

This anthology contains a collection of dissertations written by the University of Liverpool's undergraduate Philosophy students throughout the academic year of 2024-2025.

All contributions featuring in this anthology have been submitted by its author, along with a reflective comment about their experience with the dissertation.

We all hope that this anthology provides future students, maybe considering whether to undertake a dissertation of their own, insight into what it entails as well as the encouragement to embrace the challenge!

This anthology is a celebration of the hard work and intellectual resolve each student has devoted to their dissertation. It concludes with the three dissertations that were awarded the highest marks printed in full.



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Foreword by Professor Michael Hauskeller

Writing a dissertation can be quite challenging. Not everyone is up to it. It requires not only the kind of intellectual curiosity that is absolutely essential in any good philosopher, but also a fair amount of courage and resolve. There is a lot of research to be done and genuine problems to be solved, which is of course also what makes writing a dissertation so rewarding. Because those problems are not just strictly philosophical problems (if there is such a thing), but – as the variety of topics addressed in the dissertations featured in this anthology demonstrates – problems that we all face not primarily as philosophers but as people who must decide how to live our lives in a world that is often confusing, especially if it is as rapidly changing as ours is today. Philosophy not only aims to answer the big timeless questions about the nature of reality or our ability to understand it, but also the many smaller but perhaps equally important questions that arise from what is actually happening in the world right now, from the violent conflicts in Ukraine and Gaza, over culture wars and the shifting global political and economic order, to the seemingly unstoppable rise of Artificial Intelligence in all areas of life.

The British Philosophical Association launched a big campaign this year to convince the public (which includes the government and university bosses) that “philosophy matters”, which is always a hard sell because Philosophy as an academic subject has the reputation of being not very practical and rather irrelevant. But philosophy is, or at least can be, very practical and relevant indeed. It is not just idle musing. In fact, because of its ultimately always practical orientation, philosophical reflection is urgently needed, perhaps today more than ever. We certainly need more of it, not less. Those who doubt this claim only need to read this brilliant anthology of undergraduate dissertations, which should make those who wrote them very proud.

So, well done everyone, and a special thanks to Robbie Short and Joseph Higgitt for collating and editing this collection.

- **Professor Michael Hauskeller, Head of Department**

Editor's Introduction

This anthology is as a testament to the dedication of every student who completed a dissertation this year. The dissertation is, undoubtedly, the most challenging and gruelling piece of work any of us have undertaken in our academic lives thus far. Yet despite the late nights, the countless supervisor meetings, and the ever-present threat of the impending deadline, we now have something to be proud of – a piece of work that reflects the personal commitment that went into it.

Each entry contained within represents a unique voice within the student body that grapples with important philosophical questions. We hope this anthology serves as an ample celebration of the graft and intellectual rigour of each of these students.

These dissertations would not have been possible without the insight and guidance of our academic supervisors. Working under the direction of experts who have spent their careers researching – and publishing extensively – on the very subjects we have written about is a privilege and an intimidating prospect. Their advice and encouragement were indispensable in helping each of us produce the best work possible, and we thank them sincerely.

We are also especially grateful to Dr. Rachael Wiseman for convening the dissertation module and supporting the creation of this anthology. Wrangling a group of undergraduates to write 10,000 words of dense philosophical work is no easy feat, and Rachael does it year after year, with consistently excellent results – as previous anthologies can attest to.

Special thanks are also due to Eleanor Colston, a fellow philosophy student, who, on short notice, contributed the high-quality photographs that accompany this volume. These images capture something of the spirit and community that define the University of Liverpool: the students, professors and support staff who have made these last three years memorable.

- **Robbie Short & Joseph Higgitt, Co-Editors**



The Pragmatics of Small Talk: A Philosophical Enquiry into What It Means When We Talk Small

Lewis Critchley-Hope

Supervised by: Dr Rachael Wiseman

Abstract

Small talk can sometimes feel like a purposeless activity. It consists of conversations about things that don't really concern us. They often lack depth or significance and sometimes, they can feel tedious and annoying. Yet, we persist in partaking in such a practice.

In this dissertation, I want to find out why we use small talk at all. Why do we talk about the weather, what we did on the weekend, our future plans, our preferences and aversions to people that we may not even know. It seems absurd to involve ourselves in these conversations when there is so little to gain from them; there must be a reason for participation that is beyond the content of these discussions.

There have been many disciplines of academia that have tried to answer this question. From social-linguistics, anthropology, sociology to history, there have been fantastic accounts of the small talk phenomenon. Most notably, Bronisław Malinowski, a 20th century anthropologist, who researched communicative acts in the indigenous tribes of Papua New Guinea. In the discipline of philosophy, however, such little work has been done. What I aim to do is to integrate the philosophy of language into the sociology of small talk. In this way, I hope to integrate the cognitive-intentional reasons for small talk with the socio-cultural reasons.

My first chapter delves into the Malinowski's (1923) phatic communion – a term I will use synonymously with small talk throughout this paper. Malinowski argued that phatic communion is a social tool used to 'establish bonds of personal union' (Pp.150) in which the content of an utterance is almost irrelevant. I suggest that whilst this point is correct to a certain extent, that Malinowski falls short of providing a comprehensive description of small talk. Instead, I propose that Grice's (1975) conversational implicature allows for important linguistic meanings to be inferred from a small talk conversation, therefore making the content of an utterance very relevant when implying a hidden meaning.

In chapter 2, I reconsider Malinowski's socio-cultural view of small talk and how conversational implicature could be behaviourally significant instead of linguistically. I do this by referring to Frankfurt's (2008) conceptualisation of bullshit, particularly the occurrence of bull sessions, in which there is no pretence for utterances to have truth values. I note how small talk conversations, like bull sessions, have a low consideration of how accurate an utterance is. If so, perhaps Malinowski is correct in thinking that the content of phatic communion is almost irrelevant. This is an issue for Grice because these forms of conversation don't have hidden semantic meanings but rather contain social and behavioural meanings. To resolve this issue, I consider the contexts where an utterance is felicitous or infelicitous and how we strategically choose the extent of politeness that is deemed necessary for that occasion. By doing this we alter the language we use, thereby altering our behaviour.

Extract

Fourthly, although the term 'phatic' could be considered adequate, since the language used is often mutually accessible to participants in an STC, I believe the term 'phatic' incorrectly implies that important information cannot be conveyed during an interaction. For this next proposition, an explanation of the Gricean (1957; 1975) framework is necessary.

Grice (1957) distinguishes between natural-meaning and non-natural-meaning. Natural meaning occurs when A inherently entails B, regardless of human interpretation, i.e., spots mean you have measles, irrespective of whether you understand that to be the case or not (ibid Pp.337 - 338). Non-natural meaning requires human convention for it to be understood because the meaning is prescribed, i.e., when there are three bell rings on a bus, it indicates that the bus is full (ibid Pp.338). Without human custom and understanding, the three bell rings would be meaningless (ibid Pp.338-339).

Grice proposes that the meaning of an utterance, under certain conditions, transcends the conventional meaning of the words used, and should be understood through what the speaker implicitly conveys rather than explicitly says. This cognitive-intentional account of language suggests that an utterance has non-natural meaning when the speaker aims to espouse a belief in the hearer by recognising their intention (Grice 1957 Pp.382). This is because if the words were interpreted *prima facie*, then there would be a misunderstanding

in what the speaker intended to communicate. Instead, there must be a shared linguistic custom for the audience to correctly infer what the speaker meant by an utterance.

Secondly Grice (1975) introduces conversational implicature and the cooperative principle. The aim of the paper is to understand how an audience can understand language when a speaker uses implicature in an utterance. The cooperative principle proposes that conversations are mutual efforts. Participants of a talk exchange recognise a common purpose for the interaction and will work collectively by listening and responding to the topic at hand.

Grice identifies four conversational maxims that they must adhere to for successful communication:

- i. Quality – Do not say what you believe to be false or lack adequate evidence
- ii. Quantity – Make your contribution as informative as required. Do not make your contribution more informative than is required.
- iii. Relation – A participant's contribution should be appropriate to the immediate needs at each stage of the interaction
- iv. Manner – A participant is expected to make it clear what contribution he is making and to execute his performance with reasonable dispatch

(Grice 1975 Pp.26-28)

Conversational implicature occurs when one of these maxims is purposely flouted because (1) the speaker is presumed to be adhering to the conversational maxims, (2) he is intentionally disobeying the maxims unless he thinks the implication *q* being needed if, and only if, he actually means it and (3) the speaker expects the hearer to recognise that the maxims have been intentionally flouted and thinks the hearer will reason as to why he may have done so (Grice 1975 Pp.30-31).

In the context of small talk, I will use Grice's (1975) example; suppose A and B are having an STC about friend C, who is now working a new job. A asks B, "How is C getting on at work" and B replies, "Oh quite well, I think: he likes his colleagues, and he hasn't been to prison yet" (ibid Pp.24). The locutionary act is a mere fact, but because the maxim of 'be relevant' has been flouted, it induces a question as to why B has said such a thing. He could have meant (1) its locutionary sense (that he simply hasn't been to prison) or (2) its implication that C tends to get involved in illegal activities and that his colleagues are scoundrels (Grice 1975 Pp.43).

The determination of what B meant relies on our knowledge and understanding of the context of the conversation, our knowledge of C's tendencies and the shared knowledge of language. What A makes of such an utterance is reliant on the supposition that B's speech act is relevant, so A must infer the premise that 'C is doing well despite his tendencies to

involve himself in criminal activity', in order to understand the utterance (ibid). As a result, the implicature within this utterance has the property of 'non-detachability', in that, the implied meaning of words cannot be separated from the utterance. This is because A's supposition that C tends to involve himself in criminal activity is necessary for B's statement to make sense (Grice 1975 Pp.44).

The "Oh quite well, I think", would not be uttered unless there was some implicature for doubting or denying that C is doing well. This is an L-statement in which a speaker reports how something appears to him (Grice 1978 from Egan 2011 Pp.35). Here, the truth-conditions of a statement are not reliant on doubting or denying an utterance. Instead, it is reliant on the speaker's reflection - that something appears to be the case - is true (Grice 1978, from ibid Pp.35). As a result, B is also talking meaningfully about how he perceives C to be doing. The hearer reasons as to why the speaker may have done this (ibid Pp.35). This point opposes Malinowski's view that small talk utterances 'don't express any thought' (Malinowski 1923 Pp.151). Our thoughts on how things appear to us are meaningful because they are true.

The report from B about C is not 'perfectly obvious' (ibid Pp.150) either. B must estimate C's wellbeing based on his knowledge at hand and is unable to provide A with an accurate answer. Therefore, Malinowski's view that phatic expressions also describe the 'perfectly obvious' (Malinowski 1923 Pp.150) is not always correct.

Conversational implicature communicates information through what is not said but rather inferred from an STC. Valuable contributions and alterations in how we previously thought of someone, or something occur regularly through casual conversation. This means that although the language may be generic, the implicature can be significant.

Reflective Comment:

Writing this dissertation was difficult. The challenge was to effectively manage all the different perspectives and merge them together to make a coherent argument. Despite the challenges, navigating this subject was incredibly fascinating and thought provoking. There is little work from the philosophy community on small talk, and it was very satisfying to write about something new and uncharted. The process took a long time, especially with trying to manage all my ideas and communicate them in a digestible manner.

If I had any advice to future students brave enough to put themselves through the perils of a dissertation, it would be to write about something you have a genuine love for. Explore something that is personal and unique to you because philosophy is one of those rare subjects where you are allowed

to express yourself. Seize the chance to explore something truly personal – it makes the journey more bearable.

I must give a huge thank you to Professor Rachael Wiseman for helping me with this dissertation, the help and advice I received was impeccable and I would not have achieved the grade I got without it.

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To Name or Not to Name: The Ethics of Anonymity and the Feminist Fight Against Herasure

Connie Dredge

Supervised by: Dr Rachael Wiseman

Abstract:

This dissertation will explore the complex intersections between sexual violence, court trials, and feminist care ethics. More, specifically it will discuss whether extending anonymity to male defendants of sexual crimes will help or hinder female victims of sexual violence in achieving true justice.

Chapter one will lay out the historical development of sexual offense law in England and Wales, where the issues surrounding the current laws and procedure in court trials of sexual violence, including the problem of anonymity, will be discussed.

Chapter two will explore Kate Manne's book 'Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny,' where she illustrates misogyny as the policing arm of the patriarchy, that uses tools like 'himpathy' and 'herasure' interdependently to silence and punish women who threaten the patriarchal order. I will apply her work to court trials on sexual violence, where himpathy and herasure are perceived as intertwined mechanisms working together to protect men who commit acts of sexual violence whilst erasing the narratives of female survivors in court trials, which could be exacerbated when victims remain anonymous.

Chapter three looks at the case study of Giselle Pelicott, a survivor of rape who won her battle for justice, which could be attributed to how she bravely waived her right to anonymity. This is explored then in a broader ethical debate about visibility, voice, and the gender dynamics of legal recognition.

Chapter four introduces feminist care ethics and discusses a framework of care in rethinking the use of anonymity in court trials. This chapter positions defendant anonymity not only as a protective measure to protect victims and witnesses of sexual violence, but also as a tool to decentre male defendants from the narrative of court trials weakening their ability to generate 'himpathy.'

This dissertation concludes that feminist care ethics, grounded in relational accountability and the empathic sensitivity, offers a pivotal framework for rethinking anonymity—not as a neutral right, but as a morally charged mechanism with deep implications for justice, recognition, and repair.

Extract Introduction:

In this extract, I explore how Kate Manne's notions of himpathy (excess empathy shown towards male perpetrators) and herasure (the erasure of a woman's narrative) were successfully prevented from influencing the French rape trial centered around Gisele Pelicot. Her trial represents a crucial case study in rethinking the role of anonymity in sexual victimisation court trials and questions whether victim anonymity helps or hinders survivors of sexual assault.

Extract:

Patterns of himpathy and herasure seems to run rampant through coverage of sexual assault cases, especially in cases where victims remain anonymous, and when male defendants are well-known and respected individuals. However, in December 2024, a landmark court case offered powerful counterevidence that provided reason to believe that this pattern could be changed.

Gisele Pelicot became a feminist hero worldwide after waiving her right to anonymity and insisting that the biggest rape trial in French history be held in public (The Guardian, 2024). Over the span of a decade, her then husband, Dominique Pelicot, had secretly crushed anti-anxiety medication and sleeping tablets into her food and drink, inviting men to rape her while she was unconscious in their marital bed. Of the 51 men accused, most denied ever raping Gisele, claiming that they thought it was a game, or that her husband had consented on her behalf.

Unsurprisingly, the men from this trial did not resemble the disfigured monsters assumed to be accused of rape and instead resembled the average make-up of male society. Aged 26 to 74, the men worked in ordinary professions such as firefighting, law enforcement, and journalism, with several of them having kids. Personality profiles conducted through interviews with the men, their friends and their colleagues described the accused as flawed yet familiar men, with some having histories of domestic abuse and mental breakdowns, and others as devoted family members with loving childhoods making them 'kind' and 'gentle' at heart (Times, 2024).

Unlike the usual media framing which places the male perpetrator's 'fall from grace' at the centre of the narrative, the media coverage of Gisele's trial focused instead on her bravery, her trauma, and her relentless pursuit of justice. In waiving her right to anonymity and insisting on public hearings, Gisele took control of the narrative of the trial, placing herself at the centre of the story.

The outcome of the trial was that the 50 men, besides Dominique, accused of rape were sentenced to 3-15 years in prison on charges of sexual assault and aggravated rape, with Dominique himself

receiving 20 years due to his central role in orchestrating the mass rape of his wife (The Guardian, 2024).

Through her fight for justice, Gisele has become a symbol of resistance for victims of sexual assault and rape (Times 2025). By successfully calling out the cultural inertia that allows patriarchal violence to exist, Gisele unveiled the systemic biases which allowed instances domestic abuse and other forms of sexual violence to be delegitimised or overlooked in court trials. She used her platform to reprimand French law and its failure to provide an explicit definition of marital rape and consent, instead requiring proof of the coercive, threatening or violent attacks committed by the perpetrator (Gros 2021). In doing so, Gisele highlighted the transformative power in reclaiming the narrative in sexual victimisation trials, in ensuring that 'shame switches sides' in future trials of the matter (Times 2024).

The justice served in Gisele's case can be perceived as a hallmark moment in the interpretation of mens rea within French rape law, as through decisively rejecting the commonly used defence of having an "unreasonable mistaken belief in consent" (Alexander 1995, pg.208), it firmly set precedent that the absence of reasonable belief does not justify the absence of consent. However, the question remains on how Gisele was able to prevent herself from succumbing to the same fate of so many victims of sexual assault before her: being erased or 'villified' for calling out the horror they experienced at the hands of 'good men.' I believe the answer lies in Gisele's refusal to remain anonymous, showing up at every court hearing and allowing her face to be splashed across all major newspapers throughout the 3-month-long trial.

In waiving her right to anonymity, Gisele ensured that society recognised her as the victim of mass-rape at the hands of these men. She used her platform to ask society to confront the realities of sexual violence, using her own testimony to unveil the social-gendered norms that often protect male defendants of sexual victimisation. By placing her victimhood at the centre of the trials narrative, Gisele made it almost impossible to 'villanify' or overlook her narrative her narrative, thereby protecting it from 'herasure' (Manne 2017, pg.209)

Cruicially, by placing herself at the helm of media coverage around her court trial, Gisele ensured that attention could not be redirected towards the male defendants. This meant that the misogynistic tool himpathy which is needed to paint these men as 'golden boys' who 'suffered a small lapse in judgement,' was absent (Manne 2017, pg.197). No matter how 'kind' or 'gentle' the perpetrators were described, the fact that they had raped Gisele was so etched into the minds of the French people that no level of himpathy could take away the disgusting aftertaste that their crimes had left in the publics' mouths. Therefore, no level of himpathy could be generated by supporters of the accused to alter or soften the public perception towards the male defendants, nor to persuade the prosecution to call for

anything but the maximum sentence of 20 years. It is evident through the media reports that Gisele's trial is much more than a legal battle, instead representing a pivotal moment that challenged current perceptions around and protections for survivors of sexual victimisation. Gisele's case offers a glimpse into what testimonial justice could look like: where herasure is resisted and himpathy is denied its usual platform. In response to public outrage around Gisele's case, the French government has moved toward amending rape laws to explicitly require affirmative consent (Euronews, 2025), which has highlighted the need for discussions over how English and Welsh sex laws could be amended to better protect survivors of sexual victimisation.

Reflective Comment:

I thoroughly enjoyed working on this dissertation. To me, it was important to write about something I was truly passionate about, so I stayed motivated and created a piece of writing that I could be proud of. When I started thinking about topics for my dissertation, I knew that I wanted to explore the arenas where women are still treated unequally to men, and to discuss any potential solutions that could level the playing field. Instantly I was drawn to the then ongoing court trial of Gisele Pelicot, and the bravery she showed in waiving her anonymity rights, which when partnered with the philosophy of Kate Manne, created an interesting conversation around whether anonymity helps or hinders women in sexual victimization court trials. Crucially, I worked closely with my supervisor, Rachel Wiseman, who helped me time-manage my dissertation writing and guided me towards interesting academic resources and news stories that would expand my thinking and inspire my work. To those writing dissertations in the future, I urge you to pick a topic you're deeply passionate about, and to work closely with your dissertation advisor. Dissertation writing can be fun and relatively stress-free when you effectively manage your time and ask for help or inspiration when it is needed!

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Language and Liberty: A Linguistic Approach to Moral Realism

Joseph Higgitt

Supervised by: Dr. Richard Gaskin

Abstract:

Simply because rights are not written into the atoms of the universe does not make them optional. Rights are not optional any more than food is optional. They are objectively necessary if we take human beings and creatures like us as we find them: rational, social, and empathetic, but also fragile, short-lived and capable of immense cruelty. This paper argues for a grounded form of moral realism, one that does not rely on metaphysical absolutes but instead emerges from the shared features of beings like us. Drawing on evolutionary theory, I explore how human traits like self-preservation, autonomy, empathy, and rationality provide form the basis of moral obligation. These traits form what I call an 'internal moral sphere': an objective domain of moral truth applicable to agents who possess the cognitive and social traits necessary to understand and act on them.

I consider how language transforms and expands on the scope of these obligations. Language enables the formation of collective norms, responsibilities, and institutions; transforming what begins as rudimentary moral intuitions into enforceable, recognisable rights. Through linguistic infrastructure, natural rights evolve from biological imperatives into socially substantiated moral frameworks. I respond to concerns such as the naturalistic fallacy, clarifying that my argument presupposes a hypothetical imperative: if we care about our self-preservation, autonomy and empathy, then rights follow.

Extract Introduction:

This section falls towards the end of my dissertation, following sections where I had explored the evolutionary basis of our desire to be autonomous individuals, and why such desire necessitates we act in respect of other's rights. In the chapter this section is from, I discuss in detail the relationship between language and rights, how the emergence of language enhances the base intuition towards right-defending and right-respecting behaviour into more concrete obligations that can be strongly enforced. In the section specifically, I demonstrate how the simple use of language as a form of

communication presumes that the person we are talking to is an agent of equal standing to ourselves in at least some basic form.

Extract:

Language, as we know, is a product of our rational minds. It lets us share and analyse our understanding of the world, improving our chances of success by ensuring our actions reflect reality. It is also central to my concept of 'practicability' whereby only statements that we can deduce from empirically verifiable acts can we act upon; again, with the purpose of aligning ourselves with the universe. However, language does not just have an epistemic function; it has an ethical one too. The reciprocal nature of language necessarily acknowledges that participants have a right to speak and have their opinion heard. To ignore this is to discard the feature of language that makes it such a useful epistemic tool.

King George VI: Listen to me. Listen to me!

Lionel Logue: Listen to you? By what right?

King George VI: By divine right, if you must. I am your king.

Lionel Logue: No, you're not. You told me so yourself. You said you didn't want it. Why should I waste my time listening...?

King George VI: Because I have a right to be heard! I have a voice!

Lionel Logue: [pauses] Yes, you do.

- The King's Speech (2010)

In speaking to another person, I recognise their capacity to comprehend and respond to what I say. I acknowledge and respect their rationality, shown by their ability to express their thoughts, and their autonomy, as they can assert their own views. This sentiment is captured in the above extract 'The King's Speech,' in which King George affirms his right to free speech by appealing to the fact that he can speak and be understood. Though King George is relying on cliché by declaring he has a right to be heard – which in a real-life conversation could be easily ignored – what I am saying is that by engaging with a rational being in conversation presupposes equality, to respond to someone is to accept them as your equal. The film shares this intuition; when Lionel pauses and responds 'Yes, you do,' he is not just acknowledging the King's capacity for physical speech but validating his status as a rights-bearing individual.

Even within disagreements, there is mutual recognition – we acknowledge their views represent something that matters enough to contend with. This does not occur when we ‘speak’ to animals; when a dog barks at us, that bark does not represent any rational thought (but it might represent some level of autonomy if it is barking for a particular purpose, like to defend its territory) and we do not treat it as such. We would not converse or argue with a dog that is barking – except to mimic a human conversation. We communicate with animals, we might shout at a cat to make it get off the mat or tell a dog to sit but we do not converse with them, such communication is always one-directional – either we are telling the animal something or the animal is telling us something, no conversation is happening. This is because the animal lacks rationality, and so our communication with animals does not function in a way that acknowledges and respects the rationality of both participants, whereas conversation with another human does.

Where does this implicit respect of the right to expression/discussion come from? Once again, it comes back to the four features: specifically, rationality or empathy. We might respect the right to expression because it is rational to do so – listening and discussing something with another person provides us with experiences and ideas that we might not have had ourselves. This allows us to act in a way that is more in line with the truth of the external world and thus improves the chances of maintaining our own life and autonomy. Alternatively, because we empathise with others, we want their rights respected. This is because we understand the negative feelings associated with having one’s rights disrespected. This is helped because simply listening to another person’s views rarely has a large associated resource cost, and silencing does, meaning this empathy is not overridden as it might be in the more resource-intensive examples I gave previously. No matter the underlying reason for this behaviour, it does occur, and we all have a natural inclination towards it.

This mutual respect between humans is a microcosm of the rights-respecting behaviour that I argue our nature demands; if language is a product of one of the four features (rationality), and we recognise the importance and worthiness of respecting that feature (through either rationalisation or empathy) then this suggests that rights exist and statements like ‘I should have a right to speak’ become a practicable statement within the context of human experience and interaction.

