SAPERE AUDE

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In his essay "What is Enlightenment?", Immanuel Kant states that the motto of the Enlightenment is "*Sapere aude*!" [Dare to know!]. This phrase expresses our mission at Sapere Aude, the undergraduate philosophy journal of the College of Wooster. We invite undergraduate students to submit papers concerning any area of philosophy for publication in our journal, the goal being the general pursuit of knowledge. All submissions go through a blind peer review process, conducted by College of Wooster students to ensure the highest levels of quality.

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dare to know

Contents

Interview with Dr. Adriel M. Trott

EMMA ARVEDON AND SCOTTY GORDON

This interview was conducted with Dr. Adriel M. Trott, associate professor of philosophy at Wabash College, on February 7th, 2019 at the College of Wooster, prior to Dr. Trott presenting "The Matter of Sexual Difference in Aristotle's Biology" for the Phi Sigma Tau Honor Society Lecture.

Scotty: Thank you, Professor Trott, for coming to speak with us. This is a great honor for our journal and our school to have you here, and we're also very excited about your lecture.

Dr. Trott: It's a pleasure to be here. Thanks for having me.

Scotty: So just getting into what you're looking at in terms of Aristotle and how his biology and his metaphysics relate to sexual difference, one of the main themes I saw you looking at was different models of hylomorphism, different models of that form-matter distinction, and how those different models reflect different attitudes towards gender and how it is natural vs. constructed. Can you elaborate more on that?

Dr. Trott: Yeah, so I'm interested in the concept of nature in general, and I'm particularly interested in the ways that ancient thinkers are working through using nature as a ground to justify social order. So, my first book is about the way that Aristotle uses nature in the *Politics*. We see the ways people talk about politics, where they talk about it as either natural or, as you say, constructed or conventional, and that didn't sit well with me, because it seemed like you could say, 'if human decision is involved, then it's not natural, and therefore there's no real justification for it'. That seems like a more basic sense of nature, that it just could be opposed to reason, and I think you get this out of social contract theorists, so it's a very modern sense of nature as what's not involving human reason. So I found in Aristotle's *Physics* a way of talking about nature as an internal source of movement, this *archê kinêseôs*, this idea that natural things are things that move themselves. And so, reason then, for the human, isn't something opposed to nature; it's actually a way of fulfilling oneself, to become more what you are. So I was thinking about that as a way of understanding political life as not being about drawing boundaries that have to resist nature and overcome it, and say, 'nature is over there', in a kind of Lockean sense or Rousseauian sense, like we've left nature behind and now we're political—which, I'm sure you know, those ways of thinking about political life often lead to those exclusions of those who are more 'natural', and therefore not really 'political', or women and those who work with their bodies are considered more 'natural', and so not really capable of being in political life. So, one response that I received when I was working on that was, 'it might make sense for the *Politics*, but in Aristotle's biol-

ogy, it seems like he's really driving apart the form from the material', or 'he's making these distinctions that make nature look more like *technē* or artifice'. And while I had really resisted that in the reading of the *Politics*, I thought that that really did seem like a problem in the biological works. So this idea that we understand nature as a *technē* is the sense that nature is just a super-being that has made, and everything is made, and the making is always about imposing form or meaning onto some material stuff that makes it possible to be in the world. So, I started looking at those texts. I started thinking about them, and I was struck by how, even in the way that form works, it has this interdependence on various material forces and elemental forces, and I was like, 'this is so strange'. And then I went back and found the ways that people had responded and read that in Aristotle, and the kinds of acrobatics they had to go through in order to say, 'no, no, no, form can't really be based on material', and I thought that was really interesting too. So, Aristotle has this idea of 'vital heat' as the heat that makes the semen do the work, and I was like, 'well that sounds a lot like heat'. But scholars have argued, 'no no, that's a kind of more divine element, so it's not really material'. And I thought, 'that's a strange thing', like, all of the sudden we're introducing a fifth cause of 'divine elements' into Aristotle's causal structure? So I wanted to spend some time with that, and think through the idea that the thing that does the work of form has some way of being dependent on material. But the question you asked was about how this connects to gender and the significance of that for gender. So another thing Aristotle does in the biology—and I think we can trace our own continued ways of thinking in these ways back to Aristotle—he says that form is what the male is contributing and material is what the female is contributing. This is a little bit strange and complicated. There's a couple of different models people have had historically for thinking about sexual difference: one is this model we call the 'one-sex model'—maybe you've heard of this before?—the one-sex model is the idea that there really is only one true sex, and that's male, and female is the inverted male. And on that account there's a kind of sliding, like you have to work on 'being male' and you can slide into not being considered as male. So the sense of the one sex also makes the measure of sex a matter of degrees. Then there's the 'two-sex model', which comes up much later in the Renaissance. In the two-sex model, women have completely other capacities than the male does, but then those capacities are considered to be less significant or worthwhile, so it still justifies a kind of hierarchy. But I found that Aristotle is also in this strange place between the one-sex and the two-sex models, because on the one hand, he does talk about the difference in terms of degrees of heat; on the other hand, he talks about it in terms of form and matter, which seem like they have to be separate causes that do different work. So I wonder, what does this mean? Does this mean that form and matter really are a difference of degree, and if that's true, what does that mean to think of the difference of the causes as a difference of degree? And if it means no, actually the male and female really are a difference of kinds, then why is the distinction between them based on the degree to which they can heat? It seems like that's really a difference of degree. So I wanted to triangulate that and put those two together, and think about how difference might be working. So I refer to this as a 'Möbius strip' model of a relationship. The idea is that there is difference there, so it's not like what it is to be female is 'not male', or what it is to be material is just not form, but there's also a place where there's an interdependence between those things that resists the metaphysics behind a strict gender binary.

Emma: Off of that, while I was reading this, I was wondering how exactly, not necessarily non-binary people, but maybe how intersex people would fit in this?

Dr. Trott: I think that's what I'm trying to think about: why this model supposes we only have these two ends. Part of what I think is difficult for us to think about intersex people or non-binary people is that we don't have the conceptual apparatus; we don't have the metaphysics to think that, since our metaphysics is so binary and opposed. So, I'm hoping that this kind of model or this way of thinking about the relationship that I think can be found in Aristotle's biology can actually be a resource for thinking what doesn't seem to quite fit in the binary. There's a couple of issues and concerns and caveats that I want to have. This really gets to larger questions about how we think about difference, as I'm sure you've thought about. So if we think about difference as just like contradiction, X and not-X, then you are still thinking about what it means to be the second point in terms of the first and not on its own, and historically this has been the condition, this has been what it's meant to think sexual difference. Women are just not men. Anyone who is not "man" is somehow just opposed, and there's just no other way to think of that relationship. So there's that kind of problem. But I don't want to entirely collapse them either, because I think that just gets back to thinking in terms of the one pole. So I'm trying to hold those positions apart. I think that there are possibilities for thinking other kinds of difference that aren't just: you put yourself somewhere on a continuum, but a different way of thinking of relationship.

Scotty: Going back to the nature vs. culture distinction, the nature vs. convention distinction—which I guess is also a difference on its own—in your article about vital heat and material nature, you discuss a sort of debate between Judith Butler and Luce Irigaray. It seemed to me that there was some sort of tension between identifying distinct feminine or masculine elements in nature—whether or not they were normatively hierarchical or not—versus just saying it's conventional, just saying it's constructed. Do you think you could comment on that?

