MUDD CENTER
for ETHICS

The Mudd Journal of Ethics Editing Team

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Alex Farley '19 is a senior from Houston, Texas. He is pursuing a double major in Philosophy and Economics. Alex is a member of University Singers, Washington and Lee's premier choral ensemble, and is the captain of the Ethics Bowl team. He wrote his Philosophy honors thesis on the role of empathy in moral decision making. After graduation, Alex will be working as a consultant at A.T. Kearney in Washington, D.C.

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Sesha Carrier '19 is a junior Philosophy major and Film and Visual Studies minor from Oregon. This was her first year volunteering her services as an editor for the Mudd Journal of Ethics, but she has plenty of experience curating academic journals as the editor-in-chief of The Stone, Washington and Lee's interdisciplinary academic journal. Bearing a strong passion for healing and caregiving, she intends to pursue a Master's Degree in Psychotherapy pending her graduation from Washington and Lee.

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Chad Thomas '21 is a sophomore from Wiesbaden, Germany majoring in Philosophy and Mathematics. He is the Class of 2021 Representative to the Executive Committee and serves as Chair of the Traveller safe-ride Dispatch program. Last year, he spent a month abroad directing and producing a documentary on modern-day slavery in Ghana, and he will continue his work in media production this summer at the US Department of State. After graduation, Chad hopes to continue working for the Department of State as a Foreign Service Officer.

About the Roger Mudd Center for Ethics

The Roger Mudd Center of Ethics was established in 2010 through a gift to the University from award-winning journalist Roger Mudd. When he made his gift, Mudd said, "Given the state of ethics in our current culture, this seems a fitting time to endow a center for the study of ethics, and my university is its fitting home."

Today, the Mudd Center furthers that study of ethics by organizing rigorous, interdisciplinary programming. In addition to welcoming distinguished lecturers throughout the year to speak on ethical issues, the Mudd Center also sponsors and organizes ethics-based conferences, professional ethics institutes, and other public events that further discussion and thought about ethics among students, faculty, and staff at Washington and Lee University and beyond.

About Roger Mudd

Roger Mudd graduated from Washington and Lee University with a degree in History in 1950. Mudd's distinguished career in television journalism includes positions at CBS, NBC, PBS, and the History Channel. He has won five Emmy Awards, two George Foster Peabody Awards, and the Joan S. Barone Award for Distinguished Washington Reporting. Mudd serves on the board of the Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges (VFIC) and helped establish the VFIC Ethics Bowl, an annual competition in which teams from Virginia's private colleges and universities debate ethical issues. He is also a member of the advisory committee for Washington and Lee's department of Journalism and Mass Communications and an honored benefactor of Washington and Lee.

Letter from the Editor

On March 9, 2019, five undergraduate students traveled to Washington and Lee University to deliver papers on a wide variety of ethical issues, ranging from how online anonymity changes our view of what actions are permissible to how queer feminists should adopt Queer Identity Power over Straight Identity Power.

By all accounts, the fourth annual Mudd Undergraduate Conference in Ethics was a tremendous success. The papers presented and the ethical ideas contained within these papers were of excellent academic quality. Furthermore, and perhaps most importantly, the discussion generated from each paper was insightful and thought provoking, impacting both the speakers and the audience members in attendance. I firmly believe that philosophy is not a field of study meant for solitary engagement, but rather a field whose potential is only fully realized when individuals thoughtfully connect with one another. As such, it is accurate to say that at this conference, robust philosophizing occurred.

The fourth annual publication of The Mudd Journal represents our attempt to bring this act of philosophizing to our readers and allow for the continuation of these important discussions among our readers. While covering a wide-array of topics, these papers all seek to do the same thing: make the reader pause, think, and reflect. Essays on online anonymity and moral responsibility call us to reflect and think critically about the way in which we interact with those around us. Essays on identity power and microaggressions force us to question our current hierarchical structures of power within society and what our role is in maintaining these structures. Finally, essays on informed consent and health disparities make us reflect on what we consider equitable treatment of our fellow citizens and disadvantaged groups to be. We are eager to publish all of these excellent works in our journal.

The Mudd Journal of Ethics is a product of extraordinary effort on behalf of numerous individuals whom I would be remiss not to thank. Debra Frein of the Mudd Center helped make our conference possible and has been just as valuable to the publication of this journal. Mary Woodson and Denise Watts of the Publications office at Washington and Lee have both been essential in our effort to create an attractive journal that we are proud to publish. As well, I am incredibly thankful for the editors of the journal who read each of the paper submissions, provided thoughtful feedback, and proposed useful edits and alterations. I want to thank each of them: Parker Robertson, Clare Perry, Jake Sirota, Brittany Smith, Allan Blenman, Allie Rutledge, Sesha Carrier, Stanton Geyer, Sierra Terrana, Chad Thomas, and Kushali Kumar. Without all of these individuals this journal would not have been possible.

Finally, I would like to thank Professor Brian Murchison, Director of the Mudd Center for Ethics, who really made the fourth volume of this journal possible. His unending support, guiding hand, and enthusiastic commitment made both the hosting of the conference and publishing of this journal possible. I am incredibly thankful for Professor Murchison's guidance and profound wisdom.

I hope that the reader will enjoy this excellent collection of ethics-based scholarship from undergraduate philosophers across the country. Take your time as you read; pause, think, and reflect. Each paper's ideas are important, and we are honored to present them here, in this fourth volume of The Mudd Journal.

Sincerely,

Alex Farley '19
Editor-in-Chief

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Straight Identity Power

Jake Beardsley, College of William and Mary

Abstract: By adapting Miranda Fricker's concept of identity power, I develop the concept of Straight Identity Power, which is available to persons who are perceived as heterosexual and cisgender. Although it is possible for queer and feminist activists to use Straight Identity Power to further some political ends, doing so is ultimately detrimental, as it necessarily reinforces heterosexist and patriarchal mores. Queer feminists should instead challenge core heterosexist ideals holistically, by employing Queer Identity Power.

In her book, *Epistemic Injustice,* Miranda Fricker defines *identity power* as a "form of social power" which requires "imaginative social co-ordination" relating to social identity.[1] Using a modified version of this concept, I will propose the concept of Straight Identity Power (SIP), or identity power which is available to certain people because of the perception that they are heterosexual and cisgender. I will demonstrate that access to SIP[2] is contingent not on a stable sexual or gender identity, but on a person's ability to *perform* cisheterosexuality in a given context. Although cautiously relying on SIP may aid some queer or feminist activists in achieving their most immediate political goals, doing so is necessarily detrimental to the advancement of gender equality. To oppose heteropatriarchy successfully, activists must target heteropatriarchal mores without relying on SIP.

