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LYCEUM

The Role of Natural Law in a World of Religious and Political Diversity
Montague Brown

Animals and Machines: On Their Beginnings and Endings
Chris Tollefsen

Tragedy and the Philosophical Life: A Response to Martha Nussbaum
Martha C. Beck

Childhood and Salvation in ***The Brother's Karamazov***
Gary Senecal

A Publication of the
Philosophy Department
Saint Anselm College

LYCEUM

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The Role of Natural Law in a World of Religious and Political Diversity

Montague Brown

Religion and politics, church and state—just to mention these things is to invite disagreement and perhaps even mutual suspicion. It is not for nothing that they say the two subjects never to be brought up in polite society are religion and politics. There is much wisdom in this adage, for within a group of social friends, or even within an extended family, there will be differences on these subjects. And because these subjects are so big in our lives, we are at once defensive about our own position and loathe to offend others by challenging theirs. When we do talk about these things, the conversation often turns to explosive challenges or icy silences, ending with hurt feelings. That we therefore tend to avoid such discussions shows more than just politeness, I think. It also shows sensitivity to the importance of freedom in choosing how we shall live. We insist on our own freedom to choose those ultimate loyalties by which we think we can best guide our lives, and because of this, we don't want to force other people to act against their freedom of conscience. On the other hand, precisely because these things are so important, covering all aspects of how we order our lives, we ought to talk about them. If we really want what is best for ourselves and for those we love, then we should, at least at some times, talk about what we think would be best. And certainly, such conversation is necessary on the world stage, where conflicts involving injustice and violence have been, and still are, perpetrated in the name of religious and political ideals. I propose, as a way to negotiate such a mine field of commitments, that we turn to those things on which we do agree, those fundamentally human things—what has often been called the natural law. In the first section of this paper, after addressing briefly the kinds of conflicts that have arisen due to strong religious beliefs or political commitments, I shall examine the general principles of natural law and how they relate to religion and politics. In the second section, I

shall turn to more specific matters concerning our obligations to others: what they are, their degree, and how far they extend.[1]

I

Historically, there have been many cases of injustice and persecution in the name of politics or religion. Secular states have persecuted religious believers, from the Roman persecutions of Christians to the Nazi persecution of Jews to the Communist persecutions of all religious believers. But persecutions have also been carried out in the name of religion. Think of all the religious conflicts throughout history: the forced spread of Islam, the Christian Crusades against Islam, and the wars of religion among Christians of the Sixteenth to the Eighteenth centuries. Unfortunately, such conflicts are not things of the past. On a good note, the violence between and Protestants and Catholics in Northern Ireland has abated of late. But the tension between Jews and Moslems in the Middle East is far from resolved. There are frictions between Hindis and Moslems in India and Pakistan. Communist governments still severely restrict and in some cases prohibit religious practices in China and North Korea. And, of course, we face a major world-wide conflict between Islamic radicals and the West, which includes all the permutations of religious and political disagreements.

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[1] This paper was presented as the Richard L. Bready Lecture in Ethics, Economics, and the Common Good at Saint Anselm College on November 14, 2006. A portion of this paper was also presented under the title "Religion, Politics, and the Natural Law: Thomas Aquinas on Our Obligations to Others" at the International Society for Universal Dialogue Fifth World Congress, May 28-23, 2004, Olympia, Greece, and published in *Skepsis*, Vol. XV/11-111, 2004, pp. 316-30.

Since it is unlikely that we will all ever share precisely the same political views or convert to one religion, we need to find a basis on which to establish cooperation and peace. The natural law is such a basis. As a moral theory, natural law ethics is grounded in the great philosophical tradition stemming from Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle. From the Greeks, it was passed on by the Roman Stoic philosophers, developed by the philosophers and theologians of the Middle Ages, and is still very much alive today in the work of such thinkers as Germain Grisez, John Finnis, and Robert George. But natural law ethics is not unique to the west. The basic principles of the natural law can be found in virtually all cultures and religions, east and west, north and south, as C. S. Lewis has pointed out in his book *The Abolition of Man*. This is because the principles of the natural law are basic to human reason itself. There are no people who do not have access to them and no cultures that do not, in fact, make use of them. In order to indicate the universality of natural law, Lewis refers to it as the Tao, drawing from the great Chinese tradition of moral thought. As Lewis says, "This thing which I have called for convenience the Tao, and which others may call the Natural Law or Traditional Morality or the First Principles of Practical Reason or the First Platitudes, is not one among a series of possible systems of value. It is the sole source of all value judgments."[2] This universality makes the natural law suitable for building bridges between various religious and political positions.

The importance of natural law in ethical matters has long been recognized by the Catholic Church. Thus, in the second century, the theologian St. Irenaeus wrote: "From the beginning, God had implanted in the heart of man the precepts of the natural law. Then he reminded him of them by giving the Decalogue."[3] And Pope Benedict XVI, in his encyclical *Deus Caritas Est* (God is Love), affirms the availability to all of the principles of the natural law. "The

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[2] C.S. Lewis, *The Abolition of Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1978), p. 56.

[3] Quoted by Richard Neuhaus in *First Things*, Dec. 2005, Number 158, pp. 27-28.

Church's social teaching argues on the basis of reason and natural law, namely, on the basis of what is in accord with the nature of every human being."[4]

The work of Thomas Aquinas is a particularly rich presentation of natural law ethics. Drawing on the principles he articulates, I shall suggest some ways in which human reason can mediate between different religious and political convictions. The natural law provides us with a framework for living together without denying the legitimacy of our various religious beliefs or political commitments.

First, let us examine the principles of natural law as found in the thought of Aquinas. These are such as everyone who has the use of reason can easily understand. Understanding them does not require a highly developed scientific or metaphysical background, for these moral principles of the natural law are self-evident. Just to think about them is to see that they are true. Thus, the varying degrees of education in different societies does not mean that some are less able to understand the basics about how we should live—what we should and should not do.

The basic principle of natural law ethics is pretty simple: "do good and avoid evil." That is, we should support and promote what we know to be good and not do what we know to be evil.[5] This is implied by the very meaning of the word "good." "Good" means desirable or worthy of pursuing. Of course, people do not always agree about what things in particular are good, but there seems to be general agreement about some basic or fundamental human goods, which are naturally known by all human beings. The good of life is one; the good of knowledge is another; the good of friendship is a third.[6] How do we know that these goods are basic? We don't prove them to be basic by some principles even more fundamental, for there are no more fundamental goods. Life, knowledge, and friendship are primary human goods, good in themselves and not just for the sake of other desirable things. No one has to tell us they are

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[4] *Deus Caritus Est*, Part II, 28, a.

[5] Thomas Aquinas, *Summa theologiae* (hereafter ST) 1-2.94.2.

[6] Ibid.

good: to think about them is to see that they are. This is what Aquinas means when he says that they are self-evidently good. Lots of other things are good for the sake of these basic goods or as aspects of them. So food and shelter and money are good because they support life. Mathematics, biology, and history are good as kinds of knowledge. Family, community, and nation are good as different forms of friendship. Although we might disagree about the way to achieve these goods or what instantiations of them are best, we all can see that life, knowledge, and friendship are good.

If we combine these self-evident basic goods with the self-evident precept that we should do good and avoid evil, we have the basic outlines of a moral theory that we all can understand to be right. Since they are intrinsically good, life, knowledge, and friendship should be promoted and not violated. Our strongest obligations are negative: we should never intentionally violate life, knowledge, or friendship. To do so would be wrong: we would be intentionally doing what we know we should not do. But this is not the whole of our obligation. We are also obliged to promote life, knowledge, and friendship. We shall come back to this point in the second section when we ask about our obligations to others.

At this point, it is important to show the relationship between the principles of natural law and the two areas of our concern—religion and politics. The first thing to say is that religion and politics are good. Not only may we practice religion and engage in political life, but we should. Religion is not just a matter of revelation, nor politics just a mechanism for imposing order through power. Both are naturally good for human beings and so fall under the natural law. To support this we can point to the virtual universality of religion and political organization among human communities throughout history. But here I am less interested in this anthropological or sociological fact, than in the reasons why we should practice religion and political life.

Both religion and politics are related to the basic good of friendship. Religion extends the notion of friendship from the interrelations between people to our relationship with the divine. Political community extends from the most

obvious level of commitment between two people, or within a family, to local organizations and communities, and ultimately to nations and the world.

Let us begin with the good of the political community since it is a more obvious extension of the friendship that we experience personally. Some view the political community as an artificial construct formed to maximize self-interest.[7] But the natural law tradition has consistently taught that community is natural and that human individuals are only perfected in community. More than just supplying the needs that individuals cannot supply for themselves, the political community offers intellectual and moral enrichment and the chance for improvement.[8] So Aristotle calls human beings political animals, made to live in a *polis*, that is, a community. Thomas Aquinas writes in his commentary on Aristotle's *Politics*: "There are different degrees and arrangements in community-groups, but the final and most perfect is the political fellowship which provides all that is needful for civilized life."[9] Our founding fathers, especially Jefferson, were influenced by this natural law tradition. In a letter to Henry Lee, Jefferson claims that, in writing the Declaration of Independence, his intention is "not to find out new principles or new arguments never before thought of, not merely to say things which had never been said before, but to place before mankind the common sense of the subject….All its authority rests then on the harmonizing sentiments of the day, whether expressed in conversation, in letters, or in the elementary books on public right, as Aristotle, Cicero, Locke, Sydney, etc."[10]

However, it is not just that we should care about the community because it fulfills us; we should care about it because of its intrinsic worth. That is, we ought to care about other people not just for what they can do for us but

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[7] See, for example, Thomas Hobbes, *Leviathan* 1.13-15; but also see Plato's *Republic* 1.358e-359b, where the same basic position is presented as a challenge to Socrates.

[8] In ST 1.2.90.2, Aquinas says that the individual is perfected in community.

[9] Thomas Aquinas, Commentary, *I Politics* , lect. 1, tr. Thomas Gilby in *St. Thomas Aquinas, Philosophical Texts* (Durham, NC: Labyrinth Press, 1982), p. 369.

[10] Thomas Jefferson, Letter to Thomas Lee, May 8, 1825, in *Jefferson: Selected Writings*, ed. Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr. (Wheeling, Illinois: Harlan Davidson, 1979), pp. 11-12.

also for their own sakes. A true friend is not loved just because he or she is useful or pleasant to have around (that is, only for what he or she can do for me). True friendship, what Aristotle calls the friendship of virtue, cares about the other person for that person's own sake.[11] So we should care about the other people in our community for their own sakes. Again what this implies in terms of our specific obligations to others, we shall discuss in the next section.

As for religion, it, too, is not merely a natural impulse in us, but also a requirement of reason. When Aquinas discusses the virtue of religion, he says that it is not a theological virtue, but a natural virtue falling under the virtue of justice.[12] So, also, when Socrates discusses piety in Plato's dialogue the *Euthyphro*, he puts it under the general category of justice.[13] How is it a matter of justice? Justice is giving each person his due. A proper response to good done for us is gratefulness and the desire to pay it back. Thus, if you let me pull out in front of you in a traffic jam, I ought to signal my thanks. If I receive a birthday gift from my friend, I should thank him. However, there are some gifts which we cannot pay back. Our parents gave us life: we cannot do the same for them. What are we to do here? Are we off the hook because it is impossible to repay the gift? That would mean being indifferent to good. No, we should do what we can, giving to them respect, honor, and grateful obedience (and help in their old age). The inequality between ourselves and the divine is even more pronounced. Not only our lives but all things, even our parents, have been given to us by a higher power. In this dialogue by Plato, there is no philosophical argument for the existence of a first principle of all reality as in the *Republic*,[14] but Socrates does say in the *Euthyphro* that we owe everything to the gods.[15] Although the gods do not need anything from us, in justice, we owe them everything. We cannot simply ignore this; so we should be pious,

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[11] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.4.

[12] Aquinas, ST 1-2.100.1.

[13] Plato, *Euthyphro* 11e

[14] Plato, *Republic*, 6.506e-511d.

[15] Plato, *Euthyphro* 15a.

offering our gratefulness and praise to the gods. Aristotle says the same thing in his *Nicomachean Ethics*. To the gods we must do what we can, since we can never adequately pay them back.[16] The Roman philosopher Cicero also speaks of this kind of obligation. "Social duties can be divided into grades so that the priority of any given duty is apparent. The order would be as follows: first our duty to the immortal gods, secondly our duty to our country, thirdly to our parents, and lastly to the rest of society in due order."[17] And when Aquinas discusses the Ten Commandments, he includes the first three commandments—those that deal with our obligations to God—under the natural law.[18] We have a natural obligation to the divine; not to attempt to fulfill it would be unjust.

