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Letter from the Editors

Dear Readers and Contributors,

      We are excited to begin publishing the *Hemlock Papers* once again as we publish the fifteenth volume (the first to be published since 2010). We received a number of papers and have chosen the ones we thought best and most thought-provoking. In this edition, we are honored to share with you the works of Emily Comer, Dana Francisco Miranda, Tyler J. Adkins, and Tesch West.

      The *Hemlock Papers* is a student-run journal. Undergraduate students who are interested in promoting philosophy are responsible for the review and editing process. As we begin to publish again, we hope to receive more and more entries and to build a strong reader base. Our goal is to provide undergraduate students the opportunity to publish their work and to provide thoughtful reading for the philosophically inclined.

      We hope that you will continue reading our journal and, for those who are interested, that you submit your work.

Faithfully yours,

The staff of the Hemlock Papers

Wittgenstein's Theory of Language and Language Learning: Implications for Middle-Grade Vocabulary Pedagogy

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ABSTRACT

In middle-grade classrooms, definitions are the tool of choice for teaching vocabulary. Unfortunately, this approach is counterproductive. We know this from psycholinguistics and first language acquisition, as well as the linguistic theory implicit in the writing of the 20th-century philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein. In this paper, I explain Wittgenstein's views on language and language learning and apply his work to vocabulary pedagogy in the middle-grade classroom.

1. Introduction

In any middle-grade classroom,[1] at some point the following takes place: Students receive a list of words or an excerpt with highlighted words; open student dictionaries or textbook glossaries; and begin copying definitions. Or they use definitions to fill in the blanks of vocabulary worksheets. Or they study definitions and then make up sentences using vocabulary words. Though the details vary, the core practice remains the same: definitions are the tool of choice for teaching vocabulary.

Unfortunately, this approach is counterproductive to acquiring new words. We know this from psycholinguistics and first language acquisition, as well as the linguistic theory implicit in the writing of the 20th-century philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein. In the *Philosophical Investigations*,[2] Wittgenstein considers not only how we use words, but also how we learn them and how we teach them. In this paper, I explain his views on language and language learning and apply his work to vocabulary pedagogy in the middle-grade classroom.

2. Against Definitions

The argument against the pedagogical use of definitions runs thus: Definitions delineate necessary and sufficient conditions for word meanings. Ordinary

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[1] In this paper, "middle-grade" refers to the educational stage(s) when students read to learn, rather than learn to read (beginning between second and fourth grade and continuing through high school and beyond); "middle-grade classroom" refers to any context in which, as part of structured pedagogy, students engage in activities for the explicit purpose of acquiring words. Thus, I include "content" classes (such as science and social studies), electives, and even mathematics as well as traditional English or Language Arts.

[2] Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, translated by G. E. M. Anscombe, (Oxford: Blackwell, 2009). Hereafter, numbers in parentheses refer to the sections of this text.

language does not adhere to those necessary and sufficient conditions. Therefore, studying definitions cannot be the most effective way to prepare students for ordinary language use. I will briefly explain the first point before examining the second, which is the main contention of the *Philosophical Investigations*.

Definitions are inherently linked with necessary and sufficient conditions. The *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy* notes, "[a] handy tool in the search for precise definitions is the specification of necessary and/or sufficient conditions for the application of a term."[3] The purpose of a definition is to specify all and only those features that constitute a word's meaning. Instead of listing every possible situation where the word could be used, the definition presents rules for its use. If the definition contains every rule *necessary* and only as many rules as are *sufficient*, then the reader is able to apply those rules to determine whether the word applies in any situation. Thus, a definition is an "analysed form" of the word, purporting to be a "more fundamental form" than the word itself (63).

Throughout the *Philosophical Investigations*, Wittgenstein implicitly argues that definitions, with their necessary and sufficient conditions, present a false image of language ~ one that does not correspond to ordinary language use. I now discuss his reasons for claiming this; after giving each reason, I explain its implications for vocabulary pedagogy.

First, definitions distort ordinary language by drawing sharp distinctions between cases that *are* (e.g.) 'games' (or 'languages', or 'revolutions', or 'experiments') and cases that *are not*. But words in ordinary, non-technical language lack such solid boundary lines (71): odd, uncertain, or ambiguous cases abound. Moreover, they are entirely usable with blurred boundaries, though we can and do make them more distinct. "To repeat, we can draw a boundary ~ for a special purpose. Does it take this to make the concept usable? Not at all!" (69) When solid lines do occur, they are usually imposed by some authority, such as a dictionary or a teacher, often to prevent confusion in a specialized context (e.g., when a chemistry teacher says that 'water' refers to H_2O). However, in ordinary language, words do not have such rigid boundaries (76).

When students learn words through definitions, they do not acquire them with the "blurred edges" (71) that (according to Wittgenstein) most words in ordinary language have. But this hole in word learning would not be so detrimental, *if* definitions served as bridges to ordinary language. If students could understand definitions more easily than vocabulary words, they could use definitions to help them acquire new words, gradually abandoning the rigid boundaries as they became more comfortable with the words themselves. However, because definitions are analyzed forms of words, they can be *more* difficult to understand, especially for students. "[The definition], one might say, comes to the same thing as the [word itself], but in a more roundabout way" (60). Definitions

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[3] "Necessary and Sufficient Conditions," http://plato.stanford.edu/entries/necessary-sufficient/ (accessed November 9, 2013).

typically use abstract words to express the necessary and sufficient conditions of a word's meaning. Particularly in the context of middle-grade pedagogy, such words are often even more unfamiliar to students than the word in question. For example, Word Central[4] defines 'experiment' as follows: "trial; especially: a procedure or operation carried out under controlled conditions in order to discover something, to test a hypothesis, or to serve as an example." This definition is clearly trying to use simple vocabulary (such as "serve as an example"), yet it remains entirely unusable if students do not understand what is meant by (at a minimum) the words and phrases 'trial,' 'procedure,' 'operation,' 'controlled conditions,' and 'hypothesis.' For this reason, before deciding to use a definition, vocabulary teachers must determine whether the definition is more comprehensible to students than the undefined word. "[Are the students] going to understand the further analysed [form] better?" (60) If the answer is 'yes', teachers may continue to consider the definition as a potential tool for teaching the word; but if it is 'no', then they must find another tool.

A further corollary of the distinction between definitions with rigid boundaries and words with blurred edges is that knowing a word is *not* the same as knowing a definition: "an aspect of the matter is lost to the latter no less than to the former" (63). The different forms ~ word and definition ~ are not interchangeable; we use them for different purposes. Thus, to achieve the goal of vocabulary pedagogy, it is insufficient for students to be able to define words. They must be able to use them in authentic contexts: research projects, lab work, one-to-one and whole group discussions, etc.

Wittgenstein's second reason for contending that definitions misrepresent ordinary language is that definitions suggest that words are independent units, discrete and unconnected bundles of such necessary and sufficient conditions. But words in ordinary language are actually related to each other by what he calls 'family resemblances' (67). Both the same word used in different contexts and different words used in the same context form word families; Wittgenstein primarily addresses the former, so I begin with it.

Wittgenstein uses the examples of 'language' and 'game' to illustrate the impossibility of devising accurate necessary and sufficient conditions for words in ordinary language: "Instead of pointing out something common to all that we call language, I'm saying that these phenomena have no one thing in common in virtue of which we use the same word for all ~ but there are many different kinds of *affinity* between them. And on account of this affinity, or these affinities, we call them all 'languages' " (65, emphasis original). Likewise, the things we call 'games' share many features: rules, players, pieces, winning and losing, entertainment, physical movement, mental skill, luck, etc. (66) These shared features result in "a

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[4] All examples of definitions in this paper are taken from Merriam-Webster's *Word Central*, a student dictionary available online at www.wordcentral.com (accessed November 4, 2013).

complicated network of similarities overlapping and criss-crossing: similarities in the large and in the small" (66), which he compares to "the various resemblances between members of a family" (67). Despite these overlapping similarities, there is no single feature or set of features that everything called a 'game' possesses; thus, Wittgenstein is unable to find "something in common" by which we call them 'games'. Yet the goal of a definition is precisely to set forth "something in common" to every instance of a word, by defining necessary and sufficient conditions for appropriately using the word.

Of course, dictionary entries for words that occur in sufficiently diverse contexts usually give distinct definitions for each meaning. But these separate definitions are only useful for readers who are already able to determine which meaning is contextually appropriate ~ that is, readers who at least partially understand the word. For word learners, conversely, multiple definitions are especially confusing. Consider Word Central's definitions of 'revolution':

> 1*a*: the action by a heavenly body of going round in an orbit; *b*:
> the time taken to complete one orbit
> 2: completion of a course (as of years): CYCLE
> 3*a*: the action or motion of revolving: a turning round a center or
> axis: ROTATION; *b*: a single complete turn (as of a wheel or a
> phonograph record)
> 4*a*: a sudden, extreme, or complete change; *b*: a basic change in
> government; especially: the overthrow of one government and the
> substitution of another by the governed

An experienced user of the word 'revolution' can easily see that 1 comes from science, 2 from either science or social studies, 3 from science or mathematics, and 4 from social studies. But students who are not already familiar with 'revolution' and are told merely to learn the definition have no way of determining which definition they will need in a particular context.

Moreover, definitions cannot effectively capture the other significant kind of word families, different words that frequently occur together (what Wittgenstein calls "cousins" (224)). *Some* cousins may appear in the definition, but even then it will not necessarily be clear *how* the words typically combine in ordinary language. And the definition does not reveal the word's relationships with words that do not appear in the definition. For instance, Word Central includes the following definitions of 'democracy':

> 1*a*: government by the people; especially: rule of the majority; *b*:
> government in which the supreme power is held by the
> people and used by them directly or indirectly through
> representation
> 2: a political unit (as a nation) that has a democratic government

3: belief in or practice of the idea that all people are socially equal

Note that these definitions are also subject to the problem of deciphering multiple definitions, discussed above. In addition, they fail to teach students how to use 'democracy' in conjunction with other, related words. They use but do not explain the semi-technical meanings of 'people', 'majority', and 'equal', and the concepts of 'vote' and 'elect' are missing entirely.

However, the solution is *not* to add more words to definitions, so that they contain all cousins of the defined word. For one thing, many of a vocabulary word's cousins are likely also to be unfamiliar to students, so adding them to the word's definition would only make it that much more difficult to comprehend. Simply adding more words would be part of the same impossible project of providing necessary and sufficient conditions on definitions ~ when, as Wittgenstein has stressed, there are none to give. Moreover, there is a difference between needing to know words in order to learn other words and learning words together. In fact, Wittgenstein observes of such "cousins" that "[i]f I teach anyone the use of the one word, he learns the use of the other with it" (224). Students cannot acquire 'democracy' without also acquiring 'vote,' 'people,' 'election,' 'majority,' 'equal,' etc. Thus, instead of studying unconnected definitions, they can learn sets of related words as they arise naturally in examples taken from ordinary language.

Wittgenstein's final reason for contending that definitions misrepresent ordinary language is that a definition distorts ordinary language by stripping the word from its natural context ~ what Wittgenstein calls "the language in which it is at home" (116). Wittgenstein sharply distinguishes naming from describing: "For naming and describing do not stand on the *same* level: naming is a preparation for describing…. One may say: with the mere naming of a thing, nothing has yet been done" (49). We may interpret naming (in this sense) as devising a definition for a word, and describing as one example of actually being able to use the word appropriately. By itself a definition is not ordinary language, "any more than putting a piece in its place on the board is a move in chess" (49). Thus, studying the definition before encountering the word in an authentic context is no more useful for acquiring ordinary language than arbitrarily "attaching a name tag to a thing" (26).

3. The Argument for Examples

So far, my discussion has concentrated on Wittgenstein's *negative* approach to language learning. But he also addresses the positive side of vocabulary acquisition and proposes an alternative word-teaching tool. Wittgenstein poses the following question: "How would we explain to someone what a game is?" (Substitute 'revolution,' 'experiment,' 'democracy,' or any other word students are expected to learn.) His answer is simple yet profound: "I think that we'd describe *games* to him, and we might add to the description: 'This *and similar things* are called "games".' "

(69, emphasis original) Describing examples might appear to be little different from simply defining ~ both involve explaining one word in terms of others. Nevertheless, examples (see also 135) are effective where definitions are not.

First, a description of examples of a vocabulary word is no more or less abstract than the word itself. Of course, if the word is abstract, as are many words taught in the middle grades, examples of its use will be as well. But they do not require students to comprehend an *additional* layer of abstraction: the rules for the word's meaning. By providing and discussing many examples of the word, the teacher enables students to discover its meaning through direct exposure to and practice with the word itself, without the intermediary of a definition.