Dr. Trott: Yeah. I find that debate between Butler and Irigaray to be really productive, especially for thinking about this problem of difference. So Irigaray's book, *Speculum of the Other Woman*, is this mimetic reading practice in the history of philosophy. It's fascinating. She tries to read these places in texts in the history of philosophy by drawing out what's forgotten and unsaid and necessary for the argument to get off the ground. So for example, she has a piece on Aristotle's biology where she's playing with and pointing to the ways in which the account seems to depend on the material capacities that underlie. And she has this larger point that she's making out of this about how, while form has come to be considered as the place for meaning and significance and essence and so forth, to exist in actual substance in the world, it depends on material's work. But material gets elided and forgotten and erased. So Butler responds to this with the concern that while Irigaray is sort of making this move away from what has been forgotten, by positing it like that it still might work to make what it is to be material or female still this uncharacterized service to form or to male. There is this great piece by Àsta who argues that we have categories that we already hold onto that lead us to see and produce the world as if it is natural and given. We have categories of gender that is a strict binary and then we look at bodies and say they clearly fit into the categories. In a sense, Butler is saying that you already have the categories in your mind and then only the things that fit into those categories get picked up by your perception. So when that is happening at the level of gender, we only have the categories that allow us to see in these strict binaries and so we can't even compute the idea of a body that does not fit in, doesn't even show up in the way that that thing that doesn't fit into

time and space wouldn't show up for Kant. I found that engagement really productive for thinking about what it might mean to say that even material in Aristotle isn't just this stuff and that it already has its own power. What would it mean to think about it as already having its own power? No one pays attention to the *Meteorology* or *On Generation and Corruption*. I think that part of it is that it is hard to get to. What is this about and why should I care for it? I think another reason is it does not fit so easily into the way that we generally have understood the *Physics* and *Metaphysics*. There is something to be said for looking at those texts that complicate things and allow us to rethink the physics and metaphysics.

Emma: In your paper, in seems as if you end with talking about seeing material in a new way like as opposed or not opposed, but differently from how we have seen it with Aristotle. What do you think are the implications?

Dr. Trott: Some of them have already been said and I think that part of that is that it challenges the attachment—if you don't think of material as the other end of form, then it doesn't make as much sense to think of female as tacked onto material as the other end of male. I think that you are right that there might be other implications and possibilities. There is a lot of work being done in how forgetting of material or the treating of material as just stuff for the world leads to ways of opposing nature to history and culture. You could think about the ways in which we are destroying the Earth as thinking of material as what we can take up for ourselves and that it has no power of its own. That project of thinking about how the materiality of the Earth resists us in these moments. I just saw something about someone during the polar vortex last week who was joking on Twitter, some climate denier who was stating that it was not that big of a problem because we have fifty to one hundred years. The world is going to end in fifty to one hundred years and you think, 'Haha, that is not a problem'. That is pretty much about now.

Scotty: Going back to Butler's Kantian argument about perceiving and conceiving of gender, would you say that those who identify as non-binary or as outside of the binary in some way as having a different conceptual apparatus than most other people?

Dr. Trott: I do not want to pretend to speak for non-binary people. You could say that we have done them wrong by only giving them one metaphysical apparatus or set of ideas/ways of thinking. I do not know if it is so much that individuals can walk in the world and sort of select their way of seeing it in that sense. I think that those things are very much imposed on us through images, discourse, and all kinds of mythologies that it is not so much that individuals can resist them. We all become sites for reproducing them even as we are not aware of it. I do think that when we recognize that having this way of thinking makes it difficult for some people to live well that we now have the responsibility to find other ways of thinking.

Scotty: In this discussion of completely eliminating the boundary between convention and nature, do you see this as being related to Foucault's bioethics and biopower?

Dr. Trott: I have another article manuscript that I am working on that deals with Aristotle's *Politics*. I think that we have to find ways beyond biopower in ways that don't fall into the problems of the juridical institutional ways that he talks about power. I think that ways of thinking can support biopolitical projects and make us have those kinds of concerns, but I also think that we have to be careful to not just say biopower is a problem, therefore let's

overcome the body and ignore the body. The experiences and capacities of bodies are also matters for justice that we should be concerned with. We should not, in that Agambenian sense, include the concern in order to force out and bracket the concern [for the body] from the focus of political life. I think that can be just as bad for people who live in their bodies.

Emma: Do you think that this is bigger than just gender? Because when you are talking about living in a body and taking into consideration people who have disabilities/other things where you are seen as not meeting the expectation of what a body should be, concerns are being raised here.

Dr. Trott: The binary itself already sets up a sense of only having two kinds of bodies. We have this [view of] which is the better kind of body to be and this other body also does some other things that we need it to do. That already has a problem of a kind of hierarchy that it sets up. In an interesting way in the one sex model, I think that there is more ability to think those different spaces within because you can see that one can move away. Helen King wrote this book where she talks about these figures in ancient Hippocratic texts where a woman would be alone while her husband wasn't around anymore and she would start to grow a beard according to this legend. It was this sense that not having the social position actually changed her body. That kind of sense of fluidity actually is really productive and interesting, but it ends up still meaning that there is one sight of definition or reference that everything is measured in relationship to, which is not good. When you get the capacity for fluidity on that account, there is a cost and the cost is that it is measured in terms of being male.

Emma: Do you think that disabilities would fit into this sort of binary/sliding scale?

Dr. Trott: Yes, I think that it suggests that same sense of thinking of one notion that is often produced by our world, not given. People within disability studies talk about how it is not so much that people are disabled, but that the world is set up for some people that make them more able to get around in it. How could we change the world so that more people would be able to get around? If you start with the pull of what we have already decided it means to be able bodied or to have one way of getting around in the world.

Scotty: That covers about everything that I had to ask. Thank you very much for taking the time to be with us today. I believe I speak for both of us when I say we're very much looking forward to your lecture.

Dr. Trott: Thank you so much.

Survival and the First Person Perspective

KATHRYN CARPENTER RECH

Let me be another to ask the question—what is it that matters in survival? When I imagine scenarios in which *I* have survived certain precarious situations, what do I imagine as being evidence of my survival? In most situations I imagine myself—just as I am now—a mother and a wife who, after being faced with possible death, would return home to the family I know and love. The continuation of my mental life is always a factor; psychological continuity seems to be what matters. But is this the only way to think about survival? Derek Parfit and David Lewis thought so. And maybe they were right, when considering the survival of specific persons. But could *we* survive as *different* people? If my memories were replaced by someone else's, could I still be *me*? I think it's possible—if my first-person perspective remained intact. If it's *me* experiencing the life of this other person, then it's a case of survival. The goal of this paper is to explore the possibility that psychological continuity needn't be necessary for the persistence of *you* or *I* if there is causal continuity between mental stages maintaining our same first-person perspective. To be clear, I deny that psychological continuity—as defined by Parfit and Lewis—is necessary for survival. But I believe first-person perspective continuity is a psychological phenomenon. I don't deny Lewis's definition of a person (moreover, I endorse it), but rather I offer that we can be different people.