Thus, not only is it reasonable for us to engage in politics and religion; it is an obligation. However, this natural obligation is not to any particular type of government or to any specific religion. From a natural law perspective, as long as the political and religious practices are good, they are worthy of loyalty. But if two different political ideals come into conflict, what are we to do? If two religions, neither of which is evil, disagree on some important issue, what is to be done? Conflicts have often erupted between different political and religious communities. How do we avoid these? Are we just to tolerate each other with no dialogue? Or are we to look for a solution rather than embrace mutual indifference?

Clearly we must have dialogue. And in this dialogue, we must say what we mean and mean what we say. This means that we must be free to speak our minds and should listen to what others have to say. We must hope for and intend a good outcome. In this joint project, we must not be motivated by either fear or hatred. Fear responds to coercion (either real or imagined) from without. Hatred is a kind of internal coercion, for if we hate, we blind ourselves to the

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[16] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* 8.16.

[17] Cicero, *On Moral Duties* 1.45, tr. Higginbotham (Berkeley/Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1967), p. 96.

[18] Aquinas, ST 1-2.100.1.

morally obvious, namely, that we should pursue good and avoid evil in our relations with others.

II

This brings us to the second section of my talk. Having presented the general principles of natural law and shown how both political and religious communities are not only permitted but required, let us consider the proper relations between diverse communities. The natural law insists that we should avoid doing what is evil, but also that we should actively promote what is good. In general, negative moral obligations (telling us what we should not do) are more strict and universal than positive moral obligations (telling us what we should do). Therefore, we shall treat this issue in two parts. In the first part, we shall consider the moral limits to what one political or religious community may do to another, or what such communities may do to individuals who disagree with them. In the second part, we shall ask about the positive obligations that individuals and communities have for others.

Let us begin with a consideration of situations in which there are fundamental disagreements between a political community and religion. Thomas Aquinas was obviously a very devout Christian who was not shy about engaging other faiths in dialogue.[19] Nevertheless, he understood that people of different faiths often find themselves in the same political community and have to find a way to thrive together. For the political community is a natural state, with its own good. In fact, following Aristotle, Aquinas considers political science the ultimate practical science.[20] The good of the individual is

[19] So his second best known work, *Summa contra gentiles*, was an attempt to enter into a kind of dialogue with the positions of non-Christians, whether believers or non-believers.

[20] "The political community is the sovereign construction of reason; all other groupings are subservient. The mechanical arts are busied with utilities subordinate to human lives. The

important, but the good of individuals within the community—that is, the common good—is even more important. Aquinas addresses both the issue of how a majority community should treat a minority, and how a minority community should live under a ruling majority.

If there were a state religion, Aquinas would say that unbelievers within that state should not be forced to convert. Conversion is a matter of free will and of conscience; and the will cannot be forced, nor should conscience be violated. Thus, those who do not believe should not be forced to believe. "These are by no means to be compelled to the faith, in order that they may believe, because to believe depends on the will."[21] Since genuine faith is an act of free assent and a will that is forced is not free, no one can be forced to believe. Forced belief is a contradiction in terms. Nor is deception permissible, for it too is a kind of coercion. Free choice is excluded by deception since what is offered to be chosen is not what it appears. One can only freely choose to convert to a particular religion if one knows what the religion really teaches.

As for conscience, it is inviolable. It is always wrong to go against one's conscience, for one should never choose to do what one thinks is evil. In one place, Aquinas goes so far as to say that, if one really thinks Christ is evil, one should not be a Christian.[22] Of course, Aquinas thinks that being a Christian is good, and he also thinks that we have an obligation to inform our consciences. Just because one thinks that Christ is evil does not mean that it is true. Only if we have accurate information can we make a reasonable judgment in good conscience, and as we will mention in a few minutes, we can only have accurate information if people are willing to share it.

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higher and nobler the subject-matter, the more overriding its interest. So political science must needs be the chief and governing practical interest, since it is occupied with the most final and complete value within the present world" (Aquinas, Commentary, I *Politics*, lect. 1, Gilby, p. 370).

[21] Aquinas, ST 2-2.10.8, tr. Fathers of the English Dominican Province (Allen Texas: Christian Classics, 1981), vol. III, p. 1213.

[22] Aquinas, ST 1-2.19.5.

As for a Christian living under a secular government, or a government of another religious persuasion, Aquinas states that the Christian should obey the ruler, so long as the ruler does not command something evil.

> Dominion and authority are institutions of human law, while the distinction between faithful and unbelievers arises from the divine law. Now the divine law, which is the law of grace, does not do away with human law, which is the law of natural reason. Wherefore the distinction between faithful and unbelievers, considered in itself, does not do away with the dominion and authority of unbelievers over the faithful.[23]

Thus, a person whose religion is in the minority should not on that account disobey the laws of the majority. Nor should a secular government persecute any of its citizens merely because of religious belief.

In sum, the strict negative precepts of the natural law, as they apply to differences in political persuasion or religious belief, forbid us to persecute or be prejudicial to those of other persuasions, and they also forbid us to disobey legitimate authorities merely because they do not share our beliefs. However, tolerance of diverse political and religious commitments does not necessarily imply that all political or religious positions are equally good. And if one is better than another, it makes sense to embrace it oneself and to argue for its adoption by others. Not to do so is to violate that most basic requirement to pursue the good.

As to judging political differences, Aquinas, in general, follows Aristotle. Justice and freedom are the key ingredients in a good political rule. They, of course, belong together in the sense that justice is a requirement on us because we are intelligent and free to choose. And we think that people should be rewarded or punished for their actions because they freely choose to do them. If people were determined, then they would merit neither praise nor blame.

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[23] Aquinas, ST 2-2.10.10, vol. III, p. 1215.

The Role of Natural Law

Although Aquinas, like Aristotle, thinks that the perfect government would be the single rule by the perfect person,[24] he realizes that the chances of finding such a person are extremely unlikely, and the risks far too great. For single rule by a bad person, that is, a tyranny, is the worst of all the possible forms of government.

Because human beings have free will and are not just animals to be trained, a government that allows people to exercise their free will is better, to that extent, than one that does not. Aristotle distinguishes two types of rule: that of master over slave, and that of free men over free men. The latter he calls political rule. On this point, Aquinas writes: "All should take some share in the government: for this form of constitution ensures peace among the people, commends itself to all, and is most enduring."[25] The form of government that best allows for good order and participation by all is what Aristotle and Aquinas call "polity" and what we might call a republic. This combines the best of the three good kinds of government: kingship, aristocracy, and democracy. It emphasizes the importance of virtue and leadership, while at the same time preserving the people's right to self-government.

> The best form of government is in a state or kingdom, wherein one is given the power to preside over all; while under him are others having governing powers; and yet a government of this kind is shared by all, both because all are eligible to govern, and because the rulers are chosen by all.[26]

Thus, the best government would be one in which the citizens were the most just and free. A form of government which does not allow the people some say in how they are governed violates the natural law. It is wrong and

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[24] Aquinas, *On Kingship* 6; Plato makes this point in *Republic* 5.473b-e, where he speaks about the possibility of a philosopher-king.

[25] Aquinas, ST 1-2.105.1, vol. II, p. 1091.

[26] Ibid, p. 1092.

should, if possible, be replaced.[27] Here, then, is a strong negative precept: since governments are for the common good, they should not violate the rights of the people.

As for sorting out and judging among different religions, this is a very complicated business, and we cannot do it justice here. But perhaps we can mention a couple of things. For the revealed religions—Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—grace is a key feature, and it is beyond the competence of philosophy and the natural law to judge of grace. But we can say, even of a religion in which God is the instigator, that like the best political system, the best religion would be the one which best fulfills human nature. God creates the world so that it might be, and he creates us so that we might be human. Religions typically have to do with how we should treat God and each other. The two criteria we used to judge political systems—justice and freedom—come into play here. Neither faith in God nor love of neighbor can be forced. Faith is a choice, and community (as the word itself indicates) is a cooperative or chosen unity. A religion that promotes such freedom would seem better than one which prevents or destroys it. Equally, a religion that promotes justice among the people would seem superior to one that does not. When it comes to the issue of mediating between diverse religious practices, a religion which calls us to love those who are different from us, even our enemies, would seem preferable to a religion that requires us either to force others to believe (an impossibility) or to hate our enemies. This idea of loving one's enemies is also a principle of natural law, at least to the degree that one should not harm one's enemies. As Plato says in his dialogue the *Crito*, we should never intentionally do wrong. He does not say that we may do wrong if we have been wronged. Rather, he emphatically denies this. We are simply to choose what is good and never choose what is evil.

Given that it is reasonable to judge some forms of religion or political structures to be better than others, what positive obligations do we have to

[27] In some cases it might be better to put up with a worse form of government rather than fighting to overthrow it because a revolution might cause more problems than it solved.

promote those that we judge to be better? And how do we go about such promotion? Although these positive obligations to promote good are not as absolute as the negative precepts, they are real obligations. Not only are we supposed to avoid evil, but we are also supposed to do good. In some ways this doing good is more the essence of the moral life, for if we actively pursue and promote good, there is little danger that we will do evil. If, on the other hand, all we do is try to avoid doing evil, we might do nothing, except perhaps sit around and blame others for the sorry state of the world. But to say that we should promote good is to leave a great deal of latitude about what is to be done. This is because there are many basic goods, not just one. So to do good might mean providing for the material needs of others, but it also might mean raising a family, creating a beautiful painting, studying up on the latest theories of physics, teaching, or praying. So our obligations to do what is good are by nature more general and less absolute than our obligations to refrain from doing evil. Since we cannot do everything, we have to prioritize according to the situation, our talents and desires, and other people's needs.

Still our obligations to other people, especially if they are in great need, do make claims upon us that we cannot just ignore. In fact, if the need is great enough, and I am the only one who can meet it, my obligation to help another person comes close to the strict obligation I have not to hurt that person. Let me give an example. Suppose I'm walking along a deserted beach one day, and I come across a small child lying face-down in a tidal pool, struggling unsuccessfully to get out. There is no one else around to help the child. Can I walk on by and do nothing? After all, I didn't push the child into the tide pool. It was not my plan that the child should be drowning. Nevertheless, if I do nothing and the child drowns, when I could easily have reached down and saved the child, my responsibility for the death of that child comes very close to what it would be if I had intentionally pushed the child into the pool. The fact that I won't make the least effort to save the child, when there is no one else who could, and when I could do so easily, indicates that I don't care at all about the life of the child. My refusal to help this child, in this situation that has by

chance come my way, indicates my utter disdain for the good of life. I am implicitly saying that the child's life is not good; but this statement contradicts the self-evident proposition that every human life is good for its own sake.

Most of the time, of course, the situation is not as dire as this; and so one's obligation to come to the aid of the needy person is not as strict. But the example shows that intentionally omitting to do good can be morally as bad as intentionally doing evil. This makes it clear that our obligation to help others is a real obligation.

Both politics and religion recognize and support this obligation. Politics is expressly concerned with the common good. Thus, if members of our community are in trouble or suffering, we have an obligation to care for them. Most obviously we have the obligation to care for our own family members, but also for our extended family, local community, nation, and the world. Both the perfection of the community as a whole and our own perfection depend on this.[28] Religion also obliges us to help others, in many cases expressly, and always implicitly. As Aquinas says, "Just as love of God includes love of our neighbor, so too the service to God includes rendering to each one his due."[29] This is the obligation of justice under which religion falls. We owe a debt of justice to God for all he has given us. The debt is, in fact, infinite, one which we can never pay back. But God does not need anything from us. Thus, we should turn our real debt to where it is really needed and useful—to helping our neighbor.[30] Like political virtue, the virtue of religion requires us to help our neighbor.

It is, however, impossible for any person or nation to aid every needy person. So we need to think about where our priorities should be. This involves

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[28] "Justice stands foremost among all the moral virtues, forasmuch as the common good transcends the individual good of one person" (Aquinas, ST 2-2.58.12, vol. III, p. 1436).

[29] Aquinas, ST 2-2.58.1ad6, vol. III, 1429.

[30] "Since justice is a cardinal virtue, other secondary virtues, such as mercy, liberality, and the like, are connected with it. Wherefore, to succor the needy, which belongs to mercy or pity, and to be liberally beneficent, which pertains to liberality, are by a kind of reduction ascribed to justice as to their principle virtue" (Aquinas, ST 2-2.58.11ad1, ad 1, vol. III, p. 1436).

several variables, from the extremity of the need, to the proximity of the problem, to the ability or inability of the needy to help themselves. Thus, there is need for prudence here. There is no such thing as a political utopia. No practical choices that involve helping others will be made perfectly. We need good will and intelligence.