This ideal is not always upheld – people are often silenced, ignored, or dominated in a conversation, especially where there are unequal power structures that benefit from silencing opposition. But this vindicates my position: we are acutely aware when communication breaks down due to silencing because communicative equality is the norm. One-sided ‘conversations’ violate the reciprocity genuine conversation demands and feels unnatural because of it.

Reflective Comment:

The most important part of the dissertation writing process is choosing a topic that you'll consistently enjoy writing about. I found that choosing a topic that I'd already written a lot about and liked (philosophy of rights) whilst adding in something new (language philosophy) kept the topic fresh but interesting.

The actual writing process can be a slog, and as a serial procrastinator I found it difficult to motivate myself to sit down and write, especially when there were a million other things I'd rather be doing. To help with this, I tried splitting the work into smaller manageable tasks throughout the year like reading through a paper whilst on the bus, planning out a section etc. That way I always had the dissertation churning in the back of my head so when it came to the inevitable mad writing rush a month before it was due, I had already completed all the research and knew exactly what my thoughts were on the topic, allowing me to get cracking with the writing easily.

As difficult as it was, writing a dissertation was immensely rewarding – it is satisfying knowing that I have completed such a large piece of work that contributes something interesting to the topic of philosophy.

I'd like to give thanks to three people: my academic advisor Professor Richard Gaskin for being a strong critical eye that brought out the best of my work, Doctor Rachael Wiseman for inspiring my interest in language philosophy with the second year module she ran, as well as helping me draft early ideas for my dissertation, and my mum for dragging me out of bed during the Easter holidays to force me to write.

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The Power of Play: How Playfully Interacting with Art Can Inspire Political Revolution

Emily Mohammed

Supervised by: Dr. Vid Simonti

Abstract:

Many philosophers, particularly those specialising in aesthetics, have concerned themselves with presenting theories relating art to politics. Friedrich Schiller is among this group, with his thesis suggesting that aesthetic education can bring about political revolution. Schiller suggests that man's internal division, which prevents him from overcoming the powers of the state, can be remedied through engaging with the play drive. Since the object of the play drive is living form, man reaches harmony through interacting with beauty. I will begin this discussion by outlining and engaging with Schiller's theory, exploring his claim that aesthetic education can cultivate personal freedom, a notion which then expands into political freedom. However, in studying the idealism of Schiller's goal, along with the absurdity of his method, I ultimately deem his theory a failure. Schiller's thesis, however, is not without its merits. Therefore, the final chapter of this discussion will explore my own theory connecting the aesthetic to the political through an adaptation of Schiller's notion of play. In cultivating a new theory of play, and applying it to *The Handmaid's Tale*, I will explore how playful interactions with art, specifically literature, can result in changes to our political landscape.

Extract Introduction:

In this extract, I engage with the work of Friedrich Schiller. In his *Letters Upon the Aesthetic Education of Man* (1794), Schiller presents a bold theory concerning political revolution through aesthetic education. The rest of my dissertation critiques Schiller's work, and I go on to present my own theory concerning aesthetic cognitivism.

Extract:

The thesis begins with the claim that man is internally divided. His ruling forces, or drives, are in constant competition, leaving man in perpetual imbalance. These competitors are the rational drive and the sensuous drive. Each has its own object or goal to fulfil. The object of the rational drive is form. The object of the sensuous drive is life. The goal of all men, then, is to reach a state of internal harmony, or the “ideal man.” (Schiller, 1794, p.5) Like many others before him, Schiller believed this ideal state is something existing in all of us, we only need to realise it through balancing the drives. This would mean appealing to both drives equally, and since that requires a combination of form and life, balance comes through engaging with “living form,” or beauty. (Schiller, 1794, p.19) However, the rational and sensuous drives are “eternally opposed,” meaning they could never collaborate to achieve this goal. (Schiller, 1794, p.23) As a solution, Schiller introduces a third drive, the play drive. (Mathern, Riggle, 2020, p.384) It is this notion that I deem the most vital and distinctive aspect of Schiller’s theory.

The play drive is not a fundamental third drive, but a new force that is introduced to balance the rational and sensuous drives. This aspect presents the first of many complexities about the play drive, since its introduction is shrouded in a mystery that Schiller does not seem to fully explain. It is unclear how the play drive exists as a middle ground between the rational and sensuous drives, while being non-fundamental. It bears no relation to the other two yet seems to exist as the solution to their conflict. Regardless, listening to the call of this play instinct provides the opportunity to calm the mind, and lessen the pull of each drive while simultaneously allowing them to flourish. (Schiller, 1794, p.19) In neutralising the combat between reason and sense, the play drive cultivates internal harmony and allows man to realise his potential to become the ideal. This new introduction presents two key questions: how do we engage with this play drive, and how can doing so bring about personal freedom? To answer the first, since both the rational and sensuous drives are appealed to by beauty, or living form, it follows that engaging with beauty is the best means of initiating play. Other than describing it as a combination of life and form, Schiller’s letters seem to present no concrete definition of what he means by “beauty.” I feel it is best to assume he refers to that which, when viewed or experienced, leads us to some feeling of aesthetic pleasure, though I feel it imperative to relate to the reader that defining beauty or art is not in any way the focus of this discussion. It would be best for the reader to simply assume their preferred definition before following me through this conversation.

Turning now to the second question, Schiller suggests that the play drive brings about personal freedom by entering us into “a state of volitional openness.” (Mathern, Riggle, 2020, p.377) To be volitionally open means being free of our everyday constraints, such as our dispositions towards certain ways of thinking, feeling, or doing. In interacting with the aesthetic, or beauty, and finding

ourselves in a state of play, we can exist in a realm without rules, where anything is free for consideration. Play connects us to this freedom by cultivating man's character. The play drive brings us into harmony, and this harmony allows us to become our ideal. This ideal entails our having developed a social character, including our ability to freely play with beauty.

In short, the play drive is supposedly vital to balancing man's ruling forces, and it is in doing this that we cultivate our characters to a point of personal freedom. Our newfound ability to freely play with beauty, however, is not limited to developments of the self. Instead, Schiller claims that this is only a jumping-off point from which we can achieve the larger goal of political freedom through aesthetic education. The remainder of Chapter 1 will cover this, though, given Schiller's brevity in this area, I will rely heavily on the expansions proposed by Mathern and Riggle.

1.3 - Political Freedom:

As was the case with many German philosophers working in this period, Schiller was inspired by the failure of the French Revolutionaries to fulfil their promise of creating a new political and moral state. (Sharpe, 2005, p.150) It is thanks to this motivation that Schiller presented his thesis as a development of Kant's notion, transforming it into a theory with practical political applications. In fact, many scholars have praised Schiller for his ability to do exactly that, though I will explore these in Chapter 2. Schiller furthers his idea that interaction with beauty can bring personal freedom, claiming that aesthetic education can eventually result in political freedom as well. Though Schiller only addresses this in the last of his 27 letters, Mathern and Riggle present a thorough investigation of his most radical suggestion.

This expansion relies on the claim that beauty and the aesthetic have the power to unite all men. An appropriate clarification is that beauty has the power to unite all men of the correct social character, meaning all those who have found personal freedom through balancing their ruling drives. Part of this social character is having a "heart that is truly sociable," meaning we are open to others who have also developed the correct social character. (Mathern, Riggle, 2021, p.20) To explain how aesthetic education can bring about both person and political freedom, Mathern and Riggle study Schiller's notion of "love." (Mathern, Riggle, 2021, p.21) Put simply, our engaging with beauty through the play drive not only balances our ruling drives, but involves us in a loving interaction with that which we find appealing. We are drawn to what we love, and we love it both for its beauty and for its ability to improve our character. Once we have reached the ideal state, this feeling of love leads us to feel love for other people. This is less of a romantic sensation, and more a phenomenon allowing for our appreciation of the beauty of those who have developed social characters. If everyone were to do this, then, society would be able to exist as a community of people united through beauty. Aesthetic

education brings harmony both within the self and between selves, so aesthetic education can cultivate a better society.

Reflective Comment:

Writing my dissertation, while challenging, was the most rewarding aspect of my degree. I really enjoyed being able to focus on an area of philosophy I am fascinated by and wish to pursue further. The best advice I could give to future students taking the dissertation module is to set yourself regular goals and deadlines. I would also strongly advise setting up frequent meetings with your supervisor throughout the process, as they can lead you to new ways of thinking or help correct some key issues in your work.

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Philosophical Approaches to Integrating Artificial Intelligence in the Socio-Political Landscape

Freddie Saunders

Supervised by: Professor Simon Hailwood

Extract Introduction:

In this section of my dissertation, I intended to explore the relationship between how we can understand the importance of AI in the justice sector and how it relates to the ethical impact of AI more broadly. Given that I have studied a joint honours degree with politics, a reoccurring theme of my paper was the pragmatic side of ethics in the modern age and how we can use philosophy as a tool to shape policy in such complex areas as AI technology. I strongly believe it is the shared role of academics, politicians and programmers to illuminate the ethical

dilemmas which can occur in the AI sector before they happen due to the severe nature of their consequences. This is a message I hoped to deliver effectively within my paper and something that I think is quite fitting regarding this particular extract.

Extract:

One of the most promising aspects about AI technology being integrated into the criminal justice system is how it offers the potential to substantially reduce these elements of human fallibility. A positive future with AI integration in the justice system is one that, allows for a more objective, fair and unbiased approach to informing legal officials of crucial information.

One approach at reducing miscarriages of justice due to human fallibility could be the process of algorithmically profiling potential criminals as a means of alerting the relevant authorities. Such a process would require a high level of data input to AI systems which would likely need access to things like surveillance footage, social media activity, prior police records etc. As established in the previous chapter, the handling of individual's data is a highly sensitive area whereby individual privacy as well as transparency of the actors involved i.e., police, government, social media companies and AI software engineers need to be prioritised. Consequentially, this leads to a fundamental debate concerning the ethics of utilising predictive AI technology as a way to tackle crime. This being, do the

ends (preventing crime) justify the means (mass surveillance and granting AI systems access to individual's sensitive information)? It is not irrational to envision a not-too-distant future wherein AI systems are advanced enough at predicting behaviour, through the various inputs mentioned prior, that this is harnessed by the police as a key strategy to prevent crime. However, naturally this concept raises a number of ethical concerns regarding privacy, surveillance and individual liberty.

One of the most obvious concerns regarding the ethics of using AI as a form of predictive policing is the potential for an exacerbation of the surveillance state and an encroachment of individual's personal liberties. This can be likened to Foucault's panopticon analogy (1977) whereby a large watchtower is erected in the centre of a prison, but it is structured so the inmates are unable to tell if they are being surveyed. As a result, the inmates begin to self-regulate their behaviours as they are under constant fear of being watched from the panopticon. By establishing a system where citizens are under constant suspicion that they are being watched, this could inspire potential criminals to alter their behaviours in such a way that they no longer commit crime for fear that they will be caught instantly. This form of techno-panopticon is ethically problematic in that such a system would inevitably require so much information about citizens that it would violate individual's rights to privacy. In addition to this, there is a considerable risk of AI predictive policing that it perpetuates already existing biases within the data that it is trained with thus, leading to over-policing of marginalised areas (Varela 2024). The result of this is a cycle wherein marginalised groups are disproportionately profiled and as such are subjected to excess surveillance and control which has been enabled by AI systems.

In light of this, it would be remis not to acknowledge that such predictive policing technology could further enable authoritarian regimes to persecute and oppress those who they see as a threat given the threat which constant surveillance can pose. While these issues are majoritively hypothetical, this in no way diminishes the legitimacy of such threats given how authoritarian regimes are already utilising technology to further their agenda and control citizen's behaviour e.g., China's social credit system.

It is important to acknowledge that one must be especially careful not to commit the fallacy of presuming that AI is infallible. The specific AI systems that are relevant to this discussion are those which are trained on data sets which they then use to inform subsequent decision making. If the data training sets are inadequate i.e., biased or simply not inclusive enough, then the AI will also be biased. However, as outlined by Schmidt (2024) it is possible for models to be retrained on higher quality data that is more inclusive in order to generate greater algorithmic accuracy. Therefore, I argue that this process of AI training ought to be one that is heavily monitored and that transparency regarding how developers train legal AI programs is legally enforced as to avoid the unethical practice of using

technology which exacerbates already existing prejudice within the criminal justice system. It has already been documented that early uses of predictive policing enhanced by AI, like the COMPAS system in the US, have been found to exhibit racial bias, with black defendants being nearly twice as likely to be misclassified as higher risk compared to their white counterparts (Larson et al 2016).

In acknowledgement of this however, my argument is not that the plethora of issues that come with predictive policing should deter governments from harnessing the power of AI to improve the criminal justice system. Instead, rather than using AI as a tool which negatively impacts the justice system by producing the unethical consequences discussed prior, I propose that it ought to be used as a tool by which those in authority can be held to account. This would entail AI systems being used as a tool to be employed by 3rd party anti-corruption institutions given their capability to recognise behavioural patterns and flag those in positions of power who exhibit traits of corruption or bias. As established prior, if these AI systems are to be reliable and not exhibit their own kind of bias, as exemplified by systems like COMPAS, then it is paramount that they are trained with the widest and most inclusive data sets possible. This is so that they can best recognise corruption and legal malpractice in order to accurately hold individuals who abuse their power to account.

Hypothetically, one of the ways this could be achieved is by AI systems using their data processing capabilities to assess vast amounts of content from legal databases and court records in order to flag judges who have exhibited signs of corruption. From here, a list of potentially corrupt judges could be compiled and unknowingly investigated by an independent 3rd party review body led by people as opposed to AI, who then could fairly assess whether the AI's flagging of potential corruption is valid or not. This way, if found guilty of corruption, the AI assisted in legal proceedings by using its advanced data processing capabilities to flag evidence of corruption that may have otherwise gone unnoticed. If not found guilty however, then the individual in question may be removed from the list of potentially corrupt judges so that anti-corruption officials can appropriately classify them as innocent of illegal action.

Reflective Comment:

Since completing my paper and reflecting on what I learned from the process of researching and writing it, I would say that one of my biggest lessons has been regarding the multifaceted nature of my chosen topic. AI integration is not just a political, technological or philosophical issue but a combination of all three. As such, I was forced to research and write my paper accordingly which was a challenge in

some aspects but one that I welcomed. It is with confidence after finish my dissertation that I can now say I am more curious about what the future holds in this space than ever before.

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BUILT FOR THE
FACULTY OF ARTS
IN THE YEAR 1913

ASHTON BUILDING

Do Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir Necessitate Solidarity?

Rohan Benham

Supervised by: Dr J'Annine Jobling

Abstract

If human being is fundamentally intentional it might seem appropriate to suppose that acting for one's own transcendence is the basis of all our actions. With the emphasis placed upon individual freedom by both Sartre and Beauvoir it might not appear surprising that the charge that Existentialism isolates the individual is often levelled against them. Whilst it is known that both argue for a balance of facticity and freedom, it appears to me necessary that their position with regard to the Other should be elucidated. Solidarity, requiring neither a complete merging into an anonymous whole nor tolerating imbalance in agency, appears the perfect term to test Existentialism on. It requires only a sense of being-with-the-Other and as such does not necessitate the neutralisation of the individual. As such, it appears possible that Existentialism can make possible and necessitate solidarity. Whether it does so, we shall subsequently test.

Acknowledgements

Firstly, for my supervisor J'Annine Jobling, whose expert guidance was invaluable in the making of this dissertation. And to Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre whose attempts at striking balance within dualities of human existence I am irrevocably inspired by.

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Introduction

A charge often levelled against Existentialism is that it is individualistic. Marxist thinkers of Sartre and Beauvoir's time, such as György Lukács, noted that Existentialism isolates the individual from his connection to society and does not place enough emphasis on group action and social development. As such, Sartre's position was considered "ontological solipsism". (Lukács, 1949) Thus, whilst it is widely understood that Sartre and Beauvoir do not solely champion individuality, it appears to me necessary that their views on the individual's relationship with the Other should be elucidated. 'Solidarity' appears appropriate as it neither involves a complete merging into an anonymous whole nor tolerates the imbalance of coercion. It requires only a sense of being-with the Other. Thus, there should be room for it in a philosophy that seeks the mediation of the ambiguities and anxieties of existence. By analysing the ontological and intersubjective theories offered by Sartre and Beauvoir, I will assess whether their phenomenological descriptions present the fundamentals of being in such a way that solidarity with the Other is necessary.

Before we begin this investigation, several terms and concepts that we shall use throughout should be defined and understood. Ambiguity, whilst not explicitly used by Sartre, relates to both ontologies. As both facticity and freedom, immanence and transcendence, the situation we find ourselves in and our ability to move beyond it, human being is fundamentally ambiguous. These two poles often have opposing aims which are more conflictual for Sartre than for Beauvoir. As such, ambiguity is a more positive concept for Beauvoir. Nevertheless, ambiguity is a core concept to both thinkers and requires mediation. Successful mediation of ambiguity, when both immanence and transcendence are recognised, leads us to authenticity. When one considers both aspects and acts accordingly, one embraces the true nature of human being and acts authentically. Again, both thinkers recognise this basic point, despite differing in the specific route to authenticity.

Intersubjectivity regards our fundamental relation to the Other and, as we will see, takes very different forms for Sartre and Beauvoir. It can either necessitate or make futile solidarity, our last and most important definition. Solidarity must not be mistaken for a unity of unequal subjects. Any theory that fails to present the Other as a subject fails not only in necessitating solidarity but also in conceiving of the possibility of solidarity. Solidarity is mutual cooperation between subjects who both recognise the Other's equal subjectivity. It does not require merging two individuals into an anonymous unity. Rather, it requires only a fundamental sense of being-with-Others, meaning that I, in my fullest sense, cannot be thought of as completely independent of the Other.

The question of whether solidarity is necessitated must be approached differently for Sartre and Beauvoir. Some have argued that the split between Sartre and Beauvoir on our relation to the Other

occurs through their different views on the immanence-transcendence dynamic. As we will show in the first section, however, whilst less dramatically so, Beauvoir's immanence and transcendence are still in conflict, often leading to conflict between individuals. And whilst her emphasis on immanence makes solidarity more possible, this slight difference does not make solidarity a necessity.

In the following two sections, we will examine the core reason for the lack of a necessity for solidarity in the early thought of Sartre and its presence in Beauvoir. Sartre rejects the notion of intersubjectivity as a fundamental being-with, especially Heidegger's concept of *Mitsein*. This leaves the individual isolated and as a being-for-itself. Under this conception, the individual has no reason to attempt to work with the Other. Authentic living is a solitary project, and so solidarity is rendered counter-productive. On the other hand, Beauvoir embraces Heidegger's *Mitsein* and embeds the Other into the fundamentals of being. Contra, Sartre, Beauvoir's Other, as an equal subject, is essential for one's own transcendental project, and so solidarity arises as a necessity. As such, we will show that Beauvoir's conception of being as being-with necessitates solidarity.

Finally, we will evaluate whether the vast changes that occur in Sartre's *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (CDR) open up the possibility of solidarity by conceiving of the Other as subject and necessitate it by embedding the Other into the individual's fundamental being. Whilst he avoids reneging on his exclusion of the Other from our traditional ontology, the move to a focus on anthropological structures, with influence from Levi-Strauss, allows him to embed the Other into our fundamental being in another sense. As such, our being cannot be thought of as isolated, and authentic living becomes one where solidarity is necessary. Thus, we will show that both Sartre and Beauvoir necessitate solidarity by embedding the Other into our own being.

Sartrean and Beauvoirian Ontology

Sartre and Beauvoir share the recognition of an ambiguity within ontology and human existence. Whilst the former doesn't explicitly use the term "ambiguity" both recognise that we are, at once, immanence and transcendence. This duality forms an inevitable ambiguity, and with immanence and transcendence often conflicting, a tension arises that requires mediation. Mediation can only be authentic if the situated and transcendent aspects of human existence are recognised. Moreover, whilst conflict can often ensue between the two poles, their very nature of being embedded within each other necessitates an approach of unity rather than one of conflict.

Sartre is often perceived as placing more emphasis on the transcendent aspect of human existence, notably in *Being and Nothingness* (BN), whereas Beauvoir focuses more on how our

immanence effects our ability to transcend, particularly in *The Second Sex* (SS). Nevertheless, both place great importance on both ontological components and neither argues for the complete domination of one over the other. Beauvoir writes that “In truth, all human existence is transcendence and immanence at the same time; to go beyond itself, it must maintain itself; to thrust itself towards the future, it must integrate the past into itself; and while relating to others, it must confirm them itself in itself.” (SS, 455)

Nevertheless, key differences can be observed in their respective views on ambiguity. Sartre views the relationship between immanence and transcendence as involving a conflictual paradox. Whilst Beauvoir recognises that ambiguity often contains tensions, these are not inevitable and can be mediated. Daigle and Landry, among others, argue that this difference places Beauvoir in a better place to conceive of relations between individuals based on solidarity. (Daigle, 2013, 109) However, the core aspects of Beauvoir and Sartre’s formations of ambiguity appear not to be so different. Both appreciate the need to recognise both transcendence and immanence, and, as it turns out, both understand transcendence to be somewhat of a negation of immanence. Thus, tension arises for both, and whilst this may be more volatile for Sartre than Beauvoir, both require mediation.

Sartre conceives of transcendence as the fundamental “negation of immanence”. (BN, 203-209) This inner negation both “reveals the in-itself while determining the being of the for-it-self” and, as such, constitutes the position at which transcendence must be based. (BN, 203) As such, transcendence is presented as an *arrachement à soi* (tearing away from oneself) in *Being and Nothingness*. However, because of this negation of what it is and is not, a paradox emerges for consciousness. To transcend authentically, consciousness must recognise both itself as transcendence and immanence. But in transcending consciousness must nihilate its immanence. The paradoxical nature of Sartre’s view and the problems that arise from it can be understood best through his account of the body and the erotic encounter.

In *Being and Nothingness*, the body is presented as facticity, the anchorage for the transcendent consciousness. It is necessary for our interaction with the world and, thus, our transcendence towards it. Simultaneously, the body must be negated and torn away from in transcending. The body “exists only in so far as I escape it by nihilating myself. The body is what I nihilate.” (BN, 333) As the nothingness was for consciousness, the body is the basis for the intentionality of transcendence. Sartre presents the body as “the necessary condition of the existence of a world and as the contingent realisation of this condition.” (BN, 352) An inevitable paradox emerges here wherein the body is needed and negated for our interaction with the world. This is only enhanced when the Other is brought into the picture.

In the erotic situation, transcendence longs for immanence (desire for the Other's body) whilst also needing to escape it (both one's own and the Other's). Daigle and Landry note here that "Sartre wants it both ways: an embodied consciousness that entails an intermingling of immanence and transcendence and a consciousness that seeks to evade its fleshy being, that is, a transcendence radically separated from immanence." (Daigle, 2013, 97) Daigle and Landry go on to argue that Sartre does envisage the possibility of the separation of consciousness and body and, thus, transcendence and immanence. They use Sartre's example of the woman at the rendez-vous who dissociates herself from her hand, an example that appears out of place due to its original position as an example of bad faith, the denial of the duality of human being. Sartre had used this to show that the woman was denying the undeniable: one's facticity. Thus, the woman did not "successfully dissociate herself from her body"; she merely attempted to deny her body and, in doing so, lied to herself. (Daigle, 2013, 97)

Nevertheless, an important observation has been raised here: Tension within ambiguity appears necessary because consciousness wants to tear itself away from immanence and negate it as well as needing to be based in immanence and incorporate it into its project. Fearing being trapped in either one's immanence or that of another, consciousness must aim to capture the subjectivity of the Other to form a basis from which to transcend. Transcendence can only be achieved through objectification, so a cycle of conflict ensues between the individual and the Other.

Sartre can only conceive of conflictual interrelations, and his conception of ambiguity is a core reason for this. The fear of immanence and the inability to escape it give rise to a paradox that encourages the objectification of the Other. When ambiguity is not so inherently conflictual, possession of the Other does not appear to be the only outcome of interrelations. One could even transcend with the Other rather than through them. Under this new light, solidarity becomes possible, yet still not a necessity.

It is important to note that Sartre does not view transcendence as able to tear itself away from immanence, but rather that transcendence is the attempt to tear itself away. This might not seem to do much for Sartre's Other, but one can suspect that with a successful intersubjectivity, the conflictual paradox might be transcended, and solidarity might even become a necessity. However, as we will show, Sartre does not achieve this at this stage in his philosophy.