Moreover, examples do not attempt to devise necessary and sufficient conditions that exhaustively cover the word's meaning. Definitions brush over the idiosyncrasies of specific instances of a word, attempting to give students "something in common" (65) (i. e., a set of necessary and sufficient conditions) by which they can determine where and how the word may be used. Examples, on the other hand, reveal that instances of a word may differ in many features; thus, they are better able to teach students the family resemblances among the word's different uses. In addition, acknowledging that "[t]his *and similar things* are called [by the word]" (69, emphasis original) alerts students that the word encompasses cases beyond the given examples, including ones the teacher chose not to mention or does not know about. Students can even extend the word's usage as they use it themselves. In contrast, a definition purports to cover all possible applications of the word ~ in effect, discouraging students from experimenting with the word and making it their own.

Finally, examples are taken directly from "the language in which [the word] is at home" (116), so they present the word as it is actually used in ordinary language. In addition, through examining the word as it appears in authentic contexts, students learn not only *that* word, but also many others that commonly occur with that word (see 224). For these reasons, examples are more effective tools than definitions for teaching students how words are used in ordinary language.

4. Methods for Using Examples

Wittgenstein not only argues for examples as tools for vocabulary pedagogy; he also illustrates several ways of using them. Consider how I might try to get someone to understand what is called 'yellow ochre':

> Suppose I show someone various multicoloured pictures, and say: 'The colour you see in all these is called "yellow ochre".' ~ This is an explanation that another person will come to understand by looking for, and seeing, what is common to the pictures. Then he can look at, can point to, the common feature.

> Compare with this a case in which I show him figures of different shapes, all painted the same colour, and say: 'What these have in common is called 'yellow ochre'."
>
> And compare this case: I show him samples of different shades of blue, and say: 'The colour that is common to all these is what I call "blue".' (72)

Each of the three methods of giving examples that Wittgenstein mentions is effective if used for the appropriate purpose. The first enables students to learn one meaning of a word. Unlike a dictionary entry, this exercise depends on many, varied examples: sentences and paragraphs that students can understand sufficiently without knowing the target word. The emphasis, though, is on *variety* ("multicoloured pictures"). Through comparing the different contexts and discovering what each has in common, students discover the contribution of the unknown word.

However, if examples for the first method are poorly chosen and too similar, it gives way to the second method; without sufficiently diverse input, students cannot see the whole meaning of the word. Yet the second method too can be useful, particularly for discussing morphology. Students examine different instances of a word, noting that the core meaning remains the same even as its form varies. They also consider which forms are used in which contexts, and for which purposes.

The teacher or students might use the third method by pointing out that 'revolution' is used both in social studies (e.g., the French Revolution, the Industrial Revolution) and in science (e.g., the revolutions of a wheel, the revolution of the earth around the sun). They could then analyze the commonalities (or "affinities") among uses of the word, such as turning and change. They could also try to determine what is different about each situation (e.g., what is turning or changing, how fast, how often, etc.). This conversation, containing numerous, varied examples and back-and-forth between teacher and students, would increase the students' understanding of each use of the word, both strengthening the connections and clarifying the distinctions.

5. Conclusion

Through analyzing Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*, we have discovered several reasons why definitions are less effective tools for teaching new words. They present words as discrete sets of necessary and sufficient conditions, essentially independent of one another and any supporting context. In contrast, words in ordinary language have "blurred edges" (71), are related to one another through "family resemblances" (67), and always occur within authentic contexts (49).

Based on Wittgenstein's theory of language, I argue that a more effective way to acquire words is through conversations about examples. When students have opportunities to notice how words are used in ordinary language and to

practice using those words themselves, they learn to use new words "in the language[s] in which [they] are at home" (116).

On Violence & Fatherhood; The Disfigurement of Personhood
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Abstract

Within *Things Fall Apart* the character of Okonkwo, through his desperate grasping for a form of identity that is without any similitude to that of his father, grows then subjected to a mire of disfigured personhood, in which the son literally becomes impaired by deep and persistent injuries of his own father. The idea of personhood within *Things Fall Apart* becomes central to the understanding of Okonkwo, and given the direct correlation to the writings of Kenji Nakagami, the ways in which personal identity can become disfigured are better clarified; whether from the fetishizing of lineage or through the participation of landscapes, or even through the narrative form of the written work, personhood becomes the means in which to translate actions.

On Violence & Fatherhood; The Disfigurement of Personhood

Through the novel *Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe we are allowed to see not only the success of Okonkwo, a great leader of the Ibo people, but in Umuofia that is where the weaknesses of Okonkwo, both his sense of self and character, are properly viewed. The son of the agbala Unoka, Okonkwo grew up with the shame of being heir to a man of no title, but in being heir to the man he had the bad chi to be granted an inheritance. This inheritance, the features of a father, which disgusted not only Okonkwo, but also the ethics of the village, caused Okonkwo an anxiety to shed all likeness of himself to his father. This obsession with fatherhood and inheritance shapes the motivations of Okonkwo to become a man of virulent masculinity, to gain titles unlike his father, to be warlike unlike his father, and to become violent unlike his father. This motif of a man preoccupied to the point of fixation is common to the short stories of Kenji Nakagami, specifically *The Cape* and 'House on Fire'. Here the protagonist Akiyuki is plagued by the form of an absent father, yet in trying to define himself, his personhood, he becomes entangled in the question of inheritance and what we as sons take from our fathers. Thus personhood becomes endowed not by a physical connection of blood between relations but by the constant comparisons of sons to their fathers, and the means in which they liken or distance themselves from these images. While Okonkwo and Akiyuki are both consumed with the images of their father, Okonkwo seeks to be the opposite of his father and by doing so holds masculinity and violence to be exemplars of male personhood. Akiyuki on the other hand discards his father only to become haunted by the violence of his father, ultimately seeking to emulate this while only becoming a poor example. Personhood, the appearance in which we appear to ourselves, becomes disfigured

for Okonkwo and Akiyuki, for as they constantly link identity to the natural assumption of their father's traits and dispositions, inheritance itself becomes the birth defect indwelling to both protagonists. Yes, the status of Okonkwo and his personhood remain to be in a shape of disfigurement as images of fatherhood deeply and persistently harm the appearances with which Okonkwo identifies with.

Through Okonkwo the manner in which personhood can become impacted and ultimately disfigured is perceived through an analysis of lineage and its passing on of traits, violence as the behavior used to cope with the anxiety caused from self-introspection, cultural geography in which customs are framed as well as being the realm of sexual intercourse. Within *Things Fall Apart* the character of Okonkwo, through his desperate grasping for a form of identity that is without any similitude to that of his father, grows then subjected to a mire of disfigured personhood, in which the son literally becomes impaired by deep and persistent injuries of his own father.

House on Fire

Through the 'House on Fire' the question of fatherhood arises as Akiyuki, who with Okonkwo is also obsessed with the *ie*, the family line, and on inheritance as a means of connection. The fear within these two sons is the inability to understand personhood through the idea of succession. As Friedrich Nietzsche, the German philologist, states, "Parents live on. Unresolved dissonances in the relation of the character and disposition of the parents continue to reverberate in the nature of the child, and constitute his inner sufferings" (Nietzsche, 195). The characters of Okonkwo and Akiyuki show similarities as they both become affixed with their fathers, one out of hate and the other from longing. Yet, discarding their reasons for being attached the fact remains that their attachments became for them a means of identifying themselves. Recalling the bitter memory of his father, Okonkwo reveals his disgust for agbala, a term meaning woman, but is also used to describe men without title, as he finds his father within Ibo society is no less than a woman. Achebe states, "It was the fear of himself, lest he should be found to resemble his father. Even as a little boy he has resented his father's failure and weakness, and even now… Okonkwo was ruled by one passion—to hate everything that his father Unoka had loved" (Achebe 13), and this fear of himself, by his very words, has caused the personhood within Okonkwo to become disfigured and marked with the image of his father ever becoming an image of himself.

Even in death Unoka is present for, "Although motionless, the dead man had a part in the violence which had struck him down; anything which came too near him was threatened by the destruction which had brought him low" (Bataille 46). Therefore, Okonkwo divorces himself at a young age from the feminine and seeks instead success at the cost that his life would be measured in disgust to that of his father. Akiyuki on the other hand, becomes affixed with his father in admiration of certain traits while at the same time pondering the connection those two have by blood. As the fear of likeness and uncertainty of heritage arise between

the two protagonists seek ways out. The father's connection still being there as neither father, Unoka and the nameless man, both hold their sons to be of them, revealing "The man hadn't abandoned his child. The child had abandoned his father" (Nakagami 119). Yet, the Okonkwo and Akiyuki only effectively create a physical abandonment. But just as Okonkwo can only emotionally abandons his father, both protagonist can never remove their fathers from their thoughts. In fact the images of these fathers live on and thrive in the minds of their sons, fatherhood becomes a symbol to identify oneself with. Okonkwo though long divorced from Unoka can only think of himself in relation to his father, with the rejection of a father not disallowing the continued influence of fatherhood. Both Okonkwo and Akiyuki know that no matter their actions or accomplishments that they are linked to their fathers by blood. Yet, Akiyuki behaves differently as he rejects the figure of his father while simultaneously emulating him, wondering constantly whether his father is the antecedent of his own personality. Akiyuki even remarks, "If that man is an arsonist, he wondered, will the baby in my mother's belly be an arsonist too" (Nakagami 136), forming the idea that inheritance is tantamount to personhood, that bloodlines were so strong as to impress the very identity of the father unto that of the son. Okonkwo thus must constantly gauge and measure his actions against its polar opposite, that of Unoka the agbala. Knowing that he comes from his father, Okonkwo lives in a state of not only hyper-masculinity but also the fear of becoming an agbala. Thus, the likeness with which sons and fathers can resemble one another is a cause of fear and anxiety to Okonkwo and Akiyuki, even in the absence of relations, "...the father's image taunts him but never solidifies. At the same time, however, [he] cannot rid himself of the vision of his fathers ugly features" (Nakagami 174), thus Akiyuki comes to question his appearance all the while comparing its likeness to his father, while Okonkwo's vision of himself coincides with his status as a leader in the community and a great wrestler. However, this image is given meaning only in correlation to Unoka, for titles in Umuofia would be a sign of accomplishment and pride to Okonkwo, but for his father titles instead represent the righteousness in which he acts and the ammunition he needs in which to condemn others. Yet, even with these accomplishments Okonkwo by measuring himself against Unoka cannot then rid himself of his own features.

Inheritance, the manner for which sons derive certain traits becomes disfigured into the means for sons to affix images of themselves, thus fathers no longer share commonalities but rather the son through comparison seeks to create a sense of personhood. Okonkwo by being so obsessed with lineage holds biological relations to be the origin for his sense of self, and while this is sound he makes a fundamental mistake by equating genealogy with morals and equals. For one does not become one's father through blood alone, and yet Okonkwo is concerned of erring, of slipping into the skin of his father. Nakagami suggests, "...that although the sons of the roji [side street] are caught up in a blind longing for their fathers, they also understand that the question of succession is

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fundamentally a matter of belief" (Nakagami 168-169). Yes, inheritance may deal with succession but not all things are passed on to sons from fathers, nor does one have to except what is given. Even though driven by this longing and a desire to answer the question of fatherhood, personal identity should not be held in comparison with one model so completely. However, Okonkwo by seeking to answer fatherhood is then lead to the habitual use of violence.

Genealogies

Instances of violence abound within *Things Fall Apart*, occurring within and around the household, revealing that the very same violence used in warfare as a showcase to strength and prowess, becomes domestic and tyrannical in the home. As Nakagami writes, "In the hands of the son, violence is a feeble attempt to shore up a vital piece of himself that has cracked or broken away" (Nakagami 181). Okonkwo rules not with a heavy hand of a sovereign but the hand of a bully. One such instance of bullying occurs near the arrival of the New Yam festival where Okonkwo finds himself with nothing to do, finds something to do by deciding to go hunting with his gun. As Okonkwo is not a good hunter, and his household knows of this fact and womanly weakness, Ekwefi "...the wife who had just been beaten murmured something about guns that never shot" (Achebe 38), and like a sickles Okonkwo's anger turns to abuse just as the abused wife voices her dissatisfaction. Achebe writes, "Unfortunately for her, Okonkwo heard it and ran madly into his room for the loaded gun, ran out again and aimed at her...[and] pressed the trigger" (Achebe 39). This use of petty violence within the home is not of acclaim, and does not coincide with the image of strength and respect Okonkwo has elsewhere. Instead, violence and domestic abuse highlight instead the hold Unoka has on him, as the kind father bears no resemblance to the overly cruel Okonkwo, which sadly is the intent of Okonkwo. This domestic abuse is a sort of petty rage, unprovoked and thus unmitigated. Although the bullet misses its target, the intentions of Okonkwo are also somewhere missed. Murder cannot be justified for a snide remark, and it seems the reasons of Okonkwo become then simply displaced. Achebe states, "In spite of this incident the New Yam festival was celebrated with great joy in Okonkwo's household" (Achebe 39), hinting at the fact that abuse was a normal event when it came to Okonkwo. Achebe then strangely joins the image of violence to that of Ekwefi, the second wife who just early had been beaten, remembering leaving Anene, then her husband, for Okonkwo. Achebe further writes, "He just carried her into his bed and in the darkness began to feel around her waist for the loose end of her cloth" (Achebe 109), perversely joining the image of abuse with that of not only the prowess of Okonkwo, as the annual wrestling contest reminds Ekwefi of the day he defeated the Cat, but can also be a marker that times were once different. We can then ask what had Unoka done that shamed Okonkwo as to want to embody completely opposite principles? There also remains the comparison of father and son, for how was Okonkwo any better than Unoka who didn't provide for his family, to him who indiscriminately beats and bullies those around him?