So far, we have been speaking about our obligations to promote the good of life. But there are similar obligations to promote the goods of knowledge and friendship. Thus, by analogy, the greater the need for knowledge and friendship, the less likely they are to be forthcoming from other sources, and the greater one's resources in them, the greater one's obligation to help. If we have a sense that the world is in worse and worse shape, despair and withdrawal are not justified. On the contrary, as the need grows, so does our obligation to increase our efforts to share the knowledge and good will that we have. And perhaps the obligation here is even greater since the resources are less finite. There is a kind of infinity to intelligible goods—to knowledge, friendship, and beauty. Material goods, at least at any particular moment, are finite: like sharing a pie, the more I have, the less you can have.[31] But sharing intelligible goods is not a zero-sum game. On the contrary, for these goods, the more I have, the more you can have and vice versa—if, that is, we make the effort to acquire them and to share them. But it is hard to find out what's really true and good, and harder still to find out how best to communicate the truth and goodness that we know and love. Here we need courage to make the effort, and prudence to make the effort effective. People tend to resist what they see as another's truth, and another's ideal of community. None of us likes to feel ignorant or that he or she is being backed into some logical corner. To try to overcome this hurdle is to honor and promote the good of friendship. Thus, we all face a great double challenge: first, to open ourselves to the truth wherever it is found and second, to offer freely the truth we know in a way that allows

[31] There is a way that capitalism can grow the pot, so that there is more for everyone; but even so, these kinds of material goods are less able to be shared that the intelligible goods like truth, friendship, and beauty.

others freely to accept it. To do this is not easy, and we have many other things to do. But to ignore it as an obligation is to ignore either the importance of truth or the importance of other people, or both.

But people do not need just material goods, knowledge, and friendship: they also need faith, hope, and love. Admittedly, these are gifts of grace, but to the extent that we recognize them as true and good, we have an obligation to share them as well. This is even more delicate then sharing knowledge and friendship, especially as to faith and hope. We have all listened painfully while someone tried to convince us to share his or her vision of faith or hope, be that vision religious, political, or ideological. Again, that they should be shared is clear; how to share them is the problem. The third of the trio of theological virtues—love—seems to point the way. That is, we should share our faith and hope with love. This means sharing them for the sake of the other person, not for my success and comfort in getting everyone on my side. Love means giving to others what one thinks is best while respecting the other's freedom, intelligence, and conscience.

There is no forcing good on other people, whether we are speaking philosophically or theologically. The way of reason is to propose, not impose. We present our position to the other's intelligent freedom: "It is so, don't you agree?" Free assent to truth cannot be forced. The same is true of faith. Pope John Paul II put this memorably in his 1990 letter on the mission of the Church. "Her mission does not restrict freedom but rather promotes it. The Church proposes; she imposes nothing. She respects individuals and cultures, and she honors the sanctity of conscience."[32] This must be our rule in striving to promote the good in a world of religious and political diversity.

Conclusion

[32] John Paul II, *Redemptoris Missio*, 39.

The Role of Natural Law

To mitigate the conflicts and suffering in our world, we need tools with which to work. Clearly, we need a lot of goodwill, much hope, and steadfast courage. But we also need what reason can provide in the way of moral guidance. The principles of the natural law, which belong to all peoples just insofar as they are human, can help us set up the general structures for mutual respect and cooperation. We should educate ourselves and each other about our political and religious differences. But even more importantly, we should remind ourselves and each other of the things we share in common—those fundamental dimensions of human flourishing: life, family, knowledge, and friendship. It is easy to let other aspects of our lives—our personal needs, our pleasures, a concern for our security, or partisan loyalty to religion or political party—take priority over these fundamental goods. All these other aspects of our lives are good in some way, but they are subordinate to the basic human goods and to the importance of honoring these goods in community. In a world of religions and political diversity, the affirmation that other people deserve to participate in these goods just as much as we do is an essential foundation for mutual understanding and good will.

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Animals and Machines:
On Their Beginnings and Endings

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Human beings are animal organisms; machines are artifacts. To some, this has increasingly come to seem a distinction without a difference.[1] The purpose of this paper is to defend both the distinction, and the claim that the distinction makes a difference. A basic claim of the paper is that some aspects of the distinction between animal organisms and artifacts should be recognized at the extreme edges of existence: their beginnings, and their endings.

A methodological point: in this paper, I focus on the differences between machines and the higher mammals. I argue that the differences are differences in kind. At what point in the development of animate life do these differences in kind emerge? I make no claims in these regards. However, if the differences really are differences in kind, then at some point in the development of animate life – whether in the transition from the non-living to the living, from plant to animal, from lower to higher order animals, or some combination of these, new kinds of entities are introduced into nature. This raises metaphysical questions I do not here address.

I

In this section, I argue that machines and the higher animal organisms -- most, if not all mammals, for example -- differ in their originating conditions.[2] I want to suggest four ways in which the originating conditions differ. The second, third and fourth differences build upon the first.

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1 Not, however, to the following, among others: Aristotle, Aquinas, Locke, and Kant. See, respectively, The Parts of Animals, Book One; Summa Theologica Part One, Q. 76, a.4.; An Essay Concerning Human Understanding Ch. XXVII, "Of Identity and Diversity," para. 5; and The Critique of Judgment, Section 65.

2 For simplicity's sake, I will refer simply to "animal organisms" from here on.

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The first point to make, then, is that an animal organism comes into existence as a special kind of whole. This is a consequence of the nature of an animal organism as a living being. As living, animal organisms are self-directing and self-developing and self-maintaining. Such activities presuppose, however, a being of a certain sort, possessed of the ability to engage in its own direction and development. This fact about animal organisms can be expressed by saying that an organism exists in its entirety at any one time.

Such a claim needs to be distinguished from a true claim about organic development, however. For most differentiation of an organism's parts is consequent upon its initial unity as a living being; thus, the organization of parts of an animal organism is consequent to the organism's existence, as are whatever activities are consequent upon the developed organization of parts. What emerges as having a kind of absolute priority is the unity of a living thing of a certain nature.[3] Having a nature, however, means having characteristic forms of activity that are consequences of the nature, for the sake of which activities the parts exist. So while the organism exists as a whole at all times, its life takes on a necessarily temporal character, as it develops its parts and engages in its characteristic activities.

There are two relevant contrasts in this area with machines. First, a prior differentiation of parts of a machine is necessary to the machine's coming into existence. It is, indeed, the process of organization of parts <u>into</u> a unity that is the process of the machine's coming to be. By implication, the parts of a machine have an intelligibility of their own prior to their organization. This intelligibility can itself be a consequence of material nature -- this is the wood of which I will make my house. Or it can be a consequence of a prior structuring of materials with a view to making the materials fit for use in some artifact -- this is the beam with which I will make my house. But the parts of organisms

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3 See, for a helpful articulation of this idea, David S. Oderberg, "Modal Properties, Moral Status, and Identity," Philosophy and Public Affairs Vol. 26, No. 3, 1997, pp. 259-298, esp. pp. 287-291.

do not have this prior intelligibility: a heart, in a strict sense, is a part of a living being, and separated from the organism it is not a heart in the strict sense at all.

Second, the structural unity of a machine is never sufficient for a machine's functioning. An external source of energy is necessary, both for its initial functioning, and its maintenance of function. This might seem to be true of organisms, which require nutrition; but the nutrition taken in by an organism is internalized. It is the organism, we could say, that acts on the nutrition. But energy plays a more active role relative to a machine: it makes the machine to do what it does.

For these two reasons -- that the parts of a machine exist prior to its gradual organization, and that external energy must play an active role in the function of the machine -- it seems to me true to say that machines come to be gradually, whereas organisms come to be all at once. Further consequences of this will be noted below.

This account of the way in which animals come to be as special kinds of wholes results in three further kinds of differences between machines and animals. First: if the account above is true, then animals and machines are related to the entities that are causally responsible for their existence in radically different ways. For, I suggest, our creative powers as makers are limited to our powers of organization of materials into wholes, and the provision of energy for those wholes to function in a way that follows form. We can make machines, and machines are essentially make-able. But we do not have the power to create a unity that precedes structure and function. This inability is radically on display in sexual reproduction. Unlike the organization of materials characteristic of the making of machines, couples who engage in intercourse, even for the explicit purpose of begetting, do not, clearly, <u>make</u> a baby, for there are no structuring activities they engage in sufficient to bring about the characteristic unity of the human organism. The seeming counterexamples of in vitro fertilization and cloning, I will leave for consideration until section IV. But this point may best be summarized by saying that on my view, machines, and all artifacts, are made; animal organisms are not.

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A second difference is rather speculative, and perhaps counterintuitive. It involves, at any rate, science-fiction like speculations. Consider the possibility that tomorrow a computer identical to mine in all respects might come to exist, taking the place of my current computer or simply existing as a duplicate. And consider the possibility that a human being, identical to me in all respects, but not me, might come to exist tomorrow, taking my place or existing as a duplicate. (The latter was once the premise of an Arnold Schwarzenegger movie.) It might seem that I should say that the former is impossible, since machines come to be in the piece by piece way I've specified, while the latter is possible, since organisms come to be all at once. But I want to deny both claims, agreeing, rather, with a view expressed by Cora Diamond, in an article titled "The Interchangeability of Machines."[4]

As for the machine possibility, I certainly would agree that it is impossible for us to make a machine in such an instantaneous way, but this is a limitation on our part. A super-powerful being with a perfect idea of what to make and adequate materials might, through some telepathic power, instantaneously bring it about that the materials came to be organized in the necessary way. But not so with an animal organism. For it is a consequence of the priority of the animal's unity and nature to its (developed) structure and function that an animal is essentially a temporal being, developing through time. A perfect replica of me at ***t***, which has not lived through a life in order to arrive at ***t*** is not only not me (few would think it was), but it is not a human being either, nor even an animal organism of any sort.[5] No animal steps out of a Star-Trek tele-transporter.

I think this is true of all higher mammals, animals, and many other animals as well. Does the claim extend to all organisms? A seemingly obvious

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4 Cora Diamond, "The Interchangeability of Machines," in The Business of Reason, eds. J.J. MacIntosh and S. Coval, (New York: Humanities Press, 1969) pp. 50-72.

5 Michael Thompson argues for a similar view in "The Representation of Life," in Virtues and Reasons: Philippa Foot and Moral Theory ed. Rosalind Hursthouse (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1995) pp. 247-296.

counterexample comes to mind. Doesn't a slip from a plant that is planted and takes root start in mid-stream, as it were? While the case is interesting, I don't think it is a problem: first, the new plant does come to be all at once. And second, the new plant does have a history that brings it to its developed state. It is just that the history is shared with a different plant, and the shared stage of the history took place at a time during which the new plant did not yet exist. Finally, we should note that the possibility of a shared history seems dependent upon the relatively un-complex nature of the plant – the more complex the history and development of an organism is, the more difficult it is to envisage a sharing of that history. So twinning is possible among higher mammals only at very early and undifferentiated stages of life.

Finally, the third further difference is reflected in the determinate nature, or lack thereof, of the conditions for identity over time of animal organisms and artifacts. It is well known in the metaphysics of identity that the ship of Theseus raises all sorts of problems once it has been taken apart and rebuilt. But the crucial fact about artifacts which is brought out by considering their origin is that at no point do they have a determinate nature <u>of their own</u>. All that they are is, as it were, bestowed on them from without; there is never the sharp move, characteristic of substantial change that marks off a being as being self-maintaining, self-determining and self-developing. Thus, I want go further than above, in saying that machines come to be gradually, to saying that machines never completely come to be. For to completely come to be is to be a this something of such and such a nature; and a nature is what a machine never fully has. It is thus often a matter of indifference whether we say of something that it is an incomplete x, or an x that does not yet have a certain part, or an x for which there is no source of energy, or the same x or a different x. But this, epistemological difficulties aside, is never true of organisms.

Thus the third consequence: the identity conditions of machines are never fully determinate; but of animal organisms they are. What indeterminacy there is is epistemological, not ontological: an x is always either a living organic substance: or it is not.

II

In this section, I argue that the endings of machines and organisms are also different. Not surprisingly, most of the differences mirror differences of origin.

Thus, animals necessarily do, but machines do not necessarily, end all at once. This is a straightforward consequence of the account given earlier: an organism exists as long as it is alive, and its life is something that it has entirely, or not at all. When the life ends, so does the career of the organism. Failure to recognize that life is essential to the being of a living thing, as Aristotle once put it, has led a number of philosophers to assert, for example, that a dead butterfly is still, for all that, a butterfly, and a dead person still a person. Such philosophers sometimes argue for this precisely by drawing an analogy to machines: couldn't we say that the dead animal is simply broken, and that it continues to exist as long as its structure is more or less intact, as a machine does?

