short of Christian character ideals. Or they begin or end the day by Scripture reading that makes the Gospel and congruent actions more salient in

their consciousness. Or they meditate on the lives of the saints. Or they pray prayers such as the general prayer of thanksgiving from the *Book of Common Prayer*, or prayers of confession, or they confess their sins to a priest and hear from him words of encouragement. On the Aristotelian principle that ethically good actions, thoughts, and feelings can become habitual in a person who practices them over time, and thus turn into virtues, such practices may be thought to promote Christian holiness itself. By longitudinal studies of people who engage in such practices, in comparison with others who do not, Miller and his colleagues might be able empirically to verify (or falsify, or qualify) the Aristotelian hypothesis. Put in the language of our conference, such practices might be a major tool for desecularizing ourselves and those whose spiritual nurture is our responsibility.

In one of our discussions, David Bradshaw commented that secularization has brought enormous moral changes to the West: abortion, lowered standards of public decency, cohabitation, transfer of the care of the poor to the state, pornography, and the list goes on. I suggest that such secularization is psychologically brought about, in significant part, through a process of *contemplation* that belies the radical dichotomy of facts from values that David Solomon calls "the second dogma" of early twentieth-century moral philosophy. It looks to me as though the facts of the world you live in, the world you daily contemplate, make impressions on the soul that strongly affect your sense of what is morally normal, and thus normative. They are dispositions of expectation that tend eventually to become dispositions of complacent acceptance. If the *fact* is that everybody around you is cohabiting and casually having abortions, it is hard to keep your consciousness and your conscience from being affected. The approach of contemplative Christian spirituality to this kind of secularization process is to expose ourselves regularly to facts of a very different moral order that will establish in us a very different sense of the normal: the Gospel and teachings of Jesus Christ, holy lives, upbuilding Christian discourse, virtues, the promises of God. The disciplines I mentioned in the previous paragraph are all contemplative, if we take 'contemplation' to mean something like *gaze at with serious attention*, *consider*, or *pay attention to*. It is the sort of thing the apostle Paul seems to have in mind when he says, "Set your mind on the things of the Spirit," and "whatever is true, whatever is honorable, whatever is just, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is gracious, if there is any excellence, if there is anything worthy of praise, think about these things."

David Solomon's contribution to the conference is about some intersections of ethics in the sense of a dimension of practical life and ethics in the sense of a discipline of reflection *about* that dimension of practical life. Solomon chronicles the secularization of bioethics in the

second half of the twentieth century by the substitution of religiously "neutral" philosophical theories for traditional religious and theological commitments. This substitution's instigators hoped to achieve universal consensus on such matters as whether a woman has the right to abort her unborn child for any reason, or whether we should use all possible means to save the lives of seriously disabled children, or how we should regulate the use of human subjects in medical experiments. The idea seems to have been that philosophy, being unlike religion in its freedom from ideological bias, could achieve an objectivity and consensus that eluded theological thinking. But it turns out, says Solomon, that normative philosophical ethics is just as characterized by traditional commitments as theological ethics, and that once the philosophical positions on such questions as the above become sufficiently clarified, consensus is as inaccessible as it was under theology. The lesson for Christians seems to be an encouragement to be faithful to our tradition. The lusting after the normative fleshpots of philosophy is not only unfaithfulness to our Lord; the hunger for objectivity and consensus is one that philosophy is not well designed to satisfy.

If it is a mistake for Christians to take over the substantive moral thinking of Plato, Aristotle, Hume, Mill, Kant, Marx, Heidegger, or Wittgenstein, what is Christian moral philosophy supposed to be like? The lesson of Solomon's historical sketch is that Christians should beware of taking over the normative commitments of the philosophers they study. But the reading of philosophy can teach us to think conceptually and critically; it can teach us skills that we can deploy within the distinctive parameters of our own moral tradition. It can also provide us with a rich fund of normative examples that we can compare with Christian ethics so as to become clearer about the character of our own ethical thought. Sometimes the comparisons will bring out positive similarities between Christianity and the substantive commitments of a philosopher, and sometimes they will highlight contrasts. In either case, there are things to be learned, understandings to be deepened.

