

VERITAS

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VERITAS



The Haberdashers' Aske's Boys' School

Theology & Philosophy Journal

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INTRODUCTIONS

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What Is Ultimate Reality?

MR CAWLEY

WHAT IS *ULTIMATE reality*? There are, in fact, a remarkably small number of responses to this question. Amongst them are Classical Theism (whether Jewish or Islamic Monotheism or Christian Trinitarianism)

and the Monism (belief in the essentially unity of all that is) that lies behind much Buddhist and Hindu thought (including Pantheism - God is identical with the universe), as well as undergirding Materialism (the belief that matter is all there is). I would argue that the way one answers the question, 'What is ultimate reality?' will shape one's stance towards every area of life.

Alister McGrath, the eminent Oxford theologian, argues that our culture is spell-bound by the idea that this world is all there is (*Deep Magic, Dragons and Talking Mice*, 2014). The widespread nature of this cultural assumption and its place in what Peter Berger refers to as the 'plausibility structures' (the sociocultural contexts for systems of meaning; *The Homeless Mind*) of our society is something which ought not to be uncritically accepted. McGrath is impressed by C.S. Lewis' argument in *Mere Christianity* that 'If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.' This is what Berger

would refer to as a 'signal of transcendence' ('A Rumour of Angels').

These are the sorts of issues which this edition of Veritas is seeking to explore. What is ultimate reality? Are there 'signals of transcendence' or is this world all there is? You've simply got to engage with these questions!

I would like to thank Mr Bronson, Curran Kumar, Ariel Cohen and their editorial team for producing another super edition of Veritas. Enjoy and keep thinking!



Existence : Change

MR BRONSON

WHAT YOU THINK exists makes a difference to your life. This is true even if what you think exists does not, as a matter of fact, exist. If you really believe the Illuminati are hunting you down you will try to hide. To make things even more confusing things that actually do exist, which you might think don't exist, make a difference to your life. Perhaps, for example, you are convinced that free-will does not exist. If it turns out that free-will does indeed exist then much of what will explain how you live and what has happened to you will be due to free-will. Irritatingly, perhaps, this will be true even if you stubbornly refuse to believe that free-will exists. The following articles deal with questions of existence, broadly construed. Such questions are interesting, engaging and potentially life changing. Read carefully, then, for the content is rich and the questions richer still.

Word From The Editor

ARIEL COHEN, EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

THE WORLD IS changing. One only has to look at the devastating impact of both extremism and nationalism in mainland Europe, the spread of militant Islamism in Central Africa or the constant turmoil in the Middle-East to see that we are living in troubled times.

Yes, the world is changing, but so is Veritas. Some of you are new readers; others, hardened veterans. All are most welcome, and all are encouraged to be stimulated, informed, and perhaps most importantly, challenged.

When submissions for these pages started to roll in, observing the full extent and breadth of theological and philosophical interest that the Habs community has to offer was both gratifying and heart-warming. Pleasing still was to see the sheer volume of submissions received, especially from the lower school. It is imperative that we encourage the next generation of Habs truth-seekers, and to see the quality of some of our Junior boys' work is only comforting – please do continue to write, and do continue to think.

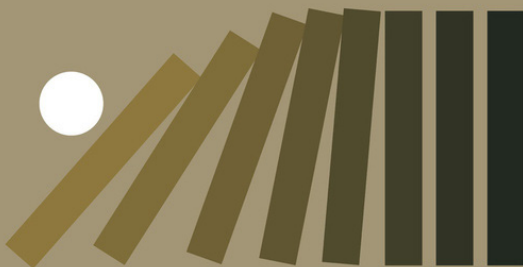
You will find in these modest pages a selection of essays, scientific explorations, existential questions, religious critiques and much more. It is my hope that this issue serves to show you that intellectual discourse is certainly alive and well at Habs.

Last of all, thanks must go to Mr Bronson and Curran Kumar for their unwavering support and belief in this project. Thanks must also go to all those who submitted writing; it has been a nothing but a joy to read and edit your pieces. To those who have never yet submitted, I urge you to consider sharing your talents with us next time round.

To end, it is my most sincere pleasure to present to you the Lent 2015 edition of Veritas.

AC.

Determinism.



SIXTH FORM

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‘We have consented to be governed, so are obliged to obey the government’, Discuss

GORDON HAO, U6R2

LOCKE ATTEMPTS TO solve the problem of political obligation (the problem of explaining why we have a duty to obey the government and the laws it imposes, or “reconciling the authority of the state with the autonomy of the individual”) in terms of consent. Given the importance he stresses on individual autonomy and natural liberty, the only way that an authority would be justified in exercising its power is if each person has given individual consent to be governed by that authority. This is linked to the idea of social contract theory, whereby all citizens have political obligation because of a “social contract” with the state with which they have all agreed. In this essay I will examine how, and hence if, we have given such consent to be governed. I argue that the claim posited by the question is false; consent has not been given and, moreover, such consent does not necessarily entail political obligation.

Some propose that explicit consent has been given, and the act of doing so was some real historical event which happened the moment when humans left the state of nature and agreed to form a society and be subject to the authority of a state. Even if there was evidence for such an event occurring (and even if a state of nature did at some

point exist), this account does not solve the problem of political obligation, because such explicit consent would only apply to this first generation of society. All succeeding generations, including existing citizens, have not been given an opportunity to explicitly consent; it would be unreasonable to suggest that the agreement of the first generation is binding on all future generations.

However, the notion of explicit consent could be salvaged by interpreting voting for a government, an opportunity afforded to all generations, as a way of explicitly consenting to that government, because a citizen would be actively and voluntarily deciding who they wish to compose a government. Nonetheless, this is still not a satisfactory solution to the problem. Voting cannot be taken as consent because it is possible for citizens to be obliged to obey the laws imposed by a party they did not vote for.

“...the moment when humans left the state of nature and agreed to form a society and be subject to the authority of a state.”

For instance, a citizen may vote for the Conservative Party, and find it is the Labour Party that wins the election; that citizen, and any other citizen that voted for any other party, would still be obliged to obey any laws laid down by the

Labour government. Moreover, if that citizen were to vote for an anarchistic party which supported the abolition of the state, then, even if this anarchistic party did not win the election, the act of voting in this instance cannot be interpreted as an act of consent to be governed. In a similar vein, not voting cannot be taken as refusal to consent, because those that do not vote are still obliged to obey any laws imposed by the ensuing government. Yet the most significant weakness of the proposition that voting can be taken as explicit consent is that voting for a representative does not constitute an endorsement of the general concept of being governed or being governed by elected representatives; citizens have no choice but to accept that they *must* be governed by elected representatives. Moreover, voting is not understood by voters as an act of consent; in the UK, for example, a citizen voting in a General Election is merely expressing who they



would prefer to be represented by, or which party they would prefer to constitute the next government, for a non-permanent period of time. Voting, therefore, is not meaningful consent, let alone explicit consent, so cannot be taken as synonymous with consenting to be governed.

Locke acknowledges the problems surrounding explicit consent, and concedes that it is not necessary for consent to be governed. He instead proposes that tacit consent is sufficient as consent to be governed. This is the idea that “every man that hath any possession, or enjoyment, of any part of the dominions of any government doth thereby give his tacit consent, and is as far forth obliged to obedience to the laws of that government” (Second Treatise). For example, by driving a car, citizens are enjoying the benefits of the government-written Highway Code and the government-built road, and by simply living within a society, citizens are enjoying the benefit of not being attacked by foreign invaders as a result of the government’s defence capabilities. In enjoying such benefits, citizens are implicitly consenting to the government which is providing those benefits. To analogise, players of a chess game, by

playing the game, are implicitly consenting to the rules of the game, even though they have not explicitly consented to them.

A basic response to this form of consent is that citizens only ever express tacit consent for some benefits a government provides, not all of them; for example, just because a citizen enjoys his right to freedom of speech, it does not necessarily entail he also enjoys his right to drink alcohol, or indeed agrees with any other law that a government might impose. Yet even if this were the case, the main objection to this view is that tacit consent is not meaningful consent. Firstly, given its implicit nature, it is not understood by citizens as consent to be governed. More importantly, however, it is an act of forced consent, as there is no opportunity to dissent; citizens cannot help but enjoy the benefits of living in a society, so cannot help but give tacit consent. Rousseau replies by suggesting that those that dissent are able to emigrate, but Hume refutes this; “can we seriously say that a poor peasant has a free choice to leave his country? We may as well assert, that a man, by remaining in a vessel, freely consents to the dominion of the master; though he was carried on board while asleep, and must leap into the ocean, and perish, the moment he leaves her” (*‘Of the Original Contract’*). Hume here demonstrates how Rousseau’s suggestion of emigration as refusal to consent fails; even if a dissenter had the available resources to emigrate, there is no location to emigrate to where there is no government (as insinuated by the phrase that dissenters must “leap into the ocean, and perish”). Therefore, since there is no real choice involved in tacit consent, it cannot be construed as meaningful consent to be governed.

This essay has so far shown that neither explicit nor implicit (tacit) consent has been given, and it may therefore seem as if the consent doctrine has been defeated. However, some argue that consent does not need to involve an act of actual consent. It can be argued that the social contract is purely hypothetical, and political obligation can be justified because all citizens would rationally consent if, hypothetically, they placed themselves in a state of nature, or, again hypothetically, they were given the opportunity to explicitly consent today. This is

because, according to both Hobbes and Locke, being subject to the authority of the state is more desirable than the alternative (being in the state of nature), and, in all circumstances, all people would explicitly consent to be governed. Proponents of hypothetical consent consider this as sufficient grounds to justify political obligation.

However, these proponents have made a questionable assumption; they have assumed that it is rational to consent to be governed. In the first hypothetical scenario, where citizens imagine themselves in a state of nature, it is impossible to determine whether people in a state of nature, having not experienced life with a government, would indeed prefer the latter to the former. Brudney alludes to this in his analogy of his visit to the mall, noting that “with changing circumstances come changing preferences” (‘Hypothetical Consent and Moral Force’); Brudney is here suggest-

“a hypothetical contract is not simply a pale form of an actual contract; it is no contract at all.”

ing that the considerations when deciding whether or not to consent without experience of subjection to government (in a state of nature) are different when deciding whether or not to consent with it, and so hypothetical consent cannot be taken as consent to be governed. There are two objections to the second hypothetical scenario, where citizens are hypothetically offered an opportunity to explicitly consent today. Firstly, it is possible that certain groups of people would decide not to consent if given the opportunity. Anarchists, for example, would reject Hobbes’ and Locke’s characterisations of the state of nature and would prefer to live in it rather than under an authority. It is possible that they are mistaken and it is against their self-interest to live in a state of nature rather than under an authority, but this does not vindicate the notion of hypothetical consent, because people cannot be coerced (as political obligation does) to act in their self-interest; if they were, this would constitute a constraint on the choice available to them, so the consent would not be meaningful. Secondly, even if all citizens were to consent in this hypothetical situation, this entails merely a willingness to consent to be governed. This is inad-

equate as the basis of a social contract. As Dworkin highlights, “a hypothetical contract is not simply a pale form of an actual contract; it is no contract at all” (“The Original Position”); for consent to be meaningful, it must involve an actual act of consent.

I ultimately conclude that the claim posited by the question is false. This essay has shown that the most common accounts of consent as the basis for political obligation are untenable. It seems unlikely that any other satisfactory account of consent exists, since the accounts discussed here would seem to be exhaustive; it seems difficult to develop an account of consent that is neither actual nor hypothetical, and neither explicit nor implicit. Moreover, the entailment between consent and political obligation is not universal; even some contractarians accept that, if a government fails to achieve its function (for Locke, to ensure the universal and fair interpretation and enforcement of the Law of Nature; for Hobbes, to ensure the security and self-preservation of the population), then citizens have no duty to obey the government, even if they have previously given consent to be governed by it. Although the consent doctrine may initially appear to be a reasonable explanation of political obligation, and perhaps even an appealing one given the importance it places on individuals’ autonomy and choices, I find on further reflection that it is an incoherent position. Overall, I argue that we have not consented to be governed, and even if we have done so, such consent does not necessarily entail an obligation to obey the government.

Should We Praise Or Condemn Martyrs?

ALEX SZLEZINGER, U6J2

– Winner of the Trinity College,
Cambridge Theology Essay Prize 2014

A MARTYR IS commonly thought of as someone who remains faithful to a religious principle in the face of persecution which results in their death. Until 9/11, people admired martyrs, but when the terrorists were proclaimed as martyrs across the Middle East, for many people, admiration was replaced by fear and revulsion. George Bush expressed his outrage; those responsible were “murderers not martyrs”. This essay explains the positive contribution to religion that martyrdom has made as part of a theology of endurance and protest by believers which has inspired future generations to continue to resist injustice. However, it

also explains that its contribution is a mixed one as martyrdom has also been part of an offensive strategy

“George Bush expressed his outrage; those responsible were “murderers not martyrs”

in the name of faith to win adherents or territory. The essay outlines the efforts that religion have made to control the negative side of martyrdom and explain why they have not succeeded. Therefore, we cannot praise or condemn martyrs uncritically. Although true martyrs should be admired, there needs to be a way of assessing martyrs that all religions can endorse but there are difficulties in arriving at such a methodology. Failing that, we should praise victims, and criticise those who carry out acts of violence, whether or not they are regarded as martyrs.

For all three western religions, martyrdom has offered a way of protesting against hardship which allowed the faithful to survive future persecutions. An early martyrdom story, of Hannah and her sons

during the Greek persecution, was hugely influential. Each son killed himself following his mother's urging, rather than be forced, at sword point, to eat pork. Before dying, the youngest declared their deaths were "under God's covenant of eternal life". While the prohibition on eating pork had no significance in Christianity, the principle that it may be necessary to give up life itself if one cannot live as God requires made a huge impression on the early Church and the Church regarded them as martyrs, although they pre-dated Christianity.