Such an argument accepts what I think is a truth about machines: their end of existence is, except in cases of annihilation, gradual, and indeed, not fully determinate, in a way that parallels their beginning. But the argument requires that life be a mere accident of an organism. The essence of the organism must thus be found in its structure. But how did it attain its structure save by having a life of a certain sort? The proposal made by the friends of dead animals seems to put the cart before the horse.[6]

It follows, again paralleling the beginning conditions, that animals are not, but machines are, susceptible of a heap-like problem in determining when the entity in question has ceased to exist. This is not to deny epistemological difficulties -- these difficulties are manifestly on display in discussions of brain death. But it again makes the organism out to be no different than a machine to suggest that there is some sort of ontological vagueness in the death of an organism and that marking the precise spot of death is essentially a moral problem.

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6 See Oderberg, op. cit., 288.

Finally, why do we say that organisms have died, but steadfastly resist the urge, save in clearly equivocal ways, to say of machines that they have died? The asymmetries already mentioned go some way towards explaining this, but so does the difference in the temporal character of organisms. Organisms have a history and a future as a consequence of their nature. Machines have a history and a future as a consequence of what others make of them. Machines are thus replaceable -- one will do as well as the next so long as their users' purposes are being served. But organisms have their own lives and it is something of the organism that is taken away at its end. What is taken away is not just the life that is occurrently ended, for the organism's future was the future for that life. So the organism's future is taken away at death, and this is not so for a machine, for the machine has no future of its own. For this reason, the bringing about of the end of an organism puts the agent in a direct relation to the organism in question; destroying a machine puts one in a relation to someone, whether oneself or another, different from the machine.

III

The results so far are important not only to a discussion of organisms and artifacts as such, but to a discussion of human nature and personal identity. For, as I shall argue, the answer to the question "What, most fundamentally, am I?" is that I, like all human persons, am best considered to be a human (animal) organism -- this is the view now commonly called "animalism." So what is true and false of animal organisms in regards to their beginnings and endings is likewise true and false of human persons as regards their beginnings and endings.

There are now a number of arguments to be found in the philosophical literature for why the answer to the "What am I?" question is "a human animal," and not "a person" where 'person' indicates some being different from the human animal to which I am (merely) related. Thus, for example, Eric Olson and Paul Snowdon have pointed to problems of coincident objects suffered by

those who believe that a person and an animal are different entities occupying the same space.[7] Less specific to the analytic tradition are concerns with perceptual situatedness and the phenomenology of perspective which find their origin in Merleau-Ponty.[8] And finally, of some influence is an argument of Thomas Aquinas against the view that I am a soul. After agreeing that intellectual activity is indeed characteristic of the soul, Aquinas writes, "Since, then, sensation is an operation of man, but not proper to the soul, it is clear that man is not only a soul, but something composed of soul and body."[9] And, in a passage to which Peter Geach has drawn attention, Aquinas famously remarks, "***anima mea non est ego***": my soul is not I."[10]

What follows, however, is not one of these arguments, but a sketch of a possible argument based on what has been said so far.

Suppose that a philosopher holds that what I am, most fundamentally, is not a human animal, but a person. The question I would want to raise is: what is this 'person' more like, in its beginnings and endings: an organism, or an artifact? For if the person turns out to be more like one than the other, then it will be reasonable to think that that is the ontological category to which 'person' belongs.

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7 Eric Olson, The Human Animal: Personal Identity Without Psychology (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), and "Was I Ever a Fetus?" Philosophy and Phenomenological Research 57 (1997); Paul Snowdon, "Persons, Animals, and Ourselves," in The Person and the Human Mind: Issues in Ancient and Modern Philosophy, ed. Christopher Gill (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1990).

8 Maurice Merleu-Ponty, The Phenomenology of Perception trans. Colin Smith (New York: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1962); David Braine, The Human Person: Animal and Spirit (South Bend: University of Notre Dame Press, 1992).

9 St. Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, Part One, Q. 75 a.4. See, for discussion of this argument, Patrick Lee, “Human Beings Are Animals,” International Philosophical Quarterly 37 (1997).

10 St. Thomas Aquinas, "Commentary on Paul's First Letter to the Corinthians" XV, 1, 11; Peter Geach, "What Do We Think With?" in God and the Soul (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1969).

What I suggest, then, is that those who hold the view in question typically portray the person as very much like an artifact. Consider the various lists of the properties needed for something to be a person, lists found in, ***inter alia***, Dennett, Warren, Tooley, or Singer.[11] These are typically understood as occurrent properties: it is occurrent rationality, self-consciousness, language, and so on, which are understood as the necessary conditions of personhood. But all these properties emerge gradually through time, all are subject to construals in terms of more or less, and all can, although they need not, go into decline gradually as well. Given these facts about the properties indicative of personhood, it is clear that on such construals persons do not come to be and end at once, nor as a whole, but gradually, and piecemeal.

Similarly, all these properties clearly require some degree of prior organization of the associated organic materials in order to be actualized. Once the materials have been sufficiently organized, then maintenance of organization will suffice for identity: so a person, on, e.g., Lynn Rudder Baker's view, could come to be completely constituted by non-organic parts, after total part replacement.[12] The picture emerges, apparently, of a relationship between organism and person quite like that between material and artifact.

Let me raise two general problems with this view. First, there is a great mystery here involved in the organism-person relationship. For it is typically, indeed I think necessarily, the case, that an artifact come about through external organization of materials. Being made, artifacts require a maker. Where are we to find such a maker in the organism-person relationship? The only hope, I think, is to view the organism as both material and maker, something that brings

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11 See Daniel Dennett, "Conditions of Personhood," in The Identities of Persons, ed. Amelie Rorty, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1976); Mary Ann Warren, "On the Moral and Legal Status of Abortion," in The Problem of Abortion, ed. J. Feinberg, (Belmont: Wadsworth, 1984); Michael Tooley, "Abortion and Infanticide," in The Rights and Wrongs of Abortion, ed. Marshall Cohen, Thomas Nagel and Michael Scanlon, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1974); Peter Singer, Practical Ethics vol. 2 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

12 Lynn Rudder Baker, Persons and Bodies: A Constitution View (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), p. 106.

itself to the point at which it constitutes the artifactual person. But there is an eminently more reasonable position in this neighborhood. For we have no other examples of cases in which the materials constitutive of an artifact are self-organizing vis-à-vis the ultimate artifact.

What we do have are numerous instances of beings which, by their own nature, develop to a point at which they can exercise various capacities belonging to them in virtue of their nature. Namely, we have a variety of instances of organisms, all of which come to exist prior to their actual ability to manifest their characteristic properties and activities. So why would we not think that the properties of personhood were in fact properties of a being with a certain sort of nature -- a being that came into existence well before it began to manifest the properties in question?

The second general problem is this. It is no great leap, from the differences I have discussed between organisms and artifacts, to think that organisms are ontologically of a higher order than artifacts. Some will naturally be suspicious of any attempt to claim ontological superiority of one sort of entity over another, but the relevant point about artifacts is that they are entities in a dimmer, or lesser way than are organisms: 'what they are' is not a matter of what they are, but of what they are made to be. Now the fact is that 'person' is in some sense an honorific term, meant to point out beings of a special, normatively important kind. It might be no argument, but it is not without evidentiary value to suggest that it is ironic that it should have turned into a term marking out a moderately arbitrary and literally artifactual boundary.

IV

Do the results of the investigation into the beginnings and endings of machines and organisms have ethical consequences? In this section, I argue that they do. There are three parts to the discussion. First, I briefly discuss the relationship between being a living being, and being an object of respect. Second, I discuss what it means, conceptually, to treat a living thing as if it were an artifact. And

finally, I discuss some instances in which human animals are treated as if they were artifacts.

I claim that being a living thing is a necessary condition for being an object of respect, understood in a moderately Kantian sense, that is, for being worthy of respect as an end in itself. This follows from what I have said about organisms and machines, respectively: only organisms, on my account, are fully beings in themselves. Artifacts, in a variety of ways, are beings of and by another. Since they are not entities in themselves, it is incoherent to think that they should, or even, strictly, could, be treated as ends in themselves. No computer could ever deserve respect.

There will surely be a parting of the ways, however, on the matter of whether being a living organism is sufficient for being worthy of respect. I do not think that it is, but I will set this issue aside for the moment, until I have discussed what it means to treat a living thing as if it were an artifact.

Finally, and still on the matter of the relation between being living and being an object of respect, does our recognition that human beings are living organisms affect our understanding of the content of the injunction that we respect rational beings as ends in themselves? Indirectly, it does. For bodily life is essential to the being of an animal. Hence any attack on the life of a human being is an attack on the human being, and the human person as such. Life cannot be a merely external or instrumental aspect of a human being.

It would be too quick to infer from this that life is a basic or essential good of human beings. It is a vexed question in general what goods are intrinsic to the life of a human being, and vexed as well how we come to know those goods. Some moral philosophers with views similar to mine about the animal nature of human beings think that a third-person look at the animal functions of human life reveals, after the style of Aristotle, what are genuine human goods.[13] Life is very naturally a good that shows up in such accounts. Others, including

13 E.g., Philippa Foot, "Does Moral Subjectivism Rest on a Mistake?" in Logic, Cause and Action: Essays in Honour of Elizabeth Anscombe ed. R. Teichmann, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 107-124.

myself, think that one aspect of the life of a human animal is the exercise, from a first person perspective, of practical reason, and that it is from this perspective, utilizing practical reason directly, that one comes to recognize goods such as knowledge, friendship, or aesthetic experience as basic goods.[14] So too from this perspective is the good of life recognized as basic and intrinsic. This is an insight of practical reason, but it is denied by many with a false theoretical view of the nature of the human being. It is supported by the theoretical view outlined in this paper.

What does it mean to treat a living being as if it were an artifact? It emerges that that the "as if it were" in the phrase must be understood quite strictly: no living being can be made into an artifact by the forms of treatment it is given. A hammer is genuinely a tool, but a slave, which Aristotle calls a living tool (***NE*** 1161b5), is only something being treated as if it were a tool. Similarly, although I shall argue below that various forms of reproductive and end of life technologies treat living beings as artifacts, this does not mean that the living beings have become artifacts. Even the most rigorous control over the circumstances of the coming to be of a living being, as, for example, when a sheep is cloned, should, on my account, be understood as ultimately no more than the arranging of circumstances in such a way as for a substantial change in something to take place. But the change itself, and hence the being of the living being itself, is not something that it is the object of a maker's activity, as the structural arrangement of the matter of an artifact is.

Still, for all that, it is possible, if not positively routine, for human beings to treat living beings, human and otherwise, <u>as</u> artifacts, that is, to bring the circumstances of the coming to be as much, and so much under human domination as to be, in the will, an attempt to artifactualize the being in question. Making a being's existence contingent upon that being's suitability to one's purposes involves such artifactualization from the standpoint of the end. Exercising choice and control, in increasing degrees, over the matter, or material

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14 E.g., John Finnis, Natural Law and Natural Rights (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1980).

sources, of a soon to emerge life involves such artifactualization from the standpoint of the means. It is certainly consistent with my view to recognize that such control can very significantly affect the nature of the eventual living being.

Thus, although cloning a human being does not make a human being, it clearly involves what I have been calling the artifactualizing of human beings: the cloned being is made to exist at the pleasure of scientists, parents, or what have you, in a way that no offspring of sexual reproduction ever is. And the material sources of the clone are rigorously controlled and determined with a view to controlling and determining as much as possible the living consequence. Genetic engineering promises, or threatens, to increase control over material sources even further, as, increasingly, we see the attempt to dominate the nature of particular human beings in their manner of creation. It does not render such attempts morally innocent to claim, as I am claiming, that they are all bound to fail, ultimately, in what I take to be their underlying point: to make human beings.

Likewise, the drive towards supremacy over death, whether in preventing or causing, seems to me to indicate a technical control over the living being as such, given that life is the being of a living thing. Both the temptation towards technological dominance of death by extreme artifactual maintenance of life, and the attempted dominance over life characteristic of euthanasia and suicide seem to me ultimately to treat human beings as if they were artifacts.

These last remarks on the ethics of beginning and end of life issues are at best brief and schematic. They are thus subject to a number of objections from those who support such policies. But equally, as mentioned before, an objection might be made to the division traditionally placed between human and other animals on the matter of right treatment. Non-human animals are no more artifacts, nor even potentially artifactual, than are human animals. Selective breeding, domestication, hunting for sport, and of course, genetic engineering all constitute artifactual treatments of animals: treating them as if they were artifacts. What possible grounds can there be for treating animals in such ways?