Throughout this paper I will challenge the notion that we are fundamentally persons, and point at the possibility that we are something else—something that has the capacity to be more than one person. But I don't wish to define what that is in this paper. I will end with some general thoughts on the matter, but nothing conclusive. When I use the italicized pronouns *you* or *I* or *he/she*, I am referring to this nameless entity that I believe we are more fundamentally than we are persons. I will, however, outline in great detail why it is I believe we have the ability to be more than one person—namely, through first-person perspective continuity—thus leading to the idea that we must be something else.

I Psychological and Causal Continuity (and the lack there of)

In short, psychological continuity encompasses remembering one's past, and carrying out the intentions and desires relevant to those memories while maintaining a general stability in character. Any change in psychologically continuant persons should be gradual. Parfit

and Lewis were two famous advocates of the idea that psychological continuity is that what matters in survival. And they both pointed to the necessary inclusion of causal continuity to ensure the right kind of relation holds between our mental stages to guarantee survival. This causal continuity is what distinguishes psychological continuity from a mere copy of our memories. It's what ensures that *you* survive, and not just a copy of you, if we can survive solely through the continuation of our mental lives.

In defining a *quasi*-memory, Parfit stated, "my belief is dependent upon this experience in the same way (whatever that is) in which a memory of an experience is dependent upon it" (1971). "Whatever that is" is meant to signify the necessary causal dependence required to ensure that a q-memory is not just a copy of a memory. Lewis included the requirement of "bonds of lawful causal dependence" in his explanation of the R-relation (1976). The R-relation is what holds between mental time-slices, or person-stages, as these moments are often called. It's what allows each memory to be psychologically continuous with the present. And as long as causal continuity is included in an account of psychological continuity, we're to take it that the checklist for the survival is complete: the person in question has indeed made it to the present person-stage. What does not allow for survival is an abrupt and total change in our mental lives (I will challenge this).

There are a variety of thought experiments available to test the sensibility of this theory: fission, fusion, brain transposition, etc. Brain continuity is usually present in these hypothetical cases because logic allows us to assume (to a great extent) that a brain can preserve psychological and causal continuity. Not to say this isn't a controversial idea, but rather it's relatively easy to accept that someone will survive if their brain survives—with their memory and mental life intact—wherever their brain happens to end up. For the most part, in regards to persons and survival, I think the psychological continuity theory holds up.

But there are some decidedly gray areas. For example, what happens if we erase a person's memory and replace it with a *copy* of someone else's memory? Consider two persons, Alpha and Beta. Alpha and Beta agree to an experiment that will allow for them to exchange bodies. But the experimenter doesn't take the proper measures necessary to ensure psychological (and causal) continuity. Instead, prior to erasing Alpha's memory, he only makes a copy of it. It's that copy that replaces Beta's memory in Beta's brain, and vice versa. This is to say: Alpha and Beta did not switch bodies at all. Let's turn our attention to what I will now refer to as the A-body person. The A-body person has Alpha's brain and Beta's memories. So who would feel the pain if a dog ran up and bit the A-body person on the leg? We can rule out Beta: we know that Beta did not survive in the mere copy of his memories, so he won't feel the pain. But Alpha, having none of his original memories and only those of Beta's, is not psychologically continuous with the present A-body person either. This is where I find things to be problematic.

According to Parfit and Lewis, because Alpha is not psychologically continuous with either the A-body person or the B-body person, Alpha no longer exists and therefore can't feel pain (or anything for that matter). Under this logic, the A-body person is a completely new person. Let's call him Charlie. Charlie has Alpha's brain (and body) and the copy of Beta's memories. If Parfit and Lewis are correct, Charlie (not Alpha) feels the dog biting his leg. And Charlie will carry on about his life in Alpha's body, with Beta's memories.

I interject. What's really going here? On the surface level, because I agree that psychological continuity is what matters in the survival of persons, this seems to be a fair claim to make: Charlie—the resulting new person residing in the A-body—feels the pain. But this is Alpha's brain. I don't think we can ignore the question—might Alpha and Charlie share the same first-person perspective? Those who *don't* hold that psychological continuity is necessary for the survival of a person might reason that Alpha just *thinks* he's Beta (and there is no new person, Charlie). This is a similar sentiment, though not quite the same. I propose the possibility that *he*, who was previously Alpha, *does* feel the pain: because *he* is now Charlie. I would like to explore the idea that Alpha is first-person perspective continuous with Charlie.

II The First-Person Perspective

Before going any further, it's important to clarify exactly what I mean when I say "first-person perspective." Lynn Rudder Baker wrote extensively on her take of the first-person perspective, and I find it to be a good one:

> A conscious being becomes self-conscious on acquiring a first-person perspective—a perspective from which one thinks of oneself as an individual facing a world, as a subject distinct from everyone else. (1998)

Baker went on to explain that there two grades of the first-person perspective, weak and strong. Dogs and infants fall under the weak grade category, and are limited to basic problem solving that shows that, for example, while an infant can't think of himself *as himself*, he can have a "certain perspective on his surroundings with himself as the origin" (1998). Baker held that the strong grade first-person perspective requires that one is able to think of oneself *as oneself*. That I can say, "I am a person who is having thoughts about being *this* person" is evidence of my own strong first-person perspective. While I'll come back to the infant's first-person perspective later, this paper's main focus is on the strong grade sort.

According to Baker, a person's prime persistence condition is the persistence of the *same* first-person perspective—as long as my first-person perspective remains intact I will continue to exist and I will continue to be a person (2011). This is where I would like to distinguish my view from Baker's and Lewis's. I agree with Lewis when he says a person is a "maximal R-interrelated aggregate of person-stages" and I believe that his definition of a person also requires that the same first-person perspective be preserved. It's probably included somewhere in the questions he left open about ensuring the R-relation (2011). But because there are certain life stages, infant stages for example, that are not clearly R-related, I allow that infants are something other than persons. But I need to assert that while I accept that *one* person requires psychological continuity *and* that the same first-person perspective remains intact, I believe that *we* can be more than one person. For *us* to persist as different persons does not require psychological continuity, but it does require sameness of first-person perspective. There are cases (both hypothetical and actual) that seem to conclude that we can maintain our same first-person perspective outside of the

realm of psychological continuity. Thus there might be some causal chain linking our mental stages—one that does not rely on memory— that allows the same firstperson perspective to survive as different persons. I will explore a couple of those cases now.

III Virtual Reality in the Future

Imagine that—at some point in the future—there is new technology that allows for a virtual reality experience that is meant to instill empathy for others. On entering into the experience, measures are taken so that one's past memories are completely forgotten. The goal of the experience is to replace your memories with a copy of someone else's, someone from a completely different walk of life—typically someone with a hard life—so you can walk a mile in 7 their shoes, so to speak. Your memories are forgotten in order to prevent you from treating the experience as an amusement ride. You enter into the virtual world (via a virtual reality headset or what have you), and suddenly you become this person. Say this person lives in poverty, and their work involves hard manual labor that results in a lot of blisters on their hands. When the experience is over (the length of the experience might typically vary from a few hours to a few days), you are given back access to your original memories, but you keep the memories of the experience. As if emerging from a dream, you tell those around you that you were that person. You felt their pain, both emotional and physical. You felt it in the same immediate way you feel your own emotional and physical pain. You experienced that person's life via the same firstperson perspective that you experience your own life. And you walk away from the experience with a bit more empathy than you had before. It's not too hard to imagine, at the rate technology is going and the more we're coming to understand the brain—that this is something that could happen.