A remarkable passage arises in 'House on Fire' when the physically abused wife of Akiyuki sick of being beaten asks Akiyuki for a separation. Akiyuki in fashion responds that she can have her separation but in turn he would murder everyone, saying, "I'm not joking. If everything's gonna fall apart, at least I'll do that. I'm not goin' with my tail between my fuckin' legs" (Nakagami 132). Through violence and its promising Akiyuki attempts to hold onto a house splitting apart, yet even with the threat of his family leaving him the only thoughts Akiyuki have are those of his father dying and what relation could the man possibly have to him. By fixating his thoughts on inheritance Akiyuki all together avoids his situation at home, at the best being inattentive, and devolves into using violence as a means of coping with the imminent death and the medium through which he expresses himself. In seeking those spontaneous bursts of anarchy, Akiyuki by emulation can only achieve a diminutive form, compared to his father who acted out according to his nature. For even though Akiyuki has achieved a likeness to his father's strength and anger, the naturalness with which he dispenses violence is bogged down by its artificiality. Thus, Nakagami states, "...the son never achieves the white heat of the father's violence" (Nakagami 181) not for lack of trying, but simply because the violence he seeks is an imitation, meaning Akiyuki does not imitate violence but wants his violence to be in likeness to his father; thus all his acts become poor reproductions. In comparison Okonkwo is tempted into violence solely in opposition to the image of his father reflected with himself, so that of an irresponsible and gentle man inattentive to the needs of his family becomes in Okonkwo a stern provider and abusive father (husband).

The use of violence displayed by the protagonist of *Things Fall Apart* and *The Cape and other stories* are testaments to the fact that the more and more the images of their fathers swept into the mind, the more violence began to be used as a coping mechanism. As Nakagami states, "In adulthood, the son's violence is petty and sordid, played out in a claustrophobic domestic sphere" (Nakagami 181). Okonkwo and Akiyuki are similar not only for their violence but also the frequency in which they lose their tempers and the gross amount of domestic abuse with follows. Coming from a night of drunkenness with friends Akiyuki returns home in a good mood only then to be irritated by his wife. Nakagami writes, "He shoved his dazed wife into the entranceway, dragged her by the hair into the living room...and immediately started hitting her" (Nakagami 111), turning emotional anxiety instead into physical abuse and allowing for at least one instant for time not to think but instead to express that anguish. We remain on the scene to witness the aftereffects only to see that, "After the son's rampage, we awake to find that the world has not changed: the glass of the chandelier has been swept away, the violent spectacle serving merely as a private declaration of one's own existence" (Nakagami 182), while, "The wife clearly recognizes that what begins as a form of anarchy...ends in sabetsu or 'discrimination'—the making of differences and the reassertion of hierarchies" (Nakagami 182), attesting to Akiyuki in using violence as an expression, can take only from his father's example

discrimination and abuse. Not understanding that violence is of a different degree to that of abuse, "[he] can only approximate an ideal." The revelation being that the violence Okonkwo and Akiyuki choose to act in comes not from instinctual disposition or inclination, but rather was chosen by the protagonist in reference to their fathers. Unoka did not generate violence in Okonkwo, rather Okonkwo sought violence to go against and be something other than his father. Likewise, Akiyuki by seeking to emulate a father who was forceful and anarchistic, by his very emulation reveals that violence was not inherent within him but something violently sought. In tracing the images of their father over themselves, each protagonist, paradoxically, seeks to divorce their fathers from their personal identities, only cementing further the place their fathers have as totems.

Cultural Geography

The use of geography in *Things Fall Apart* is best used showing the villages as places where particular people and customs gather together, and in gathering become infected with the features of the land, thus the Oracle of the Caves and Hills is as much a testament to the spirituality of the people as to the respect accorded to the land. The Ibo people even have a particular feature of turning the lands and villages into comparisons and metaphors. During funeral rites Okonkwo had the bad chi to fire his gun and killing Ezeudu's son. Achebe writes, "The crime was of two kinds, male and female. Okonkwo had committed the female because it had been inadvertent" (Achebe 124), telling that the relationship between laws was itself influenced by gender, as women are inadvertent. Thus, Okonkwo is forced into exile and he would be allowed to return to the clan after seven years, and by custom flees to the land of his mother, Mbanta, because a man finds refuge with his mother. This we come to know from Uchendu who explains this to Okonkwo: "It is true that a child belongs to his father. But when the father beats his child, it seeks sympathy in its mother's hut. A man belongs to his fatherland when things are good and life is sweet. But when there is sorrow and bitterness, he finds refuge in his motherland. Your mother is there to protect you. She is buried there. And that is why we say that mother is supreme" (Achebe, 134). The meaning of homelands is best understood they say in exile. Yet, Okonkwo is ignorant of the meaning behind this, ironically he does not penetrate into this understanding, for it is only in Umuofia where he believes he can be a man-where he can penetrate. Okonkwo's sense of personhood is then regulated to his fatherland, outside of it and his titles, the fear of Unoka creeps upon him, and it is in exile were personhood is found to be "...pressed by the forces of blood and geography" (Nakagami, 169).

Furthermore, The Ibo people also hold that Umuofia being where two people, and two villages meet is what is needed to sustain the village. It is the very act of copulation that sustains both lands. Nakagami states, "The cape epitomizes the tenacity of the outcastes who survive even at the ends of the land, and who, imbued with the vigor of sexuality itself, continually remind the majority of their existence" (Nakagami 177), and through the land people come into being and

survive through intercourse, identifying themselves with the land itself. Nakagami recalls his journey around the Kii Peninsula in 'Kishu Ki no Kuni Ne no Kuni', "The peninsula lies between the legs of the continent, the shameful protrusion of the mountains and the plains. Consider it a piece of shame, shameful because its nature that can't be beaten down, a metaphor for sex. Yet as I traveled the peninsula, I realized that the peninsula is not a metaphor for sex—it's sex itself" (qtd. in Nakagami 177). Nakagami, crafts the land itself to be of sexual continuation, that as the land houses people, that land itself is instrument and bed to sex. Through intercourse, Akiyuki then gains the attributes of the land and as, "She reached out for his penis again. A vision came to him of the cape protruding into the sea. Swell up, rise up, he thought. Tear the sea to pieces" (Nakagami 176), for as Umuofia presses identity in *Things Fall Apart* it also is a fertile source for identity. Personhood then specifically cannot then be untied for Okonkwo, as he is an Ibo man and the land and its customs are thus able to contribute and form to personal identity. However, Okonkwo cannot come to understand the land and its culture, becoming untied not only to its people but also to any realistic model of personhood. Even as Okonkwo attempts to divorce the agbala from his sense of self, we see by depreciating the land Okonkwo can thus also disinherit Nwoye and Unoka. Yet, Nakagami writes, "Sex—without the intervention of metaphor—becomes a testimony not only to survival and the perpetuation of life, but also to the continuation of a binding communal identity" (Nakagami 177), more than anything it is the act of intercourse that binds Umuofia, Mbanta and its people; sex more powerful then politics and religions is geography.

Conclusions

Thus, the idea of personhood within *Things Fall Apart* becomes central to the understanding of Okonkwo, and given the direct correlation to the writings of Kenji Nakagami, the ways in which personal identity can become disfigured are better clarified; whether from the fetishizing of lineage or through the participation of landscapes and cultural geography, personhood becomes the means in which to translate actions. If Achebe's intent in writing *Things Fall Apart* was focused on the intersections of power between the colonizer and the colonized his characters could not be solely neglected to the role of historical figures. For when viewed critically the actions of Okonkwo do not represent fully the traditions of his people, but rather the workings of a man with a significant character disorder who repeatedly even goes against Ibo mores and customs. The focus of the novel then becomes regulated to the actions of Okonkwo and more importantly their rationales. Counihan states, "Okonkwo's choices and fate are determined by his desire to compensate for his father's failed masculinity—his father's status as *agbala*—with his own aggressively inflexible brand of manhood. Driven by his fear that he will either *be* like his father or be *seen* to be like his father, Okonkwo consistently acts to fulfill his rigorous code of masculinity" (Counihan 12). As Okonkwo's view of personhood is contrary to the values held within the Ibo in being masculine he consistently violates the social codes of the

village. We can then infer that Okonkwo's suicide called into question the cultural standards of his community. By being preoccupied on inheriting traits, Okonkwo becomes ignorant of his own actions and thoughts, as his personal identity is only known, or rather translated, through his father. Yes, underlying *Things Fall Apart*, as well as 'The Cape' and 'House on Fire', is the motif of inheritance and the disfigurement of personhood caused by such, where the images of fathers are presented as a congenital disorder upon sons, and the subsequent violence which then becomes used as a maladaptive coping skill.

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Effort Responsibility: A Reply to Robert Kane's Theory of Freedom
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Abstract

In the discussion of free action, *libertarianism* is the view that for any action performed by some agent, if that action is free and one for which the agent is morally responsible, then it is not the case that the action's being performed was necessitated or determined by any antecedent conditions. The Luck Objection to libertarianism is that the 'free' actions, in virtue of their being undetermined, are a result of chance or luck and so are not actions for which the agent is morally responsible (See Kane, 2005, pp. 37-38). Robert Kane develops a libertarian theory of freedom and responsibility that is supposed to handle the luck objection. In this essay I explain Kane's theory and argue that, although Kane's theory avoids the luck objection, it fails to give a proper account of moral responsibility for the 'free' actions involved in his theory.

Introduction

In discussing the conceptual compatibility of free will and determinism, one might identify with either the compatibilist or incompatibilist traditions. The compatibilists maintain that for some agent X and some action A, there is a possible world w in which the propositions ⌜X freely does A at w⌝ and ⌜w is a deterministic world⌝ jointly obtain.[1] Compatibilists thus regard free will (and action) to be compatible with determinism. Conversely, the incompatibilists maintain that there is no possible world w in which the propositions ⌜X freely does A at w⌝ and ⌜w is a deterministic world⌝ jointly obtain –call this the incompatibilist condition. Incompatibilists thus regard free will (and free action) to be incompatible with determinism.

Simply identifying with compatibilism or incompatibilism, however, commits one only to an affirmation or denial of the the *compatibility* of free will and determinism –it does nothing in the way of committing one to affirming or denying that free will exists in our world or that determinism is true of our world. Traditionally, compatibilists affirm both that free will exists and that determinism is true –but this position is not necessitated by compatibilism. In the incompatibilist tradition, adherents usually fall under one of two categories: libertarianism or hard determinism. Libertarians are those who maintain the incompatibilist condition and affirm that free will exists, and thus deny that determinism is true (or at least true at all times) in our world. Hard determinists are those who maintain the incompatibilist condition and affirm that determinism is true (at all times), and thus deny that free will exists in our world.

Let us first take a closer look at libertarianism, since a formulation of libertarian freedom will be my focus here. Since libertarians affirm that free will exists and deny that determinism (at all times) is true in the actual world, they are compelled to develop theories of freedom that include an element of indeterminism. Generally speaking, libertarians claim that for any action performed by some agent, if that action is free and one for which the agent is morally responsible, then it is not the case that the action's being performed was necessitated or determined by any antecedent conditions.

One prominent objection to libertarianism is that the so called 'free' actions are, in virtue of their being undetermined, a result of chance, luck, or randomness, and so are not actions for which the agent is morally responsible (See Kane, 2005, pp. 37-38). This objection has been appropriately dubbed 'The Luck Objection'. Arguments for the luck objection typically take the following form, where S is some agent and A is some action:

> (L1) If S's performing some action A is undetermined, then it is a matter of chance or luck that S performs A rather than not A.
> (L2) If it is a matter of chance or luck that S performs A rather than not A, then S is not morally responsible for performing A.
> (L3) So, if S's performing some action A is undetermined, then S is not morally responsible for performing A (See Kane, 1999, p. 217).

Essentially, proponents of the luck objection assume a sort of incompatibilism concerning free will (and action) and indeterminism.

Robert Kane develops a libertarian theory of freedom and responsibility that is supposed to handle the luck objection. That is, while his notion of responsibility does require a specific type of indeterminism, he argues that, in some cases, an actions being undetermined does not rule out it's being free and one for which the agent is morally responsible. In this essay, I will first discuss Kane's theory and explain how it is supposed to handle the luck objection. I will then raise an objection to Kane's theory and outline the ways in which Kane might respond to this objection, using parts of his own view. I will close by demonstrating that these ways of response fail to handle my objection.