**"the heroically holy
were also a reproach to
the morally mediocre"**

The principle was especially relevant for Christianity because Jesus' death was a martyrdom. His martyrdom was so powerful that, although many Christians symbolically re-enacted his death and resurrection by being baptised, others felt that the only way to "follow" him properly¹ and secure salvation was by following him into death. Martyrdoms such as Polycarp's in 155CE imitated Jesus' death and helped shape the Church². Many Christians were martyred refusing to sacrifice to the Emperor; this was seen by the Romans as treason, but by the Christians as rejecting idolatry. This brought a flood of converts into Christianity, partly because of the martyrs' confidence and self-discipline, but also because "a noble death" had parallels in Roman tradition. Further, since martyrs' stories were recited on martyrs' days, it provided a model of behaviour for the faithful and a standard by which to judge them. As Eamon Duffy wrote, "the heroically holy were also a reproach to the morally mediocre".

This is also discernible in Islam as martyrdom allowed Islam to define and distinguish itself, and emerge from the violence of its early struggles, as a monotheist religion. Moreover, the Koran makes it clear that the certainty of death should empower a Muslim to focus on achieving the highest standards and inevitable opposition, should not deter him. Ali says:

¹ Mark 8:34

² The earliest account of Polycarp's martyrdom states that "all desire to imitate [his martyrdom] since it was in accord with the pattern of the Gospel of Christ"



“This house is surrounded by trials, distresses, and ill-fortunes.... No condition here is permanent....Here one has always to face adversities, disappointments, and failures, and in the end death finishes him.”

Thus the function of martyrdom was to provide an incentive to ethical behaviour and continued fidelity to the Koran. If that fidelity led to death, the person would reap the rewards of martyrdom.

Furthermore, the death of Hussein (grandson of Mohammed) was a seminal moment for the new faith which revitalised the religion by his identification with purity and allowed the faith to renew and reinvigorate itself.

In Judaism, the Rabbis disapproved of martyrdom, including the suicide at Masada to escape Roman slavery. However, in the Middle Ages, many communities committed suicide rather than be butchered by Crusaders. Their stories were written up to strengthen other communities and help Jews withstand intense pressure to convert to Christianity. As with earlier Christian martyrologies, the stories emphasised that victims would receive justice in the next world and strengthened Judaism by showing that, as the dead clearly thought being Jewish was worth dying for, survivors should value their religion.

Martyrdom therefore made three contributions to religion. First, martyrs were “witnesses” to the truth of the faith by providing credibility for it (martyrologies particularly stressed the martyr’s exemplary early life), demonstrating that it was worth dying for and conferring legitimacy on it. Second, it created a border between the faith of the

persecutor and that of the martyr. For example, at the time of the Greek revolt, Judaism appeared to be drifting into assimilation. However, as the religious authorities were sympathetic to the Greeks, it was the martyrs who established that assimilation was unacceptable. Equally, in the Roman persecution, many Christians compromised by bringing sacrifices to the Emperor, but martyrs demonstrated that this act of self-preservation was apostasy. Finally, martyrs helped create a sense of group solidarity and motivation among believers as martyrs' stories were crafted to ensure that listeners would identify with the martyr. In Christianity, the climax of the story was the declaration that the martyr was a Christian, followed by a gory death; the stories left no doubt that the Romans had achieved a pyrrhic victory and that true victory lay with the martyr and the Church.

However, although martyrdom allowed the faithful to define and distinguish themselves, and were an outlet for protesting against injustice, the overall contribution of martyrdom is more mixed for a number of reasons.

First, the term *martyr* contains an implicit judgment that the martyr is purely good and that the cause is just. Thus, proclaiming a person as a martyr polarises the two sides to a dispute as 'good' and 'bad'.³ This explains why, when, in sixteenth century England, Foxe published his Protestant *Book of Martyrs*, Catholics responded with competing martyrologies and by denying that the Protestants were martyrs at all since their beliefs were heretical⁴. Proclaiming a martyr makes disputes harder to settle peaceably as compromise is a betrayal of the martyr. In Islam, the 'spirit of pain, anger, and revenge' created by the martyrdom of Hussein 'stayed with the Shi'ite community ever since'⁵. In World War I, British propaganda relied on martyrdom when accusing the Germans of murdering Belgian nuns. This

³ Thomas More is depicted as a wholly good person, but, when in power, he had fervently prosecuted heretics (contrary to his views in *Utopia*).

⁴ Nicolas Harpsfield says that Foxe had attempted to pull "the true martyrs of Christ down from heaven", while "raising up Lucifer" in their place. Thomas Harding, a Catholic priest, referred to a "huge dunghill of your stinking martyrs".

⁵ <http://www.islamfrominside.com/Pages/Articles/Commemorating%20Martyrdom.html>

infuriated the public (as the government intended), but it also made compromise impossible.

Second, while martyrs are thought of as resisting tyranny, many martyrs have committed suicide and murder. It is difficult to reconcile this with religious teachings on the sanctity of life and, in the case of Christianity, with the requirement to “turn the other cheek”. In the Biblical story of Samson⁶, Samson is given back his powers when made to perform at a banquet and he kills all present, more than he had killed in battle.⁷ During the Crusades, those who died fighting for the Church were regarded as martyrs⁸ and in the second Crusade, St Bernard of Clairvaux said, “The Christian glories in the death of a pagan, because thereby Christ himself is glorified.”

As far as suicide is concerned, in early Christianity, many Christians turned themselves in to the Romans and demanded to be martyred. Turtullian urged Christians to “die the martyr’s death that He may be glorified that has suffered for you”. Similarly, the Koran provides that those who die as martyrs must not be mourned as they live in paradise and receive Allah’s bounty. If a killer who has acted following encouragement and incentives given by the religious authorities can be a martyr, in effect martyrdom is an instrument of “holy” warfare. The approach of some contemporary Muslims resembles the medieval church as powerful incentives are offered to participate and become martyrs. If religious authorities are encouraging individuals to kill and offering incentives to do so, there may also be a conflict of interest between the authorities and the individuals themselves.

A further objection is that martyrdom was used by nationalists, as loyalty to the nation was seen in religious terms and the willingness

⁶Judges 16:25 – 30

⁷John Milton, apparently concerned about the loss of innocent life in *Samson Agonistes*, emphasised that while “Lords, ladies, captains, counsellors, or priests,/ Their choice nobility and flower” (complicit in the war) were killed, the common people were unharmed (“The vulgar only scaped, who stood without”). There is no evidence for this in the Bible.

⁸Pope Urban offered the Crusaders absolution, saying, “God himself will lead them, for they will be doing His work. There will be absolution and remission of sins for all who die in the service of Christ. Here they are poor and miserable sinners; there they will be rich and happy!”

to die for the nation was seen as a form of sacrifice. In depicting their dead as martyrs, nationalists have been able to hijack the religious meaning of martyrdom, and make the state into a cause worth dying for. This reached its peak in World War I when almost no religious figures denounced the senseless loss of life. Instead, national churches

**“Only after 1928 did people
began to appreciate the war’s
meaninglessness”**

on both sides wholeheartedly endorsed the war⁹ and both sides’ dead were considered as martyrs. Only after 1928 did people begin to appreci-

ate the war’s meaninglessness, but even then, moral leadership was given by authors like Remarque and Sheriff, rather than the churches.

Western religions have sought to narrow the scope of martyrdom to deal with some of these criticisms and to reduce the possibility that a person may commit suicide and/or murder as a martyr. Religions have attempted to do so in a number of ways.

First, religions became more precise about the circumstances in which adherents were obliged to be martyred. In Judaism, after 70AD, it was necessary, in the interests of improving relations with the Romans, to confine the issues for which Jews were required to take a stand to the minimum (being forced to commit idolatry, sexual immorality and murder). The rabbis’ reasoning was that the Torah was given for life and that Jews should not give up life for Torah observance.¹⁰ This meant that if a Jew were compelled at sword point to eat pork, as Hannah and her sons had been, he would be required to eat. One key difference between Judaism and Christianity is whereas Jesus’ martyrdom was central to Christianity, the defining event for Judaism was the Exodus, a life affirming event which led to the giving of the law, and this made it easier for the Rabbis to limit the obligation to be martyred to a small number of essential commandments.¹¹

⁹ One vicar said, “This truly is a war of ideals; Odin is ranged against Christ, and Berlin is seeking to prove its supremacy over Bethlehem. Every shot that is fired, every bayonet thrust that gets home, every life that is sacrificed, is in very truth ‘for His Name’s sake’”

¹⁰ This is based on the statement that: “You shall keep my decrees and my laws that a person will do and live by them, I am God.” (Leviticus 18:5).

During the Roman persecution, it was unclear whether a Christian was permitted to avoid martyrdom. Tertullian taught that a person who fled persecution was a coward and apostate, but others such as Cyprian argued that those who had escaped should return to the church. Ultimately, it was decided that although a Christian should not seek martyrdom, he should not shirk it either: “it is mere rashness

**“... it is mere rashness to seek death, but cowardly to refuse it”
— Augustine**

to seek death, but cowardly to refuse it”. Later, Augustine redefined martyrdom, by eliminating any reference to sacrifice,

and said “God does not delight in the shedding of blood”. This abandoned the obligation to imitate Jesus’s death and martyrdom became purely a question of bearing witness. As the religion of the Roman Empire, this redefinition was necessary to prevent martyrdom from undermining civil order.

Aquinas specified that a martyr had to die for Christian truth. This both confirmed Augustine’s ruling that a heretic could not be a martyr, and allowed him to ensure that the prohibition of murder and suicide took priority over martyrdom. A person who had committed suicide or murdered another would be unlikely to have died for Christian truth and Aquinas rejected suicide as contrary to the inclination to love and cherish the self, injuring the community and wronging God who gives life. Man is, after all, made in the image of God.

Second, it was stressed that the spirituality reached through martyrdom could be reached in other ways; “Let no one say that I cannot be a martyr because there is no persecution”.¹² Christians could achieve the greatest spiritual heights by conquering sins such as lust. St Jerome said a life of extreme poverty carried the same rewards as martyrdom. Similarly, in Islam, there are seven types of martyr including death by the plague and in childbirth. This complements

¹¹ The Binding of Isaac was also extremely important. Although there are many interpretations of the Akeida, however God tested Abraham, ultimately, he did not require human sacrifice.

¹² St Gregory of Nazianzus

those who argue for a wider definition of jihad to include the struggle to build a good society. The medieval Islamic scholar ibn Sharaf al-Nawawi stated that “one of the collective duties of the community as a whole (*fard kifaya*) is to lodge a valid protest, to solve problems of religion, to have knowledge of Divine Law, to command what is right and forbid wrong conduct”.¹³

The effect of this was to prioritise prohibitions against suicide and murder over martyrdom¹⁴. Aquinas assumed that soldiers cannot qualify as martyrs and he has severe difficulty with Roman martyrs who had committed suicide. In Islam too, many religious authorities do not allow those who have committed suicide to be regarded as martyrs. Distinguishing between acts which may result in death and those for which death is the necessary consequence, they hold that the latter can never result in martyrdom. Further, suicide bombings cannot be laudable because they are futile as they invariably result in retaliation and further suffering. Similarly, in Judaism, the concept of martyrdom became based on dying *al Kiddush Hashem*, since man is responsible for maintaining the honour of God’s name. Given their political oppression, Jews could not hope to improve their co-religionists’ situation through acts of martyrdom so the concept of martyrdom came to be based on personal ethical considerations (a person would be regarded as a martyr if his or her death reflected well on God and Judaism).

However, attempts by religious authorities of all faiths to confine martyrdom within acceptable bounds were not successful. This was for three reasons. First, religious authorities were unable to control who is a martyr. This had been possible at one time: Augustine ruled that heretics could not be martyrs, which allowed the Church to persecute Donatists in the fourth and fifth centuries without creating martyrs. By the Reformation, however, the invention of printing meant that there was a vast literature promoting martyrs and

¹³ Kabbani, Hendricks and Hendricks. “Jihad—A Misunderstood Concept from Islam”. The Muslim Magazine.

¹⁴ Maimonides said if a person chooses martyrdom where the law decides for life, he is blameworthy.

denigrating the other side's martyrs. Over time, it became clear that whether a person was a martyr was a question of popular perception in part based on promotion in the press. In the contemporary world, suicide bombers are regularly promoted as martyrs despite the efforts of moderate clerics; this is not a purely Muslim phenomena – Baruch Goldstein, who killed 29 Muslims in Hebron in 1994 and whose grave is a pilgrimage site for extremists, is regarded as a martyr, despite condemnation by mainstream rabbis.

Second, religions apply rules on martyrdom inconsistently. The logic of Aquinas' reasoning was that, as murderers, neither Samson nor the Crusaders should be regarded as martyrs. However, Aquinas felt that he had to regard Samson as a martyr because of the apparent Biblical approval of his actions and he regarded the Crusaders' actions as good works by analogy with holy orders.¹⁵ There is also no reason why either Hannah's sons or the children killed by Herod (the "Holy Innocents") should be regarded as martyrs since, as they died before Christ, they could not have died for "Christian truth". The martyrdom of the Holy Innocents also shows that martyrdom gives meaning to the inexplicable. An important example of this is the Holocaust, victims of which are martyrs in Judaism even though the vast majority had no opportunity to resist. This is partly based on Maimonides' ruling that a person who is killed simply because he is a Jew is a martyr, but calling such a person a martyr also helps the bereaved to make sense of their loss.

Third, martyrdom ceased to be purely religious as it became a way to cloak those who had died for any cause in a quasi-religious aura. Both Nazi Germany and Soviet Russia exploited martyrdom ruthlessly for propaganda. For example, the Nazis promoted Horst Wessel, an undistinguished member of the SA killed in what was probably a financial dispute, as a martyr. A Nazi magazine exclaimed: "How high Horst Wessel towers over that Jesus of Nazareth – that Jesus who pleaded that the bitter cup be taken from him."¹⁶

¹⁵ Aquinas said this although he required martyrs to accept death voluntarily, without resistance. He also stated that those who die for their country can be martyrs if "the human good of the nation is referred to God Himself".