An adequate answer to this question is beyond the scope of this paper. Suffice it to say that I accept a longstanding, traditionalist view that human and non-human nature are marked off by the great gulf of rationality and freedom. While the fact that human beings are alive is necessary for according them moral respect as ends in themselves, it is the fact that human life is rational and free that is sufficient for according respect. My reasoning, in brief, is this: as mentioned above, it is through our exercise of practical reason that we are presented with various opportunities for flourishing as human beings, and through our free action that we pursue such opportunities. But the goods that form the foundation of our practical reasoning, and hence of our action, are human goods, the goods of a human life. Practical reason is not unconcerned with other forms of life, but the form of life that is the beneficiary of practical reason is human life. Our practical concern for other living beings which are incapable of participating in these goods are thus not basic concerns, but rather are always rooted in those goods which are reasons for us, including, for example, aesthetic goods, and goods of personal integrity. Thus, the wanton destruction of species, and the cruel treatment of non-human animals are ruled out, not because the environment or animals have rights, but because such treatment is degrading of human beings.

Our interest in not mistreating other animals is thus ultimately an interest in ourselves; so even in ethical thought towards other forms of animal life, those animals are already subordinated to us, thus establishing an instrumentalizing relationship not essentially different from that involved in what I have called artifactualizing. My view is not that we could treat animals as ends in themselves, but need, or ought, not, but rather that we can not. Only those beings who participate in fundamental goods are beings with whom we are in natural community. As far as we know this includes only human beings; and I hold, of course that it includes all human beings. Should free and rational Martians appear, it would include them as well. Reflecting on the nature of animal organisms can teach us much about human nature; but it need not

eliminate recognition of real and morally important differences between human and non-human animal organisms.

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Tragedy and the Philosophical Life:
A Response to Martha Nussbaum

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This paper is a brief summary of my three-volume series of books criticizing Martha Nussbaum's interpretation of Plato in her book, ***The Fragility of Goodness: luck and ethics in Greek tragedy and philosophy.*** I present an alternative reading of all four of the dialogues Nussbaum discusses: the ***Protagoras, Republic, Symposium,*** and ***Phaedrus.***

Although Nussbaum claims Plato is anti-tragic, my books demonstrate that in relation to his predecessors and contemporaries, Plato's dialogues are shown to be neither the same as traditional Greek tragedies nor entirely different from them. Plato appropriates many characteristics of tragic literature but goes beyond tragedy, both in his view of the human condition and in his writing style. The structure of these four dialogues is similar; readers are supposed to understand them as parts fitting into a larger whole which ultimately leads to a consistent view of the principles of reality, human nature, and human history. The properties and patterns running throughout the dialogues can be placed into four classes: 1) the tragic characteristics of Plato's dialogues; 2) the way Plato's dialogues go beyond tragedy 3) the way Plato's famous images of the two roads, the Cave, the Divided Line, and the three-part soul are represented in the characters and conversation of the dialogues themselves; and 4) the way Plato's Theory of Forms is embedded in the education of the human mind (***nous***) that is occurring continuously throughout the dialogues. Each of these points will be discussed, followed by a brief outline of how these patterns occur in the ***Protagoras, Republic, Phaedrus,*** and ***Symposium.***

The first task in determining whether Plato's work is tragic, anti-tragic, or a third alternative, is to define tragedy. As a way of understanding the human condition, using a variety of sources and scholars, my books focus on the following characteristics of tragedy: 1) humankind's radical insecurity; 2) human blindness: characters are unable to recognize who they are, what they know and don't know, and how insecure they really are; because they are blind,

they make bad judgments about truth, justice, and virtue, the most serious issues in human life; 3) the curse of honesty: the person who knows suffers from his wisdom because he does not have delusions about himself and those around him and because is ignored or hated by the public; this does not occur in every tragedy, but is a common theme; and 4) everyone will experience some degree of tragedy in life: no one can avoid being ignorant and vulnerable, and those who are wiser are often tragically misunderstood.

As a literary genre, referring primarily to Aristotle, my books look at a number of properties of tragedy. In their organization: 1) the plot is most important; 2) then character; 3) and finally, thought. The work has 4) a tightly written structure, with a beginning, middle, and end, and 5) takes place within one day. The characters: 6) are engaged in a serious action; 7) they experience a reversal from happiness to misery, 8) they suffer; 8) their suffering is caused by a mistake in judgment; 9) the characters are closely related; 10) true to type and true to life; 11) are morally intermediate, neither outstandingly good or wicked; and 12) experience a reversal from ignorance to wisdom. Tragedy is 13) poetry rather than history, because 14) it focuses on the universal rather than the particular. This focus on recurring, universal patterns in human behavior and human history makes it possible for audience members to draw analogies between the events, characters, and arguments on stage and their own lives and experiences. This, in turn, enables them to learn from the characters' mistakes. 15) The goal of tragedy is education.

On this understanding of tragedy, the ***Protagoras, Republic, Symposium,*** and ***Phaedrus*** include a great deal of tragedy. To understand the tragic nature of these dialogues readers must consider the historical context within which they take place. These dialogues either take place or describe a conversation that took place when Athens was still the most powerful city-state and the greatest democratic society anyone living at the time ever knew. By the time the dialogues were written, Athens had fallen from being a great democratic society to electing Critias as President and being subjected to nine

months of tyrannical rule. The great tragedy underlying all four dialogues is the fall of Athens, the loss of political and intellectual freedom.

Plato's readers know how blind the characters are to their situation. The characters are overconfident, arrogant, proud, and unaware of the way their own beliefs and ways of life are contributing to the fall of Athens. The dialogues include many different types of characters. The major character types are the philosopher, timocrat, oligarch, democrat, and tyrant, as described in the ***Republic***. Each character's speeches and choices before, during, and after the dialogues take place are consistent with his character. The tyrannical characters are worse than most people; the philosopher, Socrates, is better than most; the rest are morally intermediate. All of them experience tragedy but in different ways and to different degrees. The characters are discussing the most serious questions in life. The characters are not all blood relatives, but they are closely related in the sense that they belong to the ruling class of Athens. Thus their actions will determine the future fate of their city.

One apparently large difference between Aristotle's view of tragedy and Plato's dialogues, a difference Nussbaum considers fundamental, is that Aristotle places plot first, then character and, finally, thought. Plato, however, places thought first, then character, and appears to omit any plot whatsoever. But if one takes the historical context, the fall of Athens from democracy to tyranny, a fall from happiness to misery, as the main theme of the dialogues, then plot is, indeed, the most important characteristic of these dialogues. Plato shows his readers that the "plot," the fall of Athens, was caused by the Athenians' beliefs about human passion, truth and falsity, good and evil, justice and injustice, and most of all by their beliefs about the nature of a democratic society. Nussbaum and I agree that Plato's personal experience of witnessing the fall of Athens had a profound effect on his drive to establish the Academy and to write his dialogues as the cornerstone for a kind of philosophical education which would prevent such tragedy in the future. But we disagree on the nature of that education and the philosophical life which it tries to cultivate. Nussbaum believes that Plato's view of the philosophical life is much more

intellectually, emotionally, and physically detached from everyday life and the concerns of "normal" people than I do.

Plato cherished political and intellectual freedom, the real meaning of democracy. He shows his readers the great damage which results when the essence of a democracy degenerates into the false beliefs of the democratic personality. These four dialogues are targeted most directly at the one opinion everyone except the philosopher shares: the belief that the essence of a democracy, its greatest value, is the freedom given to citizens to live their lives in whatever way they see fit, whether that be as timocrats, oligarchs, tyrants, or as people who dabble in many different ways of life without bothering to develop any expertise which can be used to promote the well-being of their fellow citizens.

The way of life that corresponds most closely with the love of freedom as an end in itself is the democratic personality, the man who treats all choices as equally good. On my view, Nussbaum goes too far in defending this view of freedom and this way of life. Nussbaum's model of a "normal" person, the democratic personality, is Plato's version of a tragic character: a morally intermediate type who makes a mistake in judgment and undermines Athenian democracy. A society with political and intellectual freedom that becomes dominated by such personalities, especially among the privileged class, has no leadership; without educated and trained citizens who move into positions of leadership and use their authority for the good of those over whom they exercise it the city will flounder. Those who are motivated will use their power for their own personal gain, whether it be honor, wealth or personal power. The city will become less and less stable and eventually an authoritarian, tyrannical ruler will gain power and be able to force the citizens to obey him because of their failure to control themselves.

Unlike tragedy, Plato's dialogues do not show the character's reversals from happiness to unhappiness. Nussbaum accuses Plato of setting up a model of the philosophical life as disembodied minds engaged in meaningless conversation without any connection to emotions or actions. But the dialogues

contain many hints of what is to come. The conversations are anything but meaningless; the opinions the Athenians hold are lived out in their lives; the logical mistakes Socrates points out to the interlocutors become ontological mistakes and lead to the destruction of the city.

Also unlike tragedy, the characters do not experience a reversal from ignorance to wisdom. They do not learn what Socrates tries to teach them. The dialogues appear to end in confusion, ***aporeia***. I argue that there is a way out of the impasse. Socrates' way of life, as he shows his readers throughout the dialogues, is the "answer" to the question. Socrates exhibits the courage of the philosopher throughout the dialogues; the issue comes up specifically in the ***Laches***. Socrates exhibits the temperance of the philosopher throughout all the dialogues; the issue comes up specifically in the ***Charmides***, etc.

Plato is trying to engage his readers: readers need to learn what Socrates' interlocutors were either unable or unwilling to learn. Readers can recognize how blind the Athenians are to their situation: they think they are secure when they are not; they think they will remain a powerful democratic society forever but within a very few years they lose the war and their democratic way of life; they think they are intelligent and educated when they are ignorant and arrogant; they think they are open-minded but they will soon kill Socrates for his way of life, showing they are willing to silence the citizen who questions their way of life the most; they think they know what justice and injustice are but they are corrupt and are undermining the foundation of their society and the notion of justice upon which it was based.

When Solon wrote a constitution that provided free speech, free elections, trial by jury, and an Assembly chosen by lot, he did not do so because he believed the citizens should be free to live in any way they preferred. Rather, the institutions of his democratic society were based on the view that a fairly large number of citizens were naturally capable of understanding the public good, making good judgments about when to fight in a war and why, how to create laws that ensure fair treatment of citizens, how to elect officials who have the common good at heart, how to decide what is just in criminal and civil law

cases, etc. Solon believed that cultivating these powers of the souls of a large number of citizens was possible and desirable.

A just society is one that is structured to develop the highest potential in the most people possible. A just society is one that makes it possible for all the citizens to exercise the power of practical wisdom in the running of their societies to the degree that they are naturally able to do so. A society that cultivates practical wisdom in the souls of its citizens can avoid the problem of abuses of power that often occurs when rulers are given absolute power and demand blind obedience.

Plato wants his readers to make analogies between his dialogues and their own thoughts, experiences, religious traditions, and national history. Citizens in any society whose laws allow Plato's dialogues to be read and discussed need to take heed of Plato's message. They need to avoid abusing the freedom they have; they need to use it to educate themselves about the public good and continually discuss the philosophical questions Socrates discusses so that they can develop practical wisdom and make the judgments necessary to preserve political and intellectual freedom, the highest fruits of any civilization.

Ironically, perhaps, I argue that Nussbaum has made exactly the mistake Plato saw in his fellow Athenians. First, she associates Plato's philosophy with an extreme reaction against the abuse of freedom he observed in the Athenians. She claims that Plato wanted to replace the open-ended freedom the Athenians enjoyed with an unhealthy intellectual fixation on the "Forms," leading to a way of life similar to that of Theodorus, who is so fixated on detached mathematical abstractions that he knows nothing about how his neighbors are living. Nussbaum embraces Protagoras' relativism and defends a certain kind of secular humanism as the most natural and happiest life. Plato's dialogues show why this kind of secular humanism is both pseudo-philosophy, the mere appearance of wisdom, and will lead to the loss of cultural flourishing.

Plato's dialogues also imply that the fall of Athens was not inevitable. The Athenians could have learned what Socrates was trying to teach; if they had, they could have avoided many of the mistakes which led them eventually to

lose the war and then to elect a dictator. Their ignorance and arrogance was understandable and often happens in human history. But it is not inevitable; it does not occur by necessity. Human beings can choose to love wisdom rather than power, pleasure or honor. Plato's dialogues include a great deal of tragedy, so they are not anti-tragic; but they also show readers a way out of tragedy. The Athenians could have avoided tragedy; readers who have the freedom to read Plato's work can also choose to learn what Socrates has to teach and avoid the worst tragedies and abuses in their own societies. Again, perhaps ironically, Nussbaum's concept of humanism has dominated liberal politics in the United States long enough to lead to a counter-reaction under the Bush administration. The pendulum has swung from one extreme to the other. The United States has just experienced a milder form of what Plato experienced in Athens.