I

According to Kane, some free actions are determined and some are undetermined. An *undetermined* free action is one that is the direct result of what Kane refers to as a *Self-Forming Action*, or SFA (See Kane, pp. 224) –this type of free action will be referred to hereafter as 'directly free' and one for which the agent is 'directly morally responsible'. A *determined* action is free only if it is determined by a preexisting character that was indeterministically *self-formed* by the agent, which is just to say that the preexisting character was the direct result of a SFA (See Kane,

224) –this type of free action will be referred to hereafter as 'indirectly free' and one for which the agent is 'indirectly morally responsible'.

During a SFA, an agent is torn between two competing motivations to perform two different actions. Kane refers to these motivations as *efforts*. He says that for each effort there is a corresponding neural network or pathway and that, in a SFA, the duality of the neural networks becomes chaotic, and it becomes undetermined which of the two networks will reach its activation threshold first (i.e., which effort will succeed over the other) (See Kane, p 224). To illustrate his concept of a SFA, Kane asks us to consider a businesswoman:

> ...who faces a conflict in her will...[and] is on the way to a meeting important to her career when she observes an assault in an alley. An inner struggle ensues between her moral conscience, to stop and call for help, and her career ambitions, which tell her she cannot miss this meeting—a struggle she eventually resolves by turning back to help the victim. (Kane, p. 225)

The businesswoman is simultaneously *trying* to perform two mutually exclusive actions. The presence of these two competing efforts, assumedly equal in strength, makes it undetermined which effort will succeed. In virtue of this indeterminism, it is undetermined whether the businesswoman will stop and call for help or continue on her way.

At this point, it seems that Kane's view is susceptible to The Luck Objection. That is, it seems that, concerning the efforts involved in Kane's SFA, if it is undetermined which effort will succeed over the other, then is just a matter of mere chance or luck which will succeed over the other, and so the agent is not morally responsible for whichever action is produced by the effort that does happen to succeed (See Kane, p. 226).

To elucidate the intuition that drives The Luck Objection, Kane asks us to consider an assassin who attempts to shoot a prime minister, but who suffers from a condition that indeterministically produces sudden jerks in his arm. Amidst the assassin's attempt, it is undetermined whether or not the arm-jerk will occur, but if the arm-jerk does occur, then he will surely fail to shoot the prime minister. Thus, it is undetermined whether or not the assassin will succeed in shooting the prime minister. But despite this indeterminism, we nevertheless consider him morally responsible if he does succeed (See Kane, p. 227). This attribution of moral responsibility, despite the presence of indeterminism, is owed to the fact that if the assassin succeeds, he will have succeeded in doing what he was *voluntarily and intentionally trying* to do (See Kane, p. 227). Of course, he will not be morally responsible for failing to shoot the prime minister, if his failing is a result of the undetermined jerk; but this is owed to the fact that he did not *voluntarily and intentionally try* to fail to shoot the prime minister. From this, Kane concludes that indeterminism is a hindrance on an agent's freedom and moral responsibility only

insofar as it prevents the agent from doing what she was voluntarily and intentionally trying to do, and that this is the real intuition that drives The Luck Objection.

Upon examining the intuition behind The Luck Objection, Kane sets out to finish the development of his view so as to avoid the objection completely. Recall that what renders the assassin morally responsible for shooting the prime minister, despite the presence of indeterminism, is that he succeeds in doing what he was voluntarily and intentionally trying to do. Similarly then, it seems that the businesswoman could be morally responsible for what she does, despite the presence of indeterminism, if she succeeds in doing what she voluntarily and intentionally tries to do. So, if the businesswoman, amidst her indeterminstic SFA, is voluntarily and intentionally trying to stop and help, as well as voluntarily and intentionally trying to avoid missing her meeting, then whichever of the two actions she performs, she will have succeeded in doing what she was voluntarily and intentionally trying to do. So, for her SFA, it seems the businesswoman is morally responsible for whichever action she performs, despite the presence of indeterminism (See Kane, p. 231). From this line of argumentation, Kane concludes that that the actions that result from a SFA avoid the luck objection.

In addition to being directly morally responsible for some action, Kane thinks that we can certainly be indirectly responsible for some action as well. Specifically, he says that when our actions are determined by our will or character, it is "our own free will [or character]" because we formed it by earlier choices that were underdetermined. That is, we are indirectly morally responsible for an action determined by our will or character only if that will or character was the direct result of some earlier SFA.

II

In Kane's account of indirectly free actions –those determined by a self-formed character or will—the agent is indirectly morally responsible because she is responsible for having the particular deterministic character or will that she has (See Kane, p. 224). In Kane's directly free actions, those directly resulting from a SFA, the agent is directly morally responsible for her action because she succeeded in doing what she was voluntarily and intentionally trying to do (See Kane, p. 231), despite the presence of indeterminism. One might wonder, however, whether or not the agent of a SFA need be responsible, either directly or indirectly, for having the particular voluntary and intentional efforts that she has. Consider businesswoman*:

> A nefarious neuroscientist Black captures the businesswoman* and alters her neural network so as to ensure that she now has, as a part of her fundamental character, an utmost respect for both her moral conscience and her career ambitions. Consequently, when she is faced with the opportunity to either stop and help the victim of an assault or attempt to

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make it to her meeting on time, she has two voluntary and intentional efforts to do each of the two things. This gives rise to an indeterministic SFA that would not have otherwise occurred, if Black hadn't altered her neural network the way he did.

Now, given this knowledge of the businesswoman*'s history regarding the formation of her voluntary and intentional efforts, it seems that, regardless of which effort succeeds (and hence which action is performed), she cannot be held morally responsible for it. This is because she is not morally responsible for having those efforts –Black surgically manipulated her into having them. While Kane does require, for indirectly free actions, that the agent be in some way responsible for having the specific deterministic character or will that she has, Kane does not require this for the directly free actions. But, as shown in the case of businesswoman*, it seems that this sort of responsibility is required, even for SFAs.[2] Otherwise, the agent might be manipulated into having certain dual efforts, and nevertheless be considered free and morally responsible with respect to the action she performs as a result of those efforts –which seems terribly implausible.

If it is true that to be responsible for the action that results from a SFA, the agent must also be responsible for having the specific competing efforts that give rise to the SFA, then we can look at some ways in which, via his own view, Kane might be able to grant such responsibility. As mentioned earlier, Kane provides us with two types of moral responsibility and freedom: direct and indirect. I will now outline the two ways in which Kane might provide an account of an agent's being responsible for the efforts of her SFA and show how each account fails. Kane's potential answers to the question of how the agent might be morally responsible for the efforts of her SFA will give rise to a two horned dilemma: the direct responsibility horn and the indirect responsibility horn. The direct responsibility horn corresponds to the idea that the agent can be *directly* morally responsible for the efforts of her SFA. The indirect responsibility horn corresponds to the idea that the agent can be *indirectly* morally responsible for the efforts of her SFA.

III

If Kane were to suggest that we can be directly morally responsible for our having certain efforts, then an indeterministic situation similar to a SFA would need to occur, but with respect to those efforts. We might call this sort of situation a SFE: Self-forming effort. This situation would be similar to a SFA, except that it would result in an effort, not an action. But since this is analogous to Kane's SFA, in that it awards the agent with direct moral responsibility for its result, there would need to be the same sort of indeterminism as that in the SFA. And similarly, this indeterminism would need to be the result of two competing voluntary and intentional meta-efforts, each competing to form the effort; this situation would need to occur, also, with respect to the *other* effort, of the two

competing efforts in the SFA. And if the agent is to be directly responsible for each of the competing meta-efforts, then there would need to be SFEs for each meta-effort, which implies a competing pair of meta-meta-efforts for each meta-effort, and so on without end. Thus, if the agent is to be directly responsible for the efforts in the SFA, she would need to satisfy an infinite regress of SFEs and possess an infinite number of competing meta-...-meta-efforts. So we can conclude, on this account, that it is impossible for an agent to be directly responsible for the competing efforts involved in her SFA. Since Kane must provide an account of how an agent can be morally responsible for the efforts involved in her SFA, we must now turn to the alternative way in which he could provide such an account –with the idea that the agent can be indirectly morally responsible for the efforts involved in her SFA.

If Kane were to suggest that an agent can be indirectly morally responsible for having certain efforts, then a situation in which the agent's character or will directly determines which efforts she has would need to occur and the agent would need to be morally responsible for this

character or will.[4] Following the way in which Kane describes how an agent can be indirectly morally responsible for her actions, we might postulate that the agent must have self-formed the character or will which determines which efforts she has. This character or will, if it is to produce an effort for which the agent is morally responsible, would need to have been formed by some earlier SFA. So the agent might be indirectly morally responsible for the efforts involved in her SFA if she was determined to have those efforts by a character or will that was formed by an earlier SFA. On this account, however, the agent would also need to be morally responsible for the efforts involved in her 'earlier SFA'. And since Kane cannot say of those 'earlier efforts' that they are ones for which the agent is *directly* morally responsible, he must show that the agent is indirectly morally responsible for them. And so the process by which the agent becomes indirectly morally responsible would need to be repeated for the 'earlier efforts'. This process could continue to repeat until the point at which there no longer exists a respectively earlier SFA to produce the character or will that determines the efforts of the respectively later SFA. But, assuming the agent is finite in age, she must have had a 'first SFA'. On this account, there is no way in which the agent could be indirectly morally responsible for the efforts involved in her first SFA. And if she is not morally responsible for the efforts involved in her first SFA, then she is not responsible for that which results from her first SFA (as is shown in the example with businesswoman*). This would mean that she is responsible for none of the "self-formed" characters or wills that were intended to transfer responsibility to the later efforts which they determine. Thus, we can conclude, on this account, that it is impossible for an agent to be indirectly morally responsible for the efforts involved in her SFA, since it would require the satisfaction of an infinite regress of SFAs.
Conclusion

In full, I have shown that in order for an agent to be morally responsible for her SFA, she would need to be either directly or indirectly responsible for the competing voluntary and intentional efforts involved in such an SFA. Kane, by using his own explicit accounts of direct and indirect moral responsibility, would be unable to satisfy the above requirement, since each account leads us to the conclusion that an agent can be morally responsible for her efforts only if she satisfies an infinite regress of SFAs or SFEs. If I am right in suggesting that effort-responsibility is required for action-responsibility, then it seems that Kane will have to provide a unique account of effort-responsibility that is substantially different from his accounts of action-responsibility, if his libertarian theory of free will and moral responsibility is to be considered viable.[5]

Notes

1. I shall take ˹w is a deterministic world˺ to mean that a proposition containing a complete description of w at some time t, in conjunction with a proposition containing a complete description of the laws of nature governing w, entails a proposition containing a complete description of w at any other time $t\pm n$. This interpretation of determinism can be referred to as nomological determinism. The particular formulation is taken from Van Inwagen, Peter. "The Incompatibility of Free Will and Determinism." *Philosophical Studies* 27.3 (1975): 186. Print.

2. This sort of intuition is embodied in the crucial second premise of Galen Strawson's Basic Argument, "In order to be truly morally responsible for one's actions one would have to be *casua sui*" (Strawson, 1994, p. 5). This just means that true action-responsibility requires responsibility for that which produces the action. Although Strawon's argument and mine have this common the above sort of intuition, my argument, more so than Strawson's, is specific to the sort of responsibility that Kane' underdetermined SFAs are supposed to give us.

3. Alfred Mele (in Mele, Alfred R. 2006. *Free Will and Luck*. New York: Oxford University Press) raises a similar objection. His objection centers on the freedom of the efforts, whereas my objection centers around the agent's being morally responsible for having such efforts. This distinction seems to highlight a difference in the interpretation of 'efforts': whereas Mele seems to interpret the efforts as being actions of the will, I interpret them as being certain aspects of the agent's character that incline her to decide a certain way. Even if the 'efforts' are interpreted in the sense suggested by Mele's objection, I feel that my objection is nonetheless applicable.

4. Robert Kane (in Kane, Robert. 2007b. "Response to Fischer, Pereboom, and Vargas." In *Four Views on Free Will*, by John Martin Fischer, Robert Kane, Derk Pereboom, and Manuel Vargas, 166–83. Oxford: Blackwell) concedes that the agent need be responsible for her efforts. The account he gives of such responsibility is very similar to the following 'indirect responsibility' response that I consider.

5. I owe a special thanks to Dr. Andrew Spear for reviewing this paper and providing helpful suggestions.

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Jean-Paul Sarte's Reevaluation of Descartes' Cogito

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Abstract

In this paper, I explore the works of Jean-Paul Sartre, a 20th century philosopher who rejected René Descartes' *cogito ergo sum* (I think, therefore I am) and provided an alternative argument for the existence of the self and others. The arguments posited by these two philosophers diverge in a variety of way and therefore, in order to better understand their differences, I examine their arguments in the context of their larger ontological and epistemological views. This includes the essential and relevant tenets of Descartes' rationalism and Sartre's existentialism.