Nature and Norms of Human Freedom

In "Freedom of Choice and Principles of Self-Determination," A.V. Razin proposes that human moral freedom is a product of psychological development that involves reflective dissociation from oneself, or rather the dissociation of one part or aspect of oneself from another part, such that one becomes, in a limited sense, the author of one's own character, and thus responsible for being who one is. I can well imagine such a process exploiting some of the psychological information uncovered in the empirical work on which Christian Miller reports. The Christian, attempting to cooperate with the Holy Spirit in the process of his own

sanctification, might make efforts of will to pursue a regular discipline of self-examination in the light of Christian ideals of moral excellence, say by reading Scripture and lives of the saints. And let us say that, over a period of time, this Christian discovers many subtle faults and sins (as well as perhaps some less subtle ones), and also exercises his will, with some success, in correcting them with the help of prayerful interaction with the Holy Spirit. It seems to me that such a person could be said to have grown in freedom, in at least two senses. He is freer than formerly, in virtue of being more truly himself as God intended him to be, increasing his freedom of fellowship with the Holy Spirit. But he is also freer in the sense that he has contributed more to his own formation than he had done previously; he is responsible for more of his character than formerly. This increase in freedom is in all likelihood a process of desecularization, supposing that he had formerly been guided and formed by secular moral influences, and also that from a Christian point of view, such formation is a kind of bondage of the human spirit.

Japa Pallikkathayil, interacting with J.S. Mill and I. Kant, seeks reasons for opposing restriction of freedom of expression in speech (among which would be the Soviet restrictions that Shishkov reports) that do not depend on any particular conception of human flourishing.[1] Mill's opposition to such restrictions depends on his idea that the highest human happiness is found in exercising our higher faculties, so it is not what Pallikkathayil is seeking. Kant's reason, by contrast, is that without freedom of expression, human beings cannot interact as free agents. This is why human agency requires a political state as a guardian of some of our rights. Human interagency is so basic to human life that it does not belong to any particular conception of happiness, religious or secular. But Kant does not address *informal* restrictions on freedom of expression, such as applications of social pressure (e.g., ostracism) that cannot be regulated by law. He does, however, have conceptual *resources* for reasons to object to informal limitations on people's ability to express their ideas. Allowing people to say what they think can express respect for their autonomy and can serve the interest of the justice of our political institutions. Pallikkathayil thinks that the conception of autonomy utilized in the first of these reasons belongs to a particular ("liberal") view of what it is to live a flourishing life, thus mitigating Kant's advantage over Mill, but she thinks this commitment to autonomy very thin. Earlier in the paper she contrasts being "an independent thinker" with being "an obedient follower" as different ways of conceiving a flourishing life. I agree that it is difficult to imagine a respectable view of human flourishing that does not require

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[1] Editor's note: Professor Pallikkathayil's paper, "Freedom of Expression in Mill and Kant," has been omitted from these proceedings at her request.

independent thinking, but I think, in addition (and possibly contrary to Kant), that virtues of obedience to authority are compatible with such autonomy. The mature Christian, for example, will certainly be an independent critical thinker, and one important application of her intellectual and moral independence will be to the secularizing pressures of her social environment. It will be a strength crucially deployed in the ongoing desecularization of her heart, the deepening of her singular obedience to God.

Baylor University

CHAPTER X

COMMENTARY: THE CHALLENGE OF SECULARISM TO PHILOSOPHICAL ETHICS

BRUCE FOLTZ

Our symposium has as its theme, "Ethics and the Challenges of Secularism." The relevance of this topic for us today is twofold. Russia, of course, has only recently emerged from a long night of state-enforced secularism. Meanwhile America, or so many believe, may be inching ever more closely toward a similar or parallel condition of secularism – even if it is one enforced less by state violence than by "informal social sanctions."

But what is secularism? Why is it problematic? And what are the challenges that it poses to ethics?

Charles Taylor's recent weighty volume, *A Secular Age*, seems like a good place to begin answering these questions. According to Taylor, the secular character of our age comes from the weakening of perennial "bulwarks" against religious un-belief: things like the conviction that nature is divinely ordered; the belief that principles of moral and social order are rooted in divine order and supported by divine ordinance; and above all what Max Weber called the "disenchantment" of modern life – the loss of a sense of meaning embedded in the world around us that is not of our own making.

But if the loss of such things leads to secularity, its primary characteristic – its distinguishing feature – lies elsewhere: namely in the striking fact that whereas just a few centuries ago, un-belief was so uncommon as to require justification, today it is religious belief itself that requires explanation and justification. In short, secularity consists in the fact that, within contemporary discourse, *religious belief is optional* or purely elective.

So where does this optional status of religious belief leave ethics? If religious belief is just as discretionary as our choice of recreational activities (bowling vs. downhill skiing) or beverages (wine vs. beer) or novelists (Joyce vs. Hemingway), then it cannot count as more than a personal preference. So we cannot look to religion for ethical guidance at more than an individual level. We must look instead toward something that, by mutual agreement, we all do share if we are to find common ethical justifications. And what would that be? *Human nature*, perhaps, understood as entailing sympathy or pity or sociability? But the writing first of Sade, and then of Nietzsche, show quite intentionally and

rather powerfully, even if somewhat repugnantly, that our nature may just as well incline toward cruelty and domination as toward empathy and respect.