Suppose the experience expands to recreational use. And people can experience different adventurous and exciting lives as if they were their own. And then suppose some people, after years of enjoying the experience (and knowing without a doubt that *they* survive as these other people), decide to stay inside the virtual world and forego their actual lives forever. It seems this would be a case of survival (though not of the person, so of something else) without psychological continuity.

IV Dissociative Drugs

There are instances of mental phenomena that mirror that of the hypothetical virtual reality case. These can be seen in cases involving certain dissociative drugs. Take salvia divinorum, for example. Those with experience with the drug have described its effect in detail: 8 upon first taking the drug they experience the feeling of being completely dissociated from their sense of self—having no memory of who they were prior to taking the drug, and becoming someone with completely different intentions who is in no way psychologically continuous with the person they consider themselves to be. These intentions can be outlandish to be sure—it's a dissociative drug after all—but nonetheless there is a definite break in psychological continuity. When the drug wears off, however, they remember both their pre-drug existence, and their existence within the psychosis, and both mental states share the same first-person perspective. Based on this: should the drug user have the unfortunate fate of

remaining in the state of psychosis with no memories of his former self, it could be reasoned that he would still have the same first-person perspective. Therefore we ought to allow:

x = y if x and y share the same first-person perspective.

If x and z share the same first-person perspective, and y and z share the same first-person perspective, then it follows that x and y share the same first-person perspective. Therefore, x = y, even though x is not psychologically continuous with y.

This suggests to me that there exists causality between mental stages that ensures the persistence of the same first-person perspective without relying on memories.

So to return to the original case in question, whether or not he (who was previously Alpha) would feel pain if Charlie was bit in the leg—I think it's fair to say that if there is a causal chain linking his mental stages to preserve his first-person perspective, then yes, *he* would feel the pain. This is not to say that Alpha would feel the pain. Charlie feels the pain. I agree that persons require psychological continuity for survival. But *he* was Alpha and now *he* is Charlie. At least, I don't think we can rule out the possibility that this could be the case.

V Infants and the First-Person Perspective

I mentioned before the notion of weak and strong grade first-person perspectives. Infants are thought to have a much more basic first-person perspective than that of say, a typical adult. So the question may arise, how do I know that I currently have the same first-person perspective that I had as an infant? After all, an infant has a first-person perspective comparable to a dog. But what separates us from the rest of the animal kingdom is that an infant's first-person perspective *will evolve* into the strong grade first-person perspective one expects to have later. As Baker put it, "Born with a rudimentary first-person perspective and a remote (or second-order) capacity to develop a robust first-person perspective, a human person gets to the robust stage in the natural course of development" (2014). The infant stages are necessary in the development of the human brain, the same brain that will be associated with the adult stages. The first-person perspective is weak grade at birth, but it *develops gradually* as the infant's brain develops and with it the senses, the ability to retain memories, and eventually—language. Language is key in being able to have thoughts like "I" or "me" that finally begin to shape the child's perception of self in a strong grade type of way.

Saying it's the *same* first-person perspective is not to say that it can't be broken into stages (I believe it can), or that it doesn't need some relation to connect it all together (I believe it does). I even hold that different people can share the same first-person perspective. It is "one thing" in the same way a person is "one thing" according to Lewis: one thing being an aggregate of many causally connected mental stages. But *my* first-person perspective is mine, and will continue to be mine for as long as *I* exist. And wherever it is, there *I* am, regardless if psychological continuity is preserved or not. I can separate the first-person perspective from our ability to be psychologically continuant because it's present before

our ability to retain memories—a necessary component of psychological continuity. And even if *I* never achieved the 10 ability to form memories, or if *I* lost that ability later in life—my first-person perspective will remain until *I* die, weak as it might be in these cases.

I draw attention to the infant's first-person perspective, not just to claim that we have the same first-person perspective from birth (therefore *we were* the infant), but also to point out an interesting situation the infant is in. The infant is not psychologically continuous with any person yet. Lewis might hold that an infant, with his weak grade perspective and abilities, is not yet a person at all. I don't disagree. Right now the infant has the potential to be *any* person, and who he turns out to be all depends on the circumstances he was born into. From this junction, persons seem rather arbitrary. What's not arbitrary is his first-person perspective. That he has a weak grade first-person perspective that will evolve into the strong grade sort is necessary for becoming a person. I imagine that the first-person perspective acts like a foundation for the person one will become. And this foundation holds, even if we become different people—gradually, or abruptly. There is no obvious evidence that points conclusively to the idea that if our memories are erased, so is our first-person perspective.

VI The FPP-Relation

If the first-person perspective does, in fact, depend on its own causal chain to persist through time, then it must have it's own relation of connectedness between mental stages. Let's call this the FPP-relation. The FPP-relation is to first-person perspective connectedness as the R-relation is to psychological connectedness. For example, in the failed body exchange case, we're wondering if the FPP-relation holds between the mental stages of Alpha and the mental stages of Charlie. But what about the I-relation? Lewis stated:

> …if ever a stage is I-related to some future stage but R-related to none, then the platitude that what matters is the I-relation will disagree with the interesting thesis 11 that what matters is the R-relation. But no such thing can happen, I claim; so there can be no such disagreement (1976).

If by identity we mean the person we presently are, then I agree with what Lewis says here. But I'm tempted to object. If I'm correct about the first-person perspective and its ability to persist even if we become different persons, might our identity be tied up with the "something else" I believe we more fundamentally are? If I claim identity for the "something else" then the I-relation *would* hold between stages that are not R-related. But I will concede—and say that Lewis referred only to the identity of the person, and not to what we are more fundamentally.

The concession comes without much hesitation. A person, I believe, deserves its own identity account—and Lewis provided an excellent one. This is why I chose *not* to shift the title of "person" to the "something else." The death of a person is a death to be sure, even if *he* or *she* is now someone else. Even if we know our loved one lives on as a new person, nothing would keep us from mourning the person they were. In no way is this paper meant

to undermine the significance of persons, it is meant to explore the possibility that we are more. Because the I-relation is restricted to persons, and there is an absence of an identity account for the "something else", I will stick with "first-person perspective continuity."

VII So What Matters?

In a way, I've left us with two identities to choose from. One we know and relate to—the person—the other is rather mysterious—the something else. Psychological continuity ensures the survival of the person, and that matters! I want to survive in such a way that I remember my family, my dreams, and my history, and I want my loved ones to survive and remember our lives together. But first-person perspective continuity ensures the survival of the first-person perspective, and that matters too. It matters, for example, whether or not it would still be my husband lying next to me even if he suffered from complete memory loss and no longer acted like himself. And its possible that, in the future, people might willingly choose to forget who they are and live the virtual lives of different people. I think it's important to take both— psychological continuity and first-person perspective continuity—into account. Perhaps I'm just adding to what matters.