Introduction

René Descartes was born in La Haye en Touraine, France, a town that was later renamed "La Hay-Descartes" in 1802 and "Descartes" in 1967 (Grayling, 2006). Descartes' father was a member of the Parliament of Brittany and his mother died while he was in infancy. Descartes traveled to La Fleche in 1606 to attend the College of Henri IV and after graduating, studied at the University of Poitiers to become a lawyer (Hatfield, 2011). However, this subject held no interest for Descartes and he soon left the university to travel and muse. "I employed the rest of my youth in travel, in seeing courts and armies, in intercourse with men of diverse temperaments and conditions" (Descartes, 1979, p. 8).

Descartes joined the army of the Dutch Republic in 1618, but spent most of his time studying mathematics and physics (Hatfield, 2011). His interest in science greatly influenced his later development of a philosophical method. While stationed in Germany, Descartes had visions in which a divine spirit revealed to him a new philosophy and led him to believe that only by applying a mathematical and deductive method to philosophy could he attain true knowledge (Grayling, 2006, p. 151). It was at this time in his life that Descartes posited the theory that if one could find a fundamental truth, then since all truths are linked, one could proceed with logic to discover all science.

Descartes left the army in 1622 and published his first essay, which established the parameters of a scientific method of philosophy, *Rules for the Direction of the Mind* (Hatfield, 2011). This essay was not published until after his death, but reveals the early developments of his epistemology, the study concerning the nature of being known. Descartes studied mathematics at the University of Franeker in 1628 and taught at the Utrecht University in 1635. He married Helena Jans der Strom and had a daughter, Francine, who died in 1640 from scarlet fever (Hatfield, 2011).

Descartes traveled throughout the Netherlands from 1628 to 1649 while publishing his major works and rarely lived in one place for more than 3 years. Descartes revolutionized mathematics, philosophy, and epistemology, making ground-breaking strides in the development of the scientific method and deductive logic. In 1638, Descartes published a series of three essays prefaced by an introduction entitled, *Discourse on the Method* (Hatfield, 2011). His systematic method to obtaining knowledge, described in this introduction, included only deduction and shunned both induction and perception based on the senses. Part IV of this prologue includes Descartes' first reference to "I think" as the basic truth from which all knowledge derives (Descartes, 2003). In 1641, Descartes broadened the horizons of his philosophical inquiries and published the *Meditations on First Philosophy*, a work dedicated to metaphysics (Hatfield, 2011). This work includes Descartes' theory of the existence of the self in its Latin translation and thus marks the first publication of the phrase, "*cogito ergo sum.*" Finally, in 1644, despite the condemnation of Cartesian philosophy at the University of Utrecht, Descartes published the *Principles of Philosophy*, a kind of synthesis of the *Meditations* and the *Discourse* (Hatfield, 2011).

As mentioned earlier, my analysis of Descartes' *cogito ergo sum* will focus on his arguments in the *Meditations*. This work is divided into six chapters, each of which addresses a particular step in his philosophical method. Descartes aims to jettison any beliefs that are not grounded in certainty and then establishes that which can be known for sure. The narration is written as if Descartes were meditating over the course of six days. In fact, in his later chapters, he refers to the preceding meditations as having taken place "yesterday" (Descartes, 1979, p. 17). Given his attention to detail in this work, the *Meditations* is often regarded as the most detailed presentation of Descartes' philosophical method (Hatfield, 2011). Therefore, this work exhibits the most profound explanation of Descartes' theory of the existence of the self and as such I utilize the *Meditations* as the source of my understanding of Descartes' *cogito*.

Descartes died in 1650 while tutoring the Queen Christina of Sweden. Speculations as to the cause of his death range from pneumonia to assassination. In 1663, Pope Alexander VII included Descartes' works on the "Index of Prohibited Books" and the Cartesian method was banned from schools by the French government in the 1670s (Hatfield, 2011). Nevertheless, Descartes' works had far-reaching influence. Proponents of his method include Spinoza and Leibniz. Descartes also sparked conversation amongst those who opposed him, such as Hume, Hobbes, Berkeley, and, most notably for the purposes of this paper, Sartre.

Jean-Paul Sartre, born in Paris in 1905, is viewed as the father of existentialism. In fact, Sartre delivered a controversial public lecture, called "Existentialism is a Humanism," to a Parisian crowd and it is often considered the quasi-manifesto for the existentialist movement (Flynn, 2013). In his early life, Sartre earned a degree in philosophy at the University of École Normale

Supérieure (ENS). Sartre graduated and passed his exams to become a professor, but was soon thereafter drafted into the French Army.

Sartre served from 1929 to 1931 as a meteorologist and was drafted again in 1939. He was captured by Germans in the late summer of 1940 and spent nine months as a prisoner of war, only to be released in April 1941 due to poor health (Schrift, 2006). During his time in captivity, he read Heidegger's *Being and Time*, which later influenced his own phenomenological ontology. Upon his release, Sartre founded an underground resistance group, *Socialisme et Liberté*, alongside his long-time friend and ENS schoolmate Simone de Beauvoir, as well as Maurice Merleau-Ponty and Jean-Toussaint Desanti (Schrift, 2006). Each of these colleagues later published their own existential writings. Although the group was unable to actively resist German dominance, Sartre continued to write to express his resistance.

He published *Being and Nothingness*, often considered his life's work, in 1943. He also published a wide range of plays including *Nauseu* (1938), *The Flies* (1943), and *No Exit* (1944), among many others. In these works, he posited many existential themes including, but not limited to, contingency in being, reality for-itself and in-itself, anguish, bad faith, and objectification. His plays included characters who questioned their relationships to the world. These narratives were told through first-person experience and examined concepts such as authenticity and the Other, that have become the foundation of existentialism.

In part three, chapter one, section four of *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre describes what he calls "the Look" (Sartre, 1943, p. 340). This section and concept are the primary focus of my analysis. Sartre examines the existence of the self and develops a theory for the existence of others. Sartre reevaluates Descartes' approach and rather than appealing to introspection as the sole means of investigating the self, observes the apprehension (or experience) of object-ness in the self and subjectivity in the Other. He rejects the *cogito ergo sum* argument and aims to deconstruct Descartes' proof for the existence of the self as well as his philosophical method.

Following the end of the war in 1945, Sartre moved to Rue Bonaparte in Paris and remained there until 1962. It was during this time that he published his most well-known political works and founded the *Les Temps Modernes* (*Modern Times*), a quarterly literary and political review. He later declined the Nobel Prize in literature in 1964, went blind from the use of amphetamines in 1973, and died in 1980 (Schrift, 2006).

Although they were born in very different time periods, Descartes and Sartre both examined the same question: how can I be certain of my own existence? In answering this question, these philosophers developed ontological views explaining the nature of existent beings and epistemological views regarding how we can obtain knowledge about these being and the reality of our world. Despite the commonality in their examinations of a singular issue, Descartes and Sartre developed different answers to this question, each regarding his respective

argument as intuitive. However, despite Sartre's view that Descartes' theory is anathema to existentialism, their explanations for the existence of the self offer certain compatibilities that I discuss later in this paper.

Descartes' Rationalism
Cogito Ergo Sum

Descartes is generally viewed as the first modern rationalist. According to this view, there are important ways in which our knowledge is gained independently of sensory experience. Rationalism is often set in contrast with empiricism, which states that sensory experience is the ultimate source of all our knowledge (Markie, 2013). As such, Descartes relies on contemplative reason rather than observation. He also employs deduction, or valid arguments that derive conclusions from intuited premises, rather than induction, which is a form of "rational insight" (Markie, 2013). These themes are present throughout all of Descartes' written works.

As mentioned earlier, Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy* is divided into six chapters. In this work, Descartes undertakes three major projects: to establish certain knowledge, determine the existence of the self, and to examine his knowledge of the world outside of himself. In this chapter, I analyze each of his six meditations and their respective arguments for these three projects. I also address a particular inconsistency in Descartes' theories and provide a reductive summation of Descartes' *cogito* as well as his arguments which allow for the existence of other minds.

Certain Knowledge

In "Meditation One: Concerning Those Things that Can Be Called into Doubt," Descartes begins his arguments for a philosophical method by investigating epistemology (Descartes, 1979, p. 13). He cautions that unless he is able to find a fundamental truth, or the "first foundations," then he will not have sufficient justification for his scientific views (Descartes, 1979, p. 13). Descartes' term, "first foundations," refers to a basic truth that can be known with absolute certainty. It also explains the title of Descartes' work – he aims to establish his ontology by uncovering the fundamental principles, or truths, from which all of philosophy and science can be derived.

Descartes states that if he finds a reason for doubting even the least of his beliefs then he has a reason to doubt all of them. He then notices that all of his knowledge derives from his senses. And yet, Descartes claims that the senses are unreliable and "they sometimes deceive me" (Descartes, 1979, p. 13). Furthermore, if once deceived by a source of knowledge, then it is prudent not to trust that source again. He claims that even the knowledge we have of our own bodies could

be a dream. Therefore, Descartes concludes that the senses cannot be an epistemic source of knowledge and we can make no assumptions based on experience.

In conclusion to his first meditation, Descartes supposes that it is possible that everything we are aware of, "the air, the earth, colors, shapes, sounds, and all external things," could be the result of an evil deceiver with the omnipotence of God, but whom Descartes no longer presumes to be benevolent (Descartes, 1979, p. 16). According to Descartes, since this scenario is possible, he must assume it to be the case. This is his only recourse if he is to reach a conclusion beyond doubt, according to his rationalist and deductive method.

The Existence of the Self

In "Meditation Two: Concerning the Nature of the Human Mind," Descartes states that, having called everything into doubt, he can start to build up to "something certain or ... at least know for certain that nothing is certain" (Descartes, 1979, p. 17). He reiterates that he cannot trust his senses and then wonders if he even exists. However, assuming there is an evil deceiver who purposefully misleads him, he concludes that there can be no doubt of his existence as long as he is being deceived. This is because even if his senses deceive him, there still exists something (himself) that is being deceived. Therefore, the deceiver cannot reduce Descartes to nothing as long as he thinks that he is something. As a result, it is necessarily true that he exists any time he thinks or conceives of the idea that "I am, I exist," or in the Latin *cogito ergo sum* (Descartes, 1979, p. 17).

In order to fortify this first foundation, Descartes approaches the question of his existence from another perspective. Descartes claims that despite his knowledge that he necessarily exists, he does not yet understand the state or nature of this existence. Considering that it is his first foundation, he must describe what "I am" in order to be certain of his meaning in the claim, "I exist" (Descartes, 1979, p. 17). Descartes considers what he thought he was prior to his introspections and determines that he had previously felt a certainty about the existence of his body, or "this entire mechanism of bodily members" (Descartes, 1979, p. 18). However, he no longer has such certainty as a result of the possibility of deception. Therefore, his past experiences eating, walking, and sensing could all have been dreams. However, his *thinking* can be detached from his physical body while "this alone cannot be detached from me," by which Descartes means his conception of himself (Descartes, 1979, p. 18). Therefore, he reasons that "thought is an attribute that really does belong to me" (Descartes, 1979, p. 18). He exists as long as he thinks and thusly, his existence can be described as "only a thing that thinks" (Descartes, 1979 p. 19). Descartes again reaches the conclusion that his being is now a truly existing thing – he is a mind.

Following this conclusion, Descartes aims to describe the nature of his thoughts. He determines that there are attributes of his thinking mind that are

indistinguishable from his thoughts (e.g. doubts, understandings, affirmations, denials, wills, imaginings, etc). As a result, they must be a part of his existence as a thinking thing. Descartes also admits that he is the one who senses. Therefore, even if the externalities of these senses, such as the sun or the wind are deceptions, he certainly seems to see light, hear leaves rustle, and feel heat. Therefore, Descartes redefines this kind of "sensing" such that it is reducible to thought and it too is a part of his existence as a thinking thing.

However, Descartes claims that this kind of sensing is not our most clear and distinct knowledge. He states that despite our misguided confidence in the externalities of the senses, we have a more distinct comprehension of the mind than the body. He offers an example in a piece of wax which has a particular smell, size, and texture, but radically changes when positioned near a source of heat. In this example, Descartes suggests that what we believed to be wax did not consist in its physical attributes (shape, smell, etc.) because none of these attributes were consistently reliable and yet our understanding of the wax did not waver. Neither can we know the wax by imagining all of its possible forms, given that they are infinite. Rather, his understanding of the wax is determined by the perceptions of his mind, which do not include sight, touch, or imaginings, but an "inspection on the art of the mind alone" (i.e. thought) (Descartes, 1979, p. 21).