But what is Socrates trying to teach? What is the way out of tragedy? This is where I present a completely different view from Nussbaum's. Plato's dialogues are a unique literary genre both in their form and in their view of the human soul and its education. As a literary genre, the dialogues are divided into three parts. The dialogues represent a scene that appears to be a particular historical incident but is so tightly organized that it focuses instead on universal types of people and the types of arguments they get into, types which could actually occur but did not actually occur in the systematic way Plato presents it. The dialogues are divided into three parts. They begin in the world of imagination and opinion, the middle section turns away from this "cave" toward another view of the human soul and the nature of being, and the third section returns to the world of opinions, but now with the ability to understand it through the light of reason.

The arguments in the first section of each dialogue assume a model of the human soul made explicit in Books II-V of the ***Republic***: the appetitive part of the soul is by far the largest, the driving force behind human behavior. The spirited part tries to keep appetites in check. The so-called rational part directs the spirit in how to maintain harmony in the city and the soul by cultivating the virtues of courage, temperance, and justice. Societies institutionalize this view

of the soul by having three different classes: the ruling class makes all the decisions about how to keep the city and the citizens' souls in order, the spirited class enforces the rulers' orders, and the appetitive class provides the goods and services dictated by the rulers. Members of the economic class have to cultivate the virtues of courage, understood as the willingness to suffer and die for one's country if the rulers decide it is necessary, temperance understood as self-control in eating, drinking, and sex and as agreement to follow what the rulers order, and justice, understood as no desire to change ones' social standing unless the rulers demand it. In the first section, a sophist is using his intellectual talents to defend a way of life motivated by the love of money, status and power.

In the middle section of each dialogue, Socrates presents an entirely different model of the human soul and of courage, temperance, and justice. The ***Republic*** Book VI makes this explicit: the philosopher's soul has an erotic passion for truth, a passion far stronger than his appetites. Since such a soul does not have to be repressing appetites, there is no need for a spirited part of the soul. The philosopher's soul is a unity: all the soul's energy is dedicated to the love of wisdom; there is no desire for honor, pleasure, or power. The middle section includes different kinds of visual images, images motivated by a passion for wisdom, represented in the character and way of life of Socrates.

At approximately two-thirds of the way through, the dialogue reaches a climax: the implications of the discussion in the middle section should lead the interlocutors to reject the position in the first third and to recognize an entirely different way of living. In the ***Protagoras***, Socrates is trying to show Hippocrates in particular and the Athenians in general that the kind of dialogue they have just engaged in, a dialogue about how to conduct the dialogue between Socrates and Protagoras, is the only possible way to move toward dialectic. Long speeches and rhetorical contests about virtue and justice will never get to either; they create the appearance of being serious about living well while really functioning as entertainment only, leading citizens to ignore and deny their real responsibilities to the city. In the ***Republic***, Socrates tells

Glaucon and Adeimantus they have not yet begun to be trained in dialectic; they need to spend many years in school before they will have the training necessary to know how to handle power. In the ***Phaedrus***, Socrates gives Phaedrus a model of philosophical passion for wisdom that he should then use as the standard by which to judge the sophists who teach rhetoric and the politicians who employ it in the Assembly and the courts. In the ***Symposium***, Socrates gives Agathon a model of the kind of spiritual and intellectual development he should pursue, under the tutelage of Socrates, rather than making himself the object of Pausanias' sexual pleasure or of Alcibiades' drive for power.

All four dialogues reflect particular examples of the process of education Socrates describes in the Image of the Cave in ***Republic*** VII. In each case, Socrates is talking to at least one young man who is caught between the two worlds: he has been exposed to the opinions of the other Athenians, who advocate either the pursuit of irrational goals or irrational blind obedience to traditional beliefs, customs, and the dictates of authority figures. In each dialogue, these young men know that Socrates has different motivations; Socrates is trying to lead them out of the cave and toward the light; he wants to activate the power of the human mind in their souls, a power which will enable them to live examined, philosophical lives dedicated to the love of wisdom. In each case, the young men fail to learn what Socrates has to teach, but the readers do not have to fail. There is a way out of the tragedy of Athens; democratic societies do not have to decay into tyrannies.

In each dialogue, Socrates is arguing head-on with at least one other grown man whose character is formed and who is committed to an irrational way of life. Socrates' philosophical Eros is contrasted with a man who erotically pursues an irrational goal. Each man is trying to gain the trust of the young man; each man wants to be the teacher and mentor for the youth of Athens; each man uses rhetoric to try and persuade the young man to pursue his way of life.

This confrontation between two fundamentally different types of teacher reflects another theme made explicit in the ***Republic***: the image of two

different roads in life, mentioned in Book I when Socrates asks Cephalus to describe the road of life, at the end of Book V when Socrates abandons the road they have been on and chooses the "hard, high road" of the philosopher, and in Book X, when Socrates tells Glaucon he has to choose between two fundamentally different roads in life. In each dialogue, the two adults representing each road also exercise the powers of soul that reflect the road they are on. Readers can observe the difference between philosophical courage and unphilosophical courage, philosophical and unphilosophical temperance, philosophical and unphilosophical rhetoric, philosophical and unphilosophical friendship, philosophical and unphilosophical justice, philosophical and unphilosophical teaching, philosophical and unphilosophical Eros, the way of life driven by a philosophical idea of the Good and the ways of life driven by an unphilosophical idea of the Good.

This basic structure of the dialogues is also a concrete example of the image of the Divided Line. The Divided Line describes four levels of powers belonging to the human soul: ***noesis***, the highest power; ***dianoia***, the powers related to other intellectual activities; ***pistis***, the powers connected to the world of facts; and ***eikasia,*** the power of imagination that holds a mirror to the world of facts and makes an image of it. The young men exist at the level of ***pistis*** because they have not yet made a commitment to a way of life; they could turn either upward toward the life of the mind or downward toward the life of images. The sophist holds up a mirror to the world around him, notices that the vast majority of people pursue irrational ends, and creates an educational system that uses the powers of ***dianoia*** in the service of gaining money, power, and fame. Such men are focused on ***eikasia***, refining and magnifying irrational desires and figuring out how to manipulate and cultivate these desires. They are highly intelligent people, but they have turned their eye of the soul in the wrong direction, as Socrates says in ***Republic*** VII. They are three removes from philosophy and the truth. The philosopher's soul is exercising the power of ***noesis,*** always focused on the Idea of the Good before deciding how to act or how to treat his interlocutors. Everything Socrates says and does, his entire way

of life, is an incarnate example of how the Idea of the Good is manifested in a human life. Socrates uses his intellectual powers, such as the powers of rhetoric, logic, and myth-making, to serve his philosophical passion, his love of wisdom.

There is no need to posit the existence of a world of forms separated from the powers of soul and natural powers that exist and are being activated within the dialogues themselves. The ways of life represented in the dialogues are what courage, temperance, justice, etc., are. Socrates represents the real version of each; the other adults represent the false appearance of each. A philosophically educated person will exercise these powers throughout life, not thinking about or worrying about an afterlife or the existence of another world apart from this one.

So, what position do my books take on "Tragedy and the Philosophical Life?" I show that the characters in Plato's dialogues who assume human nature is irrational and base their choices on this assumption inevitably experience many different kinds of tragedies. Protagoras is a tragic character because he is blind to the effect of his teachings on his students. In Hippocratus' case, he might enable Hippocrates to gain status, money and power within the traditional institutions of Athenians society. In Alcibiades' case, however, he provided one of the brightest young men in Athens the tools to become a tyrannical soul and, ultimately, betray his own city, leading to the destruction of Athens. The "friend" to whom Socrates is retelling the story has the same type of soul as the Athenians at Callias' house who are observing the debate between Socrates and Protagoras. They are paradigm examples of the "democratic personality" Socrates describes in Book VIII of the ***Republic.*** They think merely discussing serious questions is what a free and open society is all about. They do not realize that they needed to develop self-control and a desire to work for the well-being of the city as a whole in order to maintain the stability and freedom they so enjoyed. Glaucon and Adeimantus are tragic characters because they do not get what Socrates is trying to teach them. They do not admit how little they know. Phaedrus is a tragic character because he

does not understand the kind of philosophical Eros Socrates is describing to him in the myth and showing him by living a certain way. In the ***Symposium***, readers see that Phaedrus has rejected the love of pleasure as a worthy goal for human life but has replaced it with the love of honor. He has become a timocrat and follows a way of life that is more Spartan than Athenian. Phaedrus is an intermediate type of person whose life comes to a tragic end because of a mistake in judgment about what to live for. The ***Symposium*** begins with speeches by former students of Socrates, men who had become enthralled with the "philosophical frenzy" in their youth, as Alcibiades points out, but gave it up and chose another, irrational road to travel on throughout their lives. They defend their ways of life, their erotic passions, even using the city's most sacred texts to defend their secular lives. Agathon is the only interlocutor who is not yet formed, who has not yet made a choice about what to live for; he, too, will make a mistake in judgment and come to a bad end. Alcibiades is the tyrannical soul, the character who most understands Socrates' way of life and its value and yet rejects it. The other characters are intermediate types who make mistakes in judgments about how to live and fail to recognize how important it is to educate the most talented youth to dedicate their talents to the love of wisdom. They allow Alcibiades to get trained in rhetoric by the sophists, giving him the power to manipulate the Athenians, drive them into a suicidal war and then betray them.

In each dialogue, Socrates' way of life provides a model for how the fall of Athens could have been prevented. Socrates' way of life goes beyond ignorance and tragedy. But neither Plato nor Socrates would be arrogant enough to believe they could eliminate tragedy. Given the many, many ways human life is filled with ignorance, vulnerability, and tragedy, tragedy will never end. But philosophy can prevent the worst tragedy, the end of the political and intellectual freedom necessary to educate citizens and give them the opportunity to govern themselves justly and wisely, so they are not forced to obey blindly a tyrannical ruler.

A Response to Martha Nussbaum

Nussbaum misreads Plato when she accuses him of arrogantly trying to overcome tragedy in human life. We are all born ignorant, living in the world of the cave, but through dialectical education, we can educate the natural power in our souls, the power of mind (***nous***), and go beyond complete ignorance and tragedy. Philosophical insight does not consist in a contemplative escape from the world of the cave. The philosopher, when asked, must return to the cave and try to educate those who also want to live the life of the mind. Only then will unnecessary tragedy be avoided and the opportunity to continually develop the love of wisdom be pursued. We will never achieve "perfect" wisdom and evade tragedy; but we are required by our innate desire to seek some kind of transcendence, to cultivate our most sacred natural gift, our minds, and use them to continually choose the better life over the worse, examining and reexamining our lives and the lives of those around us.

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Childhood and Salvation in *The Brother's Karamazov*

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In his work, ***The Brother's Karamazov***, Fyodor Dostoevsky demonstrated a profound intellectual critique of Christianity and its ideals of love. Throughout the novel, Dostoevsky sets out to address the problem of uncovering God and goodness in the face of unjust suffering, temporality, and self-laceration. Ultimately, Dostoevsky presents to the reader a metaphysical understanding of childhood and the spiritual innocence that comes from it to answer the questions of suffering, temporality and laceration. According to Dostoevsky, when an individual is psychologically and emotionally broken by the sight of unjust suffering in the world, he or she is left with an immediate sense of hopelessness in regards to a universe that has been ordered toward the good. Laceration, according to Dostoevsky, occurs when an individual is desperately shamed over the recognition of one's own impotent will in light of one's own sublime and lofty ideals about love. Temporality and time come to fruition when the individual gives up hope of reaching their own ideals of a love that exists eternally within a moment and inevitably attempts to ***construct*** an ideal utopia (i.e. a heaven on earth) based on worldly goods and circumstances. For Dostoevsky, metaphysical childhood solves these problems by returning one to a metaphysical state of innocence where one can see and recall that one possesses the ability to act in a way that is purely good. One will then no longer lacerate oneself and will also pursue goods (as opposed to manipulating and/or constructing them) in a way that, within a moment, is authentic, unadulterated, and beyond the limitations of space and time. From this, life will bear moments of "miracles"[1] for an individual that will bring one ultimately to faith in a God that has ordered the universe toward the good.

[1] These miracles will not be the standard "mysteries" that the Church strove to provide throughout history. According to Dostoevsky, "miracles" are not so much turning stones to bread as they are performing active love toward an individual and experiencing a moment of heaven in that action.

Childhood and Salvation in The Brother's Karamazov

I have chosen to break the paper down into three distinct parts as well as a conclusion to analyze how Dostoevsky uses metaphysical childhood to ultimately solve these problems: 1. unjust suffering; 2. laceration; 3. temporality; and 4. a concluding point. According to Dostoevsky, it is the recognition of unjust suffering that ultimately causes laceration of oneself and it is laceration that keeps an individual from experiencing moments of active love outside of space and time. Thus, it is in that order that I will analyze how Dostoevsky uses metaphysical childhood to solve these problems.