Like Sartre, Beauvoir declares in *The Ethics of Ambiguity* (EA) that human being is a lack of being. Born without an essence, humans must endeavour to create themselves. This lack inevitably leads to a *vouloir être* (wanting to be). Thus, we are fundamentally transcendent. Beauvoir takes a different route from Sartre in that, as well as this lack, human being exists in the disclosure of being. Through disclosure, human being makes itself and the world present. To embrace disclosure, one must embrace

immanence. And to transcend, one must first disclose. Thus, both transcendence and immanence are fundamental to human being and one cannot be thought of without the other. Despite taking this different route, Beauvoir concluded, like Sartre, that transcendence and immanence are deeply embedded in each other.

Beauvoir does, however, diverge somewhat further from Sartre in her account of ambiguity, especially in *The Second Sex*. Far more emphasis is placed on the situation's role in transcendence. For Beauvoir, "The immanent and transcendent aspects of living experience can never be separated: what I fear or desire is always an avatar of my own existence." (SS, 185). Daigle and Landry argue that Beauvoir presents a more balanced view of ambiguity, stating that "It is because Beauvoir holds the individual to be fundamentally ambiguous that she, unlike Sartre is able to conceive of reciprocal relations between subjects." (Daigle, 2013, 109) This notion appears, however, to be confused. It assumes that Sartre doesn't view individual as fundamentally ambiguous, both facticity and freedom at once. And whilst Sartre might not refer to the term explicitly, he still holds it's meaning to be true. This misapprehension appears to follow the view that Sartre's example of the woman on the rendez-vous proves that he saw possible the complete detachment of transcendence from immanence. We have shown that this is not the case. The conflictual paradox arises because transcendence is intertwined with immanence and attempting an *arrachement à soi*.

Nevertheless, Daigle and Landry crucially observe that Beauvoir is "able to conceive of reciprocal relations". However, whether this is due to Beauvoir presenting transcendence and immanence as intertwined is doubtful, as Sartre appears to do so as well. Perhaps, then, it is Sartre's characterisation of transcendence as a pure negation of immanence that renders this paradox more conflictual than if transcendence were merely often attempting to deny immanence.

Whilst in *The Second Sex*, this characterisation does not appear to be so prevalent, in *The Ethics of Ambiguity*, Beauvoir views transcendence in a way evocative of Sartre. She wrote that transcendence seeks "the destruction of the given situation," a passage remarkably similar to Sartre's notion of transcendence as the negation of immanence. (EA, 31) Combined with her assurance that immanence and transcendence are intertwined, the recognition that the for-self is "annihilated ... in the very upsurge of existence" suggests that a purely conflictual paradox would arise here for Beauvoir.

Despite the occurrence of a shift in emphasis in *The Second Sex*, her account of the transcendence-immanence dynamic is not so divergent from Sartre's. Sartre did not lose sight of the inseparability of transcendence and immanence, as some might suggest. And neither is Beauvoir fully divergent from a view of transcendence being in opposition to immanence, whether it is through "negation" or "destruction". (BN, 203-209; EA, 31) Thus, whilst Daigle and Landry are correct in noting

that Beauvoir is better positioned to conceive of positive relations between subjects than Sartre, this does not appear to be solely caused by different immanence-transcendence dynamics.

Another factor must, therefore, ensure the possibility and necessity of solidarity in Beauvoir's work. For solidarity to be necessary, solitary transcendence must be rendered counter-productive, and the Other must be conceptualised in a way that is intertwined with my own being. Thus, an exploration of Sartre and Beauvoir's conception of intersubjectivity is necessary to understand whether they necessitate solidarity. We will first evaluate whether Sartre achieves this through his theory of the Look as constituting our intersubjective relationship with the Other.

The Distant Other in Being and Nothingness

To evaluate whether Sartre's concept of the Other yields a necessity for solidarity, we must first assess whether Sartre successfully conceives of the Other as subject. Solidarity can only exist between active subjects. Sartre's proof of the Other as subject arose in the form of "the Look", which in turn arose from criticisms of the accounts of the Other provided by Husserl, Hegel, and Heidegger. Upon assessing the failures of each of these accounts Sartre developed criteria for any proof that claimed to have successfully presented the Other as subject. Thus, we can use his own criteria to determine where Sartre is successful in *Being and Nothingness*.

Despite using phenomenological frameworks as a starting point for his ideas, Sartre rejected many phenomenologist conclusions. A key example is Heidegger's *Mitsein* (being-with), which appears in *Being and Time* (BT). *Mitsein* posits that to be is, fundamentally, to be-with-others. Existence (*Dasein*) cannot be thought of as an isolated project. Others are fundamental to our existence. (BT, 149-168) As such, for Heidegger and, as we shall see, Beauvoir, the Other is embedded into our ontology. Immanence cannot be thought of as independent of the Other, nor can transcendence.

Sartre rejected this notion for multiple reasons, one of which being that it assumes an a priori relation to the Other, which, for Sartre, would not constitute a relation with a concrete Other. The Other here is abstract and has no relation to real beings in the real world. Thus, Heidegger's *Mitsein* constitutes "not the slightest bridge between me and the Other." (BN, 273) This refusal to embed the Other into his ontological framework leaves both the individual and the Other isolated. The individual must now encounter the Other with no structural relation between them. Objectification is made inevitable by this isolation as the individual has no reason, if transcendence is the aim, to consider the Other worthy of recognition as a free subject.

As well as taking on Heidegger's proof of the Other as subject, Sartre criticised Hegel's. This appears to be influential in forming Sartre's own proof and so must be understood before approaching the Look. For Sartre, "Hegel appears to us to be guilty of an epistemological optimism." (BN, 264) Here, Sartre refers to Hegel in *Phenomenology of Spirit* (PS), equating the truth of being a subject to the recognition of self-consciousness. Subjectivity is given by the Other through recognition when I see the image of myself through the Other as they see themselves through me. This image that I grasp is only possible in my being an object for the Other. And this objectification of myself is only possible if the Other is subject. A relationship of opposition ensues where "one is the independent consciousness whose essential nature is to be for itself, the other is simply to live or to be for another. The former is lord, the other is bondsman" (PS, 115). Hegel ensures us that this relationship is reciprocal, as even the slave, risking his subjectivity, gains independence through the dialectical process with the Other. This argument, however, fails for Sartre due to the lack of transparency between what I am for myself and what I am for the Other. Reciprocal relations cannot exist when one negates the Other by denying his subjectivity so that one gains the recognition of himself. Sartre's Hegel considers the Other as an object necessary for self-constitution.

This epistemological optimism becomes an ontological optimism. The division that occurs between being-for-itself and being-in-itself is crucial. As an ambiguous consciousness, I cannot escape myself. "I pursue myself everywhere, I can not escape myself, I reapprehend myself from behind. Even if I could attempt to make myself an object ... I should have to be the subject who is looking at it." (BN, 266) And yet, "according to Hegel the Other is an object, and I apprehend myself as an object in the Other." (BN, 266) This is deemed impossible as one cannot approach the Other as an object whilst simultaneously apprehending oneself as an object in the Other. If I understand myself as an object in the Other, the Other must be subject. But if I understand the Other as subject, the image I grasp in them will not be the same image they hold of me. Thus, "one of these affirmations destroys the other." (BN, 266) Sartre concludes that Hegel's 'other-as-mirror' is flawed and that "No universal knowledge can be derived from the relation of consciousness. This is what we shall call their ontological separation." (BN, 267)

From this criticism, along with those of Husserl and Heidegger, Sartre develops his own concept of the Other. He first sets up four criteria arising from these critiques to ensure that his concept succeeds in presenting the Other as subject. Whether the second criterion is achieved is most dubitable. It states that:

The cogito examined once again, must throw me outside it and onto the Other, just as it threw me outside upon the In-itself; and this must be done not by revealing to me an a priori structure of myself which would point toward an equally a priori Other but by disclosing to me the concrete,

indubitable presence of a particular concrete Other, just as it has already revealed to me my own incomparable, contingent but necessary, and concrete existence. (BN, 275)

This shall be the criterion we test “the Look” against.

Sartre’s theory of the Look is his route to presenting the Other as subject. Whilst “at least one of the modalities of the Other’s presence to me is object-ness”, Sartre recognises that this perception refers to something other than itself, being a representation. This something other is neither “an infinite series of appearances of the same type” nor an entity isolated from me, so it must refer to another’s consciousness. (BN, 277) My relation to the Other, my being-for-others, is thus as a subject of being rather than an object of knowledge. The individual may interpret the Other’s object-ness and perceive them as a physical presence, for instance, but this is not a prerequisite for their subjectivity. Their subjectivity is revealed to me immediately as a frontal confrontation in the form of the Look.

The Look can occur through the presence of another but also through the appearance of such a presence. Any slight sensation, a noise or movement, leaves me with the impression of being looked at. Thus, the Look transcends eyes. “The Other’s look hides his eyes; it seems to go in front of them.” (BN, 282) This form of the Look is elucidated by Sartre’s example of experiencing shame. In his example, I look through a keyhole due to jealousy, for instance. Suddenly, I hear footsteps and realise I have been seen by another. Consequently, consciousness changes. This consciousness “does not apprehend the person directly or as its object, the person is presented to consciousness insofar as the person is an object for the Other.” (BN, 284) I experience shame in that I am an object for the Other. This experience is only possible because of the appearance of the Other as subject.

Sartre assesses his own theory by positing that the person at the keyhole might have been mistaken in assuming the presence of another. These objections, supposedly, only strengthen his theory. The experience of shame is undeniable. Say I was mistaken; I had not heard the noise of another human; this error does not remove the experience of shame. It increases the experience. Sartre argues that shame and many other emotions essential to being human are only possible because of the presence of others as subjects. As the experience of shame is undeniable, the Other must exist.

Let us return to Sartre’s requirement of the Other being disclosed as “the concrete, indubitable presence of a particular, concrete Other.” (BN, 275) Fretz, among others, argues that Sartre fails in this respect. The “apodictical evidence for the existence of the other is, in the last resort, based on the absence of such an other.” (Fretz, 1997, 87) The “concrete” Other that Sartre required himself to produce appears as a mere abstraction. By using the absence of presence to prove the existence of the Other, Sartre, at best, proves the existence of an Other ¹⁴ completely isolated from us. We will never

feel the true subjective presence of the Other through the Look, only our own abstraction of them. Sartre's Other is not the "concrete, indubitable presence of a particular concrete Other", and the Look does not disclose the Other "just as it has already revealed to me my own incomparable, contingent but necessary, and concrete existence." (BN, 275) The particular concrete Other that Sartre presents is merely the individual's impression of what this external presence truly is. It can also be suggested that in attempting to avoid Hegel's mistake of grasping oneself in the Other, Sartre made the reverse mistake of grasping the Other in oneself. The Other that is revealed through the imposing experience of shame is based on the individual's impression. And as the Other is excluded from our ontology, he cannot be disclosed through this experience alone.

Fretz's criticism appears accurate, especially when considered in the light of the Other-as-reflection. In realising my mistake, I see that the experience of shame was not the product of the Look from a real Other. Rather, the experience was the product of the Look from myself. In this self-reflection, I realise that the abstraction of another was only myself. Fretz accepts that this might constitute the proof of "an Other I". This Other I, however, must not be confused for the Other as subject. Thus, the Look appears to fail in one of its key aims, and the Other is a ghost of a subject. (Fretz, 1997, 87-88)

We have previously noted that solidarity requires the existence of at least two subjects. As Sartre's argument for the existence of the Other as subject fails, it also fails to allow for the possibility of solidarity. Sartre himself recognises that the Look gives rise to the problem of perpetual objectification and conflict. Nevertheless, to strengthen our argument further and to pre-emptively refute counterarguments positing that Sartre does present the Other as subject and that solidarity thusly is possible, I will assume that the Look does succeed in presenting the Other as subject and show that Sartre nevertheless fails to necessitate solidarity in Being and Nothingness.

Sartre argues that, through the Look, we can dismiss the problem of solipsism. This is because we relate not as knowledge-objects but through interaction and active engagement as being-subjects. Another problem, however, arises as a result of this relation. Like myself, the Other is a being-for-itself, free from determination and thus free to objectify me. This is why we "experience the Other's freedom across our own slavery." (BN, 294) The infinite freedom of the Other limits my possibilities, and the Look of the Other strips me of my subjectivity, making me an object. Thus, only two relations can exist. If the Other is subject, then I am object, or if I am subject, then the Other must be object. A master-slave dynamic of the Hegelian type is inevitable where the alterity of the Other as subject is not graspable.

With this formulation of interrelations in mind, we may fully understand why, for Sartre, *Mitsein*, or any other concept of the “we-subject” is impossible. Only one subject can succeed in being master and making the Other slave. Sartre argues that the experience of a we-subject, where consciousness is intersubjective, is purely psychological. It is merely the appearance of an embedded Other, “produced in special cases on the foundation of being-for-others”. (BN, 436) Being-for-others and being-for-itself are the foundational relations in which subjects either objectify or are objectified, and so conflict remains fundamental. This allows Sartre to conclude that “The essence of relations between consciousnesses is not the *Mitsein*; it is conflict.” (BN, 451)

Sartre denies that *Mitsein* describes an ontological relationship of being with regard to the Other. He does this by positing that an object only appears useful when I have a prior experience of others. If I had no such experience, then it would not occur to me to distinguish between a man-made and a natural object. Likewise, I can only experience myself as a member of a we-subject if I already have a concrete experience of Others. Being-with can thus only be established subsequently and through a “frontal” approach rather than a “lateral” one. (BN, 449) Sartre writes, “The ‘we’ is a certain particular experience which is produced in special cases on the foundation of being-for-others in general. This being-for-others precedes and founds being-with-others” (BN, 436). Sartre’s critique assumed that our original relation to the other is a lateral interdependence rather than a frontal opposition. The true phenomena that cause the mirage of a “we” are “the being-in-the-act-of-looking and the being-looked-at” (BN, 436). The essential intersubjective relation is thus conflict rather than *Mitsein*. Consequently, Sartre denies the relevance of the experience of myself as part of a we-subject to ontology. The intersubjective consciousness is merely a perception and not a reality. It is purely psychological.

This line of argument has, however, been criticised. Zahavi, for instance, makes the important observation that “Sartre is identifying an “intersubjective” consciousness with a “collective” consciousness – and it is by no means clear that this identification is valid” (Zahavi, 2001, 140). Embedding the Other in the ontological structure of the for-itself does not necessarily entail neutralising the Other. Sartre does, however, raise an interesting point in that if we were to accept being-with in the Heideggerian sense where we assume to be-with the Other without any real knowledge of what that Other is, the Other is constituted a vague abstraction, and the Other that bears influence on our ontological structure is a ghost of the real Other. Sartre is wise to avoid this along with an a priori relation to the Other but in wholly rejecting any ontological being-with, Sartre completely isolates us from the Other. Moreover, as Zahavi correctly points out, a fundamental relation to the Other does not have to entail a collective consciousness where all merge into an undifferentiable whole. Others can have a bearing on our ontological structure without merging wholly with us. Thus,

Sartre's complete rejection of any fundamental relation between subjects and of a we-subject appears to be unfounded.

In wholly rejecting the we-subject and any view of intersubjectivity that attempts to embed the Other into ontology, such as Mitsein or, implicitly, Beauvoir's conception of being-with, Sartre isolates each individual from the Other. Individuals inevitably approach one another as either a being-for-itself or a being-for-others, and a master-slave dynamic ensues. This isolation not only renders the desire for solidarity counter-productive – as if my aim, as an intentional being, is to transcend, and my immanence-transcendence dynamic contains no relation to the Other, then being-for-myself is the best route to transcendence – but also seems to render solidarity impossible. For if being-with is truly impossible, and I can only ever approach the Other as a being-for-itself, then any attempt at mutual recognition is futile.

Thus, in *Being and Nothingness*, Sartre fails to make solidarity possible and a necessity. We have shown this first through Sartre's unconvincing account of the Other as subject but also, to strengthen this point, through the impossibility of solidarity under the intersubjectivity that follows from the Look. Sartre produces an intersubjectivity that necessitates conflict through an inability to concretely connect subjects. As was explored in the previous section, Sartre produces a problematic account of the body in erotic situations where one must either possess or be possessed by the Other. This situation is made inevitable by Sartre's intersubjectivity. Because the Other is only related to us as "being-in-the-act-of-looking" or "being-looked-at", and there can exist no relation other than of master and slave, possession is inevitable and solidarity is made impossible.

Daigle and Landry alluded to the core reason for the impossibility of solidarity being the immanence-transcendence dynamic as conflictual, and whilst they were correct in noting its impact, solidarity would be necessitated, and conflict might be transcended if the Other were embedded into our own project. When immanence must be wholly negated for consciousness to transcend, despite constituting the basis of transcendence, a tension arises that appears irremediable. This conflict encourages objectification and so perpetual conflict with the Other ensues. Perpetual objectification is encouraged by the attempt to negate immanence but it would be counter-productive if the Other were embedded into the individual's consciousness. Objectification would deny a crucial aspect of one's own ambiguity: that the Other is inherently linked to oneself and must be transcended with rather than through. Thus, whilst Sartre's formulation of the transcendence-immanence dynamic encourages conflictual relations, it alone does not necessitate conflict and remove the necessity to work with the Other.

The complete rejection of the we-subject removes any necessity to work with the Other. As an intentional being, constantly transcending, the isolation of my consciousness renders me a being-purely-for-itself. If, to take the converse perspective, the Other was embedded into my consciousness, objectifying the Other as an act of transcendence would be counter-productive. Transcendence must be for my whole consciousness, so transcendence now becomes a transcendence-with. In this scenario, solidarity is a necessity. Under Sartre's formulation of consciousness, however, solidarity is dangerous. Thus, Sartre's exclusion of the Other from consciousness removes the necessity for solidarity and causes perpetual objectification and conflict to be the authentic relation between subjects. In this light, it is clear that Sartre has failed to necessitate solidarity in *Being and Nothingness*, the main reason being the complete rejection of being-with.

With the requirements for the necessity of solidarity made clearer through Sartre's failure to fulfil them, we can now test whether Beauvoir does so. Having confirmed that her somewhat more balanced view of the immanence-transcendence dynamic makes conflict less inevitable, we know that solidarity is more feasible for Beauvoir. However, whether solidarity is necessary is determined by whether Beauvoir incorporates the Other into the individual's own being. As we will show, through embracing *Mitsein* and viewing ambiguity more positively, Beauvoir both necessitates solidarity and paves a route for realistically achieving it.

Beauvoir's Embedded Other

Contra Sartre, the emphasis placed upon intersubjectivity is evident early in Beauvoir's work. A recognition that one cannot exist without the Other and that interdependence is embedded in human being had a huge bearing on the formation of her existentialist ethics. Whilst a complete model of ethics was never produced, her concepts of ambiguity as positive and being as being-with lay the foundation for one. Exploring ambiguity in the first section, we found that a more balanced immanence-transcendence dynamic with more recognition of the weight of facticity on freedom than is the case for Sartre left her in a better position to conceive of solidarity between subjects. Solidarity was not, however, necessitated by this, so we will explore whether Beauvoir achieves this by embedding the Other in her ontology.

The unity between the Other and our ambiguity can be seen in the essay *Pyrrhus and Cinéas* (PC), where Beauvoir conceives of a form of transcendence called generosity. It appears alongside another aspect of transcendence, transcendence as intentionality for-oneself, which can be likened to the transcendence described by Sartre. Generosity, on the other hand, is not simply a transcendence for oneself, nor is it transcendence for the Other. Giving is generosity if one is giving without expecting

anything in return. It is a transcendence for all humanity. (PC, 124) This appears to be a core aspect of her intersubjectivity. If one values freedom one must not act only for one's own freedom nor only for the freedom of the Other. Rather, they value freedom universally. In this way, generosity appears to transcend Sartre's problem of either being-for-itself and objectifying the Other or being-for-others and being objectified.

Beauvoir has conceived of a form of transcendence that goes hand in hand with intersubjectivity. "Generosity seems to us to be better grounded and therefore more valid the less distinction there is between the other and ourself and the more we fulfil ourself in taking the other as an end" (EA, 144). The revealing nature of this moment of disclosure is valued because one is not trying to possess the Other and use them, thus feeling vulnerable to capture. Instead, one embraces the Other as an end in themselves and allows for the possibility of mutual understanding and respect. Whilst vulnerability to capture is not eradicated, the possibility of authentic solidarity nonetheless arises.

Another concept previously discussed but requiring elucidation is disclosure. Linked to intersubjectivity as Heidegger's *Erschlossenheit* is to *Mitsein*, it signifies "the character of having been laid open." (BT, 105) If disclosure is necessary for transcendence, as previously shown, then intersubjectivity, being essential to disclosure, is also required if one wishes to transcend. To deny that the Other is an integral part of one's situation and that our disclosure depends on them is to deny one's immanence and thus render authentic transcendence impossible. While Sartre, in viewing us as separate individuals who impose ourselves on others, rejects *Mitsein*, Beauvoir embraces it. We are individuals, but our dependence upon the collective to which we belong renders us fundamentally intersubjective. Heidegger states that *Dasein* (being) is inseparable from *Mitsein* (being-with). (BT, 157) As a result, our ability to disclose ourselves and the world depends on recognising that we are *Mitsein*.

In *The Second Sex* Beauvoir is clear that *Mitsein* does not ensure solidarity. Romantic relationships, as "an original *Mitsein*", are a clear example of this. (SS, 47) Men and women have always been *Mitsein*, dependent on each other but not necessarily in solidarity. Beauvoir argues that this relationship has been predominantly conflictual throughout history. *Mitsein* is not an ideal way in which humans can live and offers no moral code in and of itself. Rather, it is a fact of human existence that must first be recognised if one wants to live authentically and transcend. *Prima facie*, this emphasis on *Mitsein* being predominantly confrontational might appear to weaken Beauvoir's position that human beings can and should form authentic relationships based on solidarity. But it is precisely this emphasis that Beauvoir uses to tackle the problem of conflict in being-with. This can be better understood through the influence that Hegel, combined with Heidegger, had upon Beauvoir's being-with-others.

Beauvoir identified with Hegel's dialectic in recognising historical development as emerging from confrontation between beings. The master-slave dynamic that emerges from this can, however, be transcended through mutual recognition. Gothlin recognises this influence and writes that, along with other philosophers of the time, "Beauvoir considered it possible to combine Heidegger, with his concept of *Mitsein*, and Hegel, with his master slave-dialectic" (Gothlin, 2003, 58). In *Being and Time*, Heidegger leaves open the possibility of an authentic *Mitsein*. Like Hegel, Heidegger saw the route to overcoming perpetual conflict as reciprocal recognition of freedom. Beauvoir adapts this view in *The Second Sex* to explain why solidarity is both possible and necessary despite conflict being so prevalent in relations. Human relationships can be based either on opposition or unity. For Beauvoir, human being is in its "truth" when relationships are based on solidarity. (SS, 162) By combining Heidegger's *Mitsein* and Hegel's master-slave dialectic, Beauvoir can conceive of, and emphasise, the need for relationships based on mutual recognition between free subjects.

Upon establishing that this form of interdependence, where the Other is embedded in one's own immanence, should be embraced through mutual respect for freedom to ensure relationships are not perpetually conflictual, Beauvoir is able to advocate for transcendence through generosity even further. By recognising humanity's freedom rather than one's own or another's only, human being can be in its truth and thus better disclose itself to the world and 20 the world to it. Consequently, generosity is both essential to immanence as well as being a form of transcendence. This again displays the inseparability of immanence from transcendence but also, more significantly, of the Other from transcendence. If one wishes to transcend, one must embrace one's immanence, the Other being inextricably embedded in it. To deny the Other's subjectivity and its relation to one's own subjectivity and transcend using them as an object is thus to transcend inauthentically from false immanence. It is through this reasoning that Beauvoir necessitates solidarity.

Examining how Beauvoir conceptualises the body in comparison to Sartre will help us understand how combining a more positive ambiguity and an embedded Other both enables and necessitates solidarity. While we noted that Beauvoir's immanence-transcendence dynamic is not as divergent from Sartre's as some might suspect, there is a greater emphasis placed upon the situation which puts Beauvoir in a better position to conceive of solidarity. For Beauvoir, the body is not recognised merely as a thing – fleshy and inconvenient as it is for Sartre – but as a situation. "The body is not a brute fact. It expresses our relationship to the world" (EA, 41). Due to the importance placed upon our own situation in our ability to transcend, Beauvoir is able to view the relationship between body and consciousness in a different light from Sartre. This might make positive relations more possible, but whether it necessitates them can be doubted. That, it seems, is achieved by embedding the Other into one's ontology.