Descartes marvels at the fallibility of his own mind, mistaking mental inspection (thought) for eyesight, as in the example of the wax. He states that even when he sees men on the streets, it is by the judgment of his mind and not by his vision that he determines them to be men and not robots. And yet, Descartes states that despite the mistakes of the mind, perception (e.g. I judge the wax as real from the fact that I saw it) is impossible without a human mind. Therefore, regardless of whether or not the wax really exists, "it follows much more evidently that I myself exist from the fact that I see the wax" (Descartes, 1979, p. 22). Thus, in conclusion to his second meditation, Descartes states that all of his experiences seeing things, hearing sounds, etc, fortify his view that he must be known to himself and must exist. As a result, one has a much more distinct knowledge of the mind than of the body and "nothing can be more easily and more evidently perceived by me than my mind" (Descartes, 1979, p. 23).

Knowledge of the Outside World

Descartes' third chapter is entitled, "Meditation Three: Concerning God, That He Exists" (Descartes, 1979, p. 23). In the previous two meditations, Descartes explained his epistemology by describing his deep skepticism for knowledge derived from the senses and then established the first part of his ontology by introspectively recognizing, by means of the *cogito* as the first foundation of truth, himself (his mind) as an existent, a thinking thing. With this foundation in place, Descartes dedicates the following four meditations to examining the results of clear and distinct perceptions of the mind, in other

words, what exists outside his mind. Descartes claims that truth can be uncovered if sought with the clarity and distinctiveness of intellectual perception. These are the criteria for truth according to Descartes. However, returning to the radical doubt from his first meditation, Descartes claims that it is still possible that "some God could have given me a nature such that I might be deceived" (Descartes, 1979, p. 24). Therefore, in order for Descartes to move beyond his first foundations and acquire additional knowledge of the world, he must first establish the nature of this God and whether or not he is a deceiver. Descartes states that "if I am ignorant of these matters, I do not think I can ever be certain of anything else" (Descartes, 1979, p. 24).

Descartes claims that there are three kinds of ideas: innate (which have always existed in our minds), fictitious (which are produced by our imaginations), and adventitious (which are derived from experiences of the world). He states that God is an innate idea. He does not provide a great deal of explanation for this view; however, he claimed in the first meditation that he has had an "opinion of long standing…, namely that there exists a God" (Descartes, 1979, p. 15). This view has the potential to be question-begging if Descartes' claim is that I have always known that God exists, innate ideas are true ideas that I have always known, God is an innate idea; therefore, God must exist. I will explain this and other problems in Descartes' view later.

Descartes poses two arguments for the existence of God. The first follows as such: it is impossible for something (such as my innate idea of God) to come from nothing, an idea's cause must have at least as much formal reality as it does objective reality, my idea of God has infinite objective reality; therefore, God is a being with an infinite formal reality and as such, he must exist. According to Descartes, objective reality is an idea that represents something else, and therefore an idea with infinite objective reality cannot come from me because my existence is finite. Formal reality is simply the virtue of existing and it is reserved "for ideas in which only objective reality is considered" (Descartes, 1979, p. 27). Descartes claims that an object must have as much formal reality as objective reality due to causality, such that if "something is found in the idea that was not in its cause, then the idea would get it from nothing" and surely that is impossible. Since I cannot cause an idea in myself with an infinite objective reality, being neither infinite nor perfect, God, who is infinite and perfect, must be the source of my idea of God. Therefore, due to the fact that I have an idea of God, as an infinite and perfect being, God must necessarily exist. In addition, a perfect being is good and benevolent and therefore, God would not deceive me considering that "deception depends on some defect" (Descartes, 1979, p. 34).

This argument posed by Descartes, lacks the logical and deductive qualities present in his *cogito*. It seems as though his argument is riddled with ad hoc stipulations and unfounded premises, such as his claim that perfect beings are existent and benevolent beings. Could there be a perfectly evil being? This weak trend continues in Descartes' remaining arguments for the existence of God. His

deviation from strictly empirical and deductive reason could be attributed to several causes. It might be the case that Descartes has a profound belief in God and attempts to incorporate this belief into his philosophical method by proving that God must exist. As mentioned earlier, this makes Descartes' theory vulnerable to the accusation that it is question-begging. It is also possible that Descartes felt the need to include God in his philosophical method, regardless of its incompatibility with the rest of his views, due to political pressures. Descartes published his *Meditations on First Philosophy* in 1641, not long after Galileo's condemnation by the Catholic Church for defending Copernicus' heliocentric theory in his publication, *Dialogue Concerning the Two Chief World Systems, and his subsequently forced recantation (Galilei, 1953). Given these events, it is entirely possible that Descartes' ecclesiastical arguments were a façade to protect him from prosecution. Regardless of his motivations, which we cannot know for sure, to include arguments for a divine being in his Meditations, it is fairly apparent that Descartes' arguments for the existence of God are dissimilar to his epistemological inquiries in the first meditation, his cogito argument in the second meditation, and his dual substance arguments in the sixth meditation. Furthermore, it is important to note this incompatibility because Descartes' indirect argument allowing for the existence of other minds stems from his arguments for the existence of God.*

In his second argument for the existence of God, Descartes begins by restating that I exist. He is certain of this ontological truth due to his *cogito* argument. However, my existence must have a cause and there are only five possible ultimate causes: 1) myself, 2) my having always existed, 3) my parents, 4) a less perfect being than God, or 5) God, a perfect being. The first cannot be true because, had I the ability to create myself, I would have made myself a perfect being and I am not. The second possibility requires the continual sustainment of my being by another being and therefore does not solve the problem. The third is an infinite regress. The forth cannot be true because I have an idea of perfection derived from something other than my own mind (given that I am not perfect) and an imperfect being could not give me this idea. This leaves only one option: since I exist and I must have a cause, God must exist to have caused me. Therefore, Descartes makes the ontological claim that God is a necessarily existent being. "It is impossible that I should exist, being of such a nature as I am – namely, having the idea of God in me – unless God in fact does exist" (Descartes, 1979, p. 34).

In his fourth meditation, Descartes considers the possibility of error by examining truth and falsity. He concludes that God has provided him with understanding and will, both of which lead him to truth. Therefore, error can only result from the incorrect usage of these mental capacities. In this way, his idea of God must be true because it is the most clear and most distinct idea he has, which fulfills the criteria of truth according to Descartes. The arguments in this chapter expound upon the perfect and benevolent nature of God, but are not particularly relevant to my focus on his indirect argument which allows for the existence of others. I will refrain from further analysis of the fourth meditation.

Descartes' fifth chapter, "Meditation V: Concerning the Essence of Material Things and Again Concerning God, That He Exists," includes arguments that do not offer a direct proof of the existence of other minds, as in the case of his *cogito* argument's proof of the self, but rather a sort of argument for the existence of God, which allows for the existence of other minds (Descartes, 1901, p. 258). Descartes begins this argument by revisiting his previously established criteria of truth, namely clarity and distinctiveness. Descartes claims that external objects are either clear and distinct or confused and obscure. He uses his mathematical approach to knowledge as an example. He claims that a triangle's angles will invariably sum to 180 degrees. This is a clear and distinct idea and, like all those ideas of external objects that are clear and distinct, it relates to extension, duration, or movement. Descartes claims that these geometric ideas cannot be made false via misconstruction or recombination. Descartes also claims that God is one of these ideas. In contrast, confused and obscure ideas of external objects can be misrepresented. For example, if one were to imagine a chimera with body parts of various animals and inquire as to the nature of its intestines, the answer would be entirely and arbitrarily invented. This is the case with all confused and obscure ideas of external objects. Therefore, Descartes can only be sure of the existence of those things outside of himself that are clear and distinct.

Descartes returns to that which is most clear and distinct to him – God. He states that the "certitude and truth of all science depends on the knowledge alone of the true God, insomuch that, before I knew him, I could have no perfect knowledge of any other thing" (Descartes, 1901, p. 264). This knowledge allows him to know things outside of himself, "innumerable things, not only about God and other mental beings, but also about the nature of physical objects" (Descartes, 1979, p. 264). Therefore, Descartes' ability to have clear and distinct knowledge about things outside his own mind, such as God, allows him to have certain knowledge of the existence of other minds and physical objects.

Descartes' final chapter, entitled "Meditation VI: Concerning the Existence of Material Things, and the Real Distinction between Mind and Body," provides another indirect argument for the existence of other minds (Descartes, 1901, p. 264). Although this chapter is primarily dedicated to explaining his mind-body substance dualism, Descartes offers a proof for the reality of material substance. He states that he has "strong inclinations," or intuitions, to believe in the reality of external material things as a result of his senses. Given that this is the nature of his existence, God must have created him this way. As a result, if material things did not exist despite his intuitions, then God would have deceived him. However, God is not a deceiver. Therefore, material things exist. This argument also applies to Descartes' apprehension of other minds. At the very least, he perceives bodies which, as he stated in his second meditation, are clearly men and not robots and form a connection to other minds according to his substance dualism. This argument posed in the sixth meditation is intended to offer an escape from solipsism and skepticism, although Descartes concedes that man is

prone to error and we must "acknowledge the weakness of our nature" (Descartes, 1901, p. 280). Descartes elaborates on the existence of physical bodies belonging to his and other minds in his sixth meditation; however, these elaborations are not necessary to understand the basic tenets of his logical method which can be used to conclude the existence of other minds. Therefore, for the sake of simplicity, I will not analyze this third aspect of Descartes' ontology.

In summation, Descartes claims that I exist because I think. Furthermore, my innate idea of a perfect God implies the necessary existence of God. This God is benevolent and would not deceive me and thus errors in my judgments can only be the result of my own mistakes. Therefore, those things which appear to my intellectual perceptions as both clear and distinct must be true. The idea of other minds belongs in this category of clarity and distinctiveness and thus, it must be true that there exist other minds. Thus, Descartes' ontology includes three entities: God, minds, and material things. In its most reductive form, Descartes believes that I know I exist because I think and I know that other minds exist because God, who is another mind and about whom I can have certain knowledge, must necessarily exist.

Sarte's Existentialism
Theory of The Existence of Others

Part three of Sartre's work, *Being and Nothingness*, is dedicated to a description of what Sartre calls "being-for-others" (Sartre, 1943, p. 299). I focus on the first chapter of part three, entitled "The Existence of Others" (Sartre, 193, p. 301). According to Sartre's ontology, there are two kinds of reality: for-itself and in-itself. The former is conscious of itself as well as other things, whereas the latter is real but not conscious of itself or what it could become. In addition, that which exists for-itself has an unfixed nature unlike that which exists in-itself and has a fixed nature. And yet, Sartre claims that there is another kind of existence which is "*my* being without being-for-me" (Sartre, 1993, p. 301) In light of this unexplained phenomenon, Sartre dedicates part three of his work to providing a metaphysical explanation of being-for-others and how it is situated in his ontological view of reality.

Sartre discusses his theory of the existence of others in a section entitled "The Look" (Sartre, 1943, p. 340). However, prior to this explanation, Sartre offers three sections in which he establishes the problem of being-for-others, offers a cautionary tale of solipsism, and provides a brief description of Husserl, Hegel, and Heidegger. In the following chapter, I explain these sections prefacing the Look and clarify Sartre's terminology as well as his metaphysical views. I then identify the conditions Sartre establishes as required for the validity of a theory of the existence of others and provide an in-depth analysis of Sartre's arguments for the Look.

Prefacing Remarks

Sartre narrows the scope of his discussion in the first section of chapter one, entitled "The Problem," to focus on the recognition of subjectivity in the Other and object-ness in ourselves (Sartre, 1943, p. 301). Sartre notes that in previous chapters he concluded that human reality is for-itself, however he claims that there is a problem with the completeness of this description. Namely, Sartre suggests that there are "modes of consciousness" that seem to have a radically different ontological structure than either being for-itself or being in-itself. He states that this type of consciousness is "mine" but not "being-for-me" (Sartre, 1943, p. 301).

Sartre's epistemological method is to use experience to explain consciousness. In this way, he was inspired by phenomenologist epistemology, which philosopher Franz Adler defined as "man chooses and makes himself by acting" (Adler, 1949, p. 284). As a result, Sartre relies on qualitative experience and the senses for knowledge of existence and the world. This method contradicts Descartes' claim that the senses do not provide reliable information and the introspections of our epistemology depend on deductive knowledge not experience. Sartre redefines knowledge as the analytical investigation of the world by means of logic and reason. He views this knowledge as detached from the world and prone to error, misconception, and imagination. Throughout his work, Sartre continues to contrast knowledge, which is uncertain and unreliable, with experience, which is direct and certain.

With this in mind, Sartre provides shame as an example of a mode of consciousness that is neither in-itself nor for-itself. According to Sartre, shame is experienced in two ways: as a mode of self-consciousness and as an apprehension of something. The former calls upon an "intimate relation of myself to myself" and Sartre sets this aside as fairly self-explanatory (Sartre, 1943, p. 301). However, the latter is the apprehension of *me* inherently felt "before somebody" or "as I appear to the other;" after all Sartre claims that "nobody can be vulgar all alone" (Sartre, 1943, p. 302). Therefore, I feel shame in the presence of others. Furthermore, reflection is a state that is incompatible with the presence of others. Therefore, this second way by which shame is experienced, unlike the first, is not a phenomenon of reflection and leads me to judge myself as an object. Thus, shame is "shame of oneself before the other" (Sartre, 1943, p. 303). Ultimately, despite Sartre's view that human reality is for-itself, shame exemplifies a mode of consciousness that is mine, because I feel my own shame, but not being-for-me, because I feel shame before the Other.