VIII Conclusion

I have tried to show that *you* and *I* can persist without the necessity of being psychologically continuant persons. But in doing so I suggest that we can be different people. It's as though we're something that can have the property of being one person or another, or that might never have the property of being a person at all. But I don't know what that something is. Perhaps we are simply the first-person perspective itself—just a conscious entity aware of itself with the potential to be many persons or nonpersons. And perhaps that conscious entity is the manifestation of the unique neural syntax of our brains, and because our memories are only a fraction of that, we can survive without them. After all, the successful thought experiments that logically allow for causal continuity all involve brain continuity. But I can only speculate.

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Blessedness and Religion: the Errant Believer's Portion in the TTP

MICHAEL ANFANG

Benedict Spinoza's *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus* gives an account on the role of religion within the state, ultimately positing that the state is the best way to provide for peace among inhabitants, making it the best way to be obedient to God's command of 'love thy neighbor.'[1] [2] The state is what allows for man to live freely and securely, so that he is able "to use [his] reason freely," or so that he is able to know and obey God because He is God, and not from fear.[3] At times, however, this end of the state seems difficult to maintain. After all, in other places, Spinoza argues that the state's goal is merely "to live securely and conveniently,"[4] and he regularly asserts the difference between outward religion, or piety, and inward religion, or knowing God or Truth.[5] At this point, there would seem to be an implicit break between the goal of the state for those who could live freely and those who could not, i.e. those who rely on reason and those who rely on faith.[6]

However, due to a particularly interesting passage at the end of chapter XV and hints to this elsewhere, it does not seem like Spinoza is prepared to have the state abandon the ordinary person's search for the good. In this section, Spinoza asserts the "utility, even necessity, of Sacred Scripture," since "we can't perceive by natural light that simple obedience is a path to salvation [or blessedness per the ADN footnote]." Since the vast majority of people need revelation, which is errant in its speculative assertions, to "acquire a habit of virtue…if we didn't have the testimony of Scripture, we would doubt nearly everyone's salvation."[7] I will argue that Spinoza's notes here and elsewhere about the necessity of Scripture or errant beliefs about God for the common people is not merely a cynical pragmatic point to make it possible for the philosophers to reason freely. Rather, I hypothesize that Spinoza entertains the possibility that people can receive some amount of blessedness from understanding

[1] All citations of Spinoza will refer to Gebhardt page and line numbers in Volume III of Gebhardt's collected works of Spinoza as formatted in Benedictus de Spinoza, *The Collected Works of Spinoza*, vol. II, ed., trans., Edwin Curley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016). *Tractatus Theologico-politicus* will be abbreviated TTP and *Tractatus Politicus* will be abbreviated TP.

[2] E.g., Spinoza, TTP, 229.9-17.

[3] Ibid., 241.3-8, 62.18-21, cf. id., TP, 296.11-5.

[4] Id., TTP, 48.13-5, cf. id., TP, 275.35-6, 295.15-7.

[5] E.g, id., TTP, 59.23-6, 70.9-10, 71.10-1, 71.26-7, 202.20-2, 228.19-30.

[6] E.g. ibid., 59.29-31, 65.28-9, 77.32-78.5, 168.27-32.

[7] Ibid., 188.21-29.

God to the best of their abilities. By looking at the definition of the highest good, its psychologizing aspects, and Spinoza's language regarding personal capabilities, I will establish a case for reading the TTP as concerned with a public with a range of abilities, rather than a state in which reasonable people begrudgingly withstand the faithful, and that this concern extends even to the vulgus's ability to attain some form of blessedness, albeit not the highest one. Finally, I will show that this reading has fairly direct grounding within Spinoza's text itself.

1. Defining the Highest Good

Spinoza's definition of the highest or supreme good seems at the outset rather simple: knowledge of God.[8] This definition is sometimes expanded to "knowledge and love of God," or even just "love of God," yet the essential idea is clear, actively and correctly appreciating God brings the highest reward.[9] Notably, the supreme good for Spinoza is the entirety of the goal of the divine law, as opposed to human law, which aims "to protect life and the republic."[10] Yet this seems somewhat vague still. Spinoza gives us some hint as to what it might look life if someone follows the divine law, that is follows the path aiming at true knowledge of God. The reward for "following the universal divine law" is blessedness or the ability to act "freely and with a constant heart," while the punishment for failing to follow it is "an inconstant and vacillating heart" and "act[ing] like a slave."[11] What is notable is that this seems separate from the normal idea of obedience to the divine command of love thy neighbor. That command would seem to protect life, putting it under the idea of human law rather than divine law, even if it does have a divine basis. Further, the command for obedience, or love thy neighbor is seen as scriptural, that is from a basis upon which we cannot base speculative judgments about God's true existence.[12] So it seems at this point that the highest good is primarily about knowing God through reason, with its ultimate goal as "understanding things through their first causes [God]."[13] What is also clear is that this "intellectual, or, exact, knowledge of God is not a gift common to all the faithful," since "not everyone is equally able to be wise."[14] It is likely that this is the underlying reasoning behind the statement at the end of chapter XV in which Spinoza says that scripture is necessary to provide an alternative path to salvation, one that would allow those not equipped with enough reason to acquire the habit of virtue.[15] In other places, Spinoza comments that the "supreme good consists in the perfection of the intellect," which is solely linked to knowledge of God.[16]

What is less clear within Spinoza is the relationship between the three competing terms "highest good," "blessedness," and "salvation." The first two seem to be somehow

[8] Ibid., 59.25-6.
[9] Ibid., 60.13-62.21, cf. 66.7-9.
[10] Ibid., 59.23-6.
[11] Ibid., 62.18-21, 66.7-9.
[12] Ibid., 61.34-5, 77.32-78.1, 174.19-176.31.
[13] Ibid., 46.27-30.
[14] Ibid., 168.27-32, 170.1-6.
[15] Ibid., 188.21-9. At the very least it would allow those who are not able to reason to merely think obedience is enough for salvation. This cynical reading will be addressed later.
[16] Ibid., 59.32-60.3.

linked, in that Spinoza says that "our supreme good, then, and our blessedness come back to this: the knowledge and love of God."[17] Salvation's link to these two is less secure, but we can look toward the passage in chapter XV again for help. Spinoza's last line there—"if we didn't have this testimony of Scripture [that obedience without knowledge of God is enough for salvation], we would doubt nearly everyone's salvation"[18]—implies that those whose salvation we would not doubt, or the remainder of 'nearly everyone', are the reasoning people. Similarly, Spinoza says that "true salvation and blessedness" so far as it is related to scripture consists in understanding it very clearly, something that the common people cannot do[19] Yet, on the other hand, Spinoza elsewhere writes that "everything necessary for salvation can easily be grasped" by the common people, even though they might not know the reasoning behind them.[20] Similarly, Spinoza at some levels denies the very possibility of faith being sufficient for knowledge of God, i.e., the highest good.[21] This would make clear that the highest good is unattainable to those who rely upon faith, yet it does not necessarily mention ideas of blessedness or salvation here. At this point we will keep these distinctions in mind—particularly between the highest good on one side and salvation on the other—in dealing with the possibility of salvation or blessedness without the highest good. Blessedness in some respects here could be, along with the hypothesis, accorded even to those who do not attain the highest good. We will return to this point later in considering the issue overall, but will rely on the provisionary set up of the highest good being the only thing that is definitively and totally dependent on intellectual knowledge of God.