Part I. Terms

SIP is social power which is available to a person because of the perception that they are heterosexual and cisgender. Rather than conferring any particular goods onto those who possess it, SIP grants a limited range of power to enforce cisheterosexual mores, and also to improve one's own standing within a heterosexist framework. The more a person is perceived as straight, the more power they have to decide which behaviors are compatible with attaining SIP, and in what ways society should punish aberrant behavior. Excluded from the definition of SIP are any *positive* applications of straight identity. If a straight person defends queer people from their position of relative safety, it's more helpful to describe this as an extension of straight *privilege,* and to reserve the term SIP for nefarious exercises of the same. Innocuous expressions of heterosexuality (e.g. holding hands with one's partner in public) should likewise not be regarded as exercises of SIP.

SIP is neither synonymous with nor inherent to heterosexuality. SIP may be completely unavailable to heterosexuals who are read as queer (typically, straight trans people who don't "pass" as cis),[3] and it may be available to non-heterosexual

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[1] Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice,* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2011), 4.

[2] "Sip."

[3] "Pass" is in quotes because it's a flawed term which we should ultimately phase out.

people in certain contexts. It's at least theoretically possible for a "perfectly gendered"[4] cisheterosexual person to completely abstain from exercising SIP, although this would be difficult, since they may exercise power over queer people unintentionally, through their presentation alone.[5] It is both possible and necessary for heterosexuals to reject SIP, and understanding SIP as separate from heterosexuality itself is useful toward this end. Additionally, *heterosexism* and *heterosexist ideology* will refer interchangeably to cultural beliefs and practices which privilege cisheterosexuals over others.

I will refer to certain behaviors as having a masculine, feminine, heterosexual, or queer "valence," meaning that these behaviors increase the probability that someone will be perceived as a man, a woman, a straight person, etc. Wearing lipstick has a feminine valence; having a beard has a masculine valence; wearing lipstick while having a beard has a queer valence, and so on. I will say that a person "performs" (e.g.) masculinity to the extent that they have attributes or engage in behaviors that have a positive valence toward masculinity, and refrain from activities which have a negative valence toward masculinity.[6] The boundaries of heterosexual expression are ever-changing and historically contingent; as of now, in the United States, wearing a purse has a queer valence for men, but if the perception of purses changed, so that a large majority of nonqueer men started wearing them, this would cease to be true.

For the purposes of this paper, *performance* refers not only to deliberately chosen actions, but also to some involuntary features which affect how a person is perceived, such as their voice and height. We will consider the nature and formation of performance in more depth in the next section.

Part II. Straight Power and Performance

Heterosexist ideology does not pass judgment on people's innate experiences of sexuality and gender, but is rather concerned with the behavior that results from these experiences. Although cisheterosexual performance may be detrimental to queer people's mental health, it is, in some sense, broadly accessible; if a pansexual trans woman lives like a straight cis man, she hasn't broken any rules which would cause society to punish her. Although heterosexist ideology targets people for abuse on the basis of innate properties which have a queer valence, the mechanism by which it does this is punishing *performance* toward which such people are inclined.

Since it is rooted in performance (as I've defined the term), rather than in innate characteristics, SIP is not limited to straight people, nor are its victims universally queer. Queer people who are capable of performing heterosexuality may have access to many of the same privileges and powers as actual straight people, and nonqueer people

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[4] This is Kate Bornstein's term for a person with max privilege relating to their gender. Kate Bornstein, *My Gender Workbook,* (New York, Routledge, 2013).

[5] For instance, a gay man might feel uncomfortable revealing his sexual orientation to another man who seems identifiably heterosexual, even if the seemingly straight man would never intend to silence him, and is morally blameless. This concept of "passive" exercises of power also comes from Fricker. Miranda Fricker, *Epistemic Injustice,* 9.

[6] This will serve us for the narrow purposes of this discussion; in general, we need not concede that, say, a feminine man is performing masculinity *to a lesser extent* than a masculine man.

who are perceived as queer, or who have attributes which are understood as having a queer valence, may suffer because of homophobia and transphobia. If several middle school boys ridicule a peer because his voice is at a high pitch, we don't need to know their sexual orientations to understand that the power they hold over him derives from normative ideas about sexuality and gender. A group of people, unified by an attribute with a heterosexual valence (deep voices), targets someone specifically because he has an attribute with a queer valence (high voice), and in this way the bullies can align themselves with heterosexist ideology regardless of their actual sexual orientations. Heterosexist ideology motivates people to enforce heterosexist norms by incentivizing straight performance; in our example, the bullies might be motivated to engage in homophobic cruelty (an activity with a powerful heterosexual valence) to feel powerful, to convince others that they are powerful, or to avoid being perceived as queer themselves. Heterosexist ideology motivates people to perpetuate itself by promising safety from the abuse that heterosexism, itself, inspires.

The average person understands heterosexuality, masculinity, and femininity as having *gradations rooted in performance,* where one's performance determines the degree to which they function as a woman or man.[7] On this view, some heterosexuals are more heterosexual, some men more male, some women more female than others, based on their conformity with gender stereotypes and ideals. The average person also understands the highest gradations, those men and women who most perfectly embody heterosexist ideals, as having the most value, and may consider as personal failings traits which hold someone back from these ideals. A man might be concerned that his new backpack looks like a purse; that people will think he's dating his male friend; that getting a vasectomy will diminish his sexual potency, etc. A woman might feel distressed about her height or the size of her hands, if she fears these will cause her to be perceived as masculine. If someone says an experience made him feel like "less of a man," we understand his meaning; the transitive verb emasculate even allows us to communicate the idea of one person *forcing* this feeling onto another, although there is no common English-language equivalent for women. The extreme prevalence of this mindset supports my claim that people commonly understand gender as having better and worse gradations, and that heterosexual performance yields rewards on a sliding scale. To the extent that these rewards include power over others, it is useful to conceive of this as SIP.

One component of SIP is the ability to define the limits of heterosexual performance within a community. Suppose there is a men's football team whose members generally agree that they should exclude gay men; theoretically, no gay man is welcome in the group, regardless of his behavior. One day, their quarterback comes out as gay, and the rule shifts to accommodate him. He is physically powerful, he has a deep voice, and he has no difficulty socializing with his straight male teammates; he has performed heterosexuality perfectly in every way except one, and this grants him the limited power to make room for himself in a homophobic space. His teammates compare him favorably to effeminate gay men, and he agrees, saying things like, "Guys like that make the rest of us look bad." Because the quarterback performs heterosexuality well, he has some authority to determine which behaviors are acceptable, and which are worthy of ridicule. Since his

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[7] It should be clear that this is not really similar to, say, queer feminist models which understand gender as performative.

acceptance hinges on the distinction between masculine and effeminate gay men, he has a strong incentive to use his power to perpetuate heterosexist ideals.[8]

SIP shapes society at the highest level, but there are limitations on its power. In the final sections, we'll consider these limitations, as well as the surpassing might of Queer Identity Power.

Part III. The Impotence of Straight Identity Power

SIP allows some people to exert tremendous power over others; for the individual struggling to survive under these conditions, SIP is terrifying and great. Despite this, there is an important sense in which SIP is impotent, for although it motivates a broad range of actions, SIP cannot oppose heterosexist mores *in principle.* On the contrary, attempts to seize power through heterosexual performance will necessarily reinforce the central concepts of heterosexism, and will thus inevitably harm some of the people to whom they are most attractive.