I believe it will be beneficial to briefly explain the main concept of ***metaphysical childhood*** that I hope to ultimately illustrate and clarify throughout the course of this essay. It is often difficult or even impossible when writing on a metaphysical topic to use terminology that can be interpreted univocally because metaphysics is a science that attempts to take into account every ontological level of reality that consists of an individual's experience in the universe. Thus, the word ***metaphysical*** is used to invoke a connotation of universal accountability of all the levels of a human beings experience of reality. In particular, in regards to a Dostoevskean metaphysics, the total experience of reality would have to account for an individual's soul and an ability to have an ontological experience of the divine and eternity through an objectively spiritual essence that an individual can come in contact with through one's individual experience.

Thus, in regards to the term ***childhood***, one must try to understand the term as used in a metaphysical sense. For example, a biological/anatomical understanding of childhood would examine the various physical bodily structures of a child, a sociological understanding of childhood would perform an abstract examination of children as a group living in and responding to the various environments and cultures they are raised in, a scientific psychological examination of childhood would examine through rigorous analysis the chemical and neurological structures and workings of a child's brain to explain behavior in their environment, etc. In the Brother's Karamazov, Dostoevsky is attempting to convey an understanding of and interpretation of childhood that

speaks to another level of reality that childhood accounts for. Thus, ***metaphysical childhood*** attempts to place words upon the ability of a child, through innocence, to love life, one's peers, one's activities and oneself in a way that provides a consequent experience of God and eternity in a way that an individual who has experienced his or her own sin and guilt towards others because of this sin cannot.

It is important to note that this is not merely a univocal or metaphorical understanding of childhood. Thus, it does not speak merely to something experienced only by a child during his or her childhood. It also does not speak to something that is just a metaphorical explanation of an experience similar to something that takes place in childhood but ultimately that is fundamentally different. It is a metaphysical interpretation of childhood because though this innocent experience devoid of laceration shares the same essence in physical childhood as it does in the metaphysical childhood Alyosha experiences as an adult, metaphysical childhood takes place in a state of consciousness of oneself and one's experience of the universe that is ontologically greater than the one it is experienced in during physical childhood. In experiencing metaphysical childhood, one had already experienced one's own sinful nature, one's guilt toward one's peers because of this failure to love them according to the divine ideal one holds in one's soul and the consequent laceration and exacerbation of this failure when one loses faith that he or she can in fact be redeemed to loving one's peers according to their individual ideal. When one can overcome laceration and regain faith through active love, one will experience metaphysical childhood, like Alyosha does in the novel. Thus, one will regain faith in their ability to overcome their individual sin and guilt through directing each moment of their existence toward seeing one's peers and oneself objectively and loving one's peers and oneself actively.

Finally, I will provide a brief description of laceration before I begin to examine these concepts throughout the novel. Laceration is first formally brought up Book IV of the novel entitled "Lacerations," though it could easily be argued that lacerations in the characters can be located from the very first

pages of the novel. In this book, Dostoevsky takes time to show some very specific and diverse forms of laceration, taking place in all types of characters from an ascetic monk (Fr. Ferapont), to the buffoonery of Fyodor Karamazov and even in the form of a young child and a teenage girl (Ilyusha and Lisa, respectively). Laceration occurs when an individual recognizes his or her inability to love according to the divine ideals of their soul. Instead of looking toward one's childhood to a moment or time when one did love according to the ideals of one's soul, one loses faith in love, in God and in one's own ability to love in spite of sin and absurdity. One then does either one of two things (or both). One can then create an image of oneself and consciously project it into the world and toward one's peers (in particular those peers one longs to love the most). One then "lacerates" or simply "beats up" this image of oneself in front of one's peers to show to the world that though he or she is a sinner and has failed to live up to the ideals of their soul, he or she will judge oneself first, above all and with a harsher and more vehement punishment than any other ever could. The other option one can take is to perform this same process on one's peers. In both cases, laceration is performed in order to divert oneself from the actual state of one's own sin. In the second case, it is just more clear that one is diverting this attention toward the sins of another or of many.

I

Dostoevsky addresses the question of how one ought to exist in the world in the face of unjust suffering. In his chapter on ***Rebellion***, Dostoevsky presents his main arguments for the problem of unjust suffering through the brother Ivan. Ivan says:

> I am a believer. But then there are the children, and what am I to do about them? That's a question I can't answer…. While there is still time, I hasten to protect myself against the higher harmony altogether. It's not worth the tears of that one

> tortured child who beat itself on the breast with its little fist and prayed in its stinking outhouse, with its unexpiated tears to "dear kind God"! It's not worth it, because those tears are unatoned for. They must be atoned for or their can be no higher harmony.2

It is important to notice that this argument concerning unatoned and unjust suffering focuses on children. According to Ivan, all adults, in some way, have lost the innocence they had as a child. Thus, the suffering of adults, according to Ivan, can be justified because all have met the "idol of Gomorrah" and therefore deserve to suffer.[3] When a child suffers unjustly, not only is the body of the child hurt, but, more importantly for Ivan, the innocence of the child is lost and can no longer be regained. Ivan longs so desperately to hold on to the innocence of children because he recognizes in himself this loss of innocence. Upon recognizing the unjust suffering of children, Ivan, along with the suffering child, loses his own innocence yet refuses to kill his sublime and lofty ideals about life. According to Ivan, if he accepts a higher harmony in the midst of the unjust suffering of children he will be giving up the last of his innocence and lofty ideals. Thus, only if he rejects his ticket to heaven and the higher order can he holds on to the last part of his innocence (i.e. these sublime and lofty ideals). It is because he has lost the vast majority of his innocence (i.e., his metaphysical "childhood") that Ivan inevitably cannot bring his will to meet the ideals of Christian love that burn within his mind and soul.

Dostoevsky answers Ivan's problem of unjust suffering and loss of innocence by presenting a syllogism for how a "realist" can come to faith and

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2 Fyodor Dostoevsky, ***The Brother's Karamazov*** (Norton Critical Edition, Constance Garnett, translator and Ralph E, Matlaw, editor, New York, 1976), p. 225. (Hereafter, abbreviated ***BK.***)

3 ***BK***, ***p.*** 97, The "idol of Gomorrah" stands throughout the novel as a symbol of every human beings longing for debauchery, vile and the base pleasures in life.

ultimately perform miracles.[4] Dostoevsky's syllogism is that if one can overcome laceration one will be able to see the pure good in oneself. If one sees pure goodness within oneself, one will recognize that self-laceration is not justified even in the face of one's own vile and baseness. When one sees a moment of pure goodness in one's own life and overcomes self-laceration, it becomes possible that one can find pure goodness within the soul of all persons, ultimately overcoming laceration directed toward the actions, thoughts and intentions of others. Inevitably, when one overcomes laceration directed toward all persons, one will be able to perform active love to all persons. If one performs active love to all persons, one will see that inherent in active love lies "miracles" and even a "heaven on earth." If one sees miracles, the true, real and objective miracles active love offers, one will have faith in God.

Dostoevsky illustrates this syllogism for faith in book ten of his novel titled ***Boys*** when Alyosha is with the boys and Ilyusha's family. The common opinion is that Dostoevsky's ultimate metaphysical answer to the problems raised was to be found in Zosima's teachings, but this is not the case. They ultimately come in this understanding of active love and metaphysical childhood, though this is difficult to overlook as the only illustration of active love in the novel occurs in Alyosha's relation to the children. In the chapter on ***Boys***, Dostoevsky uses Ilyusha to depict a modern Russian version of the child suffering unjustly. He also sets out to use Alyosha as the modern Russian illustration of his syllogism for faith in the midst of suffering. Dostoevsky portrays the scene at Ilyusha's house as a melting pot of laceration. For example, he articulates how laceration manifests itself in the relationship between Captain Snegiryov and his ill son Ilyusha. To exacerbate the immense sadness he holds witnessing the slow death of his son, Snegiryov acts like a "buffoon," telling his son "stories, funny anecdotes, mimicking comic people,

[4] Dostoevsky notes in the novel that Alyosha, his hero, is also a "realist." What he means by this is that he is longing for a faith not based on mystery, outward miracles and abstract notions of God. Alyosha will only come to faith by seeing at least a true glimpse of God demonstrated in this life.

even imitating the howls and cries of animals…he even began letting them (the children) ride on his back…"[5] Ilyusha cannot stand his father's lacerated buffoonery and is brought to shame in the face of his actions. He is constantly haunted by the memory of the day when his schoolmates insulted him for his father's buffoonery and constantly falls back into contempt for his father at the sight of such actions.[6] Along with this, the young boy Kolya, who is friends with Ilyusha, experiences perhaps one of the most heavily lacerated hearts of any character in the novel for his longing to intellectually assert himself while realizing he is too young to have any independent knowledge. Thus, the pride of Ilyusha, the torn heart of Snegiryov and Kolya's intellectual laceration make for a lacerated and ultimately emotionally draining relationship between them and anyone who must endure their actions.

In fact, it is Alyosha who does just that in the chapter. Alyosha goes to the house daily just to be a stable source of love for the family amidst their suffering and laceration. Dostoevsky records the phrase "Alyosha smiled" in regards to the lacerated characters in his midst five times in only this one book. Also, Alyosha makes sure that he gathers all the children to Ilyusha for one moment so all can love the boy together and experience the miracle of communal love for another in the midst of suffering. One clear example of how Alyosha is able to love these lacerated characters with such gentleness and warmth is shown in his conversation with Kolya in the chapter on ***Precocity***. After Kolya semi-intellectually rambles on about his socialist ideals in order to gain the intellectual recognition of Alyosha, he recognizes that Alyosha's love and respect is not moved by his discourse, but instead Alyosha only ***smiles*** warmly at the young boy. He immediately feels shame over his attempts and says to Alyosha, "Tell me, Karamazov, have you an awful contempt for me?" Alyosha responds gently by saying, "What for? I am only sad that a charming nature such as yours should be perverted before you have begun life."[7] Alyosha

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[5] ***BK***, ***pp***. 509-510.

[6] ***BK***, ***p.*** 188 .

[7] ***BK***, ***p.*** 525.

is able to look past the pride-driven comments of the young boy because he can see him in the sight of love. He goes on to express to Kolya why he was able to smile but explaining that he understands the pride, conceit and passion of the Russian schoolboy. Thus, when Alyosha sees Kolya free from laceration, he can see into the heart of Kolya and he views only good desires and passions which are misplaced. From this, he is able to love Kolya (as well as all the other equally-lacerated characters) and experiences miracles and inevitably faith. In Alyosha is a state of metaphysical "childhood" which allows for enough innocence to remember what is good and ultimately to transcend laceration and see the real good at the heart of all the character's actions.

II

Dostoevsky addresses the issue of accepting oneself in the midst of laceration and guilt for one's failure to live up to the ideal of Christian love. Though evidence for laceration and guilt from failure can be derived from several characters throughout the book (i.e. Ivan, Katerina, Dimitri, Smerdykov, etc.), to stay true to the theme of this paper the young girl Lise provides one with a noteworthy example of a lacerated soul. Though Lise is a young girl, shame has fallen upon her memory of her own childhood. She says to Father Zosima:

> Why has (Alyosha) forgotten everything, then? He used to carry me when I was little. We used to play together. He used to come to teach me to read, do you know. Two years ago, when he went away, he said that he would never forget me, that we were friends forever, forever, forever! And now he's afraid of me all at once…No, now he's saving his soul. Why have you put that long gown on him? If he runs he'll fall.[8]

[8] ***BK***, ***p.*** 50.

This particular quote from Lise articulates the shame she now holds when she remembers her childhood. One ultimately learns in the story that Alyosha holds in his heart an erotic love for Lise, which one can assume is the reason why he is so hesitant and ashamed to go back to her as he has promised.[9] Unfortunately for Lise, Alyosha's shame leads ultimately to her own shame about an objectively pure and good time that she has in her life. One will see from Lise's laceration later in the novel that her shame has lead her to ultimately forget this authentically beautiful time in her life.

Later in the novel, Dostoevsky brilliantly articulates Lise's laceration. In the chapter ***A Little Demon***, Alyosha visits Lise and finds a young girl whose heart is full to the brim with guilt and laceration over her own inability to love according to the Christian ideal. After expressing her desire for destruction and the dreams she has about devils coming to capture her, she confesses the fundamental source of her laceration. She says to Alyosha:

> There's a book here in which I read about the trial of a Jew, who took a child of four years old and cut off the fingers from both hands, then crucified him to the wall…sometimes I wish it was I who crucified him. He would hang there moaning and I would sit opposite him eating pineapple compote…You know when I read about the Jew I shook with sobs all night, I kept fancying how the little thing cried and moaned…and all the while the thought of pineapple compote haunted me.[10]

At the core of her laceration, longing for destruction and confessed "hatred" of all things is a pure and true desire to love all things and become responsible to all and for all. As Lise lies awake psychologically and emotionally suffering for the poor child who was crucified, she cannot bear the fact that she also longs for as base a pleasure as dessert. Though Dostoevsky does not tell the reader

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[9] ***BK***, ***p.*** 200.