2. A Psychological View of Blessedness

Blessedness in Spinoza seems to at the very least be connected to a psychological state of a person. This can be drawn out from the distinction in relation to following the divine law where the reward is a "whole and constant heart" and the punishment is an "inconstant and vacillating heart."[22] On this view, having some knowledge of God is correlated with a constant heart or peace of mind, while lacking that knowledge, that is not appreciating the world properly, results in having internal struggle. So far, it would seem that a positive psychological state, or peace of mind, should be tied to appreciation of the highest good. Yet, in other places, Spinoza links the possibility of peace of mind coming through faith, or without the highest good.

The clearest example comes only a few lines later than the prior one, in which "faith alone" equals "full consent of the heart," at least from within the context of scripture.[23] Full consent of the heart here implies obeying God wholeheartedly, or following the laws without any hesitation, rather than following God for fear of punishment. In other words, faith alone would mean following God's command, i.e., practicing loving-kindness or loving the neighbor, due to love or reverence for God rather than corporal punishment. Similarly,

[17] Ibid., 60.18-9.
[18] Ibid., 188.27-9.
[19] Ibid., 111.29-34. See similar language of "true blessedness" in 45.2.
[20] Ibid., 115.8-13.
[21] Ibid., 61.28-35.
[22] Ibid., 62.19-21.
[23] Ibid., 65.25-6.

this is why Jesus "taught things as eternal truths and did not prescribe them as laws. In this way he freed them from the bondage of law."[24] Spinoza also argues that the true message of Psalms, or the good moral sentiments it advances, are "only a question of blessedness" and thus perhaps peace of mind.[25]

There is ground to argue here that this is already within the notion of Scripture's somewhat artificial necessity for the common person to believe that he is worthy of salvation.[26] While this is possible on some level, it seems that a properly psychologized view of blessedness or salvation can even remedy this claim. This claim would most seriously come up in Spinoza's distinction of "true salvation and blessedness" from salvation and blessedness simpliciter. The former can only come from "true peace of mind," which is found "only in those things we understand very clearly."[27] This comes up in the passage where Spinoza is discussing how to interpret scripture and comparing it to the clarity we have when we read Euclid. He concludes that what we can understand clearly from scripture are these moral sentiments, and that we likely can acquire these same principles by reason. Perhaps we might distinguish "true peace of mind" with regard to scripture as requiring clarity in understanding those moral elements through reason, whereas simple "peace of mind" may only require a subjective drive of devotion to God. This idea of requiring clarity for "true peace of mind" is supported in the idea that scripture is necessary in the first place since most people cannot on their own attain clarity through rational thought.[28]

On the other hand, the possibility and perhaps necessity of everyone believing in God wholeheartedly is paramount in Spinoza. In chapter XIV Spinoza lists seven "doctrines of the universal faith" as being general principles about God's perfection combined with acknowledgment of him as having supreme right and requiring loving-kindness.[29] These doctrines serve to ensure obedience, whereas other more speculative matters, such as God's true nature or being are not necessary for each person. In fact, each person only need to create certain ancillary principles that are necessary to "accommodate these doctrines of faith to his power of understanding…as it seems to him easier for him to accept them without any hesitation, with complete agreement of the heart, so that he may obey God wholeheartedly."[30] Elsewhere Spinoza echoes this call for each individual to determine his speculative opinions on his own, specifically outside the control of the state.[31] This second context is especially important because it separates out the personal understanding of God from the outward showing of piety or religion, since it is outside the control of the state.[32] In other words, they are separate from obedience in a meaningful way.

One might say that this is only the case because they are prior to obedience, i.e., they ensure that one will be obedient, and so they are not truly separated from obedience. This

[24] Ibid., 65.10-1.
[25] Ibid., 71.29-72.1.
[26] E.g. ibid., 185.16-32.
[27] Ibid., 111.29-34.
[28] Ibid., 65.28-9, 78.4-5.
[29] Ibid., 177.14-178.10. There is the somewhat strange seventh principle, that "God pardons the sins of those who repent." Spinoza comments that this is what allows people to believe in the possibility of salvation, since otherwise they could not think of being saved since everyone sins. This seems parallel to the note in chapter XV about obedience being enough for salvation, and should be kept in mind.
[30] Ibid., 178.30-5.
[31] Ibid., 239.13-18.
[32] Cf. ibid., 229.4-8.

might be the case, except for that Spinoza wants to specifically separate speculative philosophy that allows the philosopher to live comfortably from the outward showing of obedience, arguing that the details of philosophy are not important so long as they lead to obedience.[33] Similarly, "piety itself and the internal worship of God, or the means by which the mind is disposed, internally, to worship God wholeheartedly," is without the control of the state, and is considered as unattached to the "external practice of religion."[34] If there were truly no benefit to free philosophizing other than simply ensuring obedience, it would be hard to justify so much effort on Spinoza's part in proving this point. And this should come without surprise: after all, the true benefit is intellectual knowledge of God, i.e. the highest good. But it seems strange to ignore the possibility of a second benefit of obedience-forming beliefs even if those beliefs are entirely or somewhat erroneous.

It seems then that for everyone the ancillary benefit of forming such a belief that one is able to be obedient wholeheartedly could be the psychological benefit of the belief itself. There is proof to this idea. At one point, Spinoza notes that "really, the Holy Spirit is nothing but a satisfaction which arises in the mind from good actions."[35] His conception of the Holy Spirit is markedly different from reason, and therefore from the highest good, but it may not be pure salvation, or something acquired by obedience alone.[36] Spinoza's language here of "good actions" rather than obedience, piety, or loving thy neighbor, should make us question what Spinoza has in mind here.[37] It recalls Spinoza's discussion of doing "good acts freely and with a constant heart" versus acting from an evil compulsion.[38] Presumably the latter case would be enough for piety, since he is still doing good acts ostensibly, and he would be considered like a slave.[39] In this situation a man is not free, that is, he is unable to attain the highest good, but he is still acting piously. Thus, the phrase "good actions" should make us think that man is acting in a way similar to the manner in which a subject acts.[40] Applied to religion though, it perhaps indicates that Spinoza's language of good action in 188—which like the conception of the subject in 195 involves a psychological state in which one is doing the action because it is right or good for himself instead of out of fear— should be seen as implying constancy of the heart mentioned elsewhere. Thus, the "satisfaction that arises in the mind" or the Holy Spirit would be the reward for obedience with proper devotion. Notably, this proper devotion does not seem to require true conceptions of God, but merely accommodations of the true doctrine "so that he may obey God wholeheartedly."[41] This reading, while tenuous, supports an idea of a certain ancillary benefit to obeying the law on ones own accord rather than by fear of death and punishment. At this point, it is somewhat unclear whether this benefit can be classified merely as salvation or also as some form of blessedness. Supporting the reading of salvation, this would explain the necessity of claiming obedience's sufficiency for salvation (at the end of chapter XV), in that it would allow people to obey comfortably, i.e., not from fear, and would be its own reward psychologically. However, one could read blessedness as "the way to salvation" indicating that the positive psychological state that would enable one to be truly obedient

[33] Ibid., 10.31-11.8, 188.12-19, 229.13-7.
[34] Ibid., 229.3-6.
[35] Ibid., 188.2-3.
[36] Ibid., 188.4-5, cf. 188.21-9.
[37] Cf. virtue in 69.31-2.
[38] Ibid., 66.7-9.
[39] Ibid., 196.10-1.
[40] Ibid., 195.13-4.
[41] Ibid., 178.30-5.

is blessedness.[42] The upshot of either of these readings would still be that there is a real benefit, albeit a psychological one, to this process that is entirely outside the highest good.