Recall the quarterback, whose SIP allowed him to secure a measure of acceptance in a group of homophobic straight men. Although he successfully changed the outer limits of acceptable behavior, he didn't change the underlying ideology, which privileges "straight" behaviors over queer ones. In making room for himself, he supports an ideology that is not only cruel to others, but destructive to him personally, as it forces him to concede, indirectly, that he is lesser. In addition to this spiritual harm, he sets himself at an uneasy peace with his community; the tools that others might use to subjugate him are still available, even if straight people choose not to use them against him for the time being. By supporting homophobic ridicule when it is directed at other people, he exposes himself to risk, even though he seems to be accruing power in the short term.

There are countless similar examples in discussions of social justice. Cis women exclude trans women from feminist circles out of ostensible concern that they will threaten the movement's gains; straight-passing gay people distance themselves from people with queer gender expression; cis-passing trans people may be cruel to trans people who do not appear to be cisgender, or who don't seek surgery and hormones as a part of their transition. All of these strategies, adopted in the hopes of securing acceptance for one oppressed group at the expense of others, are noxious even to their own ends, because their meager power lies in the strength of the enemies' tools.

Transphobic and homophobic feminism is doomed to failure because it cannot sufficiently undermine the conceptual basis of patriarchy. By endorsing homophobia and transphobia, queer-exclusionary feminism concedes several claims that are noxious to its fundamental aims, as it affirms that one's gender should rigidly define the course of their life, that it is reasonable to enforce conformity with gender roles, and that a person's happiness and well-being are less important than the role assigned to them because of their (perceived) gender. Anti-queer feminism is thus not merely hypocritical, but self-defeating, and it will thus inevitably fail to liberate even cisheterosexual women from the evils of patriarchy. Although queer-exclusionary feminism may make substantial political gains, there is an inherent limit to what it can accomplish, because it cannot dismantle the

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[8] If we instead imagine that he uses his power for good, e.g. to defend effeminate gay men, we could call this an exercise of *straight-passing privilege,* rather than SIP.

tools which men use to attack women's rights. Queer activists who seek to gain acceptance for some queer people at the expense of others face a nearly identical problem. Any ideology that seeks to end homophobia, transphobia, or misogyny must oppose all three, or it is doomed to fail. In the next section, I'll explain the concept of Queer Identity Power, which lays a sustainable path to achieve justice in all three of these spheres.

Part IV. Queer Identity Power

Queer Identity Power (QIP) is available to anyone who functions as a queer person in a given context. Although it does not confer power on individual people in the way that SIP does, QIP[9] enables actors to deal harm to heteropatriarchal concepts of gender, and as such is essential to efforts to dismantle homophobia, transphobia, and misogyny.

Like SIP, QIP may be available to both queer and nonqueer people. While SIP is available to those who are able to perform heterosexuality in at least some contexts, QIP is available to those who *sincerely desire to transgress gender norms.* This distinction results from a fundamental difference between heterosexist ideology and queer feminism: Whereas the former is concerned only with behavior, and has no regard for the subjective experience of agents, queer feminism values the well-being of subjects intrinsically. On a heterosexist worldview, there's no meaningful difference between a contented heterosexual housewife and a miserable asexual aromantic woman who has been forced into marriage with a man, so long as they perform the same social function. Conversely, a queer feminist worldview should only value acts of transgression which actually improve the transgressor's welfare along some dimension of wellness.

Whereas SIP has gradations rooted in performance, QIP has gradations rooted in desire. The quarterback may access QIP to the extent that he has the transgressive desire to have sex (etc.) with other men, but he lacks the comparatively extensive QIP available to, say, a genderfluid person whose desires constantly motivate them to transgress various gender norms, even in public places.

A longer metaphysical treatment would be necessary to fully explicate the nature of QIP; this sketch should suffice, however, to demonstrate that such a concept is capable of unifying various social powers which are available to many queer people. In the remainder of this section, I will briefly enumerate three powers (out of many) which fall under this label.

People with QIP have the power to create useful discomfort relating to gender mores. When a male drag queen performs at a Pride event, the transgression isn't in what she's doing, but in *the fact that she enjoys it.* The act is able to advance gender equality in part because the performer is able to demonstrate that crossdressing makes her happy, when it should theoretically make her unhappy. By contrast, if another man wore the same outfit in a transphobic comedy film, his action would lack this power to challenge social expectations by producing discomfort, since viewers would know that the act of wearing the dress does not reflect his innate desires.

Persons with QIP are also able to offer valuable insights based on their personal experiences. The existence of nonbinary people tells us more about the nature of gender than philosophy by cisgender feminists ever could; the experiences of transgender people

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[9] "Kip."

in transition provide concrete foundations for conversations about the relationship between sex characteristics, gender identity, and social privilege that would otherwise be relegated to thought experiments. Queer experiences of desire pose an empirical threat to dominant conceptions of gender and sex, and acting on these desires allows queer people to threaten every axis of gender-based oppression at once.

Lastly, people with QIP have the power to expand social conceptions of gender by merely living, and by modeling successful lives within their marginalized identities. This option is not available to cisheterosexual allies, since it, too, must result from an innate personal desire.

Conclusion

Straight Identity Power is a capacity that is available to persons to the extent that they are perceived as straight. Although it grants such people the ability to use existing social institutions to control others, it does not empower them to effect more than surface-level social change. Regardless of its immediate effects, SIP necessarily reinforces heteropatriarchal ideals, and so cannot be an effective tool in advancing justice relating to gender.

Queer Identity Power grants subversive power to persons who fill the role of a queer person in a particular context. Although it grants any particular person less control over their immediate surroundings than does Straight Identity Power, it grants queer people more power to fundamentally change society. To produce the greatest good and the least harm, queer and feminist activists should seek to maximize their use of Queer Identity Power, and to minimize their reliance on Straight Identity Power.

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Being Online: Relationships of Anonymity and Recognition

Ben Fleenor, Washington and Lee University

Abstract: Is there something inherent in the structure of our online interactions that stifles interpersonal respect and ferments unethical behavior? This paper uses Jean-Paul Sartre's phenomenological ontology to explore the prospects and pratfalls of mutually respectful relationships in the internet age. With a focus on ethical *experiences* rather than *rationales,* I argue that Sartre's account of freedom, facticity, and personal identity provides compelling reasons to believe that ethical engagement is premised upon relationships of mutual recognition. When I meet the Other in person, her freedom and its constitutive role in forming my identity is immediately manifest in her gaze and my reaction to it—her status as a subject on par with myself is difficult, though not impossible, to deny. However, anonymous online interactions shield me from the Other's gaze and make her moral personhood all too easy to ignore. I analyze several instances of this phenomena of online moral insensitivity and explain why it is that ethical considerations affect us more powerfully when we are confronted with a human face rather than a screen.