So we look instead to *reason*, which we are all supposed to share (even if it is in an emphatically modern, Western modality). Reason ostensibly can provide us with a universally applicable algorithm for generating moral judgments as they proceed either from their principle or from their consequences. As for the former, deontology, I will simply take Kant at his word that in practice, deontological principles ultimately depend upon religious postulates. And whether this dependence if explicit or implicit, there is good reason to think that he is correct.

But what about consequences and a utilitarian calculus? I want to cite Peter Singer here, less as a *reductio ad absurdum* than as a harbinger of things to come. For what was just a few decades ago – in an only slightly more religious age – not just unspeakable, but unthinkable – i.e., not just abortion and euthanasia, but infanticide and bestiality – are with Singer given robust and eloquent advocacy. In view of this, and the fact that Singer's arguments are taken seriously by professional philosophers, can we really continue to believe that reason in its utilitarian mode can provide us with the foundation for a shared moral vision? For such reasons, then, I would join in agreement with those ethicists (such as H. Tristram Engelhardt) who argue that purely secular reason, unaided by religious intuition, can offer no foundation for ethics beyond the mere *principle of consent*. "I won't kill you (unless you request it) if you won't kill me (again, unless I want you to)." And if you are unable to either render or withhold consent – unconscious or unborn or something of the sort – then you do not count.

But of course, we all have a richer, thicker set of ethical beliefs and perceptions and sensitivities than this! Yet from where did we derive them, if not from reason? Surely many places, but let me suggest that the most important sources are religious belief and practice. Or rather, their residuals – for as Nietzsche saw, religion has a prolonged half-life, even as it decays and decomposes. Most of us share these residual elements, even as they fade. But they are not rationally grounded, nor can we publically invoke religious beliefs when they are now entirely optional and individual. For the most part, we smuggle them (unwittingly, covertly) into either deontological or utilitarian arguments, and it is often precisely these assumed premises that end up making the more formal argumentation seem plausible in its conclusions.

But what happens as they fade more and more – when we no longer feel that life is sacred, or that hospitality to the other is central to human decency? Indeed, when like Nietzsche's *letzte Menschen,* we say: "Sacred?" "Decency?" And we smirk and snigger and blink. We can still appreciate a Cantata by Bach or a Mass by Mozart, but only because we

still are close enough to the religious beliefs of the past that we are able to remember collectively the doctrines and feelings upon which that music depends. But what happens as we become more distant from that shared memory – when we truly *forget*?

I want to suggest, then, that Peter Singer – Singer, and ethicists even more bold than him, such as those who call themselves "transhumanists" – may provide us with a glimpse of that future. And I want to further suggest that this glimpse is morally chilling.

Additionally, I want to further suggest that a striking range of philosophers hardly associated with theism – philosophers such as Derrida, Vattimo, Habermas, and Žižek, to name only a few – have been expressing the sense that if we are to remain fully human, the ethical and political spheres really may not be able to do without religious belief, even though these advocates are not themselves believers.

These are, I would suggest, the questions we should take away from this very engaging symposium on "Ethics and the Challenge of Secularism."

Eckerd College

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THE COUNCIL FOR RESEARCH
IN VALUES AND PHILOSOPHY

PURPOSE

Today there is urgent need to attend to the nature and dignity of the person, to the quality of human life, to the purpose and goal of the physical transformation of our environment, and to the relation of all this to the development of social and political life. This, in turn, requires philosophic clarification of the base upon which freedom is exercised, that is, of the values which provide stability and guidance to one's decisions.

Such studies must be able to reach deeply into one's culture and that of other parts of the world as mutually reinforcing and enriching in order to uncover the roots of the dignity of persons and of their societies. They must be able to identify the conceptual forms in terms of which modern industrial and technological developments are structured and how these impact upon human self-understanding. Above all, they must be able to bring these elements together in the creative understanding essential for setting our goals and determining our modes of interaction. In the present complex global circumstances this is a condition for growing together with trust and justice, honest dedication and mutual concern.

The Council for Studies in Values and Philosophy (RVP) unites scholars who share these concerns and are interested in the application thereto of existing capabilities in the field of philosophy and other disciplines. Its work is to identify areas in which study is needed, the intellectual resources which can be brought to bear thereupon, and the means for publication and interchange of the work from the various regions of the world. In bringing these together its goal is scientific discovery and publication which contributes to the present promotion of humankind.

In sum, our times present both the need and the opportunity for deeper and ever more progressive understanding of the person and of the foundations of social life. The development of such understanding is the goal of the RVP.

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