An alternative approach to identifying a true martyr was that of TS Eliot in *Murder in the Cathedral*, in 1936. As Becket awaits his fate in the cathedral, four Tempters offer him temptation, the last of whom offers “glory after death”, that is, the ability to rule ‘beyond the tomb’ as a martyr. The offer is that Thomas will remain in the glorious company of Saints “dwelling forever in the presence of God”. To



Eliot, it is the greatest temptation and the greatest treason, as Becket realises, “to do the right deed for the wrong reason”. Thomas’ response to the Tempter expresses the mystery of free will. God leaves man free to will his life but that is the freedom to do His will and act in oneness with His purpose. As Becket says, “the true martyr is he who has become the instrument of God, who has lost his will in the will of God, and who no longer

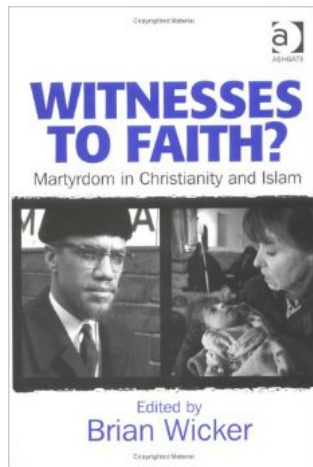
desires anything for himself, not even the glory of being a martyr”. From this perspective, a person who has become a martyr following an incentive, even a spiritual one, or has killed is not a martyr at all.

This approach is similar to Islam; the historian, GW Bowerstock argues that *shahid*, in Arabic means both “witness” and “to be witnessed”. A true martyr not only witnesses the truth but his action is also witnessed by Allah to whom the martyr is alone answerable as the ultimate witness of the martyr’s actions. Grand Mufti Ekrima Sabri, said, “The person who sacrifices his life as a Muslim will know if God accepts it and if it is for the right reason. God in the end will judge him and whether he did that for a good reason or not. We cannot judge him”.

¹⁶ Der Brunnen – Für deutsche Lebensart, 2 January 1934

The problem with this approach is that it is extremely subjective – whilst a potential martyr must be extremely careful that his conscience is clear, there is no one for him to answer to on earth. This is problematic if one accepts that those who kill others can be martyrs. There seems to be some evidence that the 9/11 bombers believed themselves to be carrying out the will of God, the result of which was the death of 3,000 people and such killings should be unambiguously condemned. Again, this is not just a Muslim issue: Anders Breivik, Swedish mass killer, referred to his crime as a “martyrdom operation”.

One alternative approach which is suggested in *Witness to Faith*, edited by Brian Wicker, is to redefine martyrdom to include those who have died for truth and justice, regardless of the cause. The authors cite Margaret Hassan, a Catholic married to a Muslim who was a tireless humanitarian worker in Bagdad. Following her abduction and death, both a number of Muslim leaders and Cardinal Cormac Murphy-O’Connor referred to her a martyr, the latter saying that she was a “martyr for truth and goodness”. Other examples include Edith Stein, a Jewish Catholic convert who was referred to by the Pope as a martyr for peace and Maximilian Kolbe who volunteered to take the place of another prisoner In Auschwitz and was sentenced to death (but did not die for Christian truth). Whilst getting religious authorities to expand the definition of martyrs to include acts of cross communal benefit and to include the acts of members of other religions would be helpful, making true progress requires faiths to agree additionally that suicide and murder can never be acts of martyrdom. For all religions, this would require a retrospective examination of martyrs; for example, it would require the Catholic church to declare that the Crusaders were not martyrs and would require Muslims to re-examine the



issue of suicide bombers and to speak with a single voice. Even if this were possible, as explained, religions are not always consistent and are rarely prepared (or able) to use disciplinary processes to bring dissident voices into line. Furthermore, as explained, while there may be official lists of martyrs, since the invention of the printing press, many martyrs are made in the media, regardless of the views of the religious authorities.

Since it is therefore likely that achieving a uniform definition of martyr will be unachievable or ineffective, it is suggested that the best alternative is to accept that while most martyrs have made a stand in the face of persecution and are laudable, this has not always been the case. The time has come to acknowledge this by praising victims whether or not they be martyrs and by condemning perpetrators, even if they are regarded by martyrs.

In conclusion, the contribution of martyrs to religion has been highly significant; brave people have stood up to religious persecution so that others could worship freely and they deserve to be praised. Others told martyrs' stories in a way that strengthened their faith and bore witness to it. Thus at its best, martyrdom is part of a tradition of non-violent protest. However, when resistance involves violence including harming others, it raises serious concerns. Religions have sought to control this but have failed, in part because martyrs are made as much by media as by religions but also through an inability to act consistently. It is unlikely that any real agreement could be reached between religions which would establish a standard by which to judge martyrs and which would remove the "martyr's crown" from those who should not be martyrs (including the Crusaders and suicide bombers). In the light of this, it is suggested that society sympathises with victims, condemn perpetrators and acknowledges that martyrs have not always been just.

The Inaugural Theology And Philosophy Department Dinner, A Report

JAKE GILBEY, L6S1

IT WAS WITH enormous excitement, that I attended what was to be not only my first formal school dinner, but also the first formal school dinner of the Theology and Philosophy Department.

After days, weeks, months, of anticipation November 6 finally came, and 30 or so excited students, OHs, and teachers arrived, to what promised to be, an evening filled with deep thought, intellectual conversation and, of equal importance, great food! As we stood enjoying the nibbles and drinks, our speaker for the evening, Dr. Joshua Horden, Fellow of Jesus College, Oxford, introduced himself to many of us, who were unsurprisingly nervous; we were of course talking to an Oxbridge Professor! But Dr. Horden soon made us feel comfortable, and many students were eager to ask questions about a range of things; from University life to different forms of the ontological argument, soon surrounded him.

Before we knew it, it was time to enter the Old Refectory for dinner, and as we took our seats the conversation began to flow. The topic at my table, wound its way to animal ethics, a topic that Dr. Horden gave us some interesting perspectives on, with new approaches, which most of us on the table had never encountered. The discussion continued throughout dinner, with many spending more time talking than eating, (although some did just continue eating)! It was soon time for Dr. Horden's speech on the role of ethics in public life, where he used the NHS as a particular example and focus point, looking at topics which included the issues surrounding funding and the role of different ethical approaches towards this.

Equally as interesting however, were Dr. Horden's responses to the questions put to him by many in the audience, such as how much do



people really pay attention to ethics, or apply the principals of different ethical approaches. What I found very interesting was how Dr. Horden took stances using a range of ethical attitudes. I would like to thank Dr. Horden for his enlightening speech and Mr. Garvey for organising such an intellectually fascinating evening. A thoroughly enjoyable night and an occasion which I hope continues for many years to come.

What Does It Mean To Be Intelligent And Is Being Intelligent Or Possibly The Most Intelligent A Good Thing?

CAMERON BAKER, L6C1; WITH RESPONSE BY
GEORGE TILLISCH, L6S1

Stephen Hawking proposed Artificial Intelligence (AI) could “supersede” human beings in the coming future. Below we look at the pros, cons and potential future of advancing our intelligence.

Is Our Intelligence Dangerous?

LET US BEGIN by considering the many different definitions of intelligence. We can say it's the capacity for cognitive function but also in many different ways, yet none of them matter if they are not relevant to the subject(s) that they deal with. With this in mind, my preference is that used by David Wechsler (American psychologist famous for his development of Intelligence testing) being, “the aggregate or global capacity of the individual to act purposefully, to think rationally, and to deal effectively with his environment”. We must also define intelligence as dealing with the nature and environment that lives around us or as I like to think of it, as having relative intelligence to those around you. For example, Stephen Hawking has *more* intelligence than most people on the planet including myself, although there may be a race of highly intelligent beings that we are yet to discover. Which if develop into our environment, Stephen Hawking's relative intelligence would diminish. This notion of relative intelligence may also be used to explain phenomena such as survival (humans may outlive pigs as a result of relative intelligence) or even psychological phenomena such as insanity (those we consider ‘insane’ could only be relative to our standards).

However, when does being the smartest become unbeneficial to the creature? Many philosophers, great artists or incredible minds of our world have been known to ‘lose their minds’ and even kill themselves. Thinking at the pinnacle of the human intellect becomes a burden, particularly when it is clear to us that we are unintelligent in comparison to the vastness of knowledge we are yet to know or discover – we cannot answer questions concerning our creation or even the purpose of humanity, so how can we be relatively intelligent? Friedrich Nietzsche argued on a parallel with such – if God gave humans life and was evidentially much smarter than His creation, but allowed us to develop intellectual capacity as so to challenge God, then problems arise.

What are the future implications with our ever-growing intelligence? Can we create automata that need not follow the constraints of the rules we set or even become too intelligent for the brightest minds to stop it? *Deep Blue*, created by IBM in 1997 was the first AI to beat a chess grandmaster (one of the very best), Garry Kasparov at his own game. Could this perpetuate any further? Intelligence is an evolutionary advantage and we as humans have the capabilities to unnaturally accelerate this trait depending on what we do and how we do it. A question we must ask is when there is a more intelligent being will there be any need for us? Where and when do we draw the boundaries with AI and its infinite possibility for knowledge? Are we morally obligated to find answers and continue to progress or the opposite – can we sit back and be complacent? If humanity is looking to perfect ourselves, we must surely continue a path of *social* progression and development with one another – we should not care how intelligent or not we are as relative to what is known about the world, we know a great deal.

Response to Intelligence

SOME TIME AGO, a debate took place between the biologist Ernst Mayr and astrophysicist Carl Sagan regarding the likelihood that SETI (‘Search for Extra-Terrestrial Intelligence’) would succeed. Sagan, be-

ing an astrophysicist, argued there are millions of planets like ours in the universe and so there would be a high chance of finding at least one with intelligent or rational life on it. But Mayr took a different approach and argued that if we take



Earth as our only example of intelligent life, it is unlikely that we could find intelligence elsewhere since “high intelligence is not at all favoured by natural selection, contrary to what we would expect”. He pointed out that out of 50 billion species since the origin of life (each with an average life expectancy of about 100,000 years), only one achieved the kind of intelligence needed to establish a civilization.

If Mayr was indeed correct (and high intelligence is a lethal mutation) then humans are nearing the end of the line – we’ve had our 100,000 of existence. Yet it may be important to point out that humans could presumably be able to exist as far longer than the archetypal expectancy as a result of our developed intelligence and unique ability to record and apply knowledge to our advantage.

It may true that none of the other 50 billion species to ever have existed have had the degree of thought nor cerebral capacity possessed by humans, but it is also true that none of those species have created weapons powerful enough to destroy life as far as we know for good. We still possess large stockpiles of potentially fatal weapons and currently are destroying our own planet at a faster pace than at any other point in history – we are experiencing the worst rate of species extinction since those lost 65 million years ago.

Although, it may appear intelligence has notable redeeming features. Humans have the unique capability of solving some of the problems that have plagued previous life forms concerning, as Cameron said, survival, reproduction and explaining the endless phenomena throughout our universe.

The problem, therefore, appears not to be a lack of knowledge, but a poor ability to apply it to problems sensibly and in a way that may be of benefit to the entire species. If we take such application of knowledge to be our definition of intelligence, it would appear that humans lack the ability to use it properly.

Should we therefore aspire to be more intelligent? It would appear a selfish, short-term solution to our issues but when considering the patterns of existence (namely natural selection), it seems unlikely that we ever will be. It seems as if that without some aide from AI or the hopeless extra-terrestrials as so unsuccessfully found by SETI, the human race simply wouldn't survive long enough for our intelligence to supersede us – problem solved.

What Can We Learn From The Kantian Nature Of Knowledge?

JOSHUA DAVIS, L6R2

IMMANUEL KANT is celebrated for being the second angriest theist in the history of philosophy - after David Hume of course. He persistently denied almost every mainstream philosophical and theological argument that attempted to prove the existence of God. It is safe to say that all of his criticisms were a bit out of 'kantrol.' Yet through the metaphorical vat of custard that is '*Critique of Pure Reason*', one is able to discover real personal opinions expressed by Kant that, for me, provide the most inspiring representation of the world in which we live.

Kant divides knowledge into two distinct categories: *a posteriori* and *a priori*. The former is knowledge based purely on the specific

contents of actual sensual experience. For example, I know that the Biology department is on the top floor of the Aske building due to the fact that I have seen this with my very own eyes. By comparison, *a priori* knowledge is something completely different. For Kant, it forms the basis of our understanding of God in particular – for this is knowledge known *before* experience. Unlike Hume, who denies the existence of the latter, Kant points to our knowledge of logic or arithmetic and the principle of causality as genuine *a priori* knowledge.

However right Hume might have been when acknowledging such *a priori* knowledge to be in need for an explanation, Kant felt that unlike Descartes, it was *inappropriate* to appeal to the truthfulness and benevolence of God in order to validate the veridicality of our natural beliefs. Consequently, Kant believed that the only possible explanation of our synthetic *a priori* knowledge is the one offered by the principle of *transcendental idealism*. To cut a very long story short, this is a reference to the principle that our scientific knowledge cannot reach farther than what we can see in front of us. Therefore, any inferences we make from effects to causes have no validity beyond empirical appearances. In other words, Kant is saying that our synthetic *a priori* has no relation to the world of reality.

Most importantly, Kant contends that with respect to the phenomenal world. Our synthetic *a priori* knowledge *may* be valid because this is a world of *our own making*. Kant says we ourselves have constructed the world around us through the medium of our minds using principles of our own understanding as constitutive archetypes. We can know *a priori*, that these principles are true of the phenomenal world because we, consciously or otherwise, *put them there!* What we observe on a habitual basis is contained in the original blueprints of the world they exist in within our own mental constitution.

So what knowledge can we learn from Kant? Big words and even longer explanations? Not quite. Rather, that in a pathetic and almost pitiful kind of way, the world that we live in is purely shaped by what we do with it. What one experiences of the universe is based on them and them alone. Therefore it is probably best to live and learn however best suits you.

Can I Really Know I Exist?

JAKE GILBEY, L6S1

THERE ARE MANY things that one could doubt they know. This was the view held by René Descartes in his piece entitled *Meditations*. Starting from the basis that he knew nothing, Descartes attempted to prove that he could know certain things one piece of knowledge at a time. He concluded that the only things he could know existed, were himself - not necessarily as a physical entity, but as a thought - and God. This idea of knowing that he himself existed is expressed

“Cogito ergo sum”

in his well known concept, ‘*Cogito ergo sum*’, which translates to ‘*I think therefore I am.*’ This shows that he knew he existed because he thought. This view that I can know I exist is widely accepted by almost all philosophers. But can one really be sure of it?

Let us begin pondering with the idea that ‘I think I exist.’ To me, I think I exist. Equally, in the mind of my friend, he thinks he exists. If this is taken further, going by the popular view, I could say ‘I believe I know I exist.’ Equally, in the mind of my friend he believes he knows he exists. Even though to me my friend may not exist at all, as all I can know is that I exist, in his mind (whether he and his mind exists or not) he believes he knows exists, just like I believe I know I exist. In this sense, in our minds our views on our own existence are exactly the same. I think I exist, he thinks he exists. I believe I know I exist, he believes he knows he exists.