Browsing the internet can be an experience akin to exploring an alternative ethical universe. Basic norms seem to lose their force or disappear entirely: civility declines, hate speech proliferates, and what would be theft in the "real" world becomes casual piracy. "You wouldn't download a car," asserted one anti-piracy campaign from the early days of the internet. I am not so sure. Anyone who has spent substantial time online has surely realized that the anonymity afforded by the internet "seem[s] to encourage a kind of frenzied abandonment of social norms, or, in the very least, a decline in civility."[1] I will be arguing that this phenomena stems largely from the anonymity that internet users enjoy, but not simply because this anonymity provides cover from prosecution and retribution. Regardless of whether we fear punishment or retaliation for traditionally immoral actions, these actions strike us as less morally objectionable when performed online, where veils of anonymity allow us to disassociate our actions from our "real-world" selves.

In his ontological treatise, *Being and Nothingness,* John-Paul Sartre explains that it is our susceptibility to the gaze of the Other that enables us to experience proto-evaluative attitudes such as shame and pride. If I think that I am alone, I can sing without any degree of self-consciousness: "My consciousness sticks to my acts, it is my acts".[2] If I stop to critique my vocalizations, it is an act of self-surpassing; I grow by putting my past mistakes behind me. But the moment I begin to suspect that someone else hears me, my excellent pitch becomes a point of pride, my obscene lyrics are revealed as shameful. Criticism, real or imagined, sticks to me and defines me. No longer can I freely transcend

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[1] Richard Boyd and Laura K. Field, "Blind Injustice: Theorizing Anonymity and Accountability in Modern Democracies," *Polity* 48, no. 3 (2016), 342.

[2] Jean-Paul Sartre, *Being and Nothingness: An Essay on Phenomenological Ontology,* trans. Hazel Barnes (New York: Washington Square Press, 1953), 348.

my being, because at any given moment I exist for the Other as a given set of facts, as an amateurish and tasteless singer. I recognize that "I am indeed the object the Other is looking at and judging," and that my being is at the mercy of the Other's freedom.[3] By becoming an object defined by the judgement of Others, I have discovered an aspect of my being which is fixed by his gaze, and in the process have learned to judge myself.[4]

It is the Other's objectification of me that establishes me as an ethical agent. The solitary self (which may be as rhetorically real as man in the state of nature) has the freedom to perpetually recreate itself, to continually lose itself in the world through action.[5] But my self-among-others is burdened with descriptions and defined by facticity which my being affirms as definitive through the primordial attitudes of shame and pride, which are the "*recognition* of the fact that I *am* indeed the object that the Other is looking at and judging."[6] Just as the Other reveals my self to me as a singer of certain worth, so too does she support my being as an ethical agent: ethics is essentially a matter of taking up attitudes and projects as a reaction to the foreign freedom of the Other.

Ethical relations, according to this reading of Sartre, are based on intersubjective recognition.[7] Hegel, writing years before Sartre, made a similar argument. He claimed that personal identity must be supported by the free cooperation of others—it would be difficult for me to persist in understanding myself as an intelligent student were I painfully aware that others saw me as dumb, impossible if expulsion from university withdrew the participation of that mediating institution which identifies me as a "student." Hegel further illustrates, through his "master-slave dialectic," that oppressive relationships of recognition can undermine the secure enjoyment of identity. The master's identity cannot be grounded in his slaves' recognition of him, since this is compelled and therefore cheapened.[8] A modern analog might be the feared employer who can never be certain that his underlings' praise of him is sincere—he knows that they harbor secret perceptions of him, and that these, despite existing in the minds of others, remain a very real aspect of who he is.

I will not attempt here to develop this fledgling account of recognition ethics into a full-blown theory of ethical *obligation* which suggests that the ontological relationships outlined above compel us to strive for relationships of non-domination and mutual recognition. It suffices for my purposes to suggest that such relationships of mutual recognition tend to be healthier than their oppressive, one-sided counterparts.[9] Here I aim only to examine moral relationships, i.e. relationships characterized by mutual recognition and non-domination, as a possibility rather than as the prescription of a universal law. Specifically, having explained the ability of the Other's gaze to reveal to us simultaneously his character as a free subject and my possibility of becoming a moral agent, I now wish to explore what happens when that gaze is distorted by anonymous, online interactions. We

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[3] *Ibid.,* 350.

[4] *Ibid.,* 268.

[5] Joseph S. Catalano, *A Commentary on Jean-Paul Sartre's "Being and Nothingness",* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1985), 161.

[6] Sartre, 350.

[7] T. Storm Heter, "Authenticity and Others: Sartre's Ethics of Recognition," *Sartre Studies International* 12, no. 2 (2006), 17.

[8] *Ibid.,* 29.

[9] *Ibid.,* 26.

might know, on an intellectual level, that the people we meet online are real, susceptible to pain and joy, and capable of judging us, but do we always experience them as such? If the experience of being seen transforms us into potentially ethical agents, can online invisibility stifle the call to moral action?

Sartre makes it clear that the ontological experience of being looked at and objectified, along with its concomitant certainty of the Other's free subjectivity, is not limited to existence within the Other's literal line of sight.[10] We can be thrust into self-consciousness just as thoroughly by the sound of a snapping twig or the sight of a farmhouse silhouetted on a hill. As socialized beings accustomed to being looked at, we are habitually aware of the possibility of being seen and objectified—we rarely succeed in "forgetting ourselves" or "losing ourselves in the world" for long. We cannot "unbecome" moral agents, because, once exposed to the Other, the personal identity which she helps mediate will forever implicate our being-for-others. But while this ontological entanglement remains a constant, Sartre stresses that we can take up a variety of attitudes, each only as potentially moral as it is ontologically sincere, towards the freedom of the Other that discloses our own being back to us as if displaying our shadow upon a shifting screen.[11]

One of these attitudes, which Sartre calls "*indifference toward others*" has the potential to foster unethical, or at least uncivil, conduct.[12] If recognition of the Other's subjective freedom is the well-spring and possibility of ethics, then solipsism, the suggestion that the Other might lack a subjective experience, must be the antithesis of morality, and it is by practicing a sort of "factual solipsism" that the indifferent attitude seeks to demean and neutralize the freedom of the Other.[13] Under the sway of this attitude, which is a reaction against the jarring experience of having one's own being mediated by the Other, the indifferent man denies the ontological force of the Other's look: others "have some knowledge of me, but this knowledge does not touch me… they express what they are, not what I am, and they are the effect of my action upon them."[14] This is the attitude that most of us take up with regard to the ticket-collector or the waiter whom we reduce to their function—it may seem like an unobjectionably quotidian perspective, but the truth is that by imagining away the inner lives of these individuals, we are effectively denying them status as moral agents and trying in vain to recapture the total freedom of that hypothetical solitary individual who is never identified with his factual circumstances.