3. The Role of Personal Capacities

Throughout the TTP, Spinoza emphasizes the requirement to conceive of God intellectually as far as it is possible for that individual, or alternatively, that knowledge of God needs to be accommodated to the individual. Spinoza does not require each person to be able to understand God properly, but rather just to know God in a vaguer sense.[43] The average man does not need to have any conception of God or know his attributes[44] other than that provided within the seven doctrines of faith.[45] In this sense, personal capabilities play a role within the area of the possible good, that is within the possibility of knowing and loving God. To look at this, we will take a very close look at Spinoza's language when talking about ranges of abilities.

First, it is clear from Spinoza that some people simply are unable to achieve true understandings of God. Time and again, Spinoza asserts that "the man of the flesh cannot understand these things," they being knowledge of God.[46] Likewise anyone who relies on faith to attain knowledge of God will not form any true knowledge of God,[47] and exact knowledge of God is said to be uncommon.[48] In fact, the proper conception of God is quite far from the common conception of God, since "it is only because of the common people's power of understanding and a defect in their knowledge that God is described as a lawgiver or prince."[49] Rather, God should truly be known as first cause or a perfect being.[50] Yet, we can find some acceptance on Spinoza's part of those with lesser rational abilities.

The first example of this is when Spinoza writes that "since the intellect is the better part of us, we should certainly strive above all to perfect it as much as we can."[51] This last clause is key, and in the Latin reads "ut eum quantum fieri potest, perficiamus," with the infinitive "fieri" implying a sense of activity or of formation of the intellect. Additionally, the term "eum quantum" implies a range of extents. In this context, it is possible for the intellect to be perfected in degrees, and also it could be possible that some intellects are perfectible more than others. Similarly, Spinoza asserts that common people need erroneous conceptions of God either because they have "too meager a knowledge of God—nimis ieiunam Dei habet cognitionem"[52]— or due to a shortage in their "power of understanding and a defect in their knowledge—ex captu vulgi, et ex solo defectu cogitationis/cognitionis."[53]

[42] Ibid., 97.3-4.
[43] Ibid., 168.27-32.
[44] See ibid., 170.1-6.
[45] Ibid., 177.14-178.10.
[46] Ibid., 61.6-7.
[47] Ibid., 61.28-35.
[48] Ibid., 167.27-8.
[49] Ibid., 65.28-9.
[50] Ibid., 46.27-30.
[51] Ibid., 59.29-31.
[52] Ibid., 66.6-11.
[53] Ibid., 65.28-9. As Curley notes on this line in his volume, he emends the Gebhardt text to read cognitionis instead of cogitationis to accord with 63.25-9.

The language here is particularly interesting. In the first section one could translate "ieiunam" as insignificant or trifling as well, which gives an idea of a natural incapability to have a fuller conception of God. Similarly, the phrase "ex captu vulgi" in the second example works to indicate their natural potential or ability, although it does not necessarily specify here abilities of understanding or cognition.[54] The last clause also aids here, in the reading of either "defectu cogitationis" or "defectu cognitionis," in that in the former case it would accord more to a defect in their reasoning understanding of God, while in the second case could be read either as a "defect in knowledge" or a "defect in their acquiring of knowledge." These seem somewhat less supportive of our argument, but nonetheless there is room to claim that an imperfect knowledge of God counts as a defect.[55]

These help explain Spinoza's acceptance of men who "err [in their understanding of God] from simplicity of the heart."[56] This error is not only acceptable for Spinoza, but it is even expected as "men's minds differ as much as their palates."[57] Yet this error seems to be only acceptable to such an extent. For example, Spinoza asserts that "cognitionem illam,[58] quam Deus per Prophetas ab omnibus universaliter petiit,"[59] with this knowledge being cognition of God. God and the prophets make it clear that each person is supposed to have some knowledge of God, that is, knowledge of God's "Divine Justice and Loving-kindness." Since Spinoza asserts these principles elsewhere, it would seem far fetched to call these absolutely false, as opposed to some other understandings of God, such as God as a "lawgiver or prince."[60] Importantly Spinoza asserts that though scripture cannot teach men true knowledge of God, it can "teach and enlighten men enough to imprint obedience and devotion on their hearts."[61] In other words, scripture does not just lead men to obedience, it also causes them to be devoted to God. It does not seem to be a great leap to move from devotion to God to love of God, at least so far as that is possible for the average person.

Further, Spinoza even asserts that some of the theoretical opinions that the common people have are "true," since the person who arrives at knowledge of God without scripture has a "distinct [rational] conception" of God that scripture cannot provide.[62] Notably, it is not that this person is the only one who is blessed, period. Rather, he is "completely blessed (beatum omnio esse)," or "more blessed than the common people (vulgo beatiorem)" be-

[54]Cf. Leo Strauss, "How to Study Spinoza's Theological Political Treatise," in Proceedings of the American Academy of Jewish Research vol. 17 (1947-8): e.g., 106, 107n63, 111.

[55]Although "cognitionis" agrees better with the parallel passage in 63, due to other places in which "cognitionis" is associated with a more universal knowledge of God whereas "cogitationis" is solely used for intellectual knowledge, I find reading "cogitationis" preferable here with Gebhardt.

[56]Spinoza, TTP, 176.25.

[57]Ibid., 239.23-5.

[58]Contra earlier in the sentence where it is "intellectualem, sive accuratam Dei cognitionem" or "intellectual, or exact knowledge of God." Curley here inserts a comma after "exact," which I find potentially confusing. Nonetheless, "intellectualem cognitionem" and "accuratam cognitionem" clearly serve as a foil to "cognitionem" below, see ibid., 168.27.

[59]Ibid., 168.28-32. Curley translates: "knowledge of God, through the Prophets, has demanded of everyone" but would be more literally translated as "this knowledge [of God], which God through the Prophets universally requested/demanded from all."

[60]Ibid., 65.28-9.

[61]Ibid., 78.1-2, teach and enlighten here are "docere" and "illuminare," in which docere might not necessarily imply teach but rather guide or lead men to obedience. Illuminare is unambiguous here and clearly gives an idea similar to our enlighten.

[62]Ibid., 78.10-2.

cause of this rational conception.[63] Spinoza advances this point even further, saying that the one who has neither the scriptural conception of God nor the rational conception of God is worse off still. This person is "devoid of human feeling, and almost a beast. He does not have any of God's gift."[64] This is true even if he is not impious, that is if he acts with obedience. The devotional aspect that can be supplied by the scriptural sense of God and knowledge of him within it (cf. "cognitionem illam" above) provides some sort of benefit (here "ullum Dei donum") to the believer that is simply not given to the pious non-believer. Given the context, and especially the "ullum" which implies the same sort of quantitative scale above, it would seem that this "Dei donum" is "beatum esse" or to be blessed. An alternative is to consider this salvation, since this is normally considered within the context of God's grace or gift.[65] However, given the contexts in which "donum" arises verses "gratiam," it would seem to support a more intellectual idea of blessedness than that of salvation.[66] This is especially shown where they arise together paralleling "love" and "worship" of God, respectively.[67] This seems tied especially well to other instantiations of linking this belief to devotion with outward acts usually according with worship.