[10] ***BK***, ***p.*** 552.

explicitly why Lise, or any of the characters that cannot overcome their laceration, the scene where she confesses shame over her childhood must be taken into account. In the novel, all characters suffer from laceration but not all ultimately fall victim to it. There is a direct correlation between Lise's shame of her childhood and her failure to overcome laceration. This becomes clear upon examining the particular ways that several characters do overcome laceration throughout the course of the novel.

In the chapter titled ***An Onion***, Dostoevsky articulates, through the conversation between Grushenka and Alyosha, that the first necessary and in many ways simple step to overcoming laceration is to recognize that at least one point in one's life that individual "gave an onion" to another.[11] To "give an onion" is essentially to offer the most base and simple act of love to another, to oneself or even to the world at large. According to Dostoevsky, it is primarily in or through metaphysical childhood that a human being will perform such a pure action of love free from any laceration or guilt. If one can only recall that deep within one's soul there lays some genuine and true act or feeling of love, one will no longer lacerate themselves when they recognize their failure to ultimately live up to the Christian ideal of love.

Among several characters in the book, Dimitri Karamazov experiences a moment of "giving an onion" and at least temporarily overcomes his own laceration. Like his two brothers, Dimitri has a dream which ends up playing a central role in defining the course of his character in the novel. After he is interrogated about the murder of his father, Dimitri falls asleep in the jail and Dostoevsky articulates his dream for the reader.

> "He was driving somewhere in the steppes…And as they drove in, there were peasant women drawn up along the road…especially one at the edge, a tall bony woman…And in her arms was a little baby crying. And her breasts were so dried up that there was not a drop of milk in them. And the

[11] ***BK, p.*** 330.

> child cried and cried, and held out his little bare arms, with its little fists blue from cold…'Why are people poor? Why is the babe poor? Why is the steppe barren? Why don't they hug each other and kiss? Why don't they sing songs of joy? Why are they so dark from black misery? Why don't they feed the babe?'[12]

Dostoevsky goes on to explain that Dimitri had felt a "passion of pity, such as he had never known, was rising in his heart," thus, demonstrating in Dimitri a one moment of love that is pure, genuine, and real.

Though this is only a dream and therefore only occurs in the theoretical realm for Dimitri it is enough to allow for his theoretical hymn. After experiencing this emotion of love in his dream, Dimitri comes to peace (at least momentarily) with the idea of being exiled for the crime of his father. Though he admits that he did not kill his father, he ***takes responsibility*** for desiring the death of his father. His penance, in his own words, will be to go to Siberia and spread his "hymn" of love to all due to this newfound recognition of his responsibility. Dimitri says:

> Even there, in the mines, underground, I may find a human heart in another convict and murderer by my side…One may resurrect and revive a frozen heart in that convict, one may wait upon him for years, and at last bring up from the dark depths a lofty soul, a feeling, suffering creature; one may bring forth an angel, resurrect a hero![13]

Though Dimitri inevitably struggles to put his plan into action and in reality accept responsibility to "the murderer" in Siberia, his plan is one that longs for the Christian ideal of love and is free from any laceration. While Dimitri

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[12] ***BK***, ***pp***. 478-479.

[13] ***BK***, ***p.*** 560.

articulates his "hymn" to his brother Alyosha, there is not the same immediate guilt and shame from the fact that he may not be able to live up to this ideal of love. At least for a moment in his mind, Dimitri's soul is at peace and free from laceration in his desire to become responsible to all persons and love ideally. His ability to love freely in this way is directly derived from his dream where he expresses a genuine care and responsibility for the suffering of a child. Essentially, to give an onion is to perform an act in a state of metaphysical childhood because at least for one moment, one act, one thought and dream, etc., an individual has enough innocence to overcome laceration and offer something intrinsically good to another. It is both Lise's inability to give an onion and Dimitri's longing to give an onion that result from their corresponding lack of innocence and moment of innocence, respectively. Thus, as is the case with Dimitri, Dostoevsky articulates that it is in children or childhood that an individual will find their "onion."

III

Dostoevsky addresses the question of temporality and eternity. Dostoevsky offers subtle but profound evidence in articulating the difference between existing within temporality and time and experiencing a moment that occurs eternally. Dostoevsky demonstrates temporality in portraying the rationalist predictions of the "man-god." At three points in the novel, Dostoevsky offers the theory that over ***time*** and through ***periods*** of history, an individual will inevitably come and demonstrate a social-political-religious dominance over all human beings.[14] Perhaps most clearly articulated in the chapter on ***The Grand Inquisitor***, there are necessary historical cycles that will take place proceeding a time when this individual will subconsciously extract the freewill from all individuals through his ability to manipulate temporal goods. Within time and

[14] Dostoevsky refers to this in his chapters ***The Grand Inquisitor***, ***Ivan Fyodorovich's Nightmare: The Devil*** and the section ***The Mysterious Visitor*** within the chapter on ***Notes of the Life in God of the Elder Zosima.***

temporality, the Grand Inquisitor longs to establish a social-religious-political heaven on earth. He takes in exchange merely the freewill of all persons so that the mere possibility of any moral failure by an individual will be eliminated, food will be given to all, people will have their miracles and mystery and all will be united in a "heaven on earth." Dostoevsky places a subtle emphasis on the fact that this "heaven on earth" articulated by Ivan is one that can only take place within time (throughout the course of historical events) and through the manipulation of temporal goods. Ironically enough, heaven for Ivan and the Grand Inquisitor actually holds on to nothing that is really divine (i.e. a moment or event that exists beyond space and time and/or the physical laws of nature). This "heaven on earth" is fitting for the lacerated heart of Ivan who constructs this prophecy in order to distract himself from a real longing but immediate inability to be "one of the twelve-thousand,"[15] so to speak.

Dostoevsky offers the reader several illustrations throughout the book of the heaven experienced by "the twelve-thousand." According to Dostoevsky, moments of pure, genuine and un-lacerated love exist in eternity, outside of space and time. While one undergoes an unconscious dream state, one is experiencing a moment of thought and sensation that takes place outside of temporal space and time. Though a dream can take place within spaces, they are not necessarily the geographic spaces of our world. Also, though there can be a small level of chronological detail in a dream, a dream occurs within a highly unstructured and ultimately more fluid account of time. Upon waking from a dream, one cannot account the amount of hours, minutes or seconds that a certain dream took place while they were sleeping and/or unconscious. On the other hand, one can only account experiencing moments of images and the contingent sensations one felt within this moment. Alyosha's dream and his falling to the earth is still very much a moment of in his own metaphysical "childhood." Spiritually, Alyosha had been a child protected and nurtured by

[15] Ivan describes in the chapter on The Grand Inquisitor that according to Jesus' plan for salvation of reaching the ideal of love and responsibility to all and for all, only 12,000 persons would have reached heaven by being able to live out this ideal.

Zosima for years. After Zosima's death, Alyosha's spiritual immaturity is demonstrated by his immediate moments of confusion and anger at the fact that Zosima's body has deteriorated so quickly and negated a possibility for sainthood. Alyosha longs for justice that he believes has not come and immediately questions the faith that he once believed held so firmly within his mind and soul. Inevitably, Dostoevsky is demonstrating to the reader the metaphysical state of "childhood" in which Alyosha remains in through the fact that his whole edifice of faith in a God of ***love, eternity and resurrection*** crumbles in the midst of the decay of a temporal body for the sake of a "miracle."

In the midst of his metaphysical "childhood," Alyosha experiences within a dream and a tangible and real action a moment of eternity. After returning home from Grushenka's,[16] he falls by Zosima's grave and begins unconsciously praying. In the background, he can hear Father Païssy reading the Gospel story of the wedding at Cana. Alyosha slips into an unconscious dream state and finds himself at the wedding experiencing the love of Jesus for all persons (even in their goodness) and their reciprocated love for him. Dostoevsky goes on to present three passages written in a ***stream of consciousness*** format.[17] Stream of consciousness writing attempts to capture within only a moment of time an abundance of conscious activity. Thus, as Alyosha is looking on at the wedding in this unconscious dream state, he is experiencing a moment that in many ways is occurring beyond temporality as we know in this world. In his third discourse (with himself), he ultimately encounters Father Zosima at the wedding. Zosima explains to Alyosha that he is

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[16] ***BK***, ***pp***. 332-333, In this scene, Alyosha gives his first "onion," In the midst of Grushenka's shame and laceration. Alyosha is able to see her clearly and recognizes the beauty at the heart of all her laceration and actions. He merely lets a broken woman know that in her heart, she is truly, purely and objectively good.

[17] A technique used primarily by some late Modern and Contemporary writers, in particular Virginia Woolf. Woolf says about stream of consciousness that it captures "the atoms as they fall onto the brain." It is a style written within space, but outside of "time" insofar as it captures a plethora of thoughts all occurring really within a moment of time.

there based only the fact that he gave one onion to another and that because Alyosha has now done the same, he will also be at the wedding (i.e. heaven) when his life is over.

In regards to the theme of metaphysical "childhood," Zosima, in explaining Jesus and his longing to bring more to "the wedding," explains to Alyosha the idea of the "new wine" which Jesus is making at that moment. This idea of "new wine" holds significance as a metaphor for the metaphysical childhood (i.e. new childhood) which Alyosha is about to embrace. Like "old wine," the "new wine" is fundamentally the same substance (i.e. wine) in the same way that physical and metaphysical "childhood" also share an essence (i.e. innocence). Like the "new wine," this "new childhood" (metaphysical childhood) must come after the "old wine" and "old childhood," respectively. According to the gospel story, despite it being brought out last, the "new wine" is described as ***the best*** wine. In the same way, this metaphysical childhood articulated by Dostoevsky, which comes after one's physical state of childhood, is ***the best*** metaphysical state one can reach. Thus, Dostoevsky is using these short moments in a state of unconsciousness to articulate the ultimate epiphany Alyosha will undergo in the novel. After awaking from his dream, Alyosha leaves the room, goes outside and falls to the earth, weeping and kissing the ground in a moment of ecstasy. In the same way that the conversion of water to wine was Jesus' first miracle in the world, this falling to the earth after his dream is Alyosha's first miracle of active love. As new wine comes from Jesus' miracle, new childhood comes from Alyosha's miracle of faith. This moment of kissing the earth and weeping for it demonstrates a new innocence and genuine ability to see all things as good and kiss them; an innocence that comes only from an experience of metaphysical childhood. Dostoevsky writes, "His soul, overflowing with rapture, yearned for freedom, space, openness."[18] This quote explains the longing of Alyosha for this moment that is beyond temporality, at least as we understand it. It is only through this experience and action of

[18] ***BK***, ***p.*** 340.

metaphysical childhood that Alyosha is able to transcend these limitations of time and cross over into a moment of eternity.

IV

For Dostoevsky, metaphysical childhood solves the problems of unjust suffering, laceration, and temporality by returning one to a metaphysical state of innocence where one can see and recall that one possesses the ability to act in a way that is purely good. What Dostoevsky ultimately presents to the reader is a genuine and original methodology for faith that meets the demands of the realist while never compromising the divine and transcending ideals of God that had been held by Christians for roughly the previous eighteen centuries. For the realist, it is no longer the case that one must concede all points of unjust suffering to the ultimate and unknowable plan of God. Dostoevsky's methodology not only allows for the realist to be broken by the absurdity of unjust suffering, laceration, and temporality. His methodology calls for all human beings to ***become responsible to all and for all*** that which is not truly providing for a true heaven on earth. How one becomes responsible and creates a heaven on earth is ultimately from moments of active love for oneself and for others. According to Dostoevsky, if one provides active love, one will experience miracles. Ultimately, if all persons perform all actions directed by acted love, all actions at all times will be miracles. Thus, human beings will have heaven on earth through experiencing life as a state of constant miracles of active love. Ivan's laceration stems from the fact that he cannot be a child and a realist at the same time. It is only this ***real experience*** of heaven will provide an individual (in particular the realist) with an unshakeable foundation for faith free from any abstract, mysterious and unknowable premises. According to Dostoevsky, active love (and thus miracles and heaven on earth) are only possible if one can come reach a state of metaphysical childhood. It is only by obtaining the metaphysical innocence that comes from this state that one will acquire the ability to see within oneself some pure goodness. Only after

recognizing at least one moment of pure goodness in one's own life will it become possible for one to overcome laceration. Upon overcoming laceration by seeing life through the eyes of this metaphysical innocence and understanding of pure goodness, one's actions will by driven by a longing for active love; a longing to get up and walk a quadrillion miles for only one moment in heaven[19]; a longing to experience miracles and a heaven on earth.

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[19] ***BK***, ***p.*** 610.

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