Indifference is often harmless, but often it can lead to disrespectful, if not outright harmful, words and actions. I suggest that the behavior of internet "trolls," who anonymously post insincere and inflammatory opinions online to provoke outrage, is motivated by an attitude strikingly similar to Sartre's concept of indifference. Such trolls carefully cultivate their online persona; their words are seen by the Other, but their hidden insincerity allows them to create artificial distance between the object of the Other's gaze and their own being. They resist their objectification at the hands of the Other: the "knowledge [of others] does not touch" them.[15] While experiencing himself as insulated

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[10] Sartre, 346
[11] *Ibid.,* 262.
[12] *Ibid.,* 495.
[13] *Ibid,* 495.
[14] BN 495.
[15] *Ibid.*

and preserved in his freedom, the troll simultaneously conspires to strip the Other of her freedom: certain "trigger-words" and techniques of outrage are used to control the Other's emotions. The Other's "absolute subjectivity" is reduced to a function and a game, and the result is one-sided liberation for the troll— he is "in no way conscious of the fact that the Other's look can fix [his] possibilities and [his] body. [He is] in a state the very opposite of what we call shyness or timidity."[16] The troll is "at ease" and refuses to be "embarrassed by [himself]," because his personal identity is sheltered from the Other's gaze even as it is built upon his manipulation of that Other.[17]

A few examples should illuminate the dangers of the indifferent attitude. In 2012 the brand Mountain Dew hosted an online poll to determine the name of a forthcoming beverage. The winner, before the poll was taken offline, was "Hitler Did Nothing Wrong."[18] This is clearly not a statement most people would be comfortable making publicly—said aloud, these words would adhere to a speaker and contribute negatively to his identity in the eyes of others. Yet hundreds of people were able to shamelessly plan and execute the dissemination of this hateful message. Unobserved, this utterance could not adhere to their being or define their identity. Another disturbing trend in trolling crosses the line from incivility to violence: "swatting." Swatting is when an anonymous viewer of a video live-steam calls the police, threatens or confesses violent crimes, and provides the address of the actual person who is live-steaming. If successful, the "swatter", along with hundreds or thousands of other viewers, watches live as armed police invade the house of the streamer—one man was even shot and killed by police as a result of swatting.[19] It goes without saying that the practice is blatantly disrespectful and manifestly unethical, but its rapid proliferation testifies to a terrifying consequence of life online—people are somehow capable of overlooking and abusing the humanity of their online peers.

Already it appears that "indifference" is too mild a term for the anti-ethical attitude that online anonymity facilitates. Fortunately for our analysis (and disconcertingly for internet users), Sartre catalogs another, more extreme, attitude which likewise seeks to misrepresent the Other's freedom and centrality to personal identity— sadism. Attentive readers will have noticed that the attitude of indifference contains a fundamental contradiction: the troll cannot succeed in constituting the Other as object or function once it becomes apparent that they are free to resist or succumb to the troll's provocations.[20] However, the manifest reality of the Other's freedom is not something that necessarily prevails in the consciousness of the sadist or troll, for they remain capable of embarking upon a project to circumscribe and control that freedom—the sadist by compelling his victim to identify fully with bodily pain, the troll by manufacturing the conditions for outrage—even if such a project can never fully negate the Other's

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[16] BN 496.

[17] *Ibid.*

[18] Everett Rosenfeld, "Mountain Dew's 'Dub the Dew' Online Poll Goes Horribly Wrong," *Time.* August 14, 2002, http://newsfeed.time.com/2012/08/14/mountain-dews-dub-the-dew-online-poll-goes-horribly-wrong/ (accessed December 31, 2018).

[19] Matt Stevens and Andrew R. Chow, "Man Pleads Guilty to 'Swatting' Hoax That Resulted in a Fatal Shooting," *The New York Times.* November 13, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/11/13/us/barriss-swatting-wichita.html (accessed December 31, 2018).

[20] Sartre, 526.

freedom.[21] The ethical insensitivity of an anonymous web user may not be strictly identical with either the attitude of indifference or sadism, but it certainly shares undesirable characteristics of each. The most troubling difference, however, is that while sadism and indifference are undermined by the embodied gaze of the Other and the ontological reality it reveals, the ethical insensitivity of the web user threatens to persevere in the absence of any concrete experience of the Other's subjectivity.[22]

Other modern philosophers, political scientists, and psychologists expound on this idea of decreased ethical sensibility which is hinted at by Sartre's ontological analyses. Emmanuel Levinas, in differentiating the semantic content of utterances from the "contact and sensibility" that accompanies face-to-face dialogue with the Other, and by identifying the latter as the basis for ethical relationships, provides us with equally strong grounds for worrying that online interactions might stoke our egoist tendencies.[23] For Levinas, something quite similar to the looking/looked-at dyad explored in Sartre's work inspires "an ethical urgency that unsettles our egocentric existence," and we can extrapolate that the absence of this dyad in cybernetic communication threatens to undermine the experience of responsibility that ultimately motivates ethical action.[24] Political scientists Richard Boyd and Laura Field likewise warn that "an acute failure of recognition" characterizes anonymous action, "as one's unsavory private actions fail to be registered in one's public persona."[25] Similarly, psychologist John Suler identifies the phenomenon of "dissociative anonymity" as a major contributor to what he calls the "online disinhibition effect": anonymous actors "don't have to own their behavior by acknowledging it within the full context of an integrated online/offline identity. The online self becomes a compartmentalized self. In the case of expressed hostilities or other deviant actions, the person can avert responsibility for those behaviors, almost as if superego restrictions and moral cognitive processes have been temporarily suspended from the online psyche."[26]

Of course, the internet is not inherently evil, and anonymity does not necessarily transform caring people into immoral monsters. Sartre's "gaze" can manifest in different mediums, and the ethical "proximity" theorized by Levinas can arise even in cybernetic contexts. People are certainly capable of embracing the other-affecting aspects of their online lives as constitutive of their personal identities, thereby laying the groundwork for healthy, i.e. ethical, relationships of mutual recognition. Whether mutual recognition occurs or not in online communities will often come down to the depth, duration, and sincerity of community members' engagement. In an online support group for cancer patients, for example, we might expect to find that a participant's sense of self-worth is substantially increased when others direct gratitude or encouragement towards his anonymous persona, or decreased if he inadvertently gives offense.[27] But we should not

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[21] *Ibid.,* 525.

[22] *Ibid.,* 526.

[23] Richard A. Cohen, "Ethics and Cybernetics: Levinasian Reflections," *Ethics and Information Technology* 2, no. 1 (200), 30.

[24] Lucas D. Introna and Martin Brigham, "Reconsidering Community and the Stranger in the Age of Virtuality," *Society and Business Review* 2, no. 1 (2007), 72.

[25] Boyd and Field, 350.

[26] John Suler, "The Online Disinhibition Effect," *Cyberpsychology and Behavior* 7, no. 1 (2004), 322.