Descartes suggested, that the only things that I can know exist are God and me. However, for my friend the only the things that he can know exist are himself and God. Only one of us can certainly (or know that we) exist, as Descartes argued we can only know for certain that two things exist, ourselves and God. If both of us are certain we exist, then that is three things we can know for certain exist, my

friend, me and God. Hence, only my friend or I can know we exist.

The question must then be asked, why can I be sure that the one certain thing that exists is me? My view that I know that I exist is the exactly the same as my friend's and hence there seems no reason to conclude that I have any more reason to be correct in believing that I exist than my friend has in believing he exists?

In truth the likelihood that either of us are right is minimal, as if only one certain thing except for God can exist, it is unlikely that out of all of the humans that have ever lived, it is my friend or I that is the one that exists. In truth, there is no reason to think that I know that I exist any more than anyone else in the world, as we all have the same views that we know we exist.

In this sense, it must be concluded that I cannot know that I exist. Since I cannot be anymore certain than anyone else in the world that my belief in my own existence is correct, I must accept the view that I cannot know I exist, as to say 'I know I exist' would imply I can be certain of my own existence, which as shown above, I cannot. This seems to be a particularly scary view. The position of solipsism (that I can only be certain that I exist and I have experiences) is already an unsatisfactory one for philosophers, and if this conclusion is reached by a theory, a new theory is normally searched for. Hence to suggest that I cannot even know that I myself exist is frightening. Can it really be correct that I can only know God exists? For many this is not true, and hence for some this conclusion means that one would know nothing exists. Can this really be true? Whatever the answer this is a topic that has, and will continue to, spark philosophic debate for many years.

Does Goodness Come from God?

ALI KERMAI, L6R2

PLATO ASKED IN his famous *Euthyphro*, “is what is pious loved by the Gods because it is pious, or is it pious because it is loved?” This statement has been the basis for thousands of years of debate otherwise known as the Euthyphro Dilemma. The basic understanding for any divine command theorist is that moral rules are true by virtue of being commanded by God. Emil Brunner (divine command theorist) said “the good consists in always doing what God wills at any particular moment”. However is this *always* the case? Is it even valid to distinguish between God and goodness? Furthermore, does goodness *transcend* God or is it merely another creation of good?

However first of all, one must establish what goodness is before it can be decided whether such exists or not. The standard definition of good varies from an act which is righteous, to differentiations between beneficial and unbeneficial qualities. However can giving money to others be classed as righteous? This is the primary question posed by the Euthyphro Dilemma.

In order to ascertain that a *moral* action is good or bad because they are commanded by God, there must be certain premises that must be made:

1. (God is supremely good and supremely powerful).
2. An action which is not commanded by God would not have been good.
3. Therefore, an action forbidden by God is ‘un-good’ or ‘bad’.
4. Therefore, if God states an action is moral it must be good.

That provides the basic framework for the divine command theory and according to Robert Bowie, “this makes the moral code appear somewhat arbitrary” and such in the words of A.J. Ayer, “no morality can be founded on authority, even if the authority were divine”. Clearly, it can be argued that commanding something does *not* making it morally acceptable. However how far is this true?

St. Thomas Aquinas would argue that good and evil comes directly from God and although Aquinas doesn't strictly use the divine command theory, there are elements of this present in his 'Natural Law Theory'. This is due to the idea that God's law is written into nature as a by-product of creation and directed by the idea that God

“in turn there must be a higher power to impose what is right and wrong”

created a perfect world to mirror His own love and goodness. In Romans 2:15, we see “what the law requires is written on their [human] hearts to which their own conscience bears witness”. Aquinas developed this by using a concept called the Primary Precepts – which are always true to all people and are considered to be absolute. These included the preservation of life, reproduction, education, living harmoniously in society and also (controversially) the worship of God. It would seem that these actions all seem to be universally good as most rational beings believe in the majority, suggesting a sense of moral objectivity. Following the definition of objectivity, in turn there must be a higher power to impose what is right and wrong (morality) that points humanity in the way of God. It follows that God is the only possible being capable to impose what is morally acceptable (or not), since God is said to have created the universe henceforth has a right over humanity. Let us take a builder of a Lego house – that person has power over their creation and can mend it or destroy it at will regardless of whoever is in possession of the house. Applied to the Qur'an, we see it says that only God has the right to take away human life for such a reason.

So if one were to accept that there is a God given law that states what is right or wrong, how does one confirm the validity of such laws? German philosopher Gottfried Leibniz argued that “things are not good by any rule of goodness, but merely good by the will of God and it seems to me that one destroys, without realising it, all love of God and his glory. For why praise Him for what He has done if He would be equally praiseworthy in doing exactly the opposite?” How can we ask such a question if God is beyond our levels of comprehension and thus it is impossible to imagine God determining between good and bad as God created morality as a sense of *guidance*. Thus is it within God’s realm of power to operate under? Yet one must also not forget the qualities of God (being maximally excellent) whilst also being a God must test us through evil and suffering. Assuming His benevolence, one must deduce that God would never command something inherently wrong, since it would bring about a contradiction.

However the idea of separating God from goodness subsequently limits the omnipotence of God simultaneously. Modern philosopher Richard Swinburne argues “[evil] seems to place a restriction on God’s power if he cannot make any action which he chooses obligatory... it also seems to limit what God can command us to do. God cannot command us to do what (independent of his will) is wrong.”

In addition, by separating God from goodness, humankind is seen to undermine the sovereignty of God – since He has total power (as aforementioned). Thus Richard Price prompts morality to be “necessary and immutable”, and further sets out the objection that “it may seem that morality is setting up something distinct from God, which is independent of him – and equally eternal and necessary.”

One may therefore conclude that although the idea that goodness from God is may be universal, one mustn’t separate God’s omnipotence and His benevolence as otherwise He wouldn’t have control over the laws He created – therefore is not distinguished from goodness. Henceforth, substantiated by my following argument, goodness *does* come from God.

My Basic Argument in Clear forms based on the analysis above:

1. Goodness was created by God in the creation of the universe and was implemented into the universe.
2. God (having maximum perfection) has the power to change the laws of the universe as He created them.
3. God, by definition loves humankind and therefore would not create anything for the misfortune of humankind.
4. Therefore, God created goodness.
5. Therefore, God created goodness as a means for the flourishing of humankind.

Does the legal system have backing without theological support?

KHUSH KOTCHA, L6H2

135,000,000 – THE NUMBER OF American citizens ideologically opposed to same-sex marriage. 50,000,000 identify as Catholic, a religion vocally against same sex marriage. The makeup of the Senate shows the distorted representation of religion. There are no Muslim or Hindu Senators, and yet they comprise 1.5% of the American population. The lack of religious diversity prevents a multicultural society from embracing change, but if there were high ranking politicians of ethnic-minorities, they could sway religious communities to support new laws. This makes the legal system fail as it won't have the theological support of a multicultural society. This law has split the US so much so that only 36 states have allowed it, and it took a landmark

case (*United States v. Windsor*) to amend the constitution in 2013 to allow same sex spouses to claim each other's estate. Then why, we should ask, does it take a country which is the most "pro" civil liberty nation in the world to legalise same sex marriage 50 years after civil rights for black people were legalised? The answer is simple. There is a clear conflict between religion and the legal system. The legality of same sex marriages, regardless of whether it is in the constitution or not, will always face strong opposition that will, in some cases, threaten social order. This was evident in Paris in 2013, when 150,000 people protested against gay marriage. 300 people were arrested for violent behaviour. If only the church and the law could work together to find a suitable compromise to this issue, then such demonstrations and circumstances could be avoided. France has effectively separated Religious life and the state through a law in 1905, which was rooted in the French revolution, and this makes it even harder for the two groups to work together, without infringing upon it. A 2004 law in France made religious symbols illegal in schools, highlighting a shift away from secularism. This is why laws such as allowing same sex marriage are so harshly opposed, due to a clamping down on secular freedoms. In the US, the 135,000,000 will remain against the issue, and will threaten its implementation. If we as a world are to progress in offering equality for all, then we need to work together to create laws that will be welcomed by all. As the Pope said "Who am I to judge?" in response to gay clergy members, support for gay marriage greatly increased, and if only this could reduce the 135,000,000 even further, then we could have a bill that everyone is proud of.

Abortion is another sensitive issue that can't be implemented without the support of the secular authorities. 60,000,000 in the US are vocally against any form of abortion, even if the mother is at risk, almost equal to the entire population of the UK. *Roe v Wade* in 1973 began to knock down the barriers to abortion, by labelling it as a "fundamental right" in the constitution. But without the support of the 20% that are against abortion in any form, which make up part of the 58% that are swaying against abortion, how can the legal system expect to enforce this bill with such a large opposition? The pope

labelled abortion “A sin against God”. This further enforces the idea that the US government, as well as other governments around the world, need to amend laws with the help of secular authorities so that the 58% will be leaning towards the bill rather than away from it. We can pass laws all we want, but if they do not represent the majority of the population, then there is no reason to pass them at all. After all, we are a democracy, and if we are not able to disagree with laws, then isn't that the biggest loss of civil liberties of them all?

To conclude, the legal system still heavily relies on theological support to enforce new bills. If we really want a multicultural progressive society, religious leaders need to have the ability to convince their sects that some of the new controversial laws are a good idea, but if high ranking officials do not represent the makeup of a country, then new laws will head towards the archives rather than affecting the population and creating real change.

The Philosophy Of The Existence Of Mathematical Art

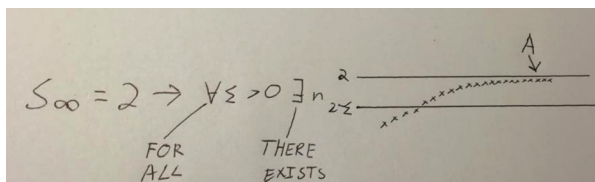
MARTIN LEE, L6S2

AN EASY WAY to argue the existence of God is the design argument. One can think God must exist due to the regularity in our world, supposing that God created and designed the universe, thus creating gravity; we know that in our world there is order and regularity. The laws of gravity are constant and if there were no God, one can be led to believe that laws won't be constant, for example if we drop an object in a world where God exists it will fall but if God were not to exist then the object which is dropped may not fall down. Another way

to push this claim forward is where one relates to an intricate watch being found in heath with a conclusion that there must have been a watch maker. One tries to prove the existence of God in the wide view from the beautiful nature of our planet. Moreover because of the sheer beauty and complexity the best explanation is that a powerful being designed the world, with that being God. It is without doubt that our world is flawed as well as amazing. But the existence of our intricate well designed world begs the question to why there is natural evil and why children and innocents die as a result of natural evil. How can evil be justified and because of that how can God's existence be justified as well.

For some the most logical argument could be the Cosmological Argument. Our universe came from a point of singularity and, because of the explosion, the universe is believed to be still expanding. Our universe exists in space and for something to be created from nothing is absurd, to further back up this and to accept that we as humans don't have the capability to understand the origins of the universe is plausible. We all struggle with ideas and thinking and it is only logical that what entails is we don't know everything. Inherently though one can say because of that we will never know our existence, primarily this is based on something can't come from nothing because nothing is something (regression of causes). Using Xeno's Paradox to explain infinite regression let us think of the space between point A and point B on a piece of paper, we know that the difference between A and B is B-A but someone using Xeno's Paradox says it is infinite, if difference is 10cm, we can divide the distance by 2 to 5cm, 2.5 cm and so on. Mathematically, it is possible to conceive in our minds. Infinity multiplied by the length of time from A to B is still infinity. This can be one way to say that we as people cannot know the original answer to existence. Yet mathematically, it can be represented in geometrical sequences if we add $1+0.5+0.25+0.125$ (and half of the previous number), the eventual answer is two. But if we put that into a calculator, we keep on getting closer to two but still never get to two, linking with our mind and our logic. We can still keep adding

and still won't get to the answer. It is like we are on an everlasting race track. To represent this mathematically:



So if the sum to infinity is 2, by adding $1+0.5+0.25+0.125$ etc, we can represent this and A in the image above. We can see that on an infinite scale, we are stuck in this everlasting corridor. From that analogy, we know that we can reach 2 but we don't have a coherent response to when we can. Thus, we can never truly know the existence or origin.

The Quantum Theory disagrees with this and presupposes that space and time is not divisible and to go on infinitely is incoherent. Now, one can say there is a God and that we can come from nothing because God can do the logically impossible. This would be the best hypothesis and a plausible one. But one of the greatest things to consider is energy. Everything is energy and God, to me, is energy. Suppose God created energy. If so then it must have come from God and therefore energy constitutes God.

PASSAGE CRITIQUES

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Judaism: The Values Of Vayishlach, Genesis 32:25-30

NOAH MAX, 11C1

THERE ARE MANY meaningful passages in my Bar Mitzvah portion of Vayishlach ('He sent'), but few resonate with me like Bereshit Chater 32 Verses 25-30. In this passage, Jacob wrestles with an angel of the Lord until daybreak. Jacob's thigh is wounded and he demands blessing before the angel leaves. The bizarre nature of this episode has sparked much discussion over the ages. What I offer here is a brief personal message that I take away from the passage. I strive to apply this principle in my day-to-day life.

What this passage depicts is a human physically fighting with God. You don't see this anywhere else in the Torah – or, in fact, throughout the entirety of religious literature. God, in whatever form(s) He may appear, is an all-powerful entity who deserves our endless respect and love. Humans are holy, made in the image of God, but have nowhere near His level of power. So why are God and Man struggling so violently here?

To me, this conflict epitomises the struggle we should all have with God in our lives. Rather than accepting evil, it is our duty to probe and question it, as that is the first stage of its ultimate prevention. We ask ourselves why evil exists when God could stop it, while the answer is in front of us. To paraphrase our former Chief Rabbi, Lord Sacks: We all have free will; we have no choice in it. God gave us the Earth

to take care of, to treat with the utmost love and respect; therefore, all the imperfections were inevitably brought about by Man.