Sartre recognised the ambiguity of the consciousness-body dynamic. Unlike Beauvoir, he saw this as a necessarily paradoxical ambiguity, with the only possibility being conflict. Whilst this conflict is possible for Beauvoir, it is not irremediable. She argues that we can create our own foundation by embracing our ambiguity through incorporating bodily immanence into the project of transcendence. When this unity is found, others can be regarded as crucial contributors to our creative freedom rather than objects we require for our own transcendence. Such is possible because transcendence and immanence are not in perpetual conflict. Furthermore, by regarding immanence as a crucial foundation for transcendence, Beauvoir can argue that transcending with full respect to one's immanence is the most authentic way to live. In doing so, one simultaneously recognises one's facticity but also that this is not deterministic. Here, harmony is struck where Sartre views only conflict.

This harmonious relationship between body and consciousness appears to lessen the problem that Sartre's formulation exacerbates. By viewing the body as something to understand and incorporate into one's transcendence rather than something to escape from, we no longer need to possess the Other's body and use them as a foundation to transcend from. We have our own immanence to transcend from, a transcendence that can now work with the Other in harmony. This assumes that the Other has their own foundational immanence embedded into their transcendental project. Otherwise, one risks one's subjectivity being captured and becoming a slave to the Other. This is partly why, under Beauvoir's formulation of transcendence, conflict is still possible. The likeliness of this conflict increases if there is a lack of necessity to work with the Other. As an isolated individual, the most authentic and risk-free form of transcendence would be purely for-myself through objectification of the Other. Thus, Beauvoir has opened up the possibility of solidarity here rather than necessitating it.

Taken with Sartre's intersubjectivity, where we can only relate to each other as a being-for-itself or being-for-others, Beauvoir's ambiguity would render solidarity possible but highly unlikely it would be counter-productive to attempt to work with others. However, in both embedding the Other into one's own being, understanding that being is fundamentally being-with, and producing a more balanced view of ambiguity, Beauvoir both necessitates and makes possible solidarity. Solidarity is thus presented as crucial for authentic living and achievable. At present, neither is the case for Sartre. However, in examining the developments in his work presented in the *Critique of Dialectical Reason* (1960), we find that Sartre's position on solidarity shifts significantly, moving closer to Beauvoir and conceiving of an Other embedded into our fundamental being.

The Other in the Critique of Dialectical Reason

A vast development in Sartre's philosophy occurs in the Critique of Dialectical Reason. While his notion of consciousness as both immanence and transcendence remains, intersubjectivity is approached from a different angle. This appears to arise from the influence of Levi-Strauss and, in particular, his work on *The Elementary Structures of Kinship*, developing a structural anthropological analysis of being. As opposed to a purely ontological view of being where one might be tempted to isolate consciousness from any fundamental external bearing, a structural anthropological analysis explores how the structures and relations that exist between beings are "both organised and organising". (CDR, 480) Sartre writes that these structures are "both the lines of force of a praxis common for every individual and the fixed links between this individual and the group". (CDR, 480) Through structural anthropological analysis, Sartre can understand our being-in-the-world and being-with-Others within the same fundamental structures that bear influence on our being. Thus, through this shift, Sartre conceives of a new intersubjectivity that embeds the Other into our fundamental being and consequently necessitates solidarity. To understand how Sartre achieves this, we must examine his methodology.

Sartre pursues several goals in this dense work, one of which being the uncovering of structural anthropological bases of the phenomenon of alienation, as described by Marx. In undertaking this feat, Sartre proves the existence of an intersubjectivity that necessitates cooperation. As well as incorporating a structural anthropological analysis in understanding the links between beings, Sartre's approach here is unique in being both Cartesian and historical materialistic. It is Cartesian in that it strives for apodictical evidence of a dialectical cogito. It is materialistic because, in a dialectical cogito, consciousness and materiality are inextricably linked. And it is historical as the structural anthropological connection under which alienation occurs as a historical phenomenon, is the alienation of our world with our history.

His method for achieving this goal is carried out in four stages. First demonstrating the evidence of the dialectical cogito, he subsequently reveals the apodicticity of this evidence and, in doing so, generates the evidence for the existence of another dialectical cogito, the Other as subject. Sartre then outlines the structural anthropological conditions for alienation, and finally, he uncovers the fundamental structure of "reciprocity" as "seriality". For our purposes of determining whether Sartre successfully provides the concepts of the Other as subject and solidarity as necessary, the second step is most important. To understand this, we must first grasp Sartre's demonstration of the dialectical cogito through the Individual praxis as totalisation in which the structure of our being is both praxis

and totalisation, both determined and determining. This basis of being as fundamentally dialectical allows Sartre to connect individuals through the structures of our being.

Step 1: Individual Praxis as Totalisation

Sartre posits that “The entire historical dialectic rests on an individual praxis insofar as it is already dialectical.” (CDR, 80). Action, as the working of matter, is transcendence and determines the present totalisation, which thus informs the future totality. Totalisation, here, is the process by which individual components come together to form a single unity. This individual praxis arises from spontaneously experiencing the relation with materiality, the first form of dialectics. The immediate relation that occurs is “Need” (le besoin) and is the first totalising relation between man and matter. This is described as “the first negation of the negation” insofar as it announces itself as “Lack” (le manque). (CDR, 83) Man experiences lack as the surrounding materiality threatens him but negates it when he works this materiality for himself. Negation of negation results in affirmation and the preservation of man. “Work” (travail) arises due to this relation and results in a transformation of matter as well as man’s consciousness of this augmentation. Despite the evidence for the dialectical cogito, its apodicticity has yet to have been established.

Step 2: Human Relations as a Mediation between Different Sectors of Materiality

To demonstrate the apodicticity of the evidence for a dialectical cogito, Sartre endeavours to examine how human relations mediate between different workings of materiality, specifically through the “Third Party”. (CDR, 100) In doing so he considers “individuals who are completely isolated by institutions”, with this very separation containing “their concrete historical bond of interiority”. (CDR, 100) To achieve this, Sartre sets up a scene where he, the philosopher at the window of his hotel room, sees a road-mender and a gardener down below. A high wall separates the latter two. Nonetheless, there exists an equivocal relation between the two, of negative order, which is made possible because of the third party, the philosopher above who mediates between them. He concludes that, because of the wall, neither is aware of the other but that there is a relation between philosopher and gardener as there is between philosopher and road-mender.

As the “petit-bourgeois intellectual”, he knows he is not one of those working men and could not do their work. Does the philosopher still not recognise them as men by positing himself as a man facing other men? But “Man” does not exist because “the concept of man is an abstraction which never occurs in concrete intuition. It is, in fact, as “holiday maker” confronting a gardener and a road-mender that I come to conceive of myself; and in making myself what I am, I discover them as they

make themselves, that is, as their work produces them” (CDR, 101). The term “work” here signifies that the relation between people exists exclusively through their working of surrounding materiality, not through the platonic idea of “Man”, for instance.

The relation between gardener and road-mender and the relations between philosopher and gardener/road-mender are mutually dependent. There are not only relations among individuals but there is also a relation among those relations. This is key as Sartre warns us of the error in assuming that the relation between gardener and road-mender is based exclusively on a subjective impression of the philosopher. “It is important”, Sartre tells us, “not to reduce this mediation to a subjective impression: We should not say that for me the labourers are ignorant of one another. They are ignorant of one another through me to the extent that I become what I am through them.” (CDR, 103) Here, it is evident that Sartre sees a reciprocal relation between subjects where I am what I am because of the Other, just as the Other is what the Other is because of me. Consequently, Sartre posits that the philosopher is able to conclude that he is a bourgeois intellectual on vacation precisely through reflection of the gardener and roadmender. It is thus through the mutual participation in the dialectics of work that all humans are connected with one another. This may have been shown through a rather specific example but these relations can be extended infinitely with the same conclusion holding. The structures that form through these relations and relations of relations have a fundamental bearing on our being. Thus, an intersubjectivity emerges that embeds the Other into our being.

Through examining the dialectics of work, Sartre has conceived of the Other as subject and in such a way that there exists a fundamental connection with the Other. This Other is an active Other; the relation between them emerges not through a priori assumption or neutralisation of the Other, but through a constant participation in work that forms the organising and organised structures. It is impossible to conceive of myself as non-working and non-existent, just as it is impossible to conceive of the Other as such. Both my existence and the Other’s are given in one and the same experience. The cogito of the Other is not one for whom I am the object of the Look but with whom I am fundamentally allied. His criticism of Heidegger’s *Mitsein* and, thus, implicitly, Beauvoir’s being-with has been avoided in the creation of a structural anthropological bond between individual and Other. Whilst these criticisms of being-with can be strongly refuted, he has nonetheless avoided an apriorism or the creation of a we-subject with a collective consciousness, where individuality is lost completely. His intersubjectivity emerges through active partaking in being and seeks only to bond rather than merge.

This embedding is explicit when Sartre states that “‘Human relations’ are in fact interindividual structures whose common bond is language and which actually exist at every moment of History.

Isolation is merely a particular aspect of these relations.” (CDR, 99) Comparing this to Being and Nothingness, wherein it was clearly stated that being-for is the foundation of the appearance of a being-with, we see a dramatic shift in position. Our fundamental bond with Others now forms the basis of the appearance of isolation. Sartre’s recognition that the Other who is bound to us through the dialectics of work has a structural bearing on our being is key to ensuring the necessity for solidarity. Like Beauvoir’s embedded Other, Sartre’s becomes crucial to our ambiguous being in the world. No longer isolated, an authentic project of transcendence must recognise the Other as a subject with bearing on our own being.

Whilst not producing a fully-fledged Existentialist ethics out of this concept of being, Sartre uses it to criticise the structure of capitalist society. As was alluded to through the example of the labourers and petit bourgeois intellectual, a capitalist society alienates individuals and gives the appearance of isolation and “keep a ‘society’ in a colloid state.” (CDR, 111) An authentic society, on the other hand, would embrace these bonds that exist between all individuals. For Sartre, “in so far as the individuals in a given milieu are threatened, in practico-inert necessity, by the impossibility of life, their radical unity is the inflexible negation of this impossibility” (CDR, 341).

Sartre denies that “reciprocity” is simply the answer to embracing this unity. We cannot truly treat the Other as an absolute end, just as we cannot treat ourselves as one. Instead, I recognise the Other as praxis, “a developing totalisation”, the movements of which towards his own ends are recognised “in the same movement by which I project myself towards mine” (CDR, 113). Nevertheless, it is through groups and solidarity that we are closest to authentically appreciating the true basis of our being. With being-with as the basis of all experience, as the fundamental state, solidarity emerges as a necessity as with Beauvoir. If ambiguity, with the Other now embedded into this transcendence-immanence dynamic, is to be mediated, this must not be done isolated. Authentic transcendence must now involve the Other as an equal comrade. Thus, solidarity becomes a necessity for authentic living, and with the Other inseparable from an individual’s anthropological structure, one cannot endeavour to authentically mediate ambiguity without considering the existence of the Other as an equal subject deserving of recognition. As such, Sartre necessitates solidarity.

Conclusion

We can thus see that, despite its reputation as individualistic, the Existentialist philosophies of Sartre and Beauvoir necessitate solidarity. Obstacles arose with the intentionality of being encouraging the individual to isolate himself and be-for-himself only. The tension that ensues between transcendence and immanence creates paradoxes that appear to necessitate conflict. As such, the Existentialists’

phenomenological method confronts a problem with the Other. However, this can be solved by creating an intersubjectivity that embeds the Other into the fundamentals of the individual's being, thus rendering the transcendental project a group project. Without this, solidarity becomes futile.

The constitution of a transcendence-immanence relation that is not so necessarily conflictual aids in the conception of solidarity, as shown by Daigle and Landry. However, as we showed in the first section, conflict is still highly likely as transcendence pulls away from immanence, and so more is required to discourage the possession of others and necessitate solidarity. Thus, despite Beauvoir's further emphasis on incorporating our immanence into our transcendental project, conflict is still highly likely, and possession can still be viewed as our most authentic interaction with the Other. What is necessary is the embedding of the Other into one's fundamental being, whereby transcendence and immanence cannot be thought of with the Other as an equal subject.

Sartre's initial attempt at an intersubjectivity appears to have failed on two fronts. Firstly, it is highly dubious whether the Look truly presents the Other as "concrete", the standard he set himself. (BN, 275) Sartre's Other appears as an abstraction based on the absence of this Other. As such, the subjectivity of Sartre's Other is not confirmed, and solidarity becomes impossible. The Look necessitates a master-slave relationship between subjects, where equal social discourse is impossible. Secondly, Sartre completely rejects *Mitsein* and any other concept of a fundamental being-with in Being and Nothingness. For dubitable reasons again, Sartre excludes the Other from the individual's transcendental project and is rendered an isolated being-for-itself whose authentic living involves acting-for-itself. As such, Solidarity was neither necessary nor possible in Sartre's early work.

Beauvoir's break from Sartre in embracing Heidegger's *Mitsein* allows her to conceive of being as being-with. As such, the Other is embedded into our ambiguity, so any authentic mediation must involve the recognition of the Other as an equal subject. Thus, solidarity is made a necessity by Beauvoir through her intersubjectivity. Despite the often conflictual immanence-transcendence relationship, which, in turn, renders interrelations primarily conflictual, there exists a necessity for solidarity such that if one aims to live authentically, one cannot view the Other as an object, completely separate from oneself. Rather, they must incorporate the Other into their project as an equal collaborator and pursue solidarity.

While Sartre's initial attempt at conceptualising our relationship with the Other was unsuccessful in necessitating solidarity, his second was more so. In the *Critique of Dialectical Reason*, a shift to a structural anthropological analysis through Cartesian historical-materialism of being uncovered a fundamental with-relation between subjects. This occurs through mutual participation in the dialectics of work. As such, each individual is fundamentally connected to the Other and cannot

be thought of as otherwise. Thus, the Other is embedded into our fundamental being. While avoiding an overt reneging on his previous ontological exclusion, this shift allows Sartre to conceive of positive relations between individuals as a necessity for authentic living. The Other is inseparable from our project and so must be included as an equal subject. Thus, Beauvoir and Sartre necessitate solidarity between subjects by embedding the Other into our fundamental being.

Reflective Comment

Initially, my idea was to research the role of romantic relationships in Existentialist philosophy. I had often heard claims of Existentialism as being individualistic and, although I had already developed a more nuanced understanding of Sartre and Beauvoir's work in particular, it fascinated me how one might approach relationships with others in lieu of radical freedom and fundamental ambiguity. The move to focussing on 'the Other' seemed a natural step as it allowed me to delve in to the specifics in the ontologies and intersubjectivities of both Sartre and Beauvoir. Here it seemed that 'solidarity' was the perfect term to test the two against and elucidate their stance on the Other.

By not getting bogged down on finding a specific question in the initial stages of my research, I allowed the research to guide me. Much of what I wrote and the many ideas I had for questions were not included in my final piece but by continuously researching throughout the year and always being open to adapting my approach, I was able to produce a piece that was honest with the two philosophers it discusses. I must thank my supervisor Dr. J'Annine Jobling for guiding this approach along with many other aspects of my research. Using the help offered by both your supervisor and Dr. Rachael Wiseman will be vital for production of something you are proud of.

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Sticks and Stones May Break My Bones, But Words Can Fuel Genocide. Beyond Dehumanisation: An Inferentialist Response to Tirrell's Genocidal Language Games

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Abstract

This dissertation examines the role of language in generating genocidal violence, focusing on the philosophical tensions within Lynne Tirrell's account of genocidal language games. While Tirrell insightfully employs inferentialist semantics to explain how deeply derogatory terms function as action-generating speech acts, she also relies on the dehumanisation hypothesis to account for their impact. I highlight the limitations and criticisms the dehumanisation hypothesis is subject to, arguing that inferentialist framework alone provides a greater insight into the destructive force enacted through discourse. Building on Tirrell's inferentialist elements, I offer a deeper and more consistent application of Robert Brandom's theory of meaning as use, supported by Langton's and Kukla & Lance's work on normative pragmatics and speech acts. On this view, genocidal language is not dangerous because it strips victims of their humanity, but because it reconfigures the inferential roles and normative statuses that structure social action. Derogatory terms function as moves within language games that reshape what is seen as permissible or obligatory, thus generating conditions in which atrocities become not only thinkable but seemingly required. By abandoning the dehumanisation hypothesis and embracing a fully inferentialist framework, I offer a sharper explanation of how language both instigates and sustains genocidal violence.

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Introduction

This dissertation examines the role of language in enabling and legitimising genocidal action. I will argue that inferentialist speech act theory offers a more philosophically rigorous framework than the widely assumed dehumanisation hypothesis (DH). The DH is an empirical hypothesis about the causal preconditions of genocide, according to which perpetrators come to see their victims as subhuman, and this denial of humanity is what renders violence psychologically or socially permissible. Drawing from Brandom's inferentialism (1994), Langton's theory of accommodation (2024), and Kukla and Lance's Yo! and Lo! (2009), I develop an account of genocidal discourse that highlights its capacity not merely to reflect prejudice, but to restructure social norms, permissions, and obligations. Genocidal language does not function only to insult or deny humanity - it actively modifies what is socially thinkable and morally permissible, establishing a discursive context in which violence becomes obligatory.

My analysis takes as its central reference point Lynne Tirrell's *Genocidal Language Games* (2012), in which she demonstrates how deeply derogatory terms such as *inyenzi* (cockroach) function inferentially, shaping norms and perceptions in ways that license violence. While Tirrell integrates inferentialism to a degree and notes the normative power of speech acts, she continues to lean on the DH to explain how genocidal language operates. In contrast, I argue - drawing on Harriet Over's (2021) critique of the DH - that such an explanation is conceptually unstable and empirically underdetermined. Instead, I show how an expanded inferentialist approach captures the action-engendering, norm-restructuring power of speech without recourse to the assumption that victims are perceived as non-human.

This view aligns with Jason Stanley's (2015) theory of propaganda, which argues that manipulative speech often functions not by falsifying beliefs, but by exploiting shared presuppositions and socially entrenched norms. Propaganda, like genocidal language, works inferentially - it guides reasoning and alters what counts as a justified response. Genocidal discourse can thus be understood as a species of propaganda that weaponizes inferential roles to reconfigure what listeners perceive as dangerous, permissible, or required. Such utterances do not merely describe the world; they construct it.

While my use of the term "language game" echoes Wittgenstein's insight that meaning arises from use in social contexts, I adopt a more normatively structured interpretation. Following Brandom (1994), I treat language games as systems of commitments and entitlements that generate obligations and transform what agents are accountable for. This allows for a more precise mapping of how speech

acts - including those involved in genocidal rhetoric - create the conditions for violence by altering inferential norms within shared discourse.

Chapter 1

Tirrell and the Dehumanisation Hypothesis

Chapter one will examine Lynne Tirrell's (2012) account of genocidal discourse, which draws on inferentialist semantics to explain how hate speech licenses violence. Tirrell offers a compelling account of the way in which deeply derogatory terms operate within normative structures, reshaping what actions are viewed as acceptable (Tirrell, 2012). Her framework draws on inferentialist concepts, particularly those concerning the normative force of speech, but it also maintains a strong commitment to the theory that dehumanisation is central to the way in which violence evolves to become seemingly justifiable. This chapter provides an outline on Tirrell's position, examining how her account depicts the functioning of inferential roles, proceeding to assess the extent to which her reliance on the DH is philosophically and empirically warranted. By clarifying this dependency, I set the groundwork for my later chapters, which develop an expanded inferentialist alternative that avoids this conceptual entanglement.

1.1 From Insult to Instrument: Tirrell on Deeply Derogatory Terms

Tirrell (2012) identifies a quintet of interrelated features which distinguish casual slurs or insults from deeply derogatory terms (DDT) within oppressive social structures. DDT derive their power not merely from an individual's malicious intent but from their embeddedness in social systems of domination. They:

1. perform an "insider/outsider function", marking social boundaries by positioning the speaker and audience as insiders and the targets as dehumanised others, thus reinforcing group solidarity and subsequently exclusion (Tirrell, 2012, p.191).
2. satisfy an "essentialism condition", conveying that members of the targeted group possess a fixed, negative essence - often presumed to justify their subordination (Tirrell, 2012, p.191).
3. exhibit "social embeddedness", gaining their harmful power by being situated within broader networks of social, political, and historical oppression (Tirrell, 2012, pp. 191- 192).

4. display “functional variation” - serving multiple roles in discourse; enforcing social norms and implicitly threatening or disciplining both targets and bystanders (Tirrell, 2012, p.192).
5. are “action-engendering”: they help generate a framework of perceived permissibility for harmful actions, including discrimination and violence, by reclassifying their targets as outside the bounds of moral consideration (Tirrell, 2012, p.193).

Together, these features illustrate the detrimental ways in which DDTs do not merely express hate, but structure reality in ways that enable and encourage large-scale violence. Rather than simply reflecting social hierarchies, such language actively helps to construct and sustain them.

1.2 Deeply Derogatory Terms in Rwanda

In *Genocidal Language Games* (2012), Tirrell applies this model to the case of Rwanda, analysing how hate speech licensed violence by altering normative structures. The terms *inyenzi* (“cockroach”) and *inzoka* (“snake”), used to describe Tutsi people in pre-genocide and genocide-era Rwanda, satisfy each of her five criteria and function as paradigmatic cases of DDTs.

1. The insider/outsider function is evident in how these terms separated Hutu from Tutsi, both linguistically and socially. Their usage marked the Tutsi as not merely other, but fundamentally dangerous and contaminating, thereby simultaneously affirming Hutu unity and superiority (Tirrell, 2012, pp. 190–191).
2. The terms carry a strong essentialist charge: *inyenzi* implies that Tutsi are incurably pest-like, inherently invasive, and unworthy of moral regard. Similarly, *inzoka* draws on long-standing cultural narratives about snakes as treacherous and lethal, suggesting a biologically fixed nature that cannot be reformed (Tirrell, 2012, p. 199).
3. Both terms exhibit social embeddedness: they were widely disseminated through media such as RTLM radio¹ and the *Kangura* newspaper, and reinforced by state actors, civic education sessions, and grassroots militias like the *Interahamwe* (Tirrell, 2012, pp. 182–184, 199). Far from being isolated utterances, they were enrolled in institutional practices of exclusion, surveillance, and violence.

¹ RTLM (Radio-Télévision Libre des Mille Collines) was a Hutu Power radio station that broadcast anti-Tutsi propaganda and incitements to violence during the Rwandan Genocide (1994). It played a central role in spreading the terms “*inyenzi*” and “*inzoka*,” directing militias, and legitimating the mass extermination of Tutsi people. See: Thompson, A. (2007) *The Media and the Rwanda Genocide*. London: Pluto Press, pp. 112-135.

4. Both terms display functional variation. They were used not only in direct address as slurs but also in third-person identification, as orders, jokes, or euphemisms. For instance, *inyenzi* was used to refer both to RPF soldiers² and to any Tutsi person. This extended its application and impact to various discursive settings (Tirrell, 2012, pp. 187, 197).
5. Most critically, the terms are action-engendering. Tirrell argues that their utterances often directly licensed or mandated specific acts, including murder. To call someone “*inyenzi*” or “*inzoka*” was to classify them within a category that demanded extermination or mutilation. *Inyenzi* signalled that the person was to be “cleared,” “finished,” or killed, while *inzoka* was associated with mutilation through dismemberment - acts deeply informed by cultural norms of snake-killing (Tirrell, 2012, pp. 199–200).

These terms, therefore, do not merely reflect genocidal attitudes; they participate in the normative structuring of genocidal practice.

1.3 Beyond Dehumanisation: Inferentialism and Norm-Guided Violence

Lynne Tirrell’s *Genocidal Language Games* (2012) presents a powerful account of how DDT license violence through reshaping the normative structures within a society. Drawing on Brandom’s inferentialism (1994), Tirrell argues that terms such as *inyenzi* and *inzoka* are more than just descriptive slurs or pejorative labels. Rather, they function as linguistic tools which reconfigure the status of individuals within the social and moral sphere. Essentially, these utterances establish new permissions, obligations, and entitlements, reshaping what is socially thinkable and morally permissible. Genocidal speech acts, on this view, are not passive reflections of animosity but active interventions: action-guiding utterances that shift the normative expectations applied to both victims and perpetrators (Tirrell, 2012, p. 176).