[27] Introna and Brigham, 171.

take for granted that mutual acknowledgment of the Other's subjectivity and freedom will occur even on platforms such as Facebook or Twitter, where users often shed anonymity and share photos of themselves. Studies by philosopher and psychoanalyst Luce Irigaray have suggested that photographed faces lack a certain motility and liveliness, and that they therefore fail to disclose the subjectivity of their subjects as vividly as embodied encounters.[28] Lest we think that the problem is solved by the advent of online video-chatting, we need only recall the numerous victims of "swatting", many of whom were doubtlessly observed for hours on live video-streams by their tormentors before ever being victimized. The lesson to be gleaned from these incidents is that every form of digital separation brings with it a threat of decreased moral sensitivity, for electronic mediums of communication are consistently outperformed by face-to-face encounters when it comes to establishing the interdependence of the Other, my experienced identity, and the Other's perception of me.[29]

The ethical insensitivity that I have warned against is not unique to online relationships. The failure of mutual recognition and the objectification of the Other is mundane and ubiquitous, stemming from both anonymity, stereotyping, and willful ignorance of the plight of others.[30] My point is simply that it is easier to maintain such anonymity and willful ignorance on the web than in interpersonal encounters. Anyone who has walked past a homeless beggar has experienced the power of the Other's gaze to spark mutual recognition. If I make eye contact with this bedraggled fellow on the street corner, the *intellectual* question of whether to help him or not remains unchanged. But if I for a moment acknowledge his gaze with my own, rational reasons for withholding my aid wither in an explosion of empathy. Without a doubt, here is a person, existentially identical to myself in terms of his freedom, who suffers, whose suffering becomes a mirror and occasion for me to discover my own ethical character. All this strikes me not as intellectual knowledge, but as an experience of obligation.[31] I have been called to account for myself, not by dry moral platitudes but by a transformative experience of recognition that momentarily succeeds in destabilizing my ego-centric perspective. Were I to meet this same man online, his unspoken plea might be experienced merely as a tab to click out of, a clump of pixels to be scrolled past—my obligation would be too abstract and mediated to disturb the foundations of my being, to bind me to an act of choice that becomes constitutive of my identity.

My concern in this paper has been with morality as an idiosyncratic experience rather than as a rational formula. I have argued that our experiences of obligation to others are conditioned upon recognition that these others are free beings like ourselves, whose perceptions of us play a definitive role in fixing our identity. My approach does not foreclose the possibility of "doing ethics" as traditionally conceived, as Hegel and Sartre demonstrate that certain relational attempts to ground identity are self-defeating—only mutually affirming, non-dominating relationships provide a sustainable basis for personal flourishing. Unfortunately, many online interactions, particularly those that occur

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[28] *Ibid.,* 174.

[29] Katherine J. Morris, *Sartre.* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2008), 124.

[30] Cohen, 32.

[31] Lucas D. Introna, "The (Im)possibility of Ethics in the Information Age," *Performance and Organization* 12 (2002), 75.

anonymously, fail to rise to this standard, since they appeal only minimally to our ethical sensibilities due to the online actor's ability to disassociate herself from her cultivated virtual persona. Like Sartre's indifferent, "factual solipsist," the web user disingenuously supposes that the face seen by other people is not her own. This all too frequent breakdown of mutual recognition online does not preclude the possibility of ethical conduct, but it certainly does deaden our *experience* of ethical obligation by establishing artificial distance and erecting veils of anonymity between persons.

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Trans-Somatic Transplant: Furthering Health Disparities in Transplant Surgery

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Abstract: Many of the discoveries in medicine, both benevolent and malicious, come at the price of exploiting vulnerable populations of people, incapable of defending themselves. This has led to historical abuse through experimentation in biomedical practices on the destitute, desperate, and, in the United States of America, the racially black. These abuses show that the most blatant malpractices of the philosophical ideology of medicine are those identified as health disparities. The key attribute in the definition of health disparities is that they are preventable differences, that play a significant role in the continuing oppression of vulnerable populations. The discipline of medical ethics should put them at the forefront for elimination because of their universality, yet, medical ethics seems to limit its advocacy of medical concerns that fall under health disparities due to medical biases and societal racism. Ethics has a duty to dissect medical procedures, experiments, and research to evaluate their medical feasibility, and to determine their moral permissibility. This paper will be an evaluation of this deficiency within medical ethics, through the analysis of the new medical procedure being proposed known as the Trans-Somatic Transplant; and how such an advancement would immensely affect populations already oppressed and neglected by the healthcare field.

When analyzing the history of medical advances and the effects they have had on those used as the catalyst for those advancements, progress is not achieved without growing pains. Many of the discoveries in medicine, both benevolent and malicious, come at the price of exploiting vulnerable populations of people, incapable of defending themselves due in part to a lack of knowledge needed to make informed decisions. This Western medicine perspective, defined by the ideas of utilitarianism, suggests that there is a minority that suffers at the hands of the majority that agrees on the parameters by which happiness is achieved. This has led to historical abuse through experimentation in biomedical practices on the destitute, desperate, and, in the United States of America, the racially black. These ills of medical advancements can be observed through cases such as the Tuskegee Syphilis Experiment[1], the Guatemala Syphilis Experiment[2], the Nazis experiments[3], and the practices of James Marion Sims[4]. These abuses show the most blatant malpractices of the philosophical ideology of medicine, those identified as health

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[1] Brandt, Allan M. 1978. "Racism and research: The case of the Tuskegee Syphilis study." The Hastings Center Report 8(6): 21-29.

[2] Reverby, Susan M. "'Normal Exposure' and Inoculation Syphilis: A PHS 'Tuskegee' Doctor in Guatemala, 1946–1948." *Journal of Policy History* 23, no. 1 (2011): 6–28..

[3] Jakubik, Andrzej, and Zdzisław Jan Ryn. "Pseudo-Medical Experiments in Hitler's Concentration Camps." Medical Review Auschwitz. Accessed October 22, 2018.

[4] Wall, L. L. "The Medical Ethics of Dr J Marion Sims: A Fresh Look at the Historical Record." Journal of Medical Ethics. June 2006.

disparities. The CDC defines health disparities as preventable differences in the burden of disease, injury, violence, or opportunities to achieve optimal health that is experienced by socially disadvantaged populations. These populations can be defined by factors such as race or ethnicity, gender, education, income, disability, geographical location, or sexual orientation. Health disparities are directly related to the historical and current unequal distribution of social, political, economic, and environmental resources. During the Civil Rights Movement, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. voiced his concern pertaining to health disparities, expounding, "[o]f all of the forms of inequality, injustice in health care is the most shocking and inhumane." Health disparities are a universal problem that are pervasive throughout the medical system of many countries, especially those that practice western medicine. The discipline of medical ethics should put health disparities at the forefront of consideration because of their universality, yet, ethics seems to limit its advocacy of medical concerns that fall under health disparities, based on medical biases and societal racism. Ethics has a duty to dissect medical procedures, experiments, and research to evaluate their medical feasibility, and to determine their moral permissibility. This paper will be an evaluation of the deficiency present within medical ethics through the analysis of the new medical procedure being proposed known as the Trans-Somatic Transplant.