We can turn this around, though. Our society, which now accepts terrorism, racism, sexism and sexual abuse as everyday evils that cannot be stopped, was built by human beings who were no more or less smart than ourselves. The world is malleable. We have the power to change it for better or for worse, if we try. And that leads us to what is possibly the most poignant verse of all: ‘With great power comes great responsibility’ (Uncle Ben’s Gospel, *Spiderman 1*).

That is what the human struggle is all about. God may be beyond what we can see and touch, but by struggling to understand Him and striving for good, we can change the world for the better and rebuild it in a way that would make Him proud.

Islam: ‘The Blood Clot’, Surat-Al-Alaq, The Qur’an - Surah 96:1-8

SAIF ABBAS CHATTOO, L6C1

“In the name of Allah, the most beneficent, the most merciful. Read in the name of your Lord who created – created man from a blood clot/embryo. Recite, and your Lord is the most Generous – who taught by the pen – and taught man that which he knew not. No! [But] Indeed, man transgresses. Because he sees himself self-sufficient. Indeed, to your Lord is the return.”

I CHALLENGE YOU to imagine yourself in a place where you are relatively insignificant. In a place where you are exposed and have noth-

ing to hide. For the privileged among us at Haberdashers', and in the wider world, this image of a Judgement Day is quite hard to conceive.

Although not the first by means of compilation, the first 5 lines of "the blood clot" were the first verses revealed to the prophet Muhammad as he sought sanctuary in the cave of Hira in Makkah. I chose to look at the first 8 lines of the chapter as it expresses humankind's nature in relatively few, yet incredibly powerful and humbling words, which might bring us closer to this idea of God's judgement of man.

"The blood clot", much like every chapter of the Qur'an (excluding Chapter 9), is preceded by the words: "In the name of Allah, the most beneficent (*ar-Rahman*), the most merciful (*ar-Rahim*)". Both superlatives originate from the same Arabic and Hebrew tri-literal root R-H-M, suggesting sympathy, or pity. I never quite realised the significance of the words which I use so habitually, before eating, sleeping and praying. And perhaps that shows how quickly we develop dependency.

Clearly, I didn't "read" the Qur'an as God had intended in the first word he revealed, and the realisation of such was the first step in understanding why Muslims and Non-Muslims alike face turmoil as a result of misunderstanding. Allah uses Classical Arabic as a means to lace in themes through choice of lexis – i.e. the Qur'an becomes accessible to anyone who is willing to make the effort to read it. And thus, those who only 'skim the surface' interpret it rudimentarily.

What fascinates me most about the extract above, is that God chooses to summarise humanity from beginning to end in a mere 8 lines. God explains that he created us from an "alaqah", which can be translated as a 'blood clot', 'clinging substance' or an 'embryo'. "Insaan", meaning 'human', comes from the verb 'to forget' and Muslims believe that we are born with the "spirit" of purity that is slowly *lost* over time to worldly desire. In essence, we forget our innocence and therefore "cling" to Allah through Islam like a leech (another such translation of "alaqah"), as a means of retaining it.

But why would God belittle his supposedly "best creation"? This question is answered by the lines which follow where God proclaims his generosity in terms of man being given status as 'knowledgeable'

by the means of education and literacy, as well as the ability to express our emotions. But we are always learning, and never achieve total wisdom. So whether you believe in God or not, the ‘the power of the pen’ is not to be taken for granted, as it can result in us overestimating our worth over others in society if we “transgress”. Allah is not trying to limit us here, he simply is telling us not to overstep our own boundaries and subsequently fall into the trap of arrogance.

We rely upon our parents for sustenance. We rely upon our teachers for knowledge. And when we gain political and social independence, we rely upon the material world and our intellect. To conclude, in the last line of this extract it is agreed that we are not immortal, but Allah offers the human race a chance to be reliant even after death, provided we don't take life in this world for granted.

Buddhism: The Heart Sutra

MR BROTHERSTON

[illegible][illegible]

THE BUDDHIST VERSE that I would like to recommend is The Heart Sutra, which is a conversation between Buddha and his disciple Sair-

putra. The conversation is an attempt to explain the true nature of reality and of our existence. He describes how the ‘I’ that we normally see, the ‘I’ that we so strongly identify with, and which can cause us to feel embarrassed, fearful and separate from the world is illusory. It is a projection of our own mind. They say that everyone has a book in them and it’s true. We are all playing a part or character in our own drama. We so strongly identify with the name and label of ‘me’ that we believe it to be real, rather than a co-created figment of imagination. He goes on to explain that the ‘five skandhas’ or five components of what make us who we are (body, feelings, perceptions, mental formations and consciousness) are all empty of inherent existence, they do not exist from their own side. What this means is that we can be extremely light with life. We can see that our body is not inherently ‘solid’ – on the molecular level, the body we have today is not the body that we had yesterday. Everything changes moment by moment, so how can there be a fixed solid ‘me’? It is just a label, a very useful label, but a label nonetheless.

This concept is wonderfully articulated by Shakespeare in his play Hamlet: “Nothing is either good or bad, but thinking makes it so,” a quote which I have up on my classroom wall. It is a very empowering belief: life and everything within it (including ourselves) are creations of mind, and consequently we are free to choose how we wish to ‘think’ ourselves and the world into existence. Another Shakespearian expression of this might be, ‘All the world’s a stage ... and we are merely players.’ To paraphrase The Heart Sutra therefore: *There is no reality, only perception*. This is not to go to the extreme of thinking nothing exists, it just does not exist in the fixed and inherent way that it might initially seem.

At the end of The Heart Sutra Buddha gives a blessed mantra which when recited with faith will help us to come to understand this subtle teaching on the true nature of reality:

Gati, Gati, Paragati, Parasamgati, Bodhi Svaha!

Reductionism.



MIDDLE SCHOOL

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My God Is Better Than Your God

ARCHUNA ANANTHAMOHAN, 11M1

IF ONE YEARNED for intellectual stimulation, I'd suggest that they have a debate with an atheist. They would quickly discover that the most ardent atheist believes that science and religion never go hand-in-hand; that collective worship at school is mass indoctrination, and that the co-operative Game Theory, not the Decalogue, is responsible for good morality.

However, the most compelling argument proposed by an atheist sounds like this: *"Why should I believe in God when we've had thousands of them?"* This argument is better expressed by Stephen F Roberts, who once famously said: *"I contend we are both atheists, I just believe in one fewer god than you do. When you understand why you dismiss all the other possible gods, you will understand why I dismiss yours."*

It's a pretty strong argument. How is it fair that Classics teachers can freely describe Zeus and his Pantheon as 'Greek mythology', but Theology teachers cannot do the same with Lord Vishnu, Padmavati or the Angel Jibreel, without being labelled 'offensive'? And why do so many people instantly reject some Gods over other Gods? Some argue that people perceive the Gods of mainstream religions to be more valid than other Gods, since the others belong to 'more primitive' cultures. Both the Western Enlightenment Paradigm and the 'My God is better than your God' attitude share the same contempt towards alternative gods.

To an agnostic onlooker, this theological madness and snobbery strengthens the reasons not to believe in God. It exemplifies Feuerbach's argument that God is simply a projection of man's imagination: a response to man's needs and desires. Furthermore, if there were a God, why does he never actively remind us that He is the right God and that all other Gods are figments of our imagination? It would save money, time and countless lives. There may never have been the need for so many Crusades, sectarian violence and blind bigotry.

Of course, those of the more inclusive persuasion would argue that gods of every religion are simply the same God. Each god could relate to that culture, nonetheless all Gods were a manifestation of a single God. Many Hindus would argue that their thousands of deities unite to form one God (although other polytheistic religions would politely disagree).

There is a slight problem with such a proposition. If every religion were true, then God's commands would differ according to each religion. If God's commands differ, there would be so many inherent contradictions. Not only will this show God to be a hypocrite but it would make no sense whatsoever. Is God really that malevolent to set the Abrahamic faiths against other faiths who worship other Gods? Would it be idolatry to worship a sheep, when a particular religion might see that sheep as a manifestation of the Lord himself?

There are, however, stronger theistic responses to the '*What about all the other Gods?*' problem. What about Zeus and the other mythological gods? For one thing, society never truly believed in Shu, Nut, Hercules, Baal, Enki, Utu, Diana in the same way people do for figures such as Christ or Mohammed. The former's belief was more of a social convention, which included all the pressures that such a system demanded. These gods were more *faddish* than *holy*. Their existence was dynamic. They even morph into other gods and sometimes moralistic ideals such as "justice" and "reason." This is why the Caesars could very easily deify themselves and expect people to jump on the bandwagon. Did the Romans truly suddenly believe that Caesar was God? Both in the philosophical world of the day and among the laity, "belief" as we think of it, was not present.

Of course, you can find a ‘faddish’ aspect in any of the world’s current mainstream religions. In this social folk religion, there is a parallel. Yet the *basis* for belief in these other gods was *founded* on social convention, not philosophical,



cal, rational, and historic *necessity* as is the case with the monotheistic religions of today. Many of our mainstream religions, such as Christianity, exist not due to rural pragmatism, but due to historic events.

Fundamentally, the only strong response to this question is to take a monotheistic viewpoint. The gods of the aforementioned pantheons were/are not *truly* gods. They were more like functional deities who carried a role that was expedient to the life and happiness of the people. They were the gods of rain, sun, crops and fertility. In essence, they were *immanent* forces who had no transcendence or ultimate creative power. They were more like superheroes from the Justice League than gods. This polytheistic system had human beings and gods sharing similar *types* of life, sharing similar problems and frustrations.

While these systems had a leading god, like Zeus, these were not thought of as the *ultimate* creators of all things who, out of necessity, transcend space and time. They were merely very powerful beings that happened to be caught up in the same world we are. More powerful than us mortals? Yes. Yet none qualify for the title “God.” Most mainstream religions believe that God created all things *out of nothing*. They believe that existence necessitates a “first cause”. The first cause had to be *by definition* God. God, while able to interact and love mankind, *must* transcend all that we see and know. He must be outside of our universe holding it all together, not simply the most powerful actor in our current play. We are simply talking about two different species here. One that is transcendentally holy, both ontologi-

cally (who he is in essence) and morally (what he does) and the other which is so close to us.

So when Stephen F Roberts and his colleagues reject all other gods, it is because they reject *polytheism*. Today's faiths, whether Hinduism or Islam, advocate for one universal God that presides over us. Whilst characteristics and religious interpretations might differ, there is still one God. Once polytheism as a worldview is rejected, all of its millions of gods go with it. And so, the '*what about all the other gods?*' is an atheist argument rebutted. The question now changes to assume that if there is a monotheistic God, which religion gives the best and most accessible interpretation of God?

One question has been answered, only for another question to arise. Such is theology.

A Review: Peter Vardy Theology & Philosophy Conference

THOMAS JOHNSTON, 11M2

YEAR 11 THEOLOGY and Philosophy students from the Boys' and Girls' school were honoured with a university style lecture by Peter Vardy a British academic, Philosopher, Theologian and a publisher of a plethora of books on Philosophy.

He immediately began talking in a rapid but informative manner, which kept us deeply engaged. The first topic he outlined was 'Truth and how reliable the arguments for and against the existence of God are'. He challenged us critically to think and to have an internal debate about preconceptions we had with our beliefs. Giving a brief history of recent philosophical views he mentioned the recent rise of Atheism in modern society, thus, giving us a small flavour of modern



philosophical ideas in order to show us the branch of philosophy we would grow up to challenge.

The primary sections of this topic were the classical arguments for and against the existence of God, such as the Design/Teleological argument, Cosmological argument and Revelation. For each argument he clearly and distinctly gave a relatable example that clearly exemplified his points such that, the chance of the universe being perfect to allow human survival is more probable than a tornado going through a junk yard and producing an aeroplane. On the contrary he used Evil and Suffering to disprove God. He stated that “Nothing is worth the tears of children”, if an omnipotent God exists then how can he let children suffer? When his presentation was finished, he took questions which were answered informatively and concisely, showing the extent of his knowledge on the subject. It should be strongly noted that he managed to change a person’s belief to whether God existed or not!

After a short break of squash and biscuits we took up our seats for the second presentation of the morning. The topic was the ‘Ethics of Technology’ which was fascinating for the students because it

was easily relatable to our current lives and our future. He assessed the moral rights and wrongs of today's society, using relevant topics such as the war against Islamic State, collateral damage in warfare, the use of drones and Genetic Engineering in humans. For each topic he analysed the ethics behind the issues whilst showing videos to reinforce the messages he was putting across. We were also able to discuss amongst ourselves problems including Napalm bombs killing innocent civilians, drone strikes dehumanising warfare, human embryo testing and IVF. By discussing these controversies we were able to dispute our views with our colleagues, providing a variety of perspectives on these debates.

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The final topic commented on the notion of identity and his expressed view was that 'You're not what you are, but what you are'. He began to address us personally about what we really wanted to be in our lives and how to live our lives. Questions were raised to whether we wanted to be a drone or an innovator. This made us realise that the meaning of life is merely more than just getting a job and earning money. He convinced us that life involves thinking laterally and ana-

lysing important situations to fully understand what is going on; and not just going through life following others like a mindless drone. In his final section he promoted taking Theology or Philosophy (T&P) for A- level due to the benefits it will bring us. In no other subject do you investigate ethical and religious contentions that affect our lives as deeply as in T&P, and that's why you should take at least one of those subjects.

Personally I thought his unbiased approach to both the 'for' and 'against' of the different arguments allowed us to relate and take away our own conclusions, as well as allow us to think critically about our lives and what sort of person we want to become. The talk was thoroughly enjoyed due to the interesting topics and the entertaining way in which Peter Vardy conveyed them to us. We are very grateful for his time to give the annual Habs T&P Conference.

Can We Be Held Morally Accountable For Our Actions?

DAVID SLUSZNY, 11M2

THE SOCIETY IN which we live plays a tremendous role in shaping the kind of people we are, from the clothes we wear to the language we speak. This being the case, a few philosophical questions arise: can we ever be held morally accountable for our actions? If our environment is responsible for shaping our life choices, can we really be blamed for the moral decisions we make? Sometimes even the most sagacious individuals succumb to peer pressure, so can they be held accountable for what they do upon conforming?

Man has the capacity to think for himself and consequently reject

his environment when he perceives it as being immoral. Therefore, I am of the view that he is morally accountable for his actions. I also believe that a world in which we are not held accountable for our actions would be dangerous and undesirable.