It is by nature recognition because I recognize that I am as the Other sees me. Furthermore, unlike the false representations of myself that Sartre calls "empty images in the mind of another," shame allows me to see myself as an object, as the Other sees me, and immediately react without reason or comparison to that new type of being. This recognition is a new mode of consciousness. It is not a

comparison because I cannot be both for-itself and in-itself at the same time in order to make such a comparison. And yet, I am responsible for this new being (for-others) as it does not reside in the Other.

Being-for-others presents a problem for Sartre's ontology because it is neither for-itself nor in-itself. Sartre claims that this type of consciousness, exemplified by shame, must be identified by investigating two questions: what is the nature of the existence of the Other and what is the nature of the relation of my being to the being of the Other.

In section two, entitled "The Reef of Solipsism," Sartre defines the Other as a "thinking substance of the same essence as I am" (Sartre, 1943, p. 303). Sartre suggests that neither the positivism of realism nor the transcendentalism of idealists has properly addressed the Other. These views can lead to solipsism, defined by Oxford's English Dictionary as "the view or theory that the self is the only object of real knowledge or the only thing really existent" (OED, 2013). Sartre describes this "perfectly unjustified and gratuitous" theory as "ontological solitude… [which] amount to saying that outside of me nothing exists and so it goes beyond the limits of the field of my experience" (Sartre, 1943, p. 311).

Sartre claims that realists are uninterested in the Other. He believes that this subject is neglected in favor of the realist's pedestrian knowledge of the effect of objects, or "an action of the world," upon the mind (Sartre, 1943, p. 303). Therefore, the realist ignores the reciprocal action of minds and forms an incomplete description of man. This is because the object-ness of man or the body is only that, a body of man. It must be taken as a part of the larger whole which includes the thinking substance and constitutes an "indissoluble unity" (Sartre, 1943, p. 304). To consider the body alone, as the realist does, is to fail to understand the body as surely as a doctor would kill a piece of flesh amputated from the totality of a living being.

The realist only understands the Other by analogy. As such, the behavior of the Other, as a body, reflects emotions and has a consciousness resembling our own emotions and consciousness. However, Sartre claims that the realist assumes the certainty of this analogy and does not explain how to arrive at such a hypothesis. Sartre recalls that, according to the realist, knowledge we have of the Other is probable, not certain. Therefore, if the Other is only accessible to us via the knowledge we have of him, and this knowledge is conjectural, then the Other's existence is also conjectural. Furthermore, in this explanation, the realist must commit to the reality of the external world. Therefore, the body is a real object (material substance) interacting with a thinking mind (immaterial substance), a conclusion that is at best vague. To avoid this issue, the Other becomes a pure representation, "my representation," whose *esse* is a simple *percipi*; that is, one whose existence is measured by the knowledge which we have of it (Sartre, 1943, p. 306). However, since the Other becomes nothing more than my representation, this view does not allow the conditions "for the experience involving others" and entraps the realist in solipsism. Therefore, according to Sartre, the realist is forced

to return to idealism and critical reflection to determine the probability of the Other's existence.

However, Sartre claims that idealism is equally unable to explain the existence of the Other. He considers ontological idealistic entities, such as constitutive and regulative concepts, but the Other does not conform to either description. Sartre claims that when we aim at the experiences of the Other (ideas, volitions, character, etc), it is in pursuit of a "radical negation of my experience" (Sartre, 1943, p. 310). We radically transcend the field of our own experience since the Other is one for whom we are subject, not object. In this way, the Other is conceived as real, even though we cannot conceive of his real relation to us. Sartre states that there are only two solutions to this problem for the idealist.

The first solution is to get rid of the concept of the Other; however, as mentioned before, Sartre views this kind of ontological solitude or solipsism with extreme disdain. That leaves only one other solution: to affirm the real existence ("extra-empirical communication between consciousnesses") of the Other (Sartre, 1943, p. 310). However, Sartre states that this solution is undesirable under the idealist view. As mentioned earlier, the realist solution to the Other refers to idealism in order to avoid solipsism. Therefore, Sartre states in this second solution both realism and idealism hold a common presupposition. This "spatializing presupposition" states that the difference between the Other and myself is a negation, such that the Other is "the self that is *not* myself" and this negation is *external* (Sartre, 1943, pp. 312, 314). This implies a separation between the Other and myself that is a given element of nothingness in the spatial world. Thusly, myself is separated from the Other by a real or ideal space. In this way, the Other can only be an image or a representation to me (precisely what the realist was attempting to avoid). An external negation requires that myself is distinct from the Other because the two are separate substances and thus, my apprehension of the Other is, by definition, impossible. Therefore, an external negation would require a third party to be an intermediary and apprehend both my reality and the reality of the Other in order to determine our separation. As such, Sartre states that the spatializing presupposition inexorably leads to either a probabilism which allows for solipsism or requires God as an intermediary. Finally, Sartre states that God's existence is no more concrete to myself than the Other and thus, offers no foundation of the Other's existence. Sartre concludes that we must abandon the realist solution to the Other because it "necessarily resulted in idealism... which rejects that solipsistic hypothesis, [but] results in a dogmatic and totally unjustified realism.

Having explained the dangers of solipsism and the problems with both idealism and realism, Sartre offers his solution. He claims that the spatializing presupposition is incorrect and rather than viewing the relation of myself and the Other as an external negation, it should instead be viewed as an internal negation. According to this view, there is no separation of substances between the Other and myself. Instead, Sartre claims that I am distinct from the Other because an internal

negation determines "me by means of the Other and determines the Other by means of me" (Sartre, 1943, p. 315). As a result, I am no longer compelled to seek knowledge of an existent beyond the veil of my own perception and experience because according to Sartre view, the Other is as much a part of my existence as I am of his. This solution circumvents the need for God as an intermediary and avoids the reef of solipsism, but more on this later.

In the third and final section preceding the Look, Sartre addresses the views of three other philosophers who tried to overcome this issue of solipsism. According to Sartre, Husserl, Hegel, and Heidegger each seemed to abandon external negation but failed to distance themselves from the consequences of the spatializing presupposition, namely the view that the connection between the Other and myself can only be realized by knowledge. Sartre defines this concept of knowledge as "the clear and distinct position of an individual confronting another individual" (Sartre, 1943, p. 332).

Sartre investigates how these three philosophers address the Other. Sartre compares Husserl to Kant, who was only able to establish the ontological "connection of knowledge" between the Other and myself (Sartre, 1943, p. 318). In this way, Sartre claims that Husserl "measures being by knowledge" and fails to achieve certainty of the Other's existence (Sartre, 1943, p. 329). Additionally, Hegel was only able to establish a kind of being-as-object instead of being-for-others, ultimately relying on knowledge of the Other as an object to realize his connection to myself. Therefore, Sartre claims that Hegel faces an ontological problem when he "identifies knowledge and being" (Sartre, 1943, p. 329). Sartre states that Heidegger's view of "being-with" is a better theory to overcome solipsism given that he describes the original relation between the consciousnesses of the Other and myself not as a separation of "you and me," but rather as "a we" (Sartre, 1943, p. 329). This means that Heidegger describes an existent whose own being implies the Other's being. However, Heidegger generalizes this connection to include a plurality of others and therefore, according to Sartre, eliminates the possibility of a concrete connection between my being and a particular Other through my experience. Sartre claims that this is because Heidegger's theory, which he calls *transcendence*, is a "concept in bad faith" and "devious reasoning" (Sartre, 1943, p. 336).

Therefore, Sartre shows that in each of these three philosophical explanations of the Other, a metaphysical foundation of knowledge as the connection between the Other and myself cannot achieve certainty of the Other's existence. Given that this knowledge of the Other is only probable, it is vulnerable to solipsism. Thus, if we are to refute solipsism, then my relation to the Other is first and fundamentally a relation of "being to being, not of knowledge to knowledge" (Sartre, 1943, p. 329).

Conditions for a Theory of Other Existents

Sartre uses his critiques of these philosophers to determine four necessary and sufficient conditions required for the validity of a theory of the existence of others. His first condition is that the Other's existence cannot be a probability (this is reserved for objects). The Other must be "immediately present to me" and I cannot conjecture about him; I must affirm him by questioning me in my being (Sartre, 1943, p. 338). Therefore, I cannot form a proof, which Sartre calls a "vain conjecture," from doubting my existence or the existence of the Other (Sartre, 1943, p. 338). As such, according to Sartre, "Descartes has not *proved* his [the Other's] existence" (Sartre, 1943, p. 338). Sartre claims that since I have always known that I exist, I must equally have always known that the Other exists in order to develop the certainty necessary to deter the threat of solipsism. Sartre calls this a "pre-ontological comprehension" (Sartre, 1943, p. 338). Sartre also redefines the term *cogito* as the result of one's consciousness being directed upon the pre-reflectively conscious, or myself (Onof, 2010). Therefore, it is a kind of reflection.

According to his second condition, Sartre claims that the *cogito* of my existence must be merged with that of the Other's. The examination of my *cogito* allowed me to transcend myself and reveals the in-itself reality. I must discover the Other in this same way by which my *cogito* reveals to me an indubitable presence of a particular Other. This examination must lead me to an individual Other because that is how I view my own particular existence and therefore, the for-itself of my reflection will lead me to the for-others. Ultimately, my theory for the existence of others must not consist of "*reasons for believing* that the Other exists, but the Other himself as not being me" (Sartre, 1943, p. 338).

In the third condition, Sartre states that the *cogito* must not reveal the Other-as-object. As mentioned earlier, objects are probable, probability is based on "the infinite congruity of our representation," and the Other is not a representation. The Other is "for us" (Sartre, 1943, p. 339). Finally, according to Sartre's fourth condition, when I apprehend the Other as not being me, this is an internal negation and not an external negation. Sartre states that the external negation separates myself from the Other as detached substances and as such, any apprehension of the Other is impossible by definition. Internal negation is defined by Sartre as a "synthetic active connection of the two terms, each one of which constitutes itself by denying that it is the other" (Sartre, 1943, p. 339) This alternative negation allows for the reciprocal action between consciousnesses that Sartre considers paramount to the ontology of the Other. This, in turn, requires that Others be viewed as a totality and not a cohesive collection. Although, Sartre concludes that it is impossible to see the totality from the perspective of the whole (cohesive collection) and therefore there is no "unifying synthesis of Others" (Sartre, 1943, p. 339).

In conclusion, Sartre's conditions for the existence of the Other follow as such: 1) the Other's existence cannot be probable, 2) my reflection must be merged

with the Other's, 3) the Other cannot be an object, and 4) the Other's existence is an internal negation of my own existence. With these four conditions in place, Sartre turns to his theory of the existence of others via his examination of the Other through the Look.

The Look

        Sartre begins his discussion of being-for-others by observing that at least one of the "modalities of the Other's presence to me is object-ness" (Sartre, 1943, p.340). However, according to Sartre's second condition, object-ness cannot be the fundamental relation between myself and the Other. If objectification, or the process by which you view the Other as existing in-itself rather than for-itself, were treated as the primary relation by which the Other was discovered, this would entail that the Other is first revealed to our perceptions (knowledge of the mind). Such knowledge, as we have seen, can only result in a conjectural existence of the Other.

        However, regardless of how ill-suited object-ness is to describe my relation to the Other, Sartre must explain this modality of the Other's presence. He notes that my perceptions indicate that it is infinitely more probable that the man on the street is a man and not a perfected robot. Therefore, my initial apprehension of the Other is not merely as an object but as a probable object. This probability, which has greater certainty than conjecture, will lead me to a "fundamental apprehension of the Other in which he will not be revealed to me as an object but as a presence in person" (Sartre, 1943, p. 340). In other words, my apprehension of the Other as a probable object leads me to conclude that the Other must be manifested in a different way than solely through the knowledge I have of him.

        Sartre claims that although perception of the Other is not primary evidence, the nature of perception is to refer to something other than the self. This is a guarantee of the object's probability. Furthermore, this probable object (the Other) cannot refer to an "infinite series of appearances," as in idealism, or an "isolated entity" outside of the reach of my experience, as in realism. Therefore, it must refer to a "primary relation between my consciousness and the consciousness of the Other," although we have not yet determined the nature of that primary relation or how we come to discover it (Sartre, 1943, p. 341).

        Following this explanation of our initial view of the Other, Sartre explains why we see the Other as an object and that it is possible to move beyond this apprehension to discover primary evidence of him. Sartre claims that the experience we have of the Other is neither mystical nor occasional, but rather a "reality of everyday life" (Sartre, 1943, p. 341). The ordinary appearance of the Other refers to a fundamental relation of my consciousness and the Other's. Sartre illustrates this point by imagining an ordinary scenario in a park: I apprehend a man in a park passing benches on the edge of a lawn. I apprehend him as an object and a man at the same time. As an object, he has location relative *from* things (e.g.