Trans-Somatic Transplant

The Trans-Somatic Transplant surgery (head transplant or full body transplant surgery) was proposed by Dr. Sergio Canavero to help patients who suffer from degenerative diseases, such as cancers, progressive muscle diseases, and tetraplegia.[5] He is supported by Chinese orthopedic surgeon Xiaoping Ren in trying to become the pioneers of such a controversial procedure.[6] If successful, their efforts will propel transplant surgeries into a new realm, yet there are many medical, ethical, and social concerns that arise with such a complicated procedure. To better understand what the repercussions could include, the details of the procedure will be reviewed and observed through the foundational ethical principles of autonomy, beneficence, non-maleficence, and justice.

Dr. Canavero's explanation of the medical procedure describes a series of complex surgeries being performed simultaneously by multiples doctors, of both the body of the donor (the patient giving the full body) and the body of the recipient (the patient giving the head).[7] The procedure includes severing the spines of both donors and reattaching the head of one to the body of the other by reconnecting the spine and all of the nerves within the neck with the substance Polyethylene Glycol, or PEG; an amber like fluid that has the potential to heal nerve cells.[8] This procedure has the potential of failure as reattaching the spine and the nerves completely is very unlikely, and includes other medical issues.

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[5] Kristof Van Assche and Assya Pascalev, "Where Are We Heading? The Legality of Human Body Transplants Examined", *Issues in Law & Medicine,* Spring 2018, Volume 33, Issue 1, Article 1.

[6] Ibid

[7] Pascalev, Assya, et al. "Head Transplants, Personal Identity and Neuroethics." *Neuroethics,* vol. 9, no. 1, 2015, pp. 15–22.

[8] Kean, Sam. "The Audacious Plan to Save This Man's Life by Transplanting His Head." *The Atlantic,* Atlantic Media Company, 10 Aug. 2016.

The first possible medical complication is the high risk of severe pain after the surgery, that can be both physical and neurological.[9] If the nerve pain occurs from improper reconnection or failure to reconnect the spine, there will be a dilemma of how to manage the pain. If the pain is neurological there would be no physical manifestations of pain and therefore no way to medically manage it. The subsequent pain could be a permanent result of the surgery highlighting a possible concern as to whether the mind and body will connect so that pain can be managed. If the surgical team has success in connecting both parts, there is a strong possibility that the recipient will have limited to no function of the body and minimum function left within the head.[10] As with most transplant surgeries, there is also the possibility that the recipient's body will reject the donated organ.[11] In the case of a full body transplant, it is hard to determine which element of the new person would reject the other, or if both elements will reject each other.

Dr. Canavero addressed this problem, stating that general immunosuppressant medications would be given to the patient to lower the immune system of both elements, the head and the body, to minimize rejection.[12] Something commonly seen in regular transplant surgeries, such as kidney transplants. The medication puts the patient at a higher risk for infection which can be more life threatening or damaging than the initial illness.[13] The factors of the immunosuppressant medications would be in direct violation of the ethical principles of beneficence and non-maleficence. The principle of beneficence "[r]equires that the procedure be provided with the intent of doing good for the patient involved."[14] The physician has a duty to "develop and maintain skills and knowledge, continually update training, consider individual circumstances of all patients, and strive for net benefit."[15] The physicians would not be acting in the best interest of the patient's wellbeing, and therefore would not be doing good for the patient but rather be causing unnecessary harm. The principle of non-maleficence "[r]equires that a procedure does not harm the patient involved or others in society."[16] Harm that was not present before the surgery would be done to the patient that would be substantially worse than the patient's initial illness, if the procedure fails and possibly terminates their life.

To defend against these worries, Dr. Canavero makes the claim that the procedure has worked in testing and was successful with his various solutions for surgical problems that conceivably could occur both before and after surgery.[17] There is fault with his claim, though, as the testing mentioned was only performed on animals and produced a minimal

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[9] Pascalev, Assya, et al. "Head Transplants, Personal Identity and Neuroethics." *Neuroethics,* vol. 9, no. 1, 2015, pp. 15–22.

[10] Kristof Van Assche and Assya Pascalev, "Where Are We Heading? The Legality of Human Body Transplants Examined", *Issues in Law & Medicine,* Spring 2018, Volume 33, Issue 1, Article 1.

[11] Ibid.

[12] Ibid.

[13] "Immunosuppressants." *The National Kidney Foundation,* 3 Feb. 2017.

[14] Johnson, Amber. "What Are the Basic Principles of Medical Ethics?" Medical Ethics 101.

[15] Ibid

[16] Ibid

[17] Pascalev, Assya, et al. "Head Transplants, Personal Identity and Neuroethics." *Neuroethics,* vol. 9, no. 1, 2015, pp. 15–22.

success rate.[18] The experiment was a reattempt by Dr. Canavero of an unsuccessful head transplant surgery performed by Dr. Robert White in 1970. Dr. White's experiment involved the transplantation of the head of a rhesus monkey onto the body of another rhesus monkey with reattachment at the spine.[19] Dr. Jerry Silver, who was present during the procedure, described the operation and results as horrific, he stated:

> "I remember that the head would wake up, the facial expressions looked like terrible pain and confusion and anxiety in the animal. The head will stay alive, but not very long," the Case Western Reserve University neurologist told CBSNews.com. When doctors attempted to feed the re-connected head, the food fell to the floor. "It was just awful. I don't think it should ever be done again."[20]

It follows from the results that emerged from the experimental testing on animals that such a surgery would be extremely unethical and could cause extreme harm and distress to any sentient being. Would the surgery have minimal success and result in limited or no functionality or will it lead to a restoration of full mental and physical capacity of a person? For this surgery to even have a chance of being ethical, there would need to be a precise determination of the chance for success for the patient. Dr. Canavero, however, claims the experimental procedure and its possibility of success is sufficient justification for his moving forward.[21] Limited success is unacceptable when considering conducting the procedure on human patients: the animal did not survive long enough to determine if the surgery is a lifelong solution and there is no way to assess the level of consciousness of animals to determine if the procedure was success.

In his own animal experimentation, Dr. Canavero stated that "[t]he monkey fully survived the procedure without any neurological injury of whatever kind," …but said it was only kept alive for 20 hours after the procedure for ethical reasons."[22] The non-transparent nature of Dr. Canavero's reasoning for terminating the animal's life further raises concerns as to the legitimacy of such an experimental and invasive surgery. If the surgery was successful, what were the implications that made it unethical such that the animal's life needed to be terminated? Clearly, if a successful surgery of an animal provided unethical or inconclusive results, the human surgery would not produce more conclusive or ethical results.

Ethical Violations of the Transplant Surgery

Issues concerning head transplantation depend heavily on the fact that every aspect of the procedure, from surgery to recovery, raises alarming ethical red flags. The first ethical consideration that is apparent are autonomy and informed consent. For the

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[18] Ibid.