Tirrell’s inferentialist analysis is tightly intertwined with the DH - the idea that violence becomes possible when victims are viewed as less-than-human. This connection is foundational to her account. Through what Brandom would term expressive commitments - the implicit normative stances embedded in assertions - and action-engendering speech acts, genocidal language functions to alter

² The Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) was a Tutsi-led rebel group formed by exiles in Uganda. During the 1994 genocide, the RPF launched a military campaign against the Hutu extremist government and ultimately halted the genocide. In the propaganda of the time, RPF soldiers were conflated with all Tutsi people and labelled *inyenzi* (“cockroaches”), a term used to justify extermination. See: Des Forges, A. (1999) *Leave None to Tell the Story: Genocide in Rwanda*. New York: Human Rights Watch, pp. 70-75.

moral boundaries³. In calling someone “inyenzi,” one does not merely insult them; one discursively reclassifies them outside the scope of moral concern, guiding others in how they are expected to treat the target. These utterances, Tirrell argues, “construct those dominated as lesser beings, limiting their aspirations, capabilities, potentialities, powers,” thereby enacting what she calls “social death, beyond the universe of moral obligation” (Tirrell, 2012, p. 197).

This repositioning, for Tirrell, is not merely symbolic - it is ontological. Illustrated through her analysis on specifically the use of inyenzi (cockroach) and inzoka (snake) in Rwandan genocidal discourse: “There is no rehabilitation of a cockroach. A snake is a snake and must be destroyed on sight” (Tirrell, 2012, p. 199). These metaphors, she insists, are inferentially potent: they reclassify the Tutsi as verminous threats whose extermination is not only permitted but normatively required. This is the heart of her analysis: genocidal speech does not only represent hate - but it also produces new normative conditions, shifting what counts as socially justified, required, or expected within a community.

Yet it is precisely here that a tension arises. While Tirrell’s analytic tools are inferentialist, the explanatory force of her account remains committed to the DH. Her framework depends on the idea that genocidal language is effective because it removes individuals from the category of “fully human,” thereby suspending the moral obligations we grant fellow persons. In doing so, her analysis leans heavily on psychological assumptions about how moral exclusion is grounded in perceptual dehumanisation.

This view, however, has been increasingly contested. Harriet Over (2021), for instance, argues that perpetrators of violence often recognise and acknowledge their victims’ humanity - but frame them as threats or enemies whose harm is justified on strategic, not perceptual, grounds. If such critiques (which we will analyse more closely in section 1.5) are right, then dehumanisation is not a necessary condition for moral disengagement. It becomes possible, then, to detach inferentialism from the DH - to preserve Tirrell’s core insight that language structures moral and social possibilities, while rejecting the idea that genocidal violence depends on misperceiving victims as less-than-human.

Doing so allows us to refine Tirrell’s framework: on this alternative reading, genocidal language does not operate by denying humanity, but by reconfiguring norms - modifying what actions are permitted. The function of deeply derogatory animalistic (or non-human) terms in genocidal discourse

³ Tirrell does not use the term expressive commitment explicitly, but her discussion of speakers’ normative positions and expectations closely tracks Brandom’s concept. See Brandom (1994, pp. 194-197)

is not to perceptually erase personhood, but to reshape the discursive conditions under which moral regard is suspended, and violence becomes obligatory.

In the next section, I turn to recent psychological literature - particularly the work of Kteily and Landry (2022) - to critically assess the empirical and conceptual foundations of the DH. Alongside this, I consider David Livingstone Smith's influential philosophical account (2011; 2014), which reframes dehumanisation as a form of moral disattunement rather than a perceptual failure. Together, these frameworks set the stage for a deeper interrogation of dehumanisation's assumed role in genocidal discourse.

1.4 The Dehumanisation Hypothesis

Dehumanisation is frequently seen as central to understanding intergroup hostility, genocide, and discrimination. Early 20th-century theories and contemporary studies alike treat it as a critical mechanism for enabling violence, with recent scholarship focusing on both its explicit and subtle forms. In what follows, I draw on Kteily and Landry's (2022) psychological feature review - alongside David Livingstone Smith's (2011; 2014) philosophical account of dehumanisation as moral disengagement - to outline the nature, mechanisms, and implications of dehumanisation. This will establish the conceptual framework that will later be subjected to scrutiny via Harriet Over's (2021) seven challenges.

Forms of Dehumanisation

Dehumanisation is generally recognised to exist in two main forms: blatant dehumanisation and subtle dehumanisation (Kteily and Landry, 2022, pp.227). Kteily and Landry (2022) describe Blatant dehumanisation as overt and conscious, often manifesting in explicit comparisons of outgroups to animals or subhuman entities. Examples include employment of adjectives such as "barbaric," or "savage," or the "Ascent of Human" measure, in which individuals rate social groups on a scale from ape-like ancestors to fully evolved humans - frequently placing minority groups closer to the former (pp. 226-228). This form of dehumanisation is notably predictive of support for hostile and exclusionary policies, such as punitive policing or travel bans (pp. 228-229).

By contrast, subtle dehumanisation is more implicit and operates through everyday biases. according to Kteily and Landry (2022) it encompasses phenomena such as infrahumanisation - the attribution of fewer uniquely human emotions, compassion for example, to outgroups (pp. 223-224) -

and the denial of “human-nature” traits such as curiosity. Other dimensions include perceptual dehumanisation, wherein outgroup faces are processed in less human-like ways, and reduced empathy, such as the assumption that marginalised individuals feel less pain, which can translate into tangible biases, for example in healthcare (pp. 225-226). The “New Look” approach, which incorporates infrahumanisation and dual-process models, places increasing emphasis on these subtle forms (pp. 224-226).

Psychological Mechanisms of Dehumanisation

Kteily and Landry (2022, p.223) identify a triad of interrelated psychological mechanisms which lay the foundations for dehumanisation: cognitive processes, emotional and motivational factors, and social and perceptual mechanisms.

Cognitive processes involve seeing outgroup members as less complex or having reduced capability of thought and emotion. This is reflected linguistically, as outgroups tend to be described by assigning fewer mental-state terms. Emotional and motivational dynamics include the role of “disgust, contempt and fear,” which not only fuel dehumanisation, but additionally serve in-group interests by downplaying the psychological needs of others (Kteily and Landry, 2022, pp.223-224, 225). Historical cases, such as the Nuremberg Laws in Nazi Germany, institutionalised these dynamics by categorising Jewish citizens as inherently inferior, justifying not only their exclusion but oppression also (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, n.d.). Finally, social and perceptual mechanisms illustrate how group status and structural power influence the attribution of humanness: dehumanisation becomes a tool to rationalise domination, discrimination and violence (Kteily and Landry, 2022, pp. 223, 226-227).

David Livingstone Smith offers a philosophically influential synthesis of these psychological strands. For Smith, dehumanisation is best understood as a form of “cognitive blindness” to moral status - not a failure to recognise others as biologically human, but a motivated dissociation from their moral significance (Smith, 2011; Smith, 2014, pp. 815-817). On this view, perpetrators may fully acknowledge the mental and emotional capacities of their victims, yet obscure or disavow their standing as moral equals. This “cognitive blindness” facilitates a uniquely disturbing form of moral disengagement: the victim is human in kind but not treated as a person within the normative order. By reframing dehumanisation as a motivated cognitive process rather than a factual misrecognition, Smith’s account attempts to explain how atrocities can be committed in full awareness of the victim’s humanity - though, as we will see, even this nuanced form of “moral blindness” has been challenged

by critics who argue that genocidal violence often depends not on moral disattunement, but on the strategic recognition and instrumentalisation of the victim's humanity.

Interventions and Theoretical Challenges

Although much of the literature focuses on how dehumanisation enables harm, Kteily and Landry (2022) also explore how it might be reduced. Promising interventions include correcting meta-dehumanisation - informing individuals that outgroups view them as fully human, which can reduce reciprocal dehumanisation (p. 231). Intergroup contact, especially sustained positive interactions, appears to lower blatant dehumanisation over time (p. 232). Interventions that challenge human superiority beliefs - by emphasising human-animal similarities - may weaken the foundations of infrahumanisation (p. 233), while strategies that promote individualised perception of others rather than reliance on group stereotypes can also diffuse dehumanising responses (p. 234).

Despite this, the DH is not without conceptual and empirical challenges. Some researchers argue that it may not be a distinct phenomenon at all, but rather a severe expression of existing prejudices (p. 236). Against this, one might respond that dehumanisation captures a broader and more diverse set of psychological phenomena, ranging from implicit affective responses to overt rhetorical strategies. Another important point of contention concerns the causal direction of dehumanisation in relation to violence: does dehumanisation enable violence, or does it emerge to justify violence after it has already begun? As Kteily and Landry observe, addressing this requires more longitudinal research (p. 237). Moreover, some violent practices appear to presuppose the humanity of the victim in order to be maximally cruel. For instance, the act of forcing someone to witness the torture of their family draws on the assumption that the victim is capable of understanding and suffering from such acts - an effect that would not be intelligible if the victim were perceived as a literal animal (p. 229).

Such complexities invite deeper interrogation of the DH itself. The forthcoming discussion of Harriet Over's (2021) challenges will examine whether dehumanisation, as traditionally conceived, is necessary to explain intergroup harm, or whether alternative explanatory frameworks - such as inferentialism - might offer a more precise account of how language and violence intersect. These critiques also call into question whether even more sophisticated accounts of dehumanisation, such as Smith's (2011; 2014) notion of moral disattunement, can fully capture the strategic and norm-guided dimensions of genocidal violence.

1.5 Harriet Over's "Seven Challenges for the Dehumanization Hypothesis"

In essence "the DH proposes that out-group members are viewed as less than human and that being viewed as less than human renders them vulnerable to harm" (Over, 2021, p.3). Over works to deconstruct the frequently assumed DH and outline key challenges which may prompt rejection of this assumed phenomenon or at least facilitate reconsideration of its strength as an assumption. These challenges collectively raise doubts about whether dehumanisation, as traditionally conceived, is either a necessary or sufficient condition for intergroup harm. What emerges instead is a picture of strategic, inferentially loaded language practices that do not require a denial of humanity to be effective.

Initially, Over (2021, p.5) argues that comparisons to non-human entities are not exclusive to out-groups and, therefore, identifying such comparisons alone is insufficient to conclude that dehumanisation has occurred. She highlights how in-group comparisons - such as describing an athlete as a "machine" or a brave person as a "lion" - can be empowering rather than demeaning. Some terms, like "monkey," may carry both derogatory and affectionate meanings, depending on context. Social groups also adopt non-human symbols (e.g., "bulls," "eagles") for their positive connotations. The key issue is distinguishing dehumanisation from neutral or complimentary comparisons. For instance, while Tutsis in Rwanda were likened to snakes in a dehumanising manner, American revolutionaries embraced the rattlesnake as a symbol of resistance. Thus, animal comparisons alone do not necessarily indicate dehumanisation.

Jason Stanley's (2015) account of propaganda supports this critique by emphasising that manipulative or violent discourse does not rely on factual falsehoods or perceptual denial but rather operates through the strategic exploitation of shared assumptions and background norms. In this light, calling a group "cockroaches" functions not to obscure their humanity but to activate inferential roles that justify exclusion, fear, and extermination. Like propaganda, genocidal speech conditions hearers to accept and participate in new moral frameworks without overt coercion - precisely by embedding those frameworks in socially familiar language.

Furthermore, out-group members are frequently described in uniquely human ways, contradicting the hypothesis that they are perceived as non-human. Consider the example of Nazi propaganda; while Jews were depicted as vermin they were simultaneously labelled as "traitors" and similar terms that would be recognised as essentially human; since one would not describe a non-human entity as a "traitor" (Over 2021, p.6). Correspondingly, Manne (2016) and Appiah (2008) argue that propagandists implicitly acknowledge their humanity even in likening groups to vermin. The power of the metaphor is in the contrast, since one would not remind a rat that it is in fact a rat; there

is no power in such an assertion (Over 2021, pp.6-7). So, if victims of supposed dehumanisation retain human attributes, then it is left as an opposition to dehumanisation theorists in the fact that victims do not seem to be truly recognised as non-human.

Another challenge from Over points out that being associated with a non-human entity is not equal to being seen as similar to that non-human entity. She illustrates this using the example of a rat routinely coming to a grey square to receive food. While the rat builds an association between being fed and coming to the grey square, this does not entail the rat recognising the grey square itself as food. This links back to much of the lab-based research; one such case is that white Americans implicitly associate black Americans with apes. Over emphasises that while one should not deny that this is problematic, it does not necessarily prove that black Americans are seen as less-than-human. Subconscious associations existing are not in themselves evidence for in-group participants literally seeing their opponents as subhuman (Over, 2021, p.7).

In light of psychological mechanisms of dehumanisation, Over (2021, p.7) argues that while out-group members may be denied certain mental status, they do tend to be attributed others. This is a matter of complication for proponents of the phenomenon. Some theories characterise dehumanisation as reduced mental-state attribution, yet out-group members are often ascribed pejorative, uniquely human attributes. Over supports her argument here by pointing out that propaganda frequently employs descriptions of the mental status of the out-group. Nazi Germany, for example, depicted Jews' supposed "malice" and "cunning." We may resist this criticism and point to the prevalence of biases in mental state attribution, such as lab-based experimental studies showing reduced mentalising responses toward drug addicts. Ultimately, however, the pejorative attributes in propaganda illustrate out-groups are not viewed as fully non-human since they are attributed distinctly human traits, thus confirming their human agency. Therefore, it lacks transparency as to why a selective attribution of mental states, as opposed to total negation, or lesser mentalising toward certain individuals, should constitute dehumanisation.

Over then challenges the DH through establishing that while out-group members are often attributed negative traits, these traits remain distinctly human. Over (2021, pp.7-8) subjects the lab-based study from Haslam et al to criticism because Haslam entirely overlooks negative, uniquely human traits. Haslam's study categorises dehumanisation into (i) animalistic dehumanisation - the denial of civility, refinement, and rationality - and (ii) mechanistic dehumanisation - the denial of warmth, emotional responsiveness, and agency. Participants were asked to select traits which distinguish human from non-human and then those characteristically human. This strikes methodological concern with the experiment, since it is known from wider research that in the

cognitive psychology of categorisation, attributes depend entirely on the comparison point chosen. In light of this, consider this experiment is repeated, but the benchmark for comparison is altered. Participants are requested to define features of distinction between human and angel, then one would likely elicit responses such as dishonesty, jealousy or spite. Thus, a peculiar asymmetry emerges: lacking civility or warmth is labelled as dehumanisation yet lacking other uniquely human traits - spite or jealousy - is not, despite both being intrinsically human (Over, 2021, p.8). Key to this point of contention is the premise that, without a coherent and consistent definition of what counts as 'human' or 'dehumanised,' the hypothesis risks becoming untestable or even trivial. A further concern here being that the hypothesis may be seen as folding into the very phenomena (prejudice, stereotyping) it is meant to explain.

Penultimately, a significant challenge to David Livingstone Smith's account which characterises dehumanisation as a form of cognitive blindness to moral status, enabling violence by dissociating the victim from normative regard (Smith, 2011; 2014, pp. 815-817) - is presented by Over (2021, pp. 8-9), a critique echoed by Kteily and Landry (2022, pp. 230- 231, 234). While Smith does not argue that perpetrators literally deny the victim's humanity, he maintains that atrocities are facilitated by a psychological process of moral disattunement. Over challenges this by questioning whether persecution of out-group members depends on such a failure to acknowledge moral status - or, conversely, on the strategic recognition of it. Central to the DH is the assumption that seeing others as human confers moral protection. Yet Over argues that persecution often leverages, rather than negates, the victim's humanity. This is evident, first, in the moralised framing of out-groups as "traitors" or "criminals" - labels which presuppose agency and justify punitive action. Second, forms of violence common in genocide, such as public humiliation or sexual violence, derive their power and meaning from the victim's human status; the depth of suffering involved is only intelligible in a human-to-human context. Hence, even paradigmatically dehumanising acts often rely on an implicit recognition of the victim's humanness, both in the nature of the violence itself and in the justificatory narratives that accompany it.

Over's (2021, pp. 9-10) final critique provides a broader challenge to the DH, arguing that being seen as less than human is not inherently a risk factor for harm. As a counterexample, she highlights babies, which, despite lacking complex cognition and uniquely human attributes, are nurtured and protected. Similarly, while pets are not granted human status, they too receive great care and devotion. In some cases, concern for animals even surpasses concern for fellow humans, as evidenced by the UK's Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals receiving more donations than the homeless charity - Shelter. These examples suggest that the absence of recognising human agency fails to necessarily entail increased vulnerability to harm.

Over's seven challenges question the prevalence of non-human comparisons in propaganda and hate speech if out-groups are not literally viewed as less than human. Over (2021, pp. 10- 11) posits that such comparisons are strategic, aimed at persuading audiences to negatively evaluate targeted groups. This is achieved by consistently pairing the out-group with negatively charged stimuli, which conditions observers to view them with disdain. Notably, this demeaning effect is not exclusive to subhuman representations; it can also arise from associating the out-group with uniquely human negative attributes, such as "enemy," "criminal," or "traitor."

This discussion leads us to a crucial insight: the power of genocidal language lies not merely in what is said, but in how such utterances function within a normative inferential space. Dehumanising terms like "rats," "cockroaches," or "monkeys" do not act solely by depicting groups as subhuman. Rather, they reconfigure the listener's inferential expectations - triggering associations of filth, danger, contagion, or expendability. As Tirrell (2012) notes, such metaphors "license" harm, but I posit it is their inferential significance - what they invite or oblige others to do - which enables this function. Over (2021, pp. 10–11), similarly, emphasises this point, arguing that these terms are effective precisely because they compactly elicit multiple negative attributes simultaneously. For instance, "enemy" evokes hostility, while "louse" implies threat, contamination, low status and homogeneity. Thus, the force of such language is normative, not just symbolic.

Crucially, then, what matters is not whether a term is "dehumanising" in kind, but whether its inferential role supports the justification of harm. Calling a group "rats" evokes danger and contamination; calling them "manatees" would likely yield no such effect - despite both being non-human. Indeed, even seemingly humanising language - such as calling a group "traitors" or "criminals" - can serve to morally exclude, condemn, and incite violence. The common thread is not subhuman status, but the role language plays in shifting what is permissible, expected, or demanded of hearers. This underscores the central argument emerging from Chapter 1: it is the inferential structure of genocidal speech - not perceptual dehumanisation - that most directly licenses violence.

The next chapter takes up this challenge. Having seen the limitations of the Dehumanisation Hypothesis, I turn now to develop a fully inferentialist model of genocidal language - one that retains Tirrell's powerful insights into norm-guided speech acts, but without tethering them to psychological assumptions about how humanity is perceived. I begin with Jason Stanley's theory of propaganda, which provides a conceptual bridge between meaning and normativity. Stanley's work offers a valuable starting point for rethinking how language can enable harm - not by denying personhood, but by shaping the moral inferences that render violence conceivable, permissible, and even obligatory.

Chapter 2

Moving Beyond the Dehumanisation Hypothesis

I start this chapter by examining Jason Stanley's theory of propaganda. We will begin to see how an inferentialist framework can offer a powerful and self-sufficient account of how language enables harm free from the assumptions of the DH. Stanley serves as a valuable starting point because his theory explicitly links linguistic meaning to background norms, shared presuppositions, and the manipulation of inferential expectations. His work helps to clarify how speech can function as a tool of ideological control by subtly restructuring what is taken as common sense, morally permissible, or politically urgent. Unlike many psychological models of dehumanisation, Stanley's account avoids appeals to perceptual deficits or failures of recognition; instead, it treats propaganda as a way of guiding inference and shifting social norms from within the discursive practices of a community.

Beginning with Stanley thus enables a transition from dehumanisation-based explanations of violence to an inferentialist model grounded in normative pragmatics. While Stanley does not position himself as an inferentialist in the Brandomian sense, his theory nonetheless aligns with key tenets of inferentialism, particularly its pragmatic account of meaning as shaped by normative roles in discourse. His theory provides a conceptual bridge between philosophical semantics and politically charged speech, illuminating how language can operate as a form of norm-guided action rather than simply as a vehicle for belief or emotion.

This chapter uses Stanley's work as a conceptual springboard but progresses into developing a fuller inferentialist account of genocidal language. Drawing on and extending Tirrell's analysis, I argue for a refined model of genocidal language games - one that retains her attention to normative power while disentangling it from the explanatory commitments of the DH. The result is a framework better suited to understanding how language makes violence intelligible, permissible, and even obligatory within specific discursive and social contexts.

2.1 Jason Stanley's Theory of Propaganda and Its Relevance to Genocidal Language

To develop an inferentialist account of genocidal language that does not rely on the DH, it is useful to turn to Jason Stanley's theory of propaganda. In *How Propaganda Works*, Stanley (2015) argues that propaganda does not function primarily through falsehood or overt deception. Instead, it operates by manipulating what audiences take for granted - drawing on background beliefs and shared cultural

assumptions to reshape perception and guide inference. Propaganda is powerful not because it tells lies, but because it alters what appears obvious or commonsensical, thereby influencing what is regarded as reasonable, moral, or necessary. While Stanley does not explicitly align with inferentialism, his account shares its core emphasis on meaning as use: linguistic meaning is shaped by the inferential roles expressions play within norm-governed practices.

This insight proves valuable when analysing genocidal speech. In Rwandan discourse, for instance, terms like *inyenzi* (“cockroach”) and *inzoka* (“snake”) did not merely insult or dehumanise; they acquired force by altering the background inferential commitments of hearers. Through repetition across media and interpersonal discourse, such terms came to signal obligations and permissions: *inyenzi* must be “cleared,” *inzoka* must be “destroyed.” These utterances did not persuade by argument but reshaped the inferential landscape, establishing normative expectations about how the targets were to be treated. Genocidal speech thus operates analogously to propaganda - not by denying humanity, but by mobilising familiar language to silently shift moral boundaries and practical reasoning.

Stanley’s framework helps clarify how this process unfolds, strengthening the case for moving beyond the DH. It supports a discursive, inferential model in which the power of genocidal language lies not in perceptual misrecognition, but in its capacity to restructure normative space - redefining what actions seem justified, necessary, or even obligatory within a shared social world.

2.2 Inferentialism

To develop a fuller inferentialist framework for analysing genocidal discourse, this section begins by examining Brandom’s foundational account before turning to the more contemporary contributions of Langton, and Kukla and Lance. My aim is to demonstrate that inferentialism alone - without relying on the explanatory assumptions of the dehumanisation hypothesis - offers a powerful and philosophically robust model for understanding how genocidal language operates.

(1) An Exploration and Expansion on Brandom’s Inferentialist Framework (1994)

Brandom’s *Making It Explicit* (1994) defends inferentialism: the view that the meaning of a concept is constituted by its inferential role. This approach is grounded in the principle that meaning is use, focusing on how expressions function within networks of reasoning. Meaning, for Brandom, emerges from the normative relations between utterances - specifically, the commitments and entitlements they generate in social practice (Brandom, 1994, pp. 141–143, 167–169, 180–181).

A central feature of this framework is so-called 'assertion as commitment': to assert something is to undertake a commitment and open oneself to demands for justification. This links to normative accountability, whereby speakers are held responsible for integrating their utterances within a shared space of reasons. Discourse, then, becomes a social practice structured by the act of giving and asking for reasons.

Brandom's concept of deontic scorekeeping elaborates this further. Participants in discourse track one another's commitments and entitlements, updating normative standings as speech acts are made and challenged. Entitlement to a claim depends not merely on its utterance but on whether the speaker can justify it. This dynamic of tracking and responding – what Brandom calls a "game of giving and asking for reasons" - shapes the evolving structure of discourse (Brandom, 1994, pp. 160-165, 186-197).

This framework has significant implications for analysing genocidal discourse. It reveals such language not merely as expressive or emotive, but as a practice of norm-setting - generating obligations, permissions, and entitlements. For example, when a speaker refers to a group as "a threat," they do not just state a belief; they reshape what is inferentially licensed within the community, potentially justifying exclusion, surveillance, or violence.

Brandom's distinction between *de dicto* and *de re* ascriptions offers further nuance. *De dicto* ascriptions reflect a speaker's conceptual framing (e.g., "Alice believes that the morning star is the morning star"), while *de re* ascriptions concern the object itself, regardless of how it is conceptualised (e.g., "Alice believes of the morning star that it is Venus") (Brandom, 1994, pp. 552-557). Kukla and Lance develop this distinction in *Yo! and Lo!* (2009), which I return to later.

(2) 'Accommodating Attitudes' (2024)

Before turning to Kukla and Lance, Langton's more recent contribution provides crucial refinements - particularly in understanding how inferential structures are shaped by the interaction between speakers and hearers, and the effects of repetition over time.