Let us first appreciate the question at hand. One way in which the extent of our conformity to our environment can be shown is through authority and the social hierarchy within a given society. This can be illustrated through several historical and contemporary examples. The children living under Nazi rule who joined the Hitler Youth would eventually grow up to discriminate and even kill minorities – but is it their fault or can it be blamed on indoctrination? These children were indoctrinated into the Nazi ideology; if they refused to subscribe to Nazism they would have been killed. Even if they genuinely believed Nazism was a good cause, can they be held accountable for their actions considering that this way of thinking was forced upon them from such an early age?

It is well known that children are extremely impressionable, but so too are adults. The moral lens through which one views the world can be changed during adulthood just as easily as in childhood. Factors contributing to this would include how charismatic the person is: Adolf Hitler and Joseph Stalin were great orators. When Adolf Eichmann was questioned he pleaded that he was just following mandatory orders and he was merely an accomplice. The Milgram experiment measured the willingness of study participants to obey an authority figure who instructed them to perform acts conflicting with their personal conscience. Sixty-five percent of the participants followed the orders from the figure of authority so that they would even go as far as killing someone. So perhaps the people living under these regimes, being ordered around by a voice of authority, should not be held morally accountable; even Hitler could blame it on the authority above him. This viewpoint, however, is not particularly compelling as it ultimately leads to an endless regression of one person blaming their elders for influencing them and so on.

President J. F. Kennedy once said that “conformity is the jailer of freedom and the enemy of growth.” He wished to inspire people to



stand up to conventions and fight for what they believe. Even though the SS officers were indoctrinated, I believe it *should* be argued that their free will was never taken away from them and thus should be held morally accountable for conforming to society and as a result committing outrageous crimes; proof of their free will is the fact that there are numerous examples throughout history and up to the present day of people who have taken a stand against their society. The pastor Dietrich Bonhoeffer (1906 —1945) is one of those people.

Bonhoeffer was a German living under the Nazi rule and a member of the resistance against the Nazism. The Lutheran Pastor and theologian was involved in many of the planned plots to assassinate Hitler. Eventually he was arrested, imprisoned and hanged following the failure of an assassination attempt. Although Bonhoeffer lived under the Nazi regime and met all the physical criteria for the “perfect German”, he took a stand because he believed that the Nazis’ actions were morally reprehensible. This is clear evidence that it is possible for us to stand up to our society. Bonhoeffer died knowing he did everything he could to stand up for his beliefs. Another example of someone standing up to society is Mosab Hassan Yousef who is the

son of Hamas' leader and founder, Sheikh Hassan Yousef. He chose to leave behind a culture of hate and martyrdom which he was raised in. For ten years he worked undercover for Israeli intelligence preventing numerous terrorist attacks and also exposing the whereabouts of some of the Hamas members including his own Father. The very fact that it is possible to rebel against society and stand up for a cause makes us accountable.

There are two clear exceptions among those who should be held fully accountable: youths and the mentally deficient. In 1924, two youths – Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb – kidnapped and murdered a 14-year old

boy. The prosecution demanded the death penalty, but

“In essence, our sense of morality is predetermined through our genes”

Clarence Darrow, the two boys lawyer, made the case that they instead be sentenced to life imprisonment. The age of the boys meant that they were let off more easily than they should have been. Because of their youth they cannot be held accountable for this action despite being the youngest graduates of the universities of Chicago and Michigan. No one can teach morality: it develops with age. Darrow simply questioned whether the two boys were morally responsible for their actions. There is this idea of the illusion of freedom, which challenges determinism and thus the absence of moral blame. Likewise, mental deficiency is a contributing factor to whether or not people can be held morally accountable and the case of mental deficiency is constantly argued as a defence in the courts around the world. This was seen more recently in the Oscar Pistorius trial. Depending on the type of deficiency that person should not be held morally accountable; because it is out of their hands what they do, it is just the job of society to keep them in a place where they can be contained.

When considering the things that impact our decisions it is important to consider the ‘Nature vs. Nurture’ argument. Take the latter. The manner in which we are nurtured can contribute massively to the way in which we act when we are older. ‘Nurturing’ is what

our sense of morality is shaped upon and this will influence our actions. However, there is also an argument for 'nature': our genetic makeup determines how we act. In essence, our sense of morality is predetermined through our genes. This would agree with the theory of determinism.

Determinism dictates that human actions are determined by external forces that transcend free will. Determinists would argue that we cannot be held morally accountable for our actions due to these external forces. However, as I have argued in this essay, I believe that there is one other aspect to human action other than nature or nurture, and this is the moral sphere: the ability to lift ourselves out of our conditioning and make choices we deem to be morally justifiable.

To answer this question you have to take into account the way in which people conform to society. A common example of this is the 'Asch Experiment', which was conducted in the 1950s. This experiment showed how an individual's own opinions are influenced by those of the majority of the group. The results were eye-opening. Almost everyone eventually conformed to the majority in the group and answered a question false simply because the rest of the group did. This proves how weak the human mind actually is and how malleable we are to conforming to society. However, there were still people in the Asch experiment who for the first few questions did not conform to the majority, which clearly demonstrates how we all have the power not to conform and have our own opinion.

This evidence brings me to the conclusion that all we do can be held against us and those doctors carrying out euthanasia procedures are actually accountable for their actions despite them conforming to society because they all had the ability to say 'no'. If we choose to ignore our own moral duties or abilities and instead blame any negative action on determinism it would, at the very best, bring disarray into the legal system and, at worst, create an extremely menacing world.

The Thinker

BEN ZOMBORY-MOLDOVAN 10M1

MY ILLUSTRATION SHOWS 'the thinker' who represents the philosophical notions of human curiosity and thoughtfulness. He could be contemplating his existence or what to eat for breakfast -- we do not know. The image shows him attached to puppet strings, but we cannot see the handler. It begs the questions as to whether we think on our own free will. Do we act in accordance with our own free will? Do we even have *any* free will? And how can we know if we do? The thinker is not aware of his lack of control over his self or even perhaps his non-physical mind, so how can we know that our existence is free? Will we ever know the truth of our existence, or even of this world? Are these questions beyond the reach of our own understanding? The image aims to raise all these questions without ever asking or answering them. It can be said the more one looks into the Philosophy of Art, the more questions it raises.



JUNIOR SCHOOL

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Junior School Essay Competition For The Question: Does The Advancement Of Robotics Threaten Human Existence?

1st Place

JAMES VERGHESE

MANKIND IS LAZY. Since time immemorial humans have sought to reduce their workload. As such, collectively we have invented many things that have made our lives easier - from sticks to combine harvesters, we have made it possible to survive – thrive even – with the minimum amount of work necessary.

Of course it is not only about agricultural advancements: we have created everything from Archimedean screws, to diggers to reduce manual labour. These ‘mechanical muscles’ are stronger, faster, more durable and tireless in comparison to humans. This is a good thing, after all *this* is how countries have become richer, more developed,

and more prosperous over time. *This* has freed us from the constraints of unproductivity, and enabled specialisation – the antiquated miner is now the cutting-edge tunnel-bore driver.

Some people have chosen to become programmers, creating ‘mechanical brains.’ Whilst ‘mechanical muscles’ replaced human labour, ‘mechanical brains’ are replacing not just senseless labour, but even human thought processes.

When the term ‘robot’ is used, the image of Honda’s ASIMO robot comes to mind. A fairly dumb humanoid figure, only able to complete unimportant tasks – if any at all. This is not wise, for today the *new age* of the robot has dawned, and it is more powerful than we think.

Baxter, the new and improved robot, is more intelligent than most – unlike other robots, Baxter has vision, and can learn through ‘sight’. Baxter is less expensive than the average worker in the UK, and much less accident prone. Baxter can, and *will* do anything desired of him. Need a cup of coffee made, or a plug rewired? Consider it done.

Baxter represents robotic development, in the same way that the iPhone represents the development of computers. *Baxter is innovation.*

We are going through the Robotic Revolution. It may seem similar to industrial, economic and mechanical ones that have preceded it – but it is not. Back then, we were prepared, and had new jobs, and policies in place, that protected us from becoming unemployed *en masse* and starving to death. When horses got replaced by the car, they became unemployable. There is little a horse can do that a car cannot. If robots are the answer, the question is this: should we be worried?

In essence, probably not. The robotic revolution is not all bad. We will not find ourselves resenting robots, destroying robots. Instead we will do other things, adapt like we always have, and get on with life.

The dawn of robotics has come. It may take time to show its full colours, and it may be brutal, but it is upon us.



2nd Place

AKSHI KRISHNAKUMAR

'With artificial intelligence we are summoning the demon'

– Elon Musk

A 'ROBOT APOCALYPSE' could happen soon and it would be our fault. We could, however, prevent this by controlling the rate at which technology advances. If we continue to have complete control over this advancement then a technological singularity would stop and turn into a dream. Because we make robots and programme them we *could* do something and prevent it and keep robots from becoming an overpowering and uncontainable entity. In a

"In a nutshell, the advancement of robotics does raise concerns and threatens humanity's existence."

nutshell, the advancement of robotics does raise concerns and threatens humanity's existence. It is for this reason that we should not bury our heads in the sand. Rather, we should maintain control and our ability to prevent disaster if the situation were to go out of control.

If we were to continue being antagonistic towards one another and if humanity refuses to come together as *one*, with *one* resolve, conflict is certain; all while the survival of the human race is not.

If the apocalypse happens, only one thing is certain:

*Don't blame it on the sunshine,
Don't blame it on the moonlight,
Don't blame it on the good times,
Blame it on humanity.*

3rd Place

ABBAS KERMALLI

WHAT ARE ROBOTS?

The dictionary defines a ‘robot’ as being a machine that is capable of carrying out a series of complex tasks automatically. Defining ‘human’ is slightly more difficult. Humans do, however, possess one innate feature that is unique to humans – I shall discuss this later.

The Bible’s view of humans can be found in Genesis. Humans were created in the image of God on the sixth day of a process known as Creation. We also know from the Abrahamic faiths that Humans are made from clay. What goes beyond the physical and into the metaphysical is still unknown or yet to be proved to us. However, if we follow a religion then we accept its teachings as an absolute truth that is definitive. For example, religions across the globe refer to life after death in some way or another, be it through resurrection or reincarnation or rebirth; followers of these religions accept that this will never change.

The crux of the argument that distinguishes robots from humans is the concept of humans having free will. I would like to briefly explain how we could assume that we have free will. The first argument that I put forward is the Garden of Eden. From the moment that evil entered the world through the form of a devil or Satan we have made choices. Eve gave into temptation and ate the fruit from the forbidden tree. Life has been a test from then on and for theists the problem of evil is answered by the theory that God is testing us. Atheists, on the other hand, will not accept this idea. Worry not, for free will can still be proved using the example of a person who steals.

The person who steals is generally going against a universal understanding that stealing is wrong. Sometimes, though, stealing can be justified. There are still people who steal. The society is not perfect. In a perfect society nobody would steal or do wrong but the fact that we act against morality is a sign of free will. The argument of moral-

ity is a completely different matter but still the point stands. Now that we have established that we have free will we can fundamentally distinguish the difference between Robots and Humans. Therefore we can use this idea of free will to see whether robots will threaten human's existence.

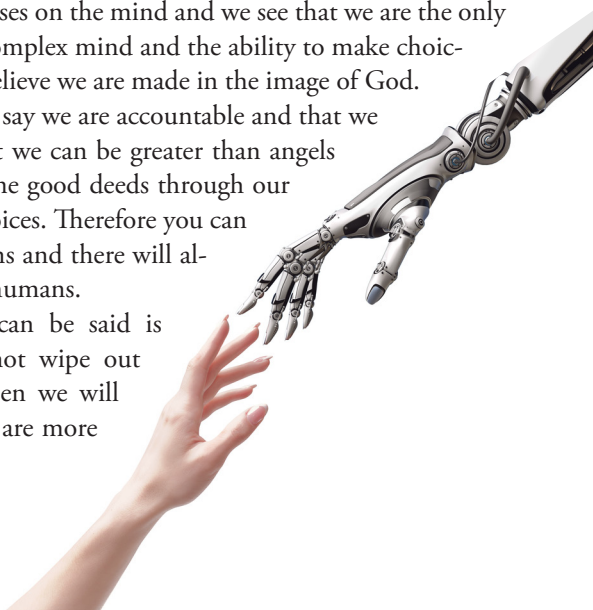
Robots will affect human existence in many ways. A robot will follow orders effectively without having the option of not following these orders or commands. This makes them more efficient. If we look at the manufacturing process on a global scale it is non stop because unlike humans robots do not suffer from fatigue. Robots also will complete a job to the same standard each time therefore ensuring consistency that humans simply cannot match.

However there are two major factors that hinder the robots domination. Firstly they are expensive. A drone costs several million dollars to produce and can be destroyed during the first flight. The expensive-ness of the robots limits the number of robots you can have and whom they are available to. They are therefore not feasible to everybody.

Secondly, and most crucially, Robots do not have free will as we have established they follow commands and orders. Humans as we have established do have free will, which is specifically unique to humans and why I feel that you can never replace humans because you can never create something with free will. No robot will ever have free will. Buddhism focuses on the mind and we see that we are the only creation to have a complex mind and the ability to make choices, which is why I believe we are made in the image of God.

It is also why theists say we are accountable and that we are unlike angels yet we can be greater than angels because we have done good deeds through our own actions and choices. Therefore you can never replace humans and there will always be a place for humans.

However what can be said is that if robots do not wipe out human existence then we will ourselves. Our wars are more



dangerous than ever before and the disasters across the world, be it in the Middle East, Eastern Europe or diseases such as Ebola in Africa the world is falling apart. Most religious believers look towards God for their awaited savior to save them. Personally this quote captures our attitude towards robots, “We humans have a love-hate relationship with our technology. We love each new advance and we hate how fast our world is changing... The robots really embody that love-hate relationship we have with technology” (Daniel H Wilson).