"two yards and twenty inches from the lawn"); whereas, perceiving him as a man leads me to view him without distance, as a privileged object about which things are arranged *around* him (e.g. "the lawn remains two yards and twenty inches away from him") (Sartre, 1943, pp. 341, 342). As an object, the Other is merely an addition to the world around him. As a man, the Other has a spatiality without parts that is not *my* spatiality. Upon seeing the Other, I realize that instead of objects grouping towards me, there is now an "orientation which flees from me" (Sartre, 1943, p. 342). Sartre claims that this is not yet the primary relation we seek because the Other is still an object of knowledge. However, it refers us one step closer to a relation of myself to the Other.

Sartre explains that I can understand the relation of the object-man to the object-lawn through its objective relation (e.g. Pierre has glanced at this lawn). However, its subjective relation of man-as-object (e.g. "the extent that the relation *reaches toward him*" or how the lawn appears to Pierre) completely escapes me (Sartre, 1943, p. 342). I cannot put myself at the center of his relation and therefore the appearance of a man in my universe causes a disintegration of the relations and distances that I apprehend between myself and my universe. The man-as-object creates his own distances as objects become located *around* him, in contrast to the object-man which is located distances *from* objects. When this reorientation takes place, the new space "is made *with my space*" (Sartre, 1943, p. 343). I take part in this regrouping, but I do not understand it. Sartre concludes that in this realization, "an object [the Other] has appeared which has stolen the world from me" (Sartre, 1943, p. 343). Everything in my universe regroups and becomes fixed to a new object (the Other) and therefore becomes decentralized from me and undermines the centralization of my own being. And yet, despite all of this, the Other still belongs to my distances and therefore remains an object for me. It is important to note that my apprehensions of the world centered around me and the world centered around the Other are occurring at the same time. Therefore, the total disintegration of the universe is not toward nothing but "there for me as a partial structure of the world" (Sartre, 1943, p. 344).

And yet, Sartre has not yet surpassed my apprehension of the Other as an object. To do this, Sartre states that when I apprehend the Other as a thing that sees what I see, then my primary relation to the Other must be to view him as a subject and must necessarily exhibit the "permanent possibility of being seen by the Other" (Sartre, 1943, p. 344). Therefore, I recognize subjectivity in the Other by recognizing objectivity in myself when he sees me. At this stage in my realizations, the Other is no longer an object. After all, I cannot be an object for an object, which has no awareness of itself. Furthermore, the sense in which I am viewed as an object must come from the Other-as-subject because it cannot derive itself for me, from me, or from the Other-as-object. Thus, Sartre concludes that "being-seen-by-the-Other is the truth of seeing-the-Other" and therefore, neither the Other nor myself can exist in solitude (Sartre, 1943, p. 345). The Other is, on

principle, "the one who looks at me" (Sartre, 1943, p. 345). To understand the Other, Sartre states that we must understand the Look.

According to Sartre, the eye is the supporting mechanism for the Look; however, when I apprehend the Look, "I cease to perceive the eyes" as they are not the most important aspect of the Look and the Other seems "to go in front of them" (Sartre, 1943, p. 346). The Look is apprehended without distance although it simultaneously seems to hold me at a distance when its immediate presence removes me from it. By directing my attention on the Look I dissolve my own perspective into the background because I cannot apprehend the Look (directed upon myself) and perceive the world at the same time. Sartre claims that the Look is initially an intermediary referring me to myself, such that I experience a kind of vulnerability and recognize that I am seen.

Vulnerability is an experiential aspect of the Other's Look. Sartre claims that being watched leaves me inclined to run away because my freedoms and possibilities are limited by the Other's presence in my universe. This leads me to fear the Other because my possibilities (such as hiding in a dark corner) are limited by the Other's possibilities (such as shining a flash light in the dark corner). Therefore, when I apprehend the Other's Look, I fear a "subtle alienation of my possibilities" (Sartre, 1943, p. 354).

In accordance with his existential view that "I am my acts," Sartre explains that we are our experiences, for example, "I *am* my jealousy; I do not *know* it" and "it is shame or pride which makes me *live*, not *knowing* the situation of being looked at" (Sartre, 1943, pp. 347, 348, 350). Sartre claims that since I am what I am not and I am not what I am, I cannot define myself as truly being without resorting to bad faith. That is until the Other is looking at me. When this occurs I am affected in my being as the world reorients itself and I can apprehend the modifications to myself. This Look from the Other allows me to conceptually identify myself through a reflective *cogito*, in which I apprehend the internal negation of myself as not the Other. This reflective consciousness makes the self present and since this self-reflection only occurs during the Look, "I have my foundation outside myself" (Sartre, 1943, p.349). Sartre simplifies this experience as "I see *myself* because *somebody* sees me" (Sartre, 1943, p. 349).

Sartre returns to his example of shame. When I experience shame, I am the object the Other is judging. The Other's Look makes me exist beyond my being in a new and different modality. Sartre explains that this is a relation in which I exist with a being that is *mine* without *being-for-me*. Through this experience, shame brings me a profound unity of consciousness because I accept and wish that the Other should confer upon me a being which I recognize. My shame shows me that I am this being as seen by the Other and "in order for me to be what I am it suffices merely that the Other look at me" (Sartre, 1943, p. 351). This is because I cannot realize myself when I am alone. I only grasp the state of my existence (e.g. I am being seated) in the Other's Look. When I apprehend the Other's Look, I recognize that it is at a distance which leads me to conclude that I

have an outside, or what Sartre calls "a nature" (Sartre, 1943, p. 352). Sartre concludes that shame is the apprehension of my own existence as the Other sees me which ultimately "escapes me and is unknowable as such" (Sartre, 1943, p. 352). Therefore, I recognize the internal negation of myself as not the Other and the Other as not me. In conclusion to his example of shame, Sartre states that in the Look I recognize my own existence, but only through the reciprocal action of my consciousness with the consciousness of the Other. Therefore, simultaneously, as I recognize myself, I recognize the existence of the Other.

As a result, the Look is an experience that I apprehend any and every time I see the Other watching me. This includes when I think the Other *could* be watching me. It is not something that I know via perceptions, introspections, or contemplations. It is something I experience, empirically, with my senses. The Look conforms to Sartre's conditions for the existence of the Other. The Other's existence is no longer probable. It is as certain as my own existence which I define as the internal negation of the Other. This internal negation merges my consciousness with the consciousness of the Other because I experience his view of me as an object and then recognize myself as not him, hence fulfilling the second condition. This apprehension also accomplishes the third condition because the Other is no longer an object, considering it takes a subject to recognize objectivity. Finally, the Other's existence is an internal negation of my own existence, according to Sartre's forth condition and thus, it meets all of the necessary and sufficient condition required for the validity of a theory of the existence of others.

Results
Compatibility of Descartes and Satre

In order to determine the compatibility of Descartes' theory of the existence of the self with Sartre's theory of the existence of others I must first identify and address their differences and deviations from one another. I will then discuss their methods of inquiry and the basics of their argument. Finally, I will analyze their holistic theories in the context of their larger epistemological and ontological views.

The primary obstacle separating Descartes' view from Sartre' view is epistemology. Descartes is a rationalist and relies on introspection and reasoned arguments for the verification of the self. In his first meditation, he discards the senses as unreliable. However, Sartre believes that to throw away the senses is to discard our knowledge of the world and ourselves. He, as an empiricist, relies on qualitative experience and the senses to understand the nature of being. He also claims that one cannot know one's own existence by means of mental proofs. This is a direct critique of Descartes' method of inquiry.

However, Descartes doubts the senses in his first and second meditations because he believes that he must establish with certainty the causes of sensations in order to escape solipsism. It is possible that the sensations I feel derive from

unknown causes that are internal to my own mind or from some deceiver and therefore, I must rule out these scenarios prior to trusting that there is an externality to the causes of my sensations. Generally, theories appeal to the standard involuntariness argument, which states that sensations come to me involuntarily, as such I am not aware of causing them myself and thus, the causes of my sensations must be external to my mind. This argument is not strong enough for Descartes' purposes given that it does not rule out an evil deceiver. Therefore, Descartes adds to this argument by stating that the whole essence of my mind is thought. This is an innate idea. If the causes of my sensations were in my mind, I would, by necessity, be aware of causing them myself. It is Descartes' view that I am aware of all of my own thoughts and cannot be mistaken about whether I have a particular thought. "All of my thoughts are *evident* to me, and my thoughts are *incorrigible" (Jorgensen, 2010)*. Sensations come to me involuntarily and I am not aware of causing them myself. Therefore, the causes of sensations are external to my mind.

Descartes establishes this externality of his senses in later meditations. He claims that God is not a deceiver and therefore the things that I perceive by my nature that are clear and distinct must be real. It is an essential part of his ontology that material objects exist and I can have knowledge of them. He also acknowledges that he must be the one sensing and therefore, regardless of the real or unreal externality of his senses, he sees, smells, hears, etc. These senses are reducible to thought and therefore, a part of his existence as a thinking thing. Furthermore, Descartes claims that anytime he senses something it reminds him that he exists (e.g. "I myself exist from the fact that I see the wax") (Descartes, 1979, p. 22).

As a result, Descartes' early skepticism in the first and second meditations is indeed the antithesis of existentialism; however, as he builds upon what he can certainly know, Descartes reincorporates the senses into his knowledge of what is true and uses his intuitions about these senses, namely their being clear and distinct and a part of his nature, to determine the externalities of his senses, the materiality of the world outside his mind, and his comprehensive knowledge of his own mind. In fact, his arguments for material substance in the sixth meditation aim to escape skepticism and solipsism by establishing the reality of our perceptions. Therefore, Descartes begins his introspections by discarding the senses, but then after determining their certainty, relies on them consistently in his arguments for the existence of God and material substances.

This is compatible with Sartre's view that the senses and experience are direct and certain. Although he does not start from a place of extreme doubt in order to determine this epistemological consideration, Sartre believes that we are our actions and therefore, our existence depends on experience. Descartes' ontology differs from Sartre because he believes that we are our thoughts. However his view, when taken from a holistic perspective of his *Meditations*, is that we are our thoughts, but seeing as our senses are reducible to thought, they too are an

essential part of our existence. As a result, Descartes' and Sartre's views are more compatible than Sartre originally believed, at least in their ends if not their means.

Their views are also compatible in some of the examples they give to personify their theories. Both Descartes and Sartre refer to our initial perception of man as being infinitely more probable that he is a man and not a robot. Descartes views this as a judgment of his mind rather than simple vision and Sartre views this as our apprehension of a probable object. Although Sartre does not provide a great deal of detail as to how we determine this man to be a probable object, it seems that both Descartes and Sartre find means of intuiting (by either thought or experience) that the man is not a robot.

In addition, Descartes claims in his wax example that I know I exist because I see the wax. This is not a far cry from Sartre's theory of the Look in which I know I exist because I see the Other who sees me. According to Descartes, the fact that I am seeing means that I am thinking and to think is to exist. According to Sartre, the fact that the Other sees me allows me to see myself as an internal negation of his existence. Despite Sartre's disdain for knowledge in the place of experience, this view seems to incorporate introspection, or reflective consciousness or *cogito* as Sartre calls it. Therefore, it seems that mental introspections have a place in Sartre's epistemology. This internal negation, which is one of the four essential conditions of his theory of the existence of others, claims that I am because I am not the Other and the Other is because he is not me. Although Sartre would not consider the fact that he thinks as comprehensive proof of his existence, I do not think that his theory of the Look is incompatible with Descartes' views. It would likely help him to determine the existence of others without having to appeal to God to overcome the spatializing presupposition in the sense that the Other is a separate substance from me. Descartes does not preclude the idea of reciprocal action between consciousnesses. Although Sartre believes that we cannot reach the Other by having knowledge of him, perhaps Descartes might claim that the experience of thinking is what determines my existence and through the experience of thinking of the Other as he experiences thoughts of me, I might achieve certain knowledge of his existence.

Ultimately, regardless of their dissimilar lives in different time periods and their deviations in epistemology and ontology, Descartes' and Sartre's theories seem to exhibit certain compatibilities. This is not to say that they have the same views. I suggest that their theories might offer each other a kind of theoretical cooperation. They examine the same question: how can I be certain of my own existence? They utilize similar means of introspection, appeal to intuition, and offer compatible examples to personify their theories. Furthermore, Descartes' theory which allows for the existence of others based upon the existence of God is inconsistent with his *cogito* and material substance arguments. Based on the compatibilities I have just reviewed between Sartre and Descartes, Sartre's examination of the Other could likely fortify Descartes' knowledge of the world outside his mind. It seems to me that Sartre's Look would be compatible with

Descartes' philosophical method. At the very least it does not seem that Descartes' theory is quite so anathema to existentialism.

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