Langton draws on J. L. Austin's (1962) key distinction between illocutionary acts and perlocutionary effects. Illocutionary acts bring about normative changes at the moment of utterance - such as commands that create obligations - whereas perlocutionary effects concern the consequences of speech on hearers' beliefs, attitudes, and dispositions. Building on Austin's theory, Langton highlights that whether an illocution is successful depends on its felicity conditions - such as the speaker's authority and the hearer's receptiveness (Austin, 1962, pp. 102–104; Langton, 2024). To

clarify, the illocutionary force of a statement may only be a demand if the figure asserting it - the speaker - has authority over the hearer for this to be felicitous, or more simply for this to be received by the hearer as a demand. If, for instance, a slave attempted to 'demand' his master, this would be infelicitous, since the slave does not have the authority to demand and therefore does not meet the felicity conditions for delivering a demand, his utterance would rather be taken as a suggestion, for example.

While Brandom's framework focuses on the immediate illocutionary level - tracking how commitments and entitlements are made explicit - Langton draws attention to how speech acts gradually reshape shared norms and expectations over time. This is especially relevant in contexts of hate speech or propaganda, where repeated utterances normalise harmful presuppositions without requiring overt persuasion.

Langton introduces two complementary mechanisms of accommodation: Accommodation of Score (AS) and Accommodation of Common Ground (ACG). AS refers to normative changes that occur immediately upon the successful performance of a speech act - such as when a speaker with recognised authority issues a directive that reshapes permissible action. ACG, by contrast, refers to the gradual reshaping of shared presuppositions over time through repeated or echoed speech acts. Where AS updates the normative landscape in real time, ACG modifies the deeper background of shared assumptions and expectations.

Crucially, Langton emphasises that both speaker and hearer attitudes influence whether accommodation occurs. Even if an utterance is structurally well-formed, its success depends partly on how it is received. A hearer's predispositions shape how the speech act is interpreted and whether it contributes to shifting the common ground.

Consider a political leader repeatedly asserting that a minority group poses "a threat to our safety and values." Initially, the illocutionary force may function as a caution or directive, licensing defensive or exclusionary responses - this would exemplify Accommodation of Score. Over time, the perlocutionary effect of repetition may instil hostility or moral disengagement, illustrating Accommodation of Common Ground. If such speech goes unchallenged - or is echoed in media and interpersonal discourse - it may reconfigure what actions are seen as justified or required.

This dynamic interplay between illocutionary force, perlocutionary outcome, felicity conditions, and the dual processes of AS and ACG is central to understanding how genocidal speech operates. It is not only what is said that matters, but how it is received, repeated, and allowed to reconfigure the normative landscape.

(3) 'Yo! And Lo!' (2009)

Brandom's inferentialism identifies meaning in the normative structure of reasoning (Brandom, 1994, pp. 141-160). This can be understood as a kind of language game, in which interlocutors give and request reasons, and where assertions function to distribute commitments and entitlements. However, Kukla and Lance (2009) argue that not all speech acts are assertions. They introduce the categories of Yo! and Lo! to describe alternative normative moves in discourse.

Yo! includes second-personal, normative acts like commands and invitations. These engage the hearer directly by shaping their obligations or permissions - for example, "Hands off!" or "Join us!" Such utterances do not assert claims but rather issue normative calls to action. Lo! encompasses attention-directing acts like exclamations or observations. Utterances such as "Look at that!" or "There's smoke!" orient the hearer toward elements of the world, often prompting practical response or mutual focus, rather than asserting propositional content.

Kukla and Lance thus extend Brandom's inferentialist model by showing how these non-assertoric speech acts participate in the normative space of reasons. Their framework illustrates that linguistic meaning is not confined to truth-claims but includes imperatives and expressive acts that also transform normative landscapes (Kukla & Lance, 2009, pp. 72-74).

The concept of Yo! corresponds closely to Brandom's deontic scorekeeping. For example, the command "Come here!" functions much like an assertion in that it places a normative demand on the hearer, engaging shared practices of accountability (Kukla & Lance, 2009, pp. 54-56). But Yo! acts expand the model by emphasising second-personal direction rather than third-personal propositional form.

Lo! acts, meanwhile, relate to Brandom's distinction between *de dicto* and *de re* ascriptions. While *de dicto* refers to the speaker's conceptual framing, *de re* is world-directed, pointing to actual objects or states. Lo! speech acts, such as "That animal is dangerous," operate inferentially by committing the speaker to something about the objective world, not merely their conceptual schema (Brandom, 1994, pp. 552-554).

Kukla and Lance's account enriches inferentialism by incorporating these perceptual and action-oriented dimensions. Language does not only manage commitments within reasoned argument, it also draws attention, issues calls, and navigates shared reality. In this way, they broaden Brandom's account to show how various kinds of speech acts help constitute the normative space, not just assertions alone.

Their pragmatic topography includes Yo! acts that build interpersonal norms and Lo! acts that align discourse with shared features of the world. This framework supports a more comprehensive understanding of how discursive practices structure reason-giving, authority, and accountability (Kukla & Lance, 2009, pp. 58-60, 63-65).

Together, Brandom's inferentialism and Kukla and Lance's expansions provide a powerful lens for understanding language as a normative and pragmatic tool – one that shapes shared reality, regulates social practices, and structures interpersonal accountability through a wide array of discursive moves.

Chapter 3

A More Nuanced Approach: Extending Inferentialism in Genocidal Language Games Alongside Stanley's Theory of Propaganda

Lynne Tirrell's "Genocidal Language Games" (2012) marks a significant move in theorising the role of language in enabling mass violence. Drawing upon inferentialism, particularly Robert Brandom's (1994) work, Tirrell argues that genocidal speech acts are not merely descriptive but normatively world-structuring. Terms like "inyenzi" (cockroach) and "inzoka" (snake) do not simply express prejudice; they reshape the network of inferences within which such terms operate, licensing violence by altering social and moral permissions. However, while Tirrell makes compelling use of inferential role semantics, her account remains partially bound to the DH - the idea that victims are perceived as less than human. In light of Harriet Over's (2021) challenges to this hypothesis, I propose that a more rigorous inferentialist analysis, detached from dehumanisation, not only survives Over's critique but emerges as a more precise tool for understanding genocidal discourse. This redirection also resonates with Jason Stanley's (2015) theory of propaganda, where background beliefs are subtly manipulated to shift what is seen as morally or politically obvious.

As outlined in Chapter 2, the move away from the DH opens space for a more robust inferentialist account of how genocidal discourse functions. Brandom's core insight - that the meaning of an utterance is determined by its role in the inferential web of commitments and entitlements - allows us to treat such discourse as norm-setting rather than merely expressive (Brandom, 1994, pp. 141-143). On this model, genocidal language does not rely on victims being perceived as nonhuman. Instead, it establishes practical inferential links that reconfigure how those targeted are to be treated. Tirrell's analysis of Rwandan discourse illustrates this well: terms like "inyenzi" ("cockroach") and

“inzoka” (“snake”) did not merely insult - they functioned as inferentially loaded speech acts that transformed the normative landscape. To call someone “inyenzi” was not simply to invoke a metaphor, but to introduce a commitment: that the person in question ought to be “cleared” or “finished.” These utterances guided reasoning by generating downstream obligations - licensing surveillance, denunciation, or execution - within a socially shared space of entitlements. As Tirrell (2012, p. 176) notes, their “action-engendering” force lies in this ability to structure what responses are expected or permissible. This effect can be further clarified using Langton’s (2024) distinctions between illocutionary and perlocutionary force, as well as her account of AS (which registers normative shifts immediately) and ACG (which gradually reshapes shared assumptions and background attitudes). Langton (2024) extends Brandom’s inferentialism by addressing not only the commitments speech imposes but also the attitudinal shifts it cultivates. Where Brandom emphasises reasoning, Langton illuminates desire, emotion, and uptake. Genocidal discourse does not merely change what one is entitled to infer; it shapes what one comes to want or feel permitted to do. When Tirrell describes how terms like “snake” imply cultural norms of violent extermination, this can be further understood through Langton’s lens: the term reconfigures not only normative permissions (illocutionary) but shared affective dispositions (perlocutionary). Importantly, Langton’s notion of felicity conditions reveals that hate speech succeeds only when the hearer is prepared to accommodate its presuppositions. This provides a diagnostic tool missing in Tirrell’s analysis. If RTLM broadcasters had referred to Tutsi as cockroaches, but listeners had not accommodated this within their normative score, the speech act would fail. Hate speech, then, requires discursive uptake to become normatively potent.

Stanley’s insight that propaganda works by shifting what audiences take to be obvious or common-sense (Stanley, 2015, pp. 53-55) aligns closely with the mechanism of inferential uptake in genocidal discourse. When terms like “inyenzi” are used in public rhetoric, they function not just as slurs, but as vehicles for altering the background assumptions that govern social reasoning. These shifts operate through language’s inferential roles, much as Stanley describes propaganda’s capacity to “manufacture consent” by gradually reorienting moral and epistemic standards. This view strengthens the case that genocidal discourse, like propaganda, does not require dehumanisation to succeed - it functions by normalising violence within a newly constructed moral order (Stanley, 2015, pp. 53-55).

Kukla and Lance’s *Yo! and Lo!* (2009) further refine the inferentialist analysis by expanding beyond assertion to a wider typology of speech acts. Their distinction between *Yo!* (second-person normative calls) and *Lo!* (attention-directing claims) helps reveal how genocidal language functions not only to assert but to command and direct perception. Tirrell largely frames genocidal discourse in

terms of assertions, but Kukla and Lance's framework shows that much of this language operates through imperatives and exclamations. "Finish the work!" is not an assertion - it is a normative call to action, a Yo! act that draws listeners into complicity (Tirrell, 2012, p. 200). Similarly, repeated references to Tutsi as vermin are Lo! acts: they direct listeners' attention toward a perceptual frame that reconfigures how Tutsi are seen.

This dual-function of genocidal speech - as both attention-directing and norm-establishing - is captured with precision in Kukla and Lance's Yo! and Lo! framework. Applying this to Tirrell's analysis yields a richer understanding of how linguistic practices initiate and sustain the normative conditions of genocide.

By applying the 'Yo! And Lo!' inferentialist framework to Tirrell's analysis, we gain greater insight of the workings of genocidal language. Rather than simply dehumanising, as may intuitively seem the operational context of the terms, we can understand how these speech acts in fact function as recognitive and directive speech acts, which restructure social permissions and obligations and elicit, even seemingly justify, violence. The inferential commitments embedded in genocidal discourse may not just operate to reflect pre-existing hatred, but actively restructure the normative landscape, not only permitting violence or genocide but implementing its perception as a social expectation.

In 'Yo! And Lo!,' Kukla and Lance (2009, pp. 15-18) distinguish between two fundamental types of speech acts: the expressive and the declarative. Expressive, or Yo!, speech acts are non-propositional, world-initiating utterances which function by directing attention and inviting recognition (Kukla & Lance, 2009, p. 18). Whereas declarative, Lo!, speech acts establish social facts and reshape the normative landscape (Kukla & Lance, 2009, p. 20). So this allows us to observe the way in which genocidal language operates on both an attentional and norm-setting level.

Tirrell (2012, p. 45) argues that terms like *inyenzi* did not merely describe, but reshaped the view on Tutsi people, changing the way they were perceived. Applying this inferentialist framework, we can understand these as functioning in the Yo! perspective as they directed attention in a way that framed Tutsi as pests. By calling a Tutsi "*inyenzi*," the Hutu extremist does not only identify the subject, but cues a specific frame of perception - one inviting fear and disgust (Tirrell, 2012, p. 47). This then constructs a narrative in which Tutsi are not merely people, but a problem to be solved.

Effectiveness of Yo! utterances are dependent on inferential uptake (Kukla & Lance, 2009, pp. 22-23). As more speakers adopted the framing of *inyenzi*, the term became perceptually sticky - by which I refer to the difficulty of individuals to then view Tutsi outside of the stigmatism that became entrenched in their being as a result of this framework (Tirrell, 2012, p. 49). Radio broadcasts and

public rhetoric worked to amplify these Yo! speech acts by constantly re-directing collective attention toward the constructed threat of the Tutsi.

Lo! speech acts establish new inferential commitments, rendering certain responses to Tutsi not merely permissible but obligatory. “Tutsi are inyenzi” is not only an assertion; it manifests as a social fact that implements instruction as to how Tutsi should be treated (Kukla & Lance, 2009, p. 30). In the logic of a genocidal language game, one classified as inyenzi is not only a permissible victim of murder, but an expected target of such (Tirrell, 2012, p. 55). This operates in a similar way to the manner in which if something is declared a “law,” we are committed to its enforcement.

Inferential commitment here is necessary: accepting the Lo! claim “Tutsi are inyenzi” entails further commitments. These commitments in such a case include agreement that they ought to be removed, murdered, or exterminated (Kukla & Lance, 2009, p. 32). This illustrates the way in which, in the Rwandan genocide, terms like inyenzi were more than just insults. These terms operated as linguistic mechanisms responsible for restructuring the social world (Tirrell, 2012, p. 57). Utilising these terms meaningfully and repeatedly in discourse expressed pre-existing hatred, but more importantly - it actively transformed what counted as reality.

When we highlight the inferentialist framework of Yo! and Lo! operating here, we distinguish the dual-step process in which genocidal language operates. The former of which is the Yo!, the attention capture, whereby widespread use of terms like inyenzi trained listeners to perceive Tutsi as dangerous pests, shifting the way in which they were viewed in everyday life (Kukla & Lance, 2009, p. 35). Secondary is inferential commitments, or the Lo! Characteristic - the way in which perceptions and mere assertions operated as normative claims, establishing obligations to act against Tutsi in this new social reality. In analysis from Tirrell, permissibility conditions for genocide become societally entrenched (Tirrell, 2012, p. 60). Considering this two-step framework, it is clearer to understand the process by which such occurs, initially linguistic practices alter perception; then those altered perceptions become normative mandates justifying violence.

This analysis challenges traditional accounts of dehumanisation or assumptions of the DH as Over (2021) highlighted. Instead of viewing the terms as removing human status through the mechanism of comparing groups to animals, an inferentialist account shows these metaphors work within a system of meaning. The power lies not in the dehumanising qualities of the descriptors used per se, but in the action-engendering force of inferential commitments (Kukla & Lance, 2009).

By considering such inferential commitments as operational in Kukla and Lance’s Yo!/Lo! framework (2009), in addition to Tirrell’s (2012) understanding of the operational use of language in

her genocidal language games, we can observe terms such as *inyenzi* and *inzoka* as not just metaphorical. We can emphasise the way in which these terms operated to actively restructure the real-world: directing social attention toward a new perception of Tutsi as vermin and establishing inferential commitments that justified and progressed into demanding violence. This analysis establishes the power of genocidal language in not merely describing but reshaping the conditions of reality itself.

In sum, this expanded inferentialist framework not only complements Tirrell's analysis but surpasses it in precision and scope. Detaching the explanation from the DH allows us to avoid Over's (2021) criticisms while preserving the insight that language licenses violence by shaping norms. Genocidal speech acts do not operate by erasing humanity but by redefining agency, threat, and moral status within a shared discursive space. This echoes Stanley's (2015) account of propaganda, which foregrounds how ideological control is exercised through the reshaping of public reasoning, rather than its denial. This inferentialist account foregrounds language as a normative force - one that builds the very conditions under which genocide becomes thinkable, permitted, and ultimately, enacted.

4.1 Concluding Remarks

I have presented the argument that genocidal language operates not through the dehumanisation of its targets but through speech acts operating to transform social norms, permissions, and obligations by inferentialism. Drawing on the works of Brandom, Langton, and Kukla & Lance, I have presented an inferentialist critique of the DH, offering a more robust and philosophically precise framework for understanding the role of language in genocide.

The central claim of this dissertation is that genocidal language, such as the use of deeply derogatory terms like "*inyenzi*" (cockroach) and "*inzoka*" (snake), does not merely reflect or express pre-existing hate but actively restructures the inferential norms within shared social discourse. This restructuring makes violence not only conceivable but morally obligatory.

While Lynne Tirrell's (2012) *Genocidal Language Games* provides significant insights into the action-engendering power of such speech acts, her framework is ultimately constrained by its reliance on the DH. The DH posits that genocide is made possible by the perception of victims as less-than-human. I have argued that this explanation is both conceptually and empirically underdetermined. Positing that a more nuanced account of genocidal discourse can be achieved by severing this link with dehumanisation and embracing an inferentialist model that focuses on how language shapes social practices and moral structures.

Theoretical Implications

This dissertation contributes to the ongoing philosophical discourse on the intersection of language and violence by extending the work of Brandom (1994), Langton (2024), and Kukla & Lance (2009) in the context of genocidal rhetoric. By applying inferentialism, I have shown that genocidal language acts not as a tool of dehumanisation but as a mechanism for altering the normative landscape - transforming what is permissible and what is required in a specific social context. This shift in understanding highlights new avenues for analysing not just genocidal language, but also other forms of linguistic violence, such as hate speech and propaganda. The inferentialist framework I have developed provides a more flexible, context-sensitive account of how language structures violence, one that aligns with the work of Jason Stanley on propaganda and the manipulation of background assumptions, rather than relying on the often-problematic notion of dehumanisation.

Practical Implications

The implications of this argument extend beyond theoretical discourse and into the practical realm of policy and intervention strategies. If genocidal language functions to reshape normative expectations and social permissions, interventions must not only address the language itself but also the broader inferential structures that support it. Public campaigns against hate speech and genocide could benefit from focusing not solely on the harmful metaphors or slurs used but on the ways in which such language reconfigures the moral framework in which violence becomes an acceptable response. This could involve promoting critical awareness of how language shapes social norms and providing tools for individuals to resist the inferential shifts that lead to violence.

4.2 Conclusion

In conclusion, this dissertation has shown that genocidal language, when viewed through the lens of inferentialism, reveals the true power of speech acts: not merely to reflect prejudices, but to construct and reconstruct the world in ways that normalise and justify violence. By expanding upon the theories of Brandom (1994), Langton (1993; 2024), and Kukla & Lance (2009), and integrating insights from Jason Stanley's (2015) theory of propaganda, I have demonstrated that language, in its various forms, is a key mechanism in the normative reconfiguration that enables genocide. This inferentialist approach not only advances our theoretical understanding of genocidal discourse, it also provides a more nuanced and practical framework for intervening in the linguistic practices that legitimise and sustain violence.

Reflective Comment

From the very start, I was determined to write a dissertation - something I could be proud of. And I can firmly say: I did that! My goal was to make it clear how philosophy underpins so much of our everyday understanding. It's often unnoticed, even misunderstood, but it's foundational - and nowhere is this more evident, I think, than in the philosophy of language. We all participate in speech, in speech acts, in communication - yet how often do we stop to ask how this actually works? I wanted to showcase how philosophical knowledge shapes the way we understand ourselves and each other, often without us realising it.

Philosophy of language has always inspired me. So many people engage in speech acts without grasping the weight of what they're doing. I wanted my dissertation to shed light on that - to invite others into this space of curiosity and reflection.

I am phenomenally proud of the work I've done. Writing a dissertation is truly worth it - but you have to *really* want it. There will be days, even weeks, when you're stuck. You'll reread the same philosopher again and again, trying to make sense of one dense paragraph or difficult concept. It can feel relentless - like running a marathon. But with stamina and passion, it is so incredibly rewarding.

Like any long race, it's about pacing yourself. Work closely with your supervisor to shape it section by section - and be willing to refine, reshape, even rethink. Stay open to the literature - it will surprise you, challenge you, change you. This might well be the longest piece of writing you ever produce. For me, it felt like stitching together puzzle pieces - little disconnected sections, slowly forming a coherent whole. Only near the end did it all begin to flourish (with some serious editing!). The sum really is greater than its parts.

So keep your mind open. Feed your curiosity. Let the literature inspire you. Don't hold too tightly to your early opinions - let yourself evolve as you read. There's so much exquisite thought out there; don't close yourself off from it.

It is also important to choose the right supervisor for you. Their guidance and support are invaluable. Find someone who shares your passion, understands your vision, and will both support and challenge you. I know I wouldn't have enjoyed this journey nearly as much without the outstanding Dr Wiseman. Her encouragement and advice were phenomenal.

On that note - if you have the opportunity, take part in the dissertation showcase. Not only does it help you better understand the narrative arc of your thesis, but it also offers thoughtful feedback that can truly enlighten and improve your work.

Pick your topic early - you've got a lot of reading ahead. If you are indecisive (like me!), the best advice I can give you is: choose something that speaks to you. Think outside the box. Find your niche. Make it your own.

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Does Logical Pluralism Provide a Successful Account of Logical Consequence?

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Abstract

Logical pluralism holds that there is more than one correct logic. The most notable formulation of this position is Beall and Restall's account of logical pluralism which maintains that there are many admissible precisifications of the relation of logical consequence – as the notion of logical consequence is fundamentally unsettled, Beall and Restall argue that it can be made precise in a multiplicity of ways. This is the central component of their pluralism: radically different logics each fit a general form – the Generalised Tarski Thesis (GTT). In this way, they seek to provide a pluralist account of logical consequence and neutralise the rivalry present between opposing Systems of logic at the level of application.

In section 1, against the background of logical rivalry, I introduce Beall and Restall's formulation of logical pluralism. Throughout this section, I consider and critically analyse Beall and Restall's logical pluralism as an account of logical consequence. More specifically, I illustrate how the approach of employing the supervaluationist method of precisification does not help explicate the notion of logical consequence. Then, in clarifying how Beall and Restall's GTT operates, I will present the objections that: 1) the supposed/necessary applicability of a logic does not help settle the issue of rivalry; and 2) Beall and Restall fail to take seriously the motivations behind the construction of non-classical logics. In section 2, I present the most serious challenge to Beall and Restall's logical pluralism: the collapse arguments. As their pluralism allows a single logic to dominate, the position ultimately collapses into logical monism. Finally, in section 3, I consider the most widely discussed attempt to escape the collapse argument: rejecting logic's normativity. However, I argue that the collapse problem remains whether logical consequence brings with it normative constraints or not. I conclude that Beall and Restall's logical pluralism as an account of logical consequence is unsuccessful.

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1. Logical Rivalry and Logical Pluralism

The central concept in logic is logical consequence, i.e., what follows from what. In providing an account of logical consequence, logic aims to determine what the valid consequences of a given set of premises or assumptions are and specify why this is the case. A logic, therefore, is simply an account of this relation of *follows from*.

However, logic is like any other subject in that there is disagreement and uncertainty. As Weber (2017, p.93) points out, for any given 'law of logic' there will be at least one reasonable logician who has disputed it. When taken further, conflicts of this kind have amounted to a denial of the foundational philosophical presuppositions that underpin entire systems of reasoning. This has given rise to rival families of logic.⁴

Equally, the construction of opposing, incompatible formal Systems is often owed to the fact that in their design they would be better suited to certain kinds of reasoning than those already available; such Systems could be intended to handle paradoxes, non-existent objects, or accommodate infinity. It is in this way that we can conceive of logic as a task-specific tool; that it is analogous to how different kinds of blades are appropriate for different types of cutting jobs.

The existence of many logics is not problematic in and of itself, as the question of which logic is the best for some given task is often (though not always) unambiguously resolved by considering the job at hand. Priest (2006, p.195) sums up this situation by drawing the distinction between pure logic and applied logic with contrast to mathematics and physics. He states that it is an uncontentious fact that there are many pure geometries (i.e., Euclidean, Riemannian, spherical, etc.) and that at the level of pure geometry, there is no rivalry between these contrasting accounts of space. It is only once we

⁴ To differentiate between meanings of 'system', henceforth I will use 'System' to refer to a family of formal logics and 'system' to mean an individual formal logic. For instance, while relevant logic is a System, the systems of R and E are distinct logics under its umbrella.

seek to apply a geometry for some purpose that the question of rivalry arises. Which is to say, disputes about which pure geometry provides the best account of space are only contested once they are applied to some given analysis. In the case of logic, it is just the same: disagreements come about on which pure logic is correct in its account of validity only when selecting one to apply.

As the canonical application of logic is in the analysis of reasoning and argumentation, however, it does seem problematic that there is no truth to the matter as to which logic, or which System, is correct in its account of logical consequence. This is because, according to the longstanding philosophical tradition, the primary task of logic is to inform us of what proper reasoning ought to look like; it is prescriptive in determining how we are supposed to reason. It is with this end that logic is said to be *normative* – that, e.g., we do something *wrong* when we accept the premises of an argument and yet reject the conclusion. It makes sense, therefore, to assume that there is a correct answer to what good reasoning is.