Honourable Mention

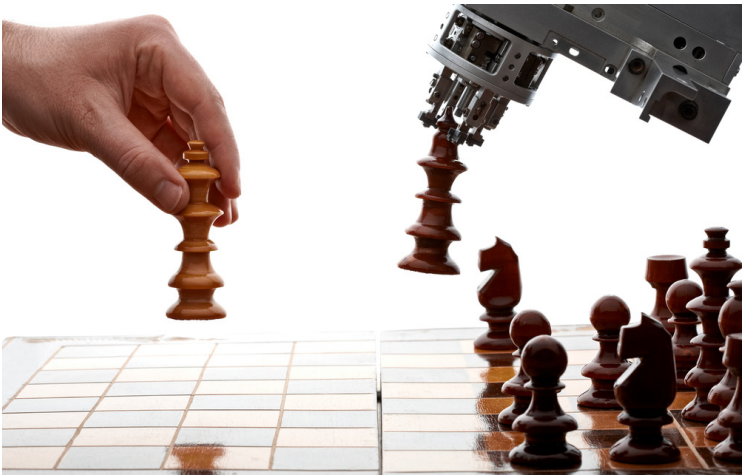
IGOR KASPIN

WILL THE ADVANCEMENT of robotics threaten humanity? A grim question to behold; it has long been limited to the imaginings of the Science-fiction genre. However, recent advancements in the field, such as self-replicating robots, have led Steven Hawking, to state that the advancement of AI could ‘spell the end of the human race as we know it’. This warning followed Hawking’s new voice transmission system which predicts what he’s going to say, before he says it. Hawking’s theory is reinforced by experts, such as Ray Kurzweil, who states that AI will surpass human intelligence by 2045. Lead computer scientists at California University predict that the development of AI will be the ‘biggest’ event in human history and most probably its last. AI is humanities most pressing existential threat. Despite this some still believe that sophisticated AI will not harm the human race, and that fears about AI are unfounded, and that mutual existence is possible.

‘The question of whether a robot can think is no more interesting than the question of whether a submarine can swim.’

– Edsger Dijkstra

Advancements in robot technology could spell the end of the human race with such sinister advances as military robots with the ability to consume 'biomass' on the battlefield to keep its systems operational. The fundamental argument for robots superseding the human race is if machines develop a conscience/superior intellect to mankind's and hence assert dominance over the human race. This situation can be likened to Mary Shellie's novel 'Frankenstein', in the sense that something of our making will have a detrimental effect on the creator. Can robots develop a conscience? Will binary code acquire a new malevolent thought process? Such circumstances have been depicted in numerous movie adaptations, such as '2001 a space odyssey' in which a computer, HAL900, which seemingly possess human emotions attempts to kill all of the astronauts on the mission due to the fact that they wanted to disconnect it. Hawking utilizes Moore's law, which states that computers double their speed and memory every 18 months, for his prediction that robots will dominate the world in the next 1000-10,000 years. Currently, computers require human programmers; however programs are being developed for self-learning robots, which will be able to incorporate the afore-mentioned self-replicating functions. Despite the fact that these robots will not be



capable of human emotion and consciousness, the machines are at the intellectual capacity of a 2 year old (learning from previous errors); a fear-provoking premise. In addition to this, 1997 proved to be a monumental year in terms of AI due to the Kasparov vs Deep Blue chess matches. Deep blue, a computer, beat Kasparov in one of the matches, marking the first time ever that a computer had beaten a chess master. During the game, Kasparov used a pawn as bait for the computer, nonetheless, after about 1 minute of calculating the computer decided against the move, defying technicians and hypothetically showing common sense. This marked the advancement of intelligence incorporated in robotics.

Despite this, many experts retain the belief that AI will permanently have humans to program them; it is a matter of prudence on the behalf of the programmer. A human is a creature; it has tendencies and emotions. Robotics however, can only be programmed 'emotion'. So, considering that robots are initially programmed their 'emotions' will conform to ours and thus not cause an apocalypse. Moreover, coding is not capable of reaching its OWN decisions, so it cannot decide on whether to eliminate the human subject, it has to be programmed to do it by a human.

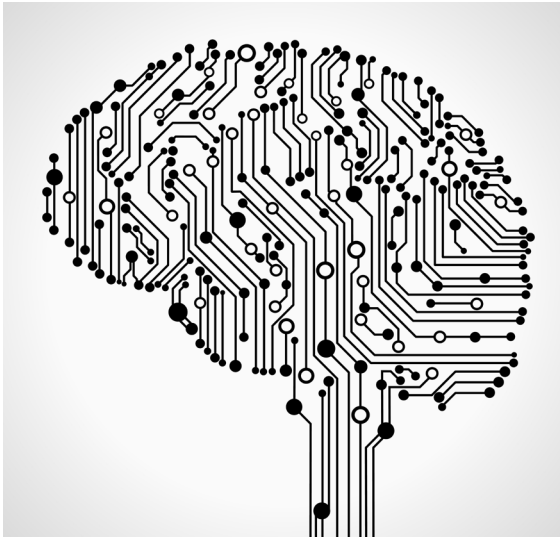
To conclude, although it has been described as humanities greatest existential threat, I believe that our portable smartphone assistant will not morph into a remorseless cyborg in the next 5,000 years due to the fact that, unless controlled by an individual, it will not acquire the aptitude to become fully independent. Full artificial intelligence will never be achieved unless a human decides to program it initially. I believe that the advanced robotics will, at some point, be on-par with human intelligence, yet it will not incorporate emotions as we understand them, leading to a mutual existence.

Honourable Mention

JOSEPH SANTHOUSE

ARE ARTIFICIAL MACHINES perfect, or are they flawed? Well, robots don't understand complex speech, move awkwardly, and think digitally and rigidly, in codes and algorithms. Yet AI is capable of so much more. It can enable prodigious memory, and seemingly limitless intelligence – intelligence being the most valued attribute, of course. After all, do we owe our superiority and place as the world's most dominant beings to our teeth, or to our brains?

With the advancement of robots in the near future, humanity will be threatened by the devices that we have created. We are no longer self-reliant, we grant more and more power and autonomy to artificial intelligence, and in our doing this, reduce our ability to master our own destiny. Whilst I loathe to predict, if time hoists us on our own petard, it would be our fault, and ours alone.



LETTERS FROM OLD BOYS

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UNIVERSITY OF
CAMBRIDGE

A Letter From Cambridge: Studying Theology And Religious Studies At University

ED JEANS, OH

Dear Reader,

I AM WRITING to briefly discuss my thoughts and feelings about what has been a really enjoyable first term of Theology at Cambridge. Cambridge life is hectic but incredibly rewarding; it is 8 weeks of meeting deadlines whilst juggling a plethora other commitments, whether these are sport, music drama or maintaining a social life. In a sense, however, this appears no different to the kind of challenges that I faced at HABS; one thing that becomes evident when studying here, is that HABS prepares you incredibly well for the rigour of university life. At school, there would be some weekends where Saturday and Sunday were devoted, almost in their entirety, to extra-curricular activities and the menacing pile of work that was due in for Monday morning seemed unlikely to ever be completed. However, ‘getting things done’ to put it crudely is a skill that is cultivated and

developed in earnest over the years of life at HABS. At Cambridge, whilst there is far more flexibility than there is at school; the skills in time-management that become habitual at HABS are incredibly useful for striking a balance between work and play.

Studying Theology here for a term has cemented my preconceptions about the course before coming, that it would be diverse, challenging and intellectually rewarding. One of the great things about studying Theology at Cambridge is that it is multidisciplinary; I take papers in Philosophy, Sociology, New Testament, New Testament Greek and Comparative Religions and each of these papers requires slightly different skills, slightly different ways of engaging with material. Sociology of religion, for example, deals with explaining religious phenomena from the remotest of African tribes to contemporary Protestant denominations, requires a totally different way of handling information and a subtly different way of formulating an argument. However, another great thing about Theology at Cambridge, and all subjects for that matter, is that you receive one-on-one supervisions, in some cases smaller groups, with the world-leading experts of the respective disciplines. If anyone is in a position to help you grasp the subtleties of the course, it is them. You are constantly forced to substantiate every claim and challenge your presuppositions; there is nowhere to hide in a supervision session and it is an environment which is conducive to intellectual progress.

To finish, I'd like to briefly reflect on what I believe makes studying, in general, enjoyable and rewarding. The most important thing, I believe, is to have a genuine interest in what you are studying. I've always enjoyed Theology, since there is scope for engagement with big questions, questions which matter to me. Whether there is a God, what we can know about him, how religion impacts upon individuals- these are all things which I find interesting, ultimately because they matter. The secret, then, to avoid viewing study as an onerous means to an end, is to care about the questions the subject is asking. All subjects attempt to engage us in a process of advancing our understanding. Wanting to understand and caring about the implica-

tions of furthering our understanding, I believe, this is key to enjoying study.

My first term here has flown by; it has been intense, challenging but ultimately engaging and rewarding. I owe a lot to HABS, not just because the school cultivates a work ethic that will serve me for life but because it ingrained in me a genuine interest and fervour for understanding which enables me to enjoy my studies.

Yours Sincerely,

Ed Jeans

Jesus College, Cambridge



A Letter From Oxford: Studying PPE At University

SAM STEINERT, OH

So, you want to be the next Prime Minister?

IT IS OFTEN said that every myth begins with a grain of truth and the reputation of PPE as a breeding ground for our country's politicians is no exception. Yet whilst you are likely to meet those who have chosen to study PPE as a stepping stone on the path to public office its

attractions are far more myriad, and consequently it draws an almost unparalleled diversity of student, both in terms of background and of interests. Despite this, the broadness of PPE as an undergraduate degree certainly gives lie to the thought that it is an easy option for those considering their future in higher education as they prepare to leave school.

Before going any further there is an admission I must make. My experience of PPE, aside from the occasional anecdote, comes totally from the perspective of an Oxford student. Thus all I say about the course and my learning experience may not necessarily hold for those at other universities studying a degree of the same name. That having been said, I am confident in the assumption that much of what I say will largely hold true for all of those institutions currently offering a BA in Philosophy, Politics and Economics.

When it came to applying for university there were two things that I knew for certain. The first was that I wanted to study philosophy. The second, and of no less importance, was that I wanted to study philosophy at Oxford. The problem was that Oxford does not offer straight philosophy. I was competent rather than outstanding at Maths which rather ruled out chancing my arm at a combination of Philosophy and a science, and my language skills left something to be desired thus eliminating Philosophy plus a modern language as an option. That PPE remained the only obvious course open to me was sweetened somewhat by the fact that I found Politics to be relatively interesting despite never having studied it.

Interviews at Oxford should not be a cause for worry. They are designed to reflect the tutorial system and if you can survive one you can survive the other. Interviewees should be prepared to think on their feet, defend themselves, but also be flexible in the positions they take. What you already know is not relevant, what matters is how you respond when presented with a new piece of information or idea.

Like almost everybody else I had no idea what to expect when I turned up to my college on a typically rainy day in October. Though my certificate will state that I have graduated with a degree in Philosophy, Politics and Economics it is ever so slightly misleading. In

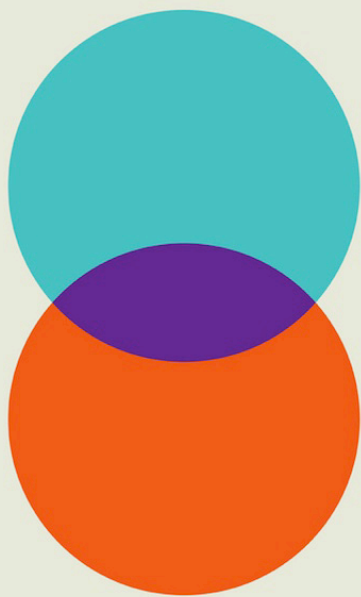
the first year every undergraduate takes two introductory modules in each of the three subjects but this is where most students' experiences of all three subjects end. One of Philosophy or Economics is usually taken with Politics as this offers the most opportunity to specialise on a particular area of interest. For example, Political Theory and the study of historical political texts can be taken as politics modules despite them being largely philosophical in nature, whilst political economy is a politics module with an economic edge.

I have no doubt that the study of philosophy at school, an opportunity not had by all, has had a positive impact on my experiences of further education. Whilst the content is largely different (and where it overlaps it is studied in far greater depth) the skills learnt in my final two years at school have proved invaluable during my time in Oxford. The ability to write coherently, assessing the key points of an issue succinctly is something that is required in all academic disciplines, but it is an absolute necessity for those studying PPE. Most likely you will have one essay, no longer than 2000 words, to make an argument that you must then defend in a tutorial with an expert in the field, twice a week.

It is not something to be taken lightly, some simply do not thrive in such an environment, but if you do there is nothing more rewarding. Applying to PPE was the best decision I have ever made, so far.

Yours Sincerely,
Sam Steinert

Dualism.



FILM REVIEW

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The Theory Of Everything, A Film Review

REV'D DR JAN GOODAIR, SCHOOL CHAPLAIN

THIS FILM IS both a love story and an inspiring depiction of human courage and endeavour in the face of enormous challenge. The central character is the renowned physicist, Professor Stephen Hawking who was diagnosed with motor neuron disease at the age of 21 and told he had just two years to live. This diagnosis came as he was embarking on doctoral research at Cambridge. His doctor told him that as his body went into decline his ability to think would remain intact but "Nobody will know what you're thinking." The film is based on the memoir of his wife Jane and depicts with great power and honesty the blossoming of their relationship despite his diagnosis, the birth of their three children, the daily challenges they faced and the gradual disintegration of their love but not of their respect and affection for one another. It may well make you cry!

However, if you have an interest in science, religion and the relationship between the two, there is so much more in this film that will hold your attention. You will see physics explained using the swirl of cream in a coffee cup and the unlikely visual aids of a pea and a potato on the end of two forks. You will see a theoretical physicist completely change his mind: having argued in his doctoral thesis for a singularity as the starting point of the cosmos; Hawking then spends his entire postdoctoral life trying to prove the exact opposite i.e. that the cos-



mos has no boundaries of any sort. Hawking is also very clear that there is a difference between an elegant mathematical theory and establishing that the theory matches reality.

The thread running through the film which I found most interesting was the contrasting approaches to religion and life in general of Hawking and his wife. Jane is a linguist, interested in art and literature, inhabiting such a different intellectual world to Hawking so much so she has to ask him exactly what cosmology is. He describes it as

‘a sort of religion for intelligent atheists’. Hawking comes from a family of scientists, his father, Frank, tries to dissuade Jane from taking on the challenge of caring for Stephen. He tells her that the science goes against Hawking’s doctor’s prognosis, that Stephen will have only a short and difficult time ahead. But Jane is not to be deterred, declaring, “I love him and he loves me. We’re going to fight this illness together.” In other words, there is more to life than that which science describes.