4. Conclusions and Objections

So far in this paper I have advanced a reading of Spinoza's TTP in which there is an idea of the average person attaining some sort of non-material benefit out of her faith-based (i.e. somewhat erroneous) belief in God that is necessary for her obedience to God.68 This has been accomplished first by separating out the notion of the highest good, or true knowledge and love of God, from those of blessedness and salvation. Then, I laid out the psychological tendencies in describing blessedness as related to a constant or unwavering heart or soul (animus), contrasted with the possibility of carrying out obedience under coercion. Finally, I established that a close reading of Spinoza's text, especially in the Latin, allows for the possibility that knowledge of God, or rather having true opinions of God, can come in various levels. This attitude toward God seemed to correspond with experiencing love or devotion to God, which I argued resulted in a form of blessedness, albeit a lesser form than that of attaining the highest good. According to this view, blessedness would be a gift that would be possible for man to receive depending on how well his conception of God provides him peace of mind in doing his divine duty.

One objection would be that this argument is reading too much concern for the common person into Spinoza. This would accord with a Straussian reading of the TTP, and would be supported in fact by some of Spinoza's sharp comments toward the common

[63]Another way of reading "beatum omnio esse" would be that the rational person is "blessed in every way" or "blessed in everything," implying a difference in the ways or areas in which he is blessed rather than a difference in overall degree.

[64]Ibid., 78.12-4.

[65]See ibid., 165.27-9. 188.23.

[66]See, for "donum" ibid., 15.23, 112.31, 113.7, and 182.13 meaning natural cognitive ability especially one that is not particularized to a group, cf. at 168.28, 170.1, 170.32, and 172.26 as (intellectual) or other knowledge of God. See for gratiam, as Spirit at 26.34, as God's presence, 53.23, as complementing knowledge and love of God, 55.34- 5, as the phrase "God's grace," like a gift, e.g., 152.1, 168.36, 177.33, 178.8, as an attribute of God, e.g., 65.18, as linked to salvation, 157.24, 165.27, and 188.24.

[67]They appear together, with "freedom," in paralleling "true life, and the worship and love of God' at 41.6-8.

people, particularly in his letter to Albert Burgh.[68] Additionally, it agrees with Curley's comments on the "vulgus," in which he says that Spinoza does not have much concern for them.[69] The argument here would run along the lines that Spinoza merely includes these strange comments about common people being able to receive blessedness or salvation as a means of satisfying the common person if he happens to read Spinoza's book. This would help Spinoza avoid censorship and it would help him keep his duty to the state.[70] Additionally, it could be understood by Spinoza's own hermeneutic principle where if the text (there by scripture, but maybe here too by the TTP) contradicts reason, the text must be interpreted figuratively.[71] So in all these places where blessedness or salvation is assured to the faithful, we can wink them away as figures of speech, or things Spinoza does not really mean, but rather that they are intended to hoodwink the masses.[72]

There are several difficulties with this reading. The first is the historical account that Spinoza explicitly printed this book in Latin, not Dutch, which would limit his readership to the learned. In other words, it is somewhat unlikely that an average common person would read this book, and thus it seems strained to claim that Spinoza spends fourteen out of twenty chapters talking about the Bible when the reasonable person would do away with it anyway. Secondly, Spinoza acknowledges this likelihood by addressing his reader as "Philosophical" and in discouraging the common person from reading the book, especially when they have a strong attachment to scripture.[73] Even if he was trying to convince other philosophers who are stuck in their so-called pious ways, the amount of time and effort Spinoza puts into the biblical criticism sections still seems excessive.[74] Finally, and most importantly, far too much of the TTP mentions the necessity of scripture, or of a faith-based understanding of God. It seems rather strained to suggest that one read a work of philosophy, especially one as systematic as the TTP, in a periphrastic way, by which one would have to cherry pick the arguments in order to make sense of the work. Of course it would be impossible to disprove the objection: we simply do not have definitive statements from Spinoza that the goal of his work was or was not to hoodwink common people and secretly enlighten the proud few. Yet, I believe that my reading requires fewer emendations of the text without hurting the political philosophy of Spinoza nor disturbing the sense to which his rational believer in God does have significantly more blessedness than the scriptural believer, since he has attained the highest good. Thus, I find that in expanding Spinoza's idea of blessedness to include those for whom their most accurate and most calming conception of God is the erroneous religious one aids in understanding the text as is, or in the way Spinoza suggests we understand texts.[75] The additional benefit of my reading would be that it would allow us to see Spinoza as maintaining a sort of intellectual elitism while not consigning the common person to the role of automaton. In other words, this reading

[68] See id., "Letter 76 to the Most Noble Young Man Albert Burgh," IV.319a.1-320a.2, 322a.13-324a.5.

[69] Edwin Curley, "Glossary," in The Collected Works of Spinoza, vol. II, ed., Edwin Curley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016): 620-1 s.v. "Common People."

[70] Cf. Strauss, "How to Read," 106.

[71] Cf. ibid., 110 in thinking about how this could parallel Maimonides's Guide.

[72] See ibid., 112ff.

[73] Spinoza, TTP, 12.3, 12.13-19.

[74] Strauss raises this point, and thinks that the primary audience is Christians who are capable of philosophy, thus explaining the necessity of comments on all of Scripture. Yet Strauss's argument relies on the idea that the philosopher is using relatively little of the text, and so my objection can still be maintained. See Strauss, "How to Read," 113, 119.

[75] Ibid., 98.17-99.7.

would see people filling their roles within the intellectual hierarchy.[76]

A second objection would be quite the opposite. This objection would say that I have not laid out anything particularly new as one could already see this line in Spinoza's thinking before my intervention. In other words, my effort was unnecessary and my reading is the most obvious one. This objection can be refuted by the previous one itself: the very fact that a major school of thought about Spinoza's TTP works against this argument and likewise against his concern for the common believer, shows that my intervention is useful and that I have established a provocative reading of the text.

To conclude, I have shown that it is viable to read Spinoza's concept of blessedness as being partially accorded to those for whom erroneous beliefs of God are satisfactory, and push them to devotion as well as obedience. This would create two rewards with definitive categories: the highest good would be accorded to those who truly know and love God, while salvation would go to those who obey God, without these being mutually exclusive. Blessedness would exist in a category somewhat attached to both, in that for the truly rational people, blessedness and attaining the highest good would coincide. For the common person, blessedness would come about when he felt no conflict about obeying the divine order, and this peace of mind would prove to be a real yet non-material benefit.[77]

Works Cited

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3. Edwin Curley, "Glossary," in *The Collected Works of Spinoza*, vol. II, ed., Edwin Curley (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2016): 620-1 s.v. "Common People."

[76] Perhaps this is similar to discussions about who Maimonides thought the thirteen principles of faith espoused in his first comment on Perek Chelek were for.

[77] Of course, Strauss suggests the most important upshot of this: maybe Spinoza is right. This solution would be much more palatable than one that heavily condescends to the vulgus. See Strauss, "How to Read," 81-2.