The problem at hand is that given the same set of inferences and arguments, different accounts of logical consequence can be applied which each yield differing verdicts on some reasoning's validity or invalidity; the logics in question all rightly deserve the title of logic and are all well-suited for this particular application. However, it is not clear which one is correct and should therefore be followed.

A notable attempt to neutralise the situation described above is Beall and Restall's form of logical pluralism. Put simply, it seeks to accommodate a variety of radically different logics by describing the way that they each fit a general form – their Generalised Tarski Thesis:

Generalised Tarski Thesis:

An argument is valid_x if and only if, in every case_x in which the premises are true, so is the conclusion

In spelling out the notion of a case, i.e. the kind of situation being considered, a plurality of equally correct/genuine consequence relations will result as an instance of GTT. Beall and Restall argue that their logical pluralism can accommodate at least three logics: classical consequence, as captured by Tarskian models/possible worlds; relevant consequence, by situations (both incomplete and complete); and intuitionistic consequence, via stages of construction. Beall and Restall (2006, p.44) agree that rivalry only emerges amongst the logics in their application; however, they argue, that there is no need to say that there is ever a single privileged logic, as the rivalry regarding what is the correct logic is also settled by its application.

1.1 Logical Consequence and Precisification

More specifically, the logical pluralism put forward by Beall and Restall is a pluralism about *logical consequence*. This is the relation, represented as ' $\models$ ', that defines what it means to 'logically follow from' and relates a given set of premises to the conclusion(s) that they validly entail.⁵ Standardly, it could be said that a logic is identified with its consequence relation. As, at the very least, a logic can be defined as an ordered pair, $\langle L, \models \rangle$; where L is a formal language consisting of a non-empty set of well-defined symbols and a non-empty set of formation rules, whilst $\models$ is the formal consequence relation that holds between a set of statements from L and a statement from L . It is by specifying the conditions on which the consequence relation holds, i.e., determining which inferences and arguments are valid, that the logic's consequence relation is made precise and the logic becomes fixed.

Following Stei (2017, pp.1-2), it is worth noting that this definition of logic permits multiple forms of logical pluralism. By allowing for different languages and different consequence relations, we get at least the following combinations of plurality: (i) $\langle L_n, \models_x \rangle$, and $\langle L_m, \models_x \rangle$, i.e., different languages with the same consequence relation; (ii) $\langle L_n, \models_x \rangle$ and $\langle L_n, \models_y \rangle$, i.e., different consequence relations within the same language; and, (iii) $\langle L_n, \models_x \rangle$ and $\langle L_m, \models_y \rangle$, i.e., different languages with different consequence relations.⁶ It is plurality (ii) that is the kind of pluralism which is advocated for by Beall and Restall: pluralism about logical consequence within the same language.

As a concept, Tarski (1936, p.418) describes logical consequence as a relation that is not sharply defined; and, to reflect its common usage, it requires revision in order to provide a precise account of it. In this way, following Tarski, Beall and Restall understand logical consequence as being initially 'unsettled': it is a term that is somewhat vague or indeterminate. In clarifying and making the notion of the concept of logical consequence settled, Beall and Restall employ the method of 'precisification'.

Just as the term 'thin' is vague, it is still able to determine that certain people are definitely thin whilst certain others are definitely not, though it leaves the borderline cases that are more difficult to call either way undetermined. As Keefe (2013, p.1378) writes, vague and indeterminate terms like this are typically settled by providing a precisification that eliminates the imprecision in the notion in such a way as to agree with the original conception of the notion, on the aspects of it that are determined (i.e., the clear cases), whilst settling the cases that are not. A precisification, therefore, is a means of

⁵ In this paper, I will only refer to semantic entailment.

⁶ These are examples of some different ways to be a pluralist about logic. (i) does raise the question of how the same consequence relation could be preserved over contrasting languages with different syntaxes, logical constants, or inferential rules. Shapiro (2014, pp.42-44) explains how such a pluralism could be meaningful, however, by appealing to translational equivalence.

drawing a sharp boundary within the borderline cases, it settles those undetermined cases one way or the other at the same time as preserving the determined ones.

In the supervaluationist theory of vagueness, precisifications play a central role in providing truth values for indeterminate statements; as Fine (1975, p.282) defines it, supervaluationism maintains that a sentence is true if and only if it is true on all precisifications. However, Beall and Restall are not quantifying over precisifications in this way. They are treating the multiplicity of precisifications of logical consequence as establishing that multiplicity of logical consequence relations.

To illustrate, Beall and Restall understand their GTT as correctly pinning down the ordinary concept of logical consequence, in that it determines what it means to follow on from, although, in a vague and indeterminate sense. By specifying a case and precisifying GTT, which in turn produces an instance of it, the consequence relation is then settled as to which inferences and arguments are valid.

However, Keefe (2013, pp.1379-1382) sees this approach as problematic and not sufficient in supporting the logical pluralism as it is characterised. As stated above, Beall and Restall's overarching claim is that: (A) at least two different instances of GTT provide admissible precisifications of logical consequence. Whilst, more generally, a proponent of any formulation of logical pluralism would maintain: (B) there is more than one relation of logical consequence. Keefe argues that (B) is essential to the position of any plurality thesis, yet it is not clear how a theory holding (A) also yields (B). After all, even if there are several precisifications available this is still compatible with the denial of (B).

As an example, Keefe considers how the exact area of Mount Everest is delineated. There is no sharp boundary at the base of the mountain, but nonetheless, different lines could be drawn to define the area and each would constitute a precisification of Mount Everest. Intuitively, we would not be inclined to say from this that the availability of several precisifications of Mount Everest entails many Mount Everests - it seems to be a settled matter that there is only one.

However, to establish this claim, i.e., that there is only one Mount Everest, we need to determine which precisification, from the collection of equally good candidates, is the proper referent of "Mount Everest". She states that there are two options: we would either need to accept that there is something that determines a uniquely correct candidate, even if we could never find out what that is, i.e., a form of epistemicism; or, employ supervaluationism.

The supervaluationist approach can establish that there is only one Mount Everest since it is true that it is true on all precisifications; however, it invalidates analogues of the move from (A) to (B) for logical pluralism. To illustrate, suppose a supervaluationist-type proposal to determine the truth-

value of consequence claims by quantifying over the multiplicity of precisifications, an argument would be valid if and only if it is valid according to every admissible logic. Owing to the wide variation among the candidate logics, this intersection of what would count as valid between the logics would be a very small set of arguments. Most importantly, this would ultimately amount to the position of logical monism rather than pluralism: there would always be a single answer to whether an argument is valid, i.e., there would be 'one true logic' with a single consequence relation that was ultimately correct.

It is evident, therefore, that when Beall and Restall employ the method of precisification to resolve the indeterminacy of logical consequence, it is not in a supervaluationist way. However, Keefe argues that it is not clear at all how exactly, if in any way at all, Beall and Restall are relating their different formal consequence relations to the informal notion of logical consequence. Intending to clarify this situation, they pre-emptively offer an analogy; Beall and Restall (2006, p.28) claim that "the notion of 'follows from', as it applies to reasoning, may be made precise in at least two distinct ways". That is, as deductive consequence or as inductive consequence; these are the two ways that settle what is meant by the 'goodness' of an argument. In terms of the conclusion "following from" the premises, the inductive reading sounds wrong; but regardless, Keefe states that these two notions do not correspond to two different ways of making the notion of 'follows from' precise. Although we might fail to distinguish deductive reasoning and inductive reason from time to time, and use the same term of "good argument" for both, what we actually have here are two different informal notions. Their analogy, therefore, serves to acknowledge a kind of ambiguity in the notion of *following from* rather than highlighting a pluralism about a single notion.

Despite this, let us suppose that there are many precisifications and that these, somehow, subsequently result in many logical consequence relations. What differentiates a correct from an incorrect precisification? As it was described above, a logic is at least an ordered pair; although this point is somewhat trivial, this definition permits an infinite number of distinct logics and consequence relations to exist – some of which will be useful and have applicability. For Beall and Restall, for a precisification to be correct, and its subsequent logic admissible, it must meet the primary constraint. This is the three core features of the settled core of logical consequence, and any account, more generally, must take account of them state Beall and Restall (2016, p.14). Those three features are:

- (1) Necessity – the truth of an argument's premises necessitate its conclusion.
- (2) Formality – the validity of an argument depends on its form rather than its contents

- (3) Normativity – if you accept the premises of a valid argument but reject its conclusion, you somehow go wrong.⁷

Any formal system that satisfies this constraint counts as a correct precisification of the concept of logical consequence and is rightly deserving of the title of ‘logic’.

To summarise, it seems that Beall and Restall’s use of precisification does not guarantee that there is more than one relation of logical consequence; nor does it clarify how their admissible instances of GTT, as resulting consequence relations, correspond to the informal notion of logical consequence. Yet, not just any logic goes – it must meet the primary constraint. Let us now consider the central component of their theory: the GTT.

1.2 The Generalised Tarski Thesis

Beall and Restall, again following Tarski, define validity as a matter of truth-preservation; this is the idea that a valid argument is such that, on all interpretations on which its premises are true so is its conclusion (semantic entailment). Accordingly, their approach to validity is that it is explicated by Tarskian model-theoretic means which are formalised by way of varying interpretations and models - hence why their pluralism is often described as ‘models as logics’.

In essence, an interpretation is an assignment of semantic values to the symbols of a formal language. These symbols are distinguished as either logical constants or as elements of the non-logical vocabulary (e.g., individual constants and predicate letters); the logical constants have fixed meanings across all interpretations whilst items in the non-logical vocabulary have variant interpretations. Crucially, an interpretation that makes a set of statements true is called a model.⁸

From this, it follows that an argument is valid if and only if any model of its premises is also a model of its conclusion. This is exactly what we want from a valid argument: no instance where the argument has true premises and a false conclusion. Another way of putting this is that an argument is valid when there is no counterexample to it: there is no case in which the premises are true and in which the conclusion is false. Thus, model-theoretic validity may be formulated:

Model-theoretic validity:

An argument is valid if and only if every model of its premises is also a model of its conclusion

⁷ See Kellen (2018, pp.260-261)

⁸ Strictly speaking, a model is an ordered pair consisting of a domain and an interpretation.

Beall and Restall (2006, p.29) state that a more restricted version of their generalised thesis can be formulated from this conception of validity as follows: ‘the sentence X follows logically from the sentences of class K if and only if every model of the class K is also a model of the sentence X’. Given that ‘model’ is understood along Tarskian lines, they see this restricted thesis of validity as a recipe for specific accounts of consequence and as a single instance of GTT. Further, it is in adopting this thesis in the analysis of logical consequence that *truth-preservation in cases* does the work required of logical consequence; by specifying case_x in their generalised thesis particular precisifications are then gained. We can now ask: what is meant precisely by a ‘case’?

Typically, cases are thought of as possibilities. It is by providing a sufficiently precise notion of possibility, and then treating ‘true in a case’ as ‘possibly true’, that we can get to an account of necessary consequence. To illustrate, B is a (necessary) consequence of $A_1, \dots, A_n$ if and only if there is no possibility in which $A_1, \dots, A_n$ are all true but B is not true. Or, in other words, B is a consequence of $A_1, \dots, A_n$ if and only if it is impossible for each given A_i to be true without B being true.

Taking cases to be possibilities in this way, however, requires specification over what is possible and what is not possible. Beall (2010, pp.5-7) gives the example of reasoning about a scenario in which it is possible to travel faster than the speed of light; though it is not physically possible as the laws of physics prohibit it, we might want to acknowledge a broader sense of ‘possibility’ in which such travel is possible – for example, coherent possibility, or imaginable. Subsequently, it is by restricting what is meant by ‘case’ that we get different accounts of logical consequence as we will now see.

Applying this understanding of what a case is to Beall and Restall’s GTT, we can better comprehend their position. In specifying what is meant by case_x , the resulting precisification and consequence relation provides an account of when truth is preserved in such a case. Classical consequence, for instance, is the product of dealing with cases that are both complete and consistent – captured by possible worlds or Tarski models. Classical logic deals exclusively with cases that are both complete and consistent, and nothing is a classical case unless it is both. An account of such possibility, which is the specification of a case, subsequently provides us with truth-conditions, i.e., truth-in-a-case conditions, for the language. From these truth-conditions, it can be determined whether certain inferences are truth-preserving or not. By providing an account of which inferences and arguments are valid, classically, the classical consequence relation is then settled. In the very same way, argue Beall and Restall, if we instead allow cases_x to be incomplete or potentially inconsistent situations, the precisification would settle what it means to ‘follow on from’ in a way that results with the consequence relation corresponding to relevant logic.

As Beall and Restall are pluralists about logical consequence, they want to accept that both the classical logician and the relevant logician succeed in capturing a correct consequence relation. As such, they contend that classical and relevant logic are equally good; and in determining which logic should be employed to give a verdict on some argument, that it is simply a matter of its intended application. They are correct in stating that rivalry emerges at the level of application, yet there is much contention as to whether this rivalry is resolved by the logic's suitability and/or necessity for a given application.

A major source of the rivalry between these two Systems stems from the disagreement about the validity of *Ex Falso Quodlibet*, i.e., EFQ ("from falsehood, anything follows"). By the lights of classical consequence, EFQ is valid; it permits the move from a contradiction to any statement whatsoever, such that, we can validly reason: "all lemons are yellow and not all lemons are yellow, therefore unicorns exist". While this might seem counterintuitive, if we were to consider the intermediate steps in its reasoning we can see that EFQ is perfectly fine classical reasoning. The validity of EFQ, moreover, is an expression of the System's fundamental commitment to consistency; it handles contradictions by treating them as explosive: once a contradiction is admitted, anything can be derived; i.e., the existence of a contradiction within a given set of premises trivialises the distinction between truth and falsity.

Relevant consequence, on the other hand, is paraconsistent: it is not committed to the idea that no statement can be both true and false (an impossibility expressed by EFQ). Beall and Restall (2001, pp.4-6) distinguish three kinds of paraconsistent logicians who all endorse relevant consequence and reject EFQ. First, there is the regular dialetheist according to whom there are true contradictions and the actual world is inconsistent; this is evidenced, for example, by paradoxes. Secondly, there is the light dialetheist. Light dialetheism is more cautious. It holds that the actual world might be inconsistent and that it remains an open question as to what is the right conclusion to draw from paradoxes. The regular dialetheist and the light dialetheist both embrace paraconsistency – since even if some contradictions might be true, not every proposition could be true. However, Read (2006, pp.5-7) finds fault with Beall and Restall's GTT in that they falsely claim it can accommodate for the third kind of paraconsistent logician: the so-called, non-dialetheist paraconsistentist

In contrast to regular dialetheism and light dialetheism, which deny that contradictions are always false, non-dialetheist paraconsistentism does not think that a contradiction could be true. The three positions are united as paraconsistent logics in their rejection of EFQ. However, argues Read, Beall and Restall's GTT renders EFQ as trivially valid for non-dialetheist paraconsistentist despite their very rejection of it.

For EFQ to be invalid according to GTT, there must be cases where A and $\sim A$ are true and B false. Yet, A and $\sim A$ cannot be true for the non-dialetheist paraconsistentist as any case where A and $\sim A$ is true is impossible. This means that there would never be a case in which EFQ did not preserve truth, because of this they cannot deny the validity of EFQ.

For the dialetheist paraconsistentists the situation is different. For the dialetheist, the case specified is, or at least could be, inconsistent; so, there is the possibility that A and $\sim A$ is true and, though there is no guarantee that it is, the conclusion is true too. Therefore, GTT, quantifying over possibly inconsistent cases, shows that EFQ is invalid.

The same cannot be said for the non-dialetheist paraconsistentist. As they hold that true contradictions are impossible, the precisification of their position by GTT would count EFQ as valid reasoning despite their position's paraconsistency. Beall and Restall (2001, p.4) refer to this as the "Peircean objection", and in their response, they say that the non-dialetheist paraconsistentist could only be led astray by this problem if their conclusion failed to *follow relevantly* from their premises. What this amounts to, argues Read, is the abandonment of truth-preservation as the criterion for validity; now, what is required of validity is not just the preservation of truth but the preservation of relevance also. Thus, in the non-dialetheist paraconsistentist's interpretation of GTT, as ranging over situations, what results is, at best, not truth-preservation but case-preservation.

Nonetheless, putting aside this issue with Beall and Restall's GTT, we now have a sense of how the rivalry between conflicting Systems emerges – i.e., disagreements arise concerning which inferences are valid in preserving truth – while classical consequence accepts EFQ as valid, relevant consequence rejects it. We might now ask: if we accept the premises of an argument and are now considering the conclusion – what logic should we call on to decide whether we accept the conclusion? For Beall and Restall, this rivalry is neutralised by appealing to the consequence relation's intended application.

Beyond the explication of their GTT, they state that classical logic's consequence relation affords various useful applications. Most notably, classical logic is applied in the analysis of (classical) mathematics. It is no coincidence, state Beall and Restall (2006, p.44), that classical predicate logic is well-suited for spelling out the mathematician's sense of what a 'valid argument' is, as this was one of the design criteria in the construction of classical logic. As the validity of mathematical arguments is explained in terms of universality, valid mathematical arguments are those that are true in all mathematical structures. Therefore, Tarskian validity, as described above, appears to model the kind of universality most apt to the classical mathematician's sense of validity.

Likewise, they cite several useful, possible applications for relevant logic. An interesting example is its aptness for modelling fictional discourses which are often inconsistent. Although fiction may hold that both A and $\sim A$ are true, it is usually not the case that everything is therefore true in that story; and so, it seems natural to employ relevant consequence for modelling such discourse rather than forcing classical logic to do that task.

Although Beall and Restall also mention relevant logic's applicability in the explanation of truthmaking, Read (2006, pp.7-8, p.11) argues that Beall and Restall interpret relevant logicians as only being concerned with truth-preservation in arcane circumstances. This is because of how Beall and Restall (2006, pp.50-51) describe relevant logic as dealing with ways in which the world could not be – impossible worlds. According to their account of possible worlds, as being complete and consistent, the *impossibilia* of dialetheism cannot be a part of any world. As such, the cases that relevant logic considers, i.e., situations permitting true contradictions, are parts of impossible worlds.

On this very matter, Beall and Restall (2001, p.10) write: "These situations are inconsistent. They are 'impossible'. Not in the sense that they do not exist (one may well be a realist about these impossible situations) but in the sense that they can never be actualised. They are never part of any possible world." Rightfully, Read sees Beall and Restall's view as incoherent. The dialetheist believes that a situation involving a true contradiction is not impossible; after all, as illustrated above, they hold that the actual world *is* inconsistent.

If such cases could never be actualised, as Beall and Restall believe, it is hard to see why they ever ought to be considered. Yet, such cases must be considered in determining an argument's validity. To say that these cases are impossible, this should mean that there are no such cases; and if they are impossible, then, no matter how arcane, there would be no situation in which they hold.

With reference to Priest (1997, pp.481-482), Read challenges Beall and Restall's understanding of impossible worlds by providing three possible notions of such cases: i) they may be, using Beall and Restall's terminology, "cases" where A and $\sim A$ are both true; ii) they may be cases where classical logic does not hold; or, iii) they may be cases where our preferred logic fails to hold. For the non-dialetheist paraconsistentist, i) is impossible (they deny true contradictions); and it is clear why nobody should think of cases as described in iii). Therefore, not only should any non-classical logician accept that there can be cases according to ii), but also, argues Read, that the *actual* case is one of them.

As for the distinction of whether the cases ascribed to relevant logic exist and whether they can be actualised, Restall (1997, p587) states that a way that the world cannot be, i.e., an impossible world, is a *set* of ways the world can be. This is not realism about impossible situations, argues Read; it is to

say that these impossibilities exist, as sets, but that they are not real as situations. The dialetheist will argue that true contradictions are not an impossibility and that such situations may be real.

While this is the case, Beall and Restall still contend that classical logic and relevant logic are both equally good accounts of logical consequence; and that the question of which logic we ought to employ is simply a matter of purpose and application. Application, therefore, is certainly a crucial element within their pluralism – it determines what the *correct* logic is; however, as Keefe (2013, pp. 1384-1386) points out, incorporating applicability into the theory poses certain issues.

As a logic's application appears to bear import on whether it is among the admissible logics, Keefe asks whether a logic is only admissible when it is applicable. For instance, could an admissible logical consequence relation have *no* useful application? If there were such a logic that had no useful application, it would be hard to see how it could meet the normative constraint; after all, this logic would specify how we may go wrong by invalid argumentation, but if it has no application, then it is never the case that we should avoid going wrong in that way. Or, in other words, since a logic is supposed to guide our reasoning, i.e., it tells us how we should reason, if a logic never applies then there is no "should" in play. For Keefe, this subsequently prompts the question of whether there are correct ways to reason, i.e., use a consequence relation, in different applications or different contexts.

Beall and Restall contend that their pluralism is not a form of relativism. They claim that the different admissible logics capture validity simpliciter; and that given the same arguments, involving the same subject-matter, and taken in the same context, it is more than one logic that adjudicates over whether those arguments are valid. Beall and Restall (2006, p.88) state: "we do not take logical consequence to be relative to languages, communities of inquiry, contexts, or anything else". Stei (2017, pp.4-5), in attempting to capture the essential features of Beall and Restall's pluralism, describes their approach as 'global consequence pluralism', and he takes this to be the distinguishing criterion between pluralism and relativism: they are committed to the applicability of logical consequence in the sense that logical consequence applies under any conditions whatsoever.

Yet, to argue that different types of application would determine whether a logic gives the right verdict about consequences would amount to logical relativism. The right logical consequence relation would be dependent upon, and thus relative to, a certain context. Given that how we ought to reason, i.e., which logic we should use, depends on the context, it is not clear how their position is genuinely a pluralism and not simply relativism about logic.

Thus far we have seen that Beall and Restall's formulation of logical pluralism comes with some problems. The first is that, it is clear neither how precisification secures multiple genuine consequence

relations, nor how these relations are supposed to correspond to a single concept of validity. Then, there is Beall and Restall's treatment of relevant logic, as dealing with non-actualisable impossible worlds. Finally, as demonstrated by Keefe, their appeal to application to settle rivalry appears to undermine the pluralist position itself. If the matter of what is the correct logic is context-dependent, this would mean that their position would ultimately be a form of relativism.

In addition to these unresolved problems for Beall and Restall's theory, multiple forms of what have been dubbed "collapse arguments" pose an even more significant threat to their overall plurality thesis. The first major challenge is from Priest who argues that their pluralism collapses into monism, with classical logic dominating. Read then builds upon Priest's initial challenge to formulate two further collapse arguments. The next section explores these collapse arguments.

2. Priest's Challenge: Three Collapse Arguments

As we have seen, Beall and Restall's argument is that equally legitimate and distinct notions of logical consequence can be obtained by defining validity as truth-preservation over the different cases within the domain being quantified over. By restricting the case to a consistent and complete domain, classical logical consequence results; and as we vary what we take the case to be, different validities arise. They argue, therefore, that there is a plurality of validities; one for each appropriate class of situations – and, each as genuine as the next.

To clarify the situation, Priest asks what is the disagreement between the monist and the pluralist about exactly. The monist believes that there is a core of universally correct inferences and that these can be expanded on if we are reasoning about certain kinds of situations. Whereas, the pluralist believes that different kinds of situations require different validities.

Priest calls Beall and Restall's logical pluralism a duck/rabbit pluralism, as the differences in validity due to variation of the class of situation can be viewed from a pluralist perspective just as much as it can be viewed from a monist perspective. Following Read (2006, p.2), Priest's challenge goes as follows: suppose there really are two equally good accounts of deductive validity, K_1 and K_2 , that β follows from α according to K_1 but not K_2 , and we know that α is true. From the information presented, does the truth of β deductively follow?

Beall and Restall (2006, p.94, p.102) deny that they are pluralists about truth; and, given that K_1 and K_2 , are accounts of validity, and not truth, they would not hold that β is true according to K_1 but not K_2 . So, the question of whether β is true has a determinate answer – truth remains consistent across logics. What this means is that there can be a pluralism about logical consequence, but there

cannot be a pluralism about truth. The question remains: if it follows from K_1 that β is true, but not from K_2 , should we or should we not conclude that β is true?

Priest and Read concur in that the answer is straightforward: K_1 trumps K_2 . K_2 does not tell us that β is false, it just fails to tell us whether it is true; whereas, K_1 tells us what we want to know – β is guaranteed to be true. In this context, if one logic can provide a clear answer while the other logic cannot, the former is not just different but it is also better. Therefore, K_1 and K_2 are not equally good. As we are always free to use the strongest logic, K_1 , Beall and Restall's pluralism collapses into monism; this is the first collapse argument.