The question of God’s existence is addressed many times in the film, featuring significantly in the scene with the forks, potato and pea: if Hawking really can produce a Theory of Everything then surely there will be no need to postulate God. Towards the end of the film, events take an interesting turn as Hawking, now equipped with the technology that ensures his thoughts can still be known, reads some of the final lines of his book, ‘A Brief History of Time’: *“Then we shall all, philosophers, scientists and just ordinary people, be able to take part in the discussion of the question of why it is that we and the universe exist. If we find the answer to that, it would be the ultimate triumph of*

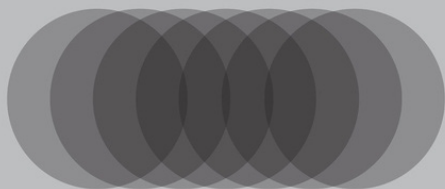
human reason – for then we should know the mind of God.” The exchange between Hawking and his wife suggests that this is Hawking acknowledging God’s existence¹ but with characteristic caution and implied qualification.

A powerful ending to the film sees Hawking expounding his philosophy on life: just as he believes that there are no boundaries to the universe so he believes that there should be no boundaries to human endeavour. The film is both inspiring and enormously entertaining. I both laughed and cried and came away with much more food for thought than just the potato and the pea.

The Theory of Everything is out now in cinemas everywhere.

¹ For further reading and analysis of Hawking’s views on God the reader might consult http://infidels.org/library/modern/antony_flew/hawking.htm (Anthony Flew, before his own conversion to theism, critiquing Hawking’s references to God in A Brief History of Time) <http://www.rzim.org/just-thinking/stephen-hawking-and-god/> (An article critiquing Hawking’s later repudiation of the idea of God.)

Relativism.



ACADEMIC ARTICLE

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The Religious Criminal

JEFFREY M. COHEN PH.D

PUBLISHED IN THE AMERICAN RELIGIOUS
CONGRESS, JUDAISM, 125 VOL.32:1, WINTER 1983

A MOST UNSAVOURY case, involving an allegedly very religious Jew who was found guilty of a particularly sordid type of crime, has recently rocked a British provincial Jewish community. Newspapers referred to the man's religious orientation, making a great play of his having prayed before going to court and of the fact that he was a member of an ultra-Orthodox Jewish sect.

Inevitably, many people have asked how, indeed, one can equate such debased behaviour with a man supposed to be striving toward the opposite pole — away from earthly, physical excesses to the direction of heaven? Was his religion all a sham? Was it completely devoid of any meaning?

Such an explanation is unsatisfactory for, surely, a man who was a willing member of a vibrant, highly self-critical and disciplined sect, which brooked no compromise in religious behaviour, which expected every man, woman and child to live by the most exacting standards — in Synagogue attendance three times a day, in dress, separation of the sexes before marriage, compulsory attendance at daily *Shuirim* [Jewish religious lessons, often taking the form of lectures] and so on — surely anyone who was not totally sincere in this situation could

not have kept up the façade for over fifty years! He would have been discovered; he would have been unmasked, and would have voluntarily moved out of that community.

Or was it just a mental aberration? Was it a psychological debility which suddenly manifested itself? Was the man, in effect, ill, not *compos mentis*? Alas, no, for the courts established his sanity and his degree of psychological responsibility beyond any doubt before they proceeded with the trial and sentence!

It would be an interesting, theoretical dilemma, if it were not so tragic in its practical ramifications and repercussions. But let us for a moment forget the specific case and address ourselves to the wider issue and problem: How do we explain the anomaly of a ‘religious criminal’?

We could not make so bold as to claim to be able to give an unequivocal answer to this problem, but we may discover a rationale by delineating two levels of religious consciousness — a deeper one and a more superficial one — and attempting to demonstrate thereby how, within the context of the more superficial level, such a hybrid as the religious criminal might emerge.

The first thing to clarify is the term religious, because it frequently befogs the issue. Being religious is a response to, and identification with, a fixed body of instruction, law and traditional values which we call *Torah*. It is not a vague empathy with a people’s struggle and destiny, nor is it the adoption of some unintelligible ritualistic activities which commend themselves solely on the basis of their ethno-social cohesiveness. So, to be ‘religious’ means to *identify with* a clearly definable and comprehensive system, to such an extent that the discipline of that system is not viewed as an external imperative, but rather as the natural, the only, course for one’s behavior and emotional happiness.

In the first analysis, being ‘religious’ involves knowledge, knowledge of a Torah which we affirm to have emanated from God. And it is in the context of variant human responses to knowledge that light on our central problem may be shed.

In a penetrating book by the social analyst Erich Fromm, entitled

To Have or To Be? (Jonathan Cape, 1978), the author describes two modes of existence struggling for the spirit of mankind: the ‘having mode’, which concentrates upon material possessions, power, and aggression, which beget greed, envy and violence, and the ‘being mode’, which is based on love, on the pleasure of sharing and being at one with others.

When these competing attitudes are applied to learning or knowledge they are particularly significant. Fromm distinguishes two kinds of students — those in the having mode of existence and those in the *being* mode.

Students in the *having* mode will listen to a lecture, hearing the words and understanding their logical structure and meaning as best they can, to enable them to write down a full, almost verbatim, account of the lecture in their notebooks, so that later on they can memorize their notes and pass an examination. But the content does not become part of their own individual system of thought, enriching and widening it. Instead, they transform the words they hear into fixed clusters of thought, which they store up. The students and the contents of the lectures remain strangers to each other, except that each student has become the owner of a collection of statements made by somebody else. These are students in the *having* mode whose one aim is to hold onto what they “learned” either by entrusting it firmly to their memories or by carefully guarding their notes. They do not have to produce or *create* something new. In fact, the *having* type student would be disturbed by new theories about the subject, because they cast doubt on the reliability and value of their knowledge possessions.

The process of learning is totally different for students in the *being* mode of relatedness to the world . . . Such students will have thought beforehand about the problems the lectures will be dealing with, and have in mind certain questions and problems of their own. Instead of being passive receptacles of words and ideas, they listen, they hear, they *receive* and they *respond* in an active, productive way. What they listen to stimulates their own thinking process. New questions, ideas and perspectives arise in their minds. They do not simply acquire knowledge that they can take home and memorize. They are affected and changed by what they hear (pp. 28-29).

The lecturer's phraseology is, of itself, unimportant. The student's own mind and imagination has used it only for a springboard. This student is in a *being*-relationship to what he absorbs. The ideas become his food, his nourishment, his very make-up.

Is not this the same with Torah knowledge and religious instructions? You can subject two children to the same religious environment and religious educational system. The '*having* mode' student may outstrip the '*being* mode' student in learning and in regurgitating the notes and facts. His prodigious memory may enable him to score full marks in the exam, having reproduced verbatim the 'cluster

"It all boils down to the question of whether we have Torah or whether we become the Torah"

of knowledge' provided by the teacher. But there could be a world of difference between the responses and effect of such lectures upon the

two children. The *being* mode student might well have had his heart touched, his whole outlook on life and faith changed by contact with a single idea propounded by the teacher or embodied in the text of the Siddur [Jewish prayer book] or Chumash [Bible]. He may not, ironically, have been able to translate each word as well as his fellow '*having* mode' student. But which one has learned creatively, and which superficially?

It all boils down to the question of whether we *have* Torah or whether we become the Torah, its embodiment in thought and deed.

Hence the phenomenon of a rabbinic sage who is, nevertheless, devious, avaricious, unethical, the antithesis of all the qualities which Torah seeks to inculcate. Such a man *has* Torah, but has not *become* Torah. Yes, he can quote you chapter and verse, but he has not been truly changed by contact with it. He has not absorbed it into his being, only into his thinking. He has remained, all along, only 'the owner' of a vast collection, but he has always been separate from it.

The ideal is succinctly summed up in three Biblical words: *Veyad'ata im levavehha*, "And you shall know with your heart" (Deut. 8:5) or, as the Rabbis were fond of expressing it: Rahamana liyba' ba'ey "God requires the heart". *Knowing* his Torah is insufficient; it

is *identifying* with it, *being* it, being affected by it throughout one's waking hours, absorbing it not just with one's brain, but through the vehicle of one's deep-seated emotions that is important.

So it happens that one may confront a situation where a person may have been brought up in a strictly religious, confined environment, but the psychological make-up of the particular individual gives him merely a '*having* mode' relationship to the system. He knows it all; he conforms, he even enjoys it (because he knows no other system), but, perhaps unknown to himself, he is not psychologically in a '*being*' relationship to it, through no fault of his own, through no lack of effort.

Would we brand such a person as non-religious, assuming that we were able to hypnotize him and discover the relatively superficial fiat Lire and extent of his outward commitment and degree of identification? Surely not, by the same token that we do not disparage a student who gains top marks on the basis of having memorized his notes verbatim. Would we deny him the title 'student'? We wouldn't. We would be laughed out of court, if we did!

“... by the same token that we do not disparage a student who gains top marks on the basis of having memorized his notes verbatim”

So we have the situation, tragic as it is, wherein people, educated and reared in a religious system, adhering to it in good faith and yet because it is only possessed by them and not absorbed into them, are susceptible, at any moment of crisis or pressure in life, to act totally out of character with — if not totally in defiance of the basic teachings with which they had lived since earliest childhood. It comes as a shock to them, as well as to others, to realize that, all, along, the traditional teachings had existed merely as a 'cluster of knowledge', with no real anchor and no immersion into the psychological ethos of the individual concerned.

Only along these lines can we make sense of the anomaly of a religious criminal, one whose make-up has allowed him to enter merely

into a having-mode relationship to his Torah teachings, never into the desired being-mode.

Rabbi Dr Jeffrey M. Cohen studied at the Yeshivot of Manchester and Gateshead, and at Jews' College, London, where he gained a first class honours degree (1963), a Master of Philosophy and Minister's Diploma (1965), and a Ph. D from Glasgow University (1978).

He has held several rabbinic, educational and academic appointments, including lecturer in Hebrew Literature at Glasgow University, lecturer in liturgy at Jews' College, and Rabbi of the largest Modern-Orthodox Jewish congregation in Europe for nineteen years. He has also been a scholar in residence on both coasts of America, and has authored twenty-five books and more than three hundred articles for learned and popular journals.

He has been hailed as a champion of Modern-Orthodox Judaism, and has strongly promoted that philosophy, for some forty years, within the Anglo-Jewish rabbinate, in the pages of the Anglo-Jewish and national press, and in his own writings. He strongly believes that an educated rabbinate is an enlightened and tolerant rabbinate, and that this is the way to eradicate obscurantism.

GOOD READS

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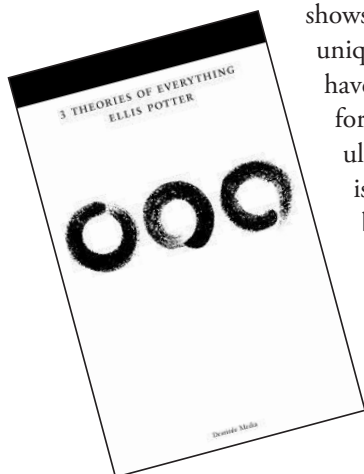
3 Theories Of Everything

THEOLOGY

WHAT IS REALITY? What is the meaning of human life? Why do we suffer? In this simple volume, international lecturer Ellis Potter explores three major worldviews that propose radically different answers to these eternal questions. In clear and compelling language, Potter

shows us that the three worldviews, and the unique hope that each offers to humanity, have profoundly different consequences for how we see everyday reality and the ultimate purpose of our lives. This book is a concise, reader friendly look at 3 basic ways of seeing reality from the East and the West. It wrestles with the problem of suffering and finds solutions in each of the 3 points of view. It is respectful of each worldview and engages the readers in some deep and hard-hitting questions about how they identify

themselves and how they look at and understand the world. Reading, thinking about and perhaps discussing this book will bring the readers into a clearer focus of their own way of seeing reality. The book is based on lectures by the author and has a large section of questions and answers drawn from actual discussions.



What Money Can't Buy: The Moral Limits Of Markets

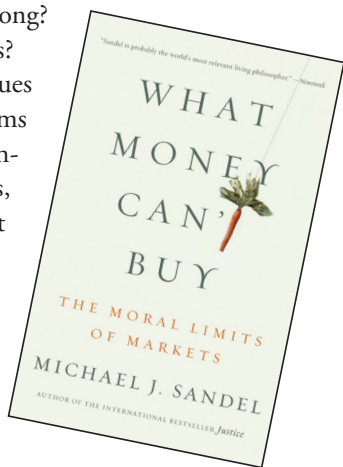
PHILOSOPHY

SHOULD WE PAY children to read books or to get good grades? Should we put a price on human life to decide how much pollution to allow? Is it ethical to pay people to test risky new drugs or to donate their organs? What about hiring mercenaries to fight our wars, outsourcing inmates to for-profit prisons, auctioning admission to elite universities, or selling citizenship to immigrants willing to pay?

In his New York Times bestseller *What Money Can't Buy*, Michael J. Sandel takes up one of the biggest ethical questions of our time: Isn't there something wrong with a world in which everything is for sale? If so, how can we prevent market values from reaching into spheres of life where they don't belong? What are the moral limits of markets?

In recent decades, market values have crowded out nonmarket norms in almost every aspect of life. Without quite realizing it, Sandel argues, we have drifted from having a market economy to being a market society.

In *Justice*, an international bestseller, Sandel showed himself to be a master at illuminating, with clarity and verve, the hard moral questions we confront in our everyday lives. Now, in *What Money Can't Buy*, he provokes a debate that's been missing in our market-driven age: What is the proper role of markets in a democratic society, and how can we protect the moral and civic goods that markets do not honor and money cannot buy?



I Believe

ANONYMOUS

I believe in the sun even when it's not shining.
I believe in love even when I don't feel it.
I believe in God even when He is silent.

Found scratched into a wall of a concentration camp by one of the six million victims of the Holocaust. *In commemoration of the 70th anniversary of the liberation of Auschwitz.*

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It is the editorial policy of *Veritas* to write out God's name in full (as opposed to as G-D). This is not a reflection of individual author's preferences or beliefs.



Theology and Philosophy