Beall and Restall (2006, p.93) reply to Priest's challenge, they suppose that K_1 is classical logic and that K_2 is relevant logic; they reiterate Priest's description of the case and say that we are entitled to infer β from α according to K_1 and that we are not from K_2 ; they do not think that this is surprising, as Priest's argument simply shows us that with the more we know, i.e., the more information that we have, the more we know about what is true. Though, as Read states, this is merely repeating Priest's argument, Beall and Restall do add that their position is not a plurality about what is true in a case but rather it is about a plurality of equally good/correct consequence relations. Though it might be true that there is a plurality of consequence relations, it will always be the strongest consequence relation (classical logic in Beall and Restall's case) that is better than the rest. Hence, duck/rabbit pluralism; and, collapse.

However, Read argues that Priest's challenge raises two deeper problems. Firstly, if an account of validity can answer the crucial question that another account fails to answer, namely, 'what follows from what?', then surely the account that provides the most information regarding whether an argument is valid must be better than the account that fails to do so. Then, secondly, Beall and Restall's logical pluralism would be at risk of collapsing due to inconsistency if there were a third logic, K_3 , that gave a contradictory verdict on an argument's validity.

Supposing again, as Beall and Restall do, that K_1 is classical logic and K_2 is relevant logic; we are told that α is true, that the inference from α to β is classically valid by K_1 , and that this inference is not relevantly valid by K_2 . Is this information sufficient to inform us of whether β is true? Beall and Restall (2000, p.490) claim that it is: they say, "...classical logic *is* logic after all. If the premises of a classically valid argument are true, so is the conclusion". Read takes from this that Beall and Restall believe that β is true, and not relevantly true, but true simpliciter. It is irrelevant therefore, says Read, that β does not follow relevantly from α as classical logic dominates and guarantees the truth of β .

By classical logic then, not only are we entitled to infer that β follows from α , but given that α is true (and that β follows classically from α), we can also infer that β is true; that is, not just classically infer it – if α is true then β is true. This is more than simply providing a clear answer to the question of ‘what follows from what?’ (Priest’s collapse argument); rather, Read is saying that, here, classical logic offers us more information than what relevant logic does regarding the question of ‘what follows from α ?’. The second collapse argument, then, is that the account of validity that gives us the most information concerning ‘what follows from what?’ is, therefore, the best account – and that this will always dominate.

A possible cause of Beall and Restall’s predicament, here, is their neglect to respect the motivations behind relevant logic, i.e., considerations of relevance between the premises of an argument and its conclusion. Read argues that relevant logic actually says more than just that β does not follow from α ; it says that we are not entitled, relevantly, to infer β from α . The relevant logician does not reject some classically valid inferences just out of fancy, but because they think they are wrong. Relevant logic is just as much an account of logical consequence as classical logic is; and as Read (2006, p.3) puts it: “this makes a mockery of relevance considerations”.

Read’s final point, following from Priest’s argument, highlights that there is the possibility that some of Beall and Restall’s supposedly equally good logics could infer contradictory statements from the same consistent premises. Though this is not the case at present, there is no reason why it would not be possible. As we have seen, classical logic, K_1 , dominates K_2 , so there is no disagreement. However, suppose that K_1 disagrees with another logic, K_3 : by K_1 ’s consequence relation, β follows from α , but by K_3 ’s consequence relation $\sim\beta$ follows from α . If α is consistent, that is, there is some world, i.e., this one, in which α is true, should we infer that β is true or that $\sim\beta$ is true?

By Beall and Restall’s account of logical pluralism, classically valid (K_1 -valid) arguments are valid; this means that β is true. Given that K_3 -valid arguments are also valid, β is false. Unless they willingly accept the truth of a contradiction, dialetheism, they would be forced to say that both β and $\sim\beta$ are true (since α is true). In denying the truth of contradictions, they would then be forced to reject one of the logics from their pluralism or else it would lead to logical inconsistency. Beall and Restall (2006, p.118) do reject some intuitionistic theories on because they can be used to prove the negations of classical theorems, they say: “...reject any inference in conflict with classical reasoning. That is the approach we too must take”. This reply, however, effectively enforces the point of Priest’s collapse argument, and, in the end, it seems their pluralism does collapse into classical logic.

Despite Beall and Restall's aim for their pluralism to be inclusive and wide-ranging, it falters on several fronts. It fails to acknowledge the core, fundamental motivations behind non-classical logics – the motivations that prompted them as rivals to classical logic in the first place. While this seems antithetical to Beall and Restall's pluralist agenda, i.e., viewing supposedly equally good consequence relations as 'weaker' if their account of validity is not complete and consistent, the larger issue is the position's collapse into monism.

As we saw above, Stei (2017, p.3) takes Beall and Restall's logical pluralism as an approach that can be described as a 'global consequence pluralism'. He argues four claims serve as hallmarks to this approach and that these distinguish Beall and Restall's pluralism from other formulations of the position. By way of the claims that the approach endorses, he seeks to generalise the collapse arguments that face Beall and Restall's theory. The hallmarks Stei describes are as follows:

- (a) There is more than one correct logical consequence relation within one language.
- (b) Logical consequence is global in scope.
- (c) There is rivalry between different correct consequence relations.
- (d) Logical consequence is normative.

By employing these hallmarks, he demonstrates how it is straightforward to abstract the specifics of Beall and Restall's position in relation to Priest's argument. From (a) we may assume that there are two correct consequence relations $\models_1$ and $\models_2$ such that $\alpha \models_1 \beta$, but $\alpha \not\models_2 \beta$. We have previously established the constraints regarding the logical vocabulary and its meaning in the language in question, therefore, it is the *same* argument forms that are subject to the different verdicts by the resulting logics. As (b) states that both consequence relations are global, this guarantees the scenario in which there will be some argument that is valid according to $\models_1$ but invalid according to $\models_2$. Then, given a subject, *S*, who knows that α is true and also that $\alpha \models_1 \beta$ and $\alpha \not\models_2 \beta$ – this is the situation kind of envisioned in Priest's collapse argument. Owing to (a) and (b), and the applicational overlap between the two logics, rivalry emerges: (c).

Considering, now, the normativity of logical consequence, (d), it will suffice for now to say that it puts certain constraints on reasoning and beliefs. For instance, *S* would *go wrong* if they accepted the premises of a valid argument yet rejected its conclusion. In some application where $\langle L, \models_1 \rangle$ and $\langle L, \models_2 \rangle$ apply and where $\alpha \models_1 \beta$ but $\alpha \not\models_2 \beta$, in rejecting β according to $\langle L, \models_1 \rangle$ the subject would go wrong. Logic $\langle L, \models_2 \rangle$, on the other hand, imposes no normative constraint on α or β here; this is because the argument from α to β is not valid according to $\models_2$. So, ceteris paribus, the only belief state which does not violate logic's normativity is not rejecting β .

Stei's analysis states that Beall and Restall's pluralism is, essentially, the conjunction of the claims (a)-(d); and, that a generalised and structural version of the collapse arguments put against their pluralism is outlined above. Beall and Restall do have several options to avoid their pluralism's collapse, and these options involve amending or rejecting claims (a)-(d); I will consider the most widely discussed – rejecting the normativity of logic (d).

3. Normative and Non-Normative Collapse

As the collapse arguments present a definite challenge for Beall and Restall's logical pluralism, much discussion in contemporary literature has revolved around whether the position can escape them. The rejection of the normativity of logical consequence has been the most widely considered route. Of course, if logic is not normative in the first place, then the very question of whether a subject should reason following one logic or another just does not arise. Though this would constitute a fundamental departure from the well-established understanding of logical consequence, an understanding shared by Beall and Restall, as well as almost all their critics, the thought that logic might not be normative after all has been taken very seriously and has garnered much attention.

The common thought, indeed, throughout its history, has been that logic is normative. What we mean when we say that logic is normative, claims Russell (2017, p373), is that, at a minimum, a logic has consequences for what we ought to do, what we ought to believe, and how we ought to reason. This can be illustrated by several philosophers of logic on the matter:

It is commonly granted that the logical laws are guidelines which thought should follow to arrive at the truth. (Frege, 2013, xv)

...logic is a normative subject: it is supposed to provide an account of correct reasoning. (Priest 1979, p.279)

Logical consequence is normative. In an important sense, if an argument is valid, then you somehow go wrong if you accept the premises but reject the conclusion. (Beall and Restall, 2006, p.18)

Despite the widespread historical agreement that logic must be normative, it is only recently that work has been carried out on how exactly we should spell out the normative role of logic.

For Russell, however, she believes that this agreement is superficial upon reflection; and, that it actually disguises a multiplicity of views. Russell (Blake-Turner and Russell, 2018, p.4860) claims that

there are two ways in which the thought that logic is normative can be summed up: either as what she calls the 'reasoning view' or the 'consequence view'.

The reasoning view holds that logic *is* simply a theory of how we ought to come to believe things and how we ought to reason. In this way, then, logic is normative just as (normative) ethics is normative; akin to how a key characteristic of an ethical theory is that it tells us what we ought to do, a key characteristic of a logic is that it tells us what we ought to believe. If this is the central purpose of logic, it follows that a theory that fails to include such normative claims is not a logic.

However, a logic, such as first-order classical logic, does not contain words like "ought", "believe" and "reason", rather, what logics are concerned with are a set of symbols, interpretations, models, and the logical consequence relation. This is a complication for the view, and if a logic is supposed to tell us what we ought to believe and how we ought to reason, it will need to be accounted for why such concepts are absent from certain logics.

According to the consequence view, on the other hand, regardless of whether logic is about what we ought to believe and how we ought to reason, it has significant consequences for those things independently. For instance, take a situation in which modus ponens is valid; it may well be that if you believe both P and $P \supset Q$, then you *ought* to believe Q . Likewise, if a logic that tells us that any set containing P and $\sim P$ is unsatisfiable, i.e., that it is impossible for them both to be true, it may be that if we believe both P and $\sim P$ then we ought to give up one of these beliefs.

On the consequence view, claims about logical consequence possess normative consequences all on their own. That is, the arguments in question do not contain any normative enthymemes; rather, it is the consequence relation itself that carries with it the normative weight. Since the role of logic is to determine when a conclusion follows from a set of premises, this would mean that logic is fundamentally concerned with normative matters.

The two views are different but compatible. Each view holds that the job of a logic is to provide us with a certain account: the reasoning view, an account of good reasoning; and the consequence view, an account of logical consequence. Blake-Turner and Russell call both views "logical normativism" and believe that neither is true; they argue that logic is not normative.

They claim that if logic was not normative, it would remain obvious that a rational subject makes some kind of mistake when they accept all the premises of an argument, that they know to be valid, yet reject its conclusion. However, argue Blake-Turner and Russell, it is not obvious that the mistake arises from any normative demands inherent to logic. This situation would be similar to a rational subject with a sufficient understanding of arithmetic, accepting that their shopping receipt correctly

lists the prices of the items bought at £2 and £3, but rejecting that their shopping totals to £5; they make a mistake, but it would seem rash to conclude that arithmetic is inherently normative.

Russell (2017, p.380) believes that logic is ‘normatively entangled’ in a very weak sense: logic has normative consequences, but only in combination with other normative assumptions that are not inherent to logic itself. As Stei (2019, p.10) puts her position, logic is not normative in and of itself, but rather normative consequences result from logic plus X , where X is an independent normative principle. This means that an argument such as $\Gamma \models$ would be ‘normatively inert’; the consequence relation only gives us *descriptive* information that not every member of Γ is true.⁹ When this is combined with a normative principle, however, such as (N) – ‘you ought not to accept things as true if they are not true’ – it is then possible to derive the normative conclusion that we ought not to accept every member of Γ as true.

Endorsing such a principle does become a little more complicated when we consider arguments such as $P \vee Q, \sim P \models Q$; this is because of the conditional with (N) that, if all members of $\{P \vee Q, \sim P\}$ are true, then Q is true – however, this can be rephrased. A suitable rephrasing could be: at least one member of $\{P \vee Q, \sim P, \sim Q\}$ is not true.

If we recall what Beall and Restall (2006, p.16) say regarding normativity, they state that “if an argument is valid, then you somehow go wrong if you accept the premises but reject the conclusion”. Though there are several ways to interpret this as a normative principle, Caret (2017, p.748) and Stei (2019, p.3) agree that it is best read following the ‘wide scope ought’ principle – (wo): if $\Gamma \models \phi$, then for all subjects σ : σ ought to see it that σ does not both accept all sentence in Γ and reject ϕ .

Stei reformulates Preist’s collapse argument to accommodate both normative principles. Suppose that there is a situation, s , about which a subject, σ , is reasoning; s is in two different classes of situation, K_1 and K_2 . There is an argument from Γ to ϕ that is valid in K_1 but not in K_2 , and σ knows that all the statements in Γ hold in s . The question, as it was before, is should σ accept ϕ or not.

Well, L_1 and L_2 are two notions of validity appropriate for K_1 and K_2 ; L_1 tells us that ϕ is true, its arguments are truth-preserving and we know that all the statements of Γ are true. L_2 , on the other hand, does not tell us that ϕ is false, it just fails to tell us whether ϕ is true. In situation s , therefore, L_1 and L_2 are not equally good – L_1 establishes that ϕ is true. Should σ now accept that ϕ is true? Following Beall and Restall’s sense of normativity, (wo), L_1 normatively constrains our beliefs such that we should seek to not both accept Γ and reject ϕ . This contrasts with L_2 , which is normatively silent; by L_2 the

⁹ This argument, $\Gamma \models$, has no normative consequences. See Russell (2017, pp.382-385) for her ‘descriptivist’ account of logical normativity; see Blake-Turner and Russell (2018, p.4867) for their account of entailment.

argument is not valid so the antecedent condition of (wo) is not met. Accordingly, we would only violate Beall and Restall's sense of normativity if by L_1 we accept Γ and reject ϕ ; normatively, therefore, we are obligated to either accept ϕ , collapsing the position into monism, or suspend judgement.

On Russell's proposal, however, logic is not itself normative. This means that the logics only provide the descriptive information that ϕ follows from Γ according to L_1 but not to L_2 . Further, although L_1 is not normative, it is still an admissible instance of GTT; this means that any argument that is valid by L_1 preserves truth, and so we also get the descriptive information that ϕ is true.

This is what is unique about Russell's view: the normative consequences are the result of generalised principles, such as (N), not specific to logic. Though this is the case, Stei argues that this is not enough to avoid the normativity objections that trigger the collapse arguments facing Beall and Restall's logical pluralism. Neither does it change the fact that L_1 would still trump L_2 ; regardless of whether logic is itself normative, it still provides us with more information.

In terms of Russell's (N), we can apply it to the reformulated Priest argument by understanding it as excluding the situation in which σ holds that both all the sentences of Γ and $\sim\phi$ are true. I.e., it cannot be the case that all the statements in $\{\gamma_1, \dots, \gamma_n, \sim\phi\}$ are true if the argument in question is valid by some admissible logic. When we apply this to situation s , the very same options that we had available to us when considering (wo) result again. Given that σ ought not to accept all statements in $\{\gamma_1, \dots, \gamma_n, \sim\phi\}$, and that σ accepts all statements in Γ , if σ conforms to Russell's (N) and L_1 , σ ought not to accept $\sim\phi$. From the case as it is described, L_2 is normatively silent, and it is only L_1 that places a constraint on the argument; this means that σ should either accept ϕ or suspend judgment on ϕ .

Stei argues that this is sufficient to show that the same issue facing Beall and Restall's pluralism, regarding collapse, reemerges even if a non-normative formulation of their position is constructed. If L_1 answers the question of whether a given argument is valid while L_2 fails to do so, whether logic is normative or not, L_1 will continue to persist as the dominant logic.

Though the pluralist hopes to endorse several distinct consequence relations, in cases such as that presented by Priest, there will always be a single logic that dominates – the one that provides the most information regarding an argument's validity – thus collapsing the position into monism.

4. Conclusion

Beall and Restall's logical pluralism stands as a notable attempt to provide a pluralistic account of logical consequence. In its attempt to accommodate several logics and resolve the rivalry at the level of application, much fruitful discussion on the fundamental aspects of logical consequence has

emerged. For instance, the matter of whether normativity is a fundamental feature of logical consequence continues to be debated and warrants further exploration.

Nevertheless, Beall and Restall's logical pluralism is unsuccessful. There are issues concerning several aspects of their approach. It is unclear how, and whether, the method of precisification establishes a multiplicity of logical consequence relations. Further, the matter of supposed/necessary application only complicates matters; ultimately, it seems that their position collapses into either logical monism, with classical logic dominating, or a form of logical relativism.

Further, Beall and Restall's constraints concerning possible worlds render the dialetheist's relevant logic as exclusively dealing with the arcane. Despite the dialetheist's belief in true contradictions as a phenomenon of the actual world, Beall and Restall deny the very possibility and see such situations as impossibilia. Thus, in favouring the classical sense of possibility, they fail to truly recognise relevant logic.

Finally, as demonstrated by Priest, Read and Stei, the position inevitably collapses. Given a conflict regarding an argument's validity, with one system providing an answer whilst another fails to do so, the former will always be the better logic. In Beall and Restall's case, this is classical logic. This issue is not resolved by denying the normativity of logical consequence either, as one logic that does provide an answer regarding validity will always remain the better logic; thus, collapsing into monism.

Reflective Comment

If you have your topic decided upon, and you're not too sure where to start, it doesn't hurt to start writing about the absolute essentials – the subject 101. It can really help you to form a clear idea of the essential concepts and thoroughly understand the key terms from the start. Crucially, however, don't continue to *solely* do this into the second semester...

Also, your dissertation supervisor is a repository of expert-level knowledge and a source of invaluable feedback. They are also human (as of 2025) and will be happy to simply see you, regardless of whether you have done what you said you would do.

I'd like to thank Dr Stephen McLeod for the guidance provided throughout my research project, in addition to convening and teaching the PHIL207 Logic module – without which I'd likely not have had the confidence to pursue either my choice of topic for this dissertation nor my interest in logic.

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Afterword by Dr. Rachael Wiseman

"Philosophy, in fact, is not just one specialized subject among many, something which you only need to study if you mean to do research on it. Instead, it is something we are all doing all the time, a continuous, necessary background activity which is likely to go badly if we don't attend to it. In this way, it is perhaps more like driving a car or using money than it is like nuclear physics. And perhaps it is more like music than it is like any of these things, because its effect is primarily on our imagination. It is a potent background; it profoundly shapes our life."

- Mary Midgley, What is Philosophy For?

As always it is a great privilege to work with final year students on their dissertations. The creativity, ambition and intellectual rigour of their work never fails to amaze me. Reading this year's submissions, I am reminded of Mary Midgley's description of philosophy as an imaginative activity that is necessary for human life. For the class of 2024-25, the future world that will be theirs is profoundly uncertain and perilous. They will need the sorts of intelligence that cannot be artificially mimicked – involving imagination, creativity and courage – to inhabit and change it. Reading their work gives one hope. Among this collection are some truly outstanding dissertations. And although not every dissertation can be awarded a first-class mark, in every single one there are ideas or arguments that shows first-class philosophical insight and achievement.

Thank you to everyone who submitting their work for this anthology. By doing so, you give a gift of experience and inspiration to next year's dissertation students. Thank you also to Joseph Higgitt and Robbie Short, who have worked hard and selflessly as editors to produce a professional publication to showcase their peers' work.

Writing a dissertation is a leap in the dark but, as this collection testifies, the students who do so learn a tremendous amount – not just, as one would expect, about the philosophical topic on which they write, but also about their own intellectual and emotional abilities. Each dissertation produced is a triumph of self-motivation, organisation and resilience over procrastination, self-doubt, and panic. Congratulations to all of you – I hope the experience will stand you in good stead for whatever you go on to do next.

- **Dr. Rachael Wiseman, Dissertation Module Lead**



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Completed Dissertations 2024/2025

Congratulations to all undergraduate philosophy students this academic year. The following is a list of every student who completed their dissertation, the name of their project, and organised by supervisor.

Supervised by Dr. Christopher Bartley

Evan Askew

An Assessment of Divine Command Theory

Ellie Searle

Does Plato Have a Concept of Free Will?

Ella Shani

The Incoherence of Perfection: God's Attributes in the Context of Evil and Eternal Punishment

Lucie Thatcher

Analysing Nietzsche's Approach to Morality and Suffering

Supervised by Dr. Tom Bunyard

Jake Crapper

Putting an End to Populism: A Philosophical Assessment of the Political Failings of Neo-Liberal Democracy

Dan Horton

Alienation and the Spectacle in Marx and Debord

Harriet Schofield

Avatars and Acts: Judith Butler, Gender Performativity, and Roleplaying Video Games

Supervised by Dr. Katherine Furman

Dan Crick

Theoretical Justifications for Restricting Elements of Free Speech

Cara Hoarty

An Ethical Case for Conscientious Objection in Healthcare

Supervised by Prof. Richard Gaskin

Seb Finch

Indistinguishability: Can Kataleptic Impressions Truly Serve as the Stoic Criterion of Truth?

Grace Flynn

A Philosophical Exploration into Moral Responsibility: Are Our Actions Truly Free or Are They Ultimately Determined by Childhood Experiences and External Factors?

Joseph Higgitt

Language and Liberty: A Linguistic Approach to Moral Realism

Toby Doniach Hughes

How Our Beloved Game Taken: An Exploration of Marx in the English Premier League

Rufus Self

How Modern Algorithms Silently Threaten Our Epistemic Agency

Supervised by Dr. Nikos Gkogkas

Owen Evans

The Waiter is an Existentialist Too: A Critique on Jean Paul Sartre's Treatment of the Waiter

Rachael Mooney

Natural or Unnatural? Rethinking Human Enhancement Through the Lens of Evolution

Supervised by Prof. Simon Hailwood

Christy Gifford

Finding Justice in the Wild – Then and Now

Sara Kristiansen

The Ethical Problem of Justifying the Government Pension Fund Global

Anna Nowak

Flourishing by Design: Can Human Enhancement Coexist with Virtue Ethics?

Maisie Rathmell

Who Bears the Burden? Examining Moral Responsibilities of Governments, Individuals, and Corporations in the Age of Climate Change

Leshay Richards

Liberal Theories of Free Speech and Their Limits in Online Discourse

Freddie Saunders

Philosophical Approaches to Humanely Integrating Artificial Intelligence in the Sociopolitical Landscape

Supervised by Prof. Michael Hauskeller

Patrick Hill

More Than Just a Game: An Investigation into How and Why Football Provides Meaning in Life

Alicia Stapledon

Technology vs Humanity: Who Holds the Power?

Supervised by Dr. J'Annine Jobling

Larley Staton

A Discussion of the Ways in Which Gendered Connotations Surrounding Women's Sexual Morality Affects the Material Conditions and Criminalisation of Direct Sex Workers

Mollie McCarthy

The Extent to Which Western Feminism has Failed to Represent the Growing Concerns of Global Women

Rohan Benham

Do Jean-Paul Sartre and Simone de Beauvoir Necessitate Solidarity?

Supervised by Dr. Stephen McLeod

Jack Murphy

Can Just War Theory Constrain Military Surveillance in Modern Conflict?

Robbie Short

Does Logical Pluralism Provide a Successful Account of Logical Consequence?

Supervised by Dr. Vid Simonti

Maisie Jefferson

The Zombie Scrolling Game: How Can We Use Game Theory to Explain Social Media's Algorithmically Caused Harms?

Emily Mohammed

The Power of Play: How Playfully Interacting with Art Can Inspire Political Revolution

Ella Smyth

The Propaganda of Appearance: A Philosophical Inquiry into Beauty Ideals Using the Work of Jason Stanley and Sheryl Tuttle Ross

Supervised by Dr. Tom Whyman

Charlotte Moran-Hollis

Digital Pornography, Incel culture and the 'Right to Sex': A Philosophical Exploration of 'Compulsory Sexualisation'

Katie Forward

Why We Need Forest Schools: A Philosophical Exploration

Tom Stein

The Mind According to Marx: An Anti-Theoretical Approach to Theory of Mind

Supervised by Dr. Rachael Wiseman

Lewis Critchley-Hope

The Pragmatics of Small Talk: A Philosophical Enquiry Into What it Means When We Talk Small

Connie Dredge

To Name or Not to Name: The Ethics of Anonymity and the Feminist Fight Against Herasure

Roisin Hynes

Sticks and Stones May Break my Bones but Words can Fuel Genocide. Beyond dehumanisation: An inferentialist response to Tirrell's Genocidal Language Games

Lily Smith

Language as a Mechanism of Social Regulation: A Philosophical Exploration into Gendered Political Discourse