[19] Elliot, Danielle. "Human Head Transplant Is 'Bad Science," Says Neuroscientist." *CBS News,* CBS Interactive, 2 July 2013.

[20] Ibid.

[21] Martin, Alan. "Human Head Transplant: Controversial Procedure Successfully Carried out on Corpse; Live Procedure 'Imminent.'" *Alphr,* 17 Nov. 2017.

[22] Knapton, Sarah. "First Head Transplant Successfully Carried out on Monkey, Claims Surgeon." *The Telegraph,* Telegraph Media Group, 21 Jan. 2016.

procedure to take place, the medical team must find a patient that voluntarily consents to such an extensive and life-threatening surgery. The patient must be diagnosed with a terminal or degenerative disease and have no other healthcare options for curing the disease. This qualification creates a paradox because it implies that the patients, because of their terminal condition, would be desperate to find a cure for their disease and willing to risk their minimal time left for the possibility of being cured. This could impede the judgment of the patient limiting the validity of the informed consent they give. If this factor is not considered by the medical team, it would be a violation of the ethical code and seen as the medical team taking advantage of a patient who is desperate. The issue of consent is also raised about the patient whose body would be donated for the surgery. Due to their medical condition, such as being brain dead or near death and unconscious, consent would have to be established before the patient losses consciousness. This request would be documented before the patient's illness reached a critical level through methods such as being an organ donor. This would raise the question, does general consent to organ donation apply to such an extensive and invasive transplant procedure? With the body transplant, it would come to review whether transplant parameters would remain the same. The definition of organ donation would have to be specified in noting the difference between organ donation and organism/body donation. Typical organ donation consent involves a person signing up to be an organ donor through their state government and they are able to specify what organs they want to donate, or if they want to donate whatever can be used at their time of death, or if they would like to make living donations as well.[23] Since the list of viable organs does not include the donation of an entire person, only parts, a new term would have to be implemented in order to denote the specific donation of a whole person. Those who consented to being typical organ donors would need to re-consent under new conditions, or it must be determined whether their prior consent in the chance of a full body transplantation would hold.

With the importance of DNA and genetic material, a full body transplant can leave much undecided on how to classify the new individual negating the identities of the two previous individuals; this could lead to many psychological or social issues.[24] There is the possibility that the patient will present with strong body image issues and identity issues if the surgery is successful. Questions could arise such as: which part, the head or the body, is the donation and which is considered the recipient, and how this determines the identity of the individual or if the new individual will be a new 'person' all together. These questions can be illustrated in the scenario of procreation. If the patient can procreate with the new body, there would be several concerns such as who would the child be a composition of, would the "new person" identify with the child, and who has legal obligations to the child based on genetics.

These questions raise disquieting speculations concerning the nature of the self and personal identity, and bring more questions to the forefront such as what makes a person a person and what is the connection between the brain, identity, and sense of self? In trying to piece together what entity would emerge from such a surgery, depending on the grounds for success, the question of the "part-whole" is posed.[25] The "part-whole"

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[23] Health Resources & Services Administration. "Organ Donation FAQs." Organ Donor.

[24] Kristof Van Assche and Assya Pascalev, "Where Are We Heading? The Legality of Human Body Transplants Examined", *Issues in Law & Medicine,* Spring 2018, Volume 33, Issue 1, Article 1.

[25] Ibid.

tries to determine which part is being given to make the person whole. This extends into the realm of autonomy, essentially deciding which part of the body is being donated to a person in order to heal their ailment and make them a fully functioning person again.[26]

One view of personal identity, espoused by Dr. Assya Pascalev, is comprised of a person's mental events and psychological experiences over time, the view of many western philosophers. By this view, the patient donating the head will remain that same person with a new body since mental capacity resides within the brain: mind essentialism, you go where your mind goes.[27] From the opposing view, animalism, one's identity is preserved as long as one's body exists.[28] This view says that our minds and body function as organisms and that our psychological continuity and personal identity is a part of our physical continuity: "consciousness is just another property of the organism."[29] This follows that we do not die from lack of consciousness, but we die from the failure of organismic functioning. A head transplant preserves parts of two distinct organisms, but no single biological unit survives the surgery.[30] With so many unknowns surrounding the surgery, it seems medically gratuitous and infeasible. Observing issues concerning its infeasibility, the transplant could further widen the gap of health disparities for communities who already are not sufficiently served with "normal" transplantations. The extreme cost of the surgery alone would limit the available resources for other transplants that would save more lives.

Transplantation as a Health Disparity

The key attribute in the definition of health disparities is that they are preventable differences. They play a significant role in the continuing oppression of many vulnerable populations, i.e African Americans in the United States. To give context, we can view health disparities through the comparison of treatment from the health care system towards African Americans compared to their white counterparts. Among the extensive list of medical issues that widen the gap in health care between African Americans and their white counterparts, transplantations are one of the biggest factors.[31] An organ transplant is a surgical operation in which a failing or damaged organ in the human body is removed and replaced with a functioning one.[32] The donated organ may be a cadaveric organ donation, a living organ donation, or an organ from an animal, giving the donor's organ system the ability to still be able to function after the donation.[33] African Americans suffer more from illnesses that cause organ failure than other groups and, as a result, they

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[26] Ibid.

[27] Pascalev, Assya, et al. "Head Transplants, Personal Identity and Neuroethics." *Neuroethics,* vol. 9, no. 1, 2015, pp. 15–22.

[28] Ibid.

[29] Ibid.

[30] Ibid.

[31] Harding K, Mersha T, B, Pham P, -T, Waterman A, D, Webb F, J, Vassalotti J, A, Nicholas S, B, Health Disparities in Kidney Transplantation for African Americans. Am J Nephrol 2017;46:165-175

[32] "Definition: What Are Organ Transplants?"

[33] Ibid.

become the group in the most need for transplants.[34] This creates a paradoxical problem that lends them to also be the group most unqualified to receive needed transplants, making up thirty-four percent of needed kidney transplants and twenty-five percent of all needed heart transplants; due to the lack of proper preventative health care,.[35] Largely caused by past abuse and bias from the medical profession, particularly that stemming from racist ideologies, there is great mistrust of doctors in the African American community, and they are unlikely to be put on a transplant list unless as a 'reward' for proper health practices.[36]

The dilemma is furthered because the conditions in which African Americans suffer that causes the initial organ failure are conditions that are preventable if they were caught earlier on.[37] "The number of organ transplants performed on black Americans in 2015 was only 17% of the number of black Americans currently waiting for a transplant. The number of transplants performed on white Americans was 31% of the number currently waiting."[38] In light of the breakthrough of the head transplant surgery, it seems that certain groups would be the last to be affected by such an egregious surgery. This is not true. The surgery would have repercussions that would affect aspects of healthcare for those not directly receiving its treatment. One of the main components of the surgery that would further the disparity between the disadvantaged and their privileged counterparts concerns the money needed to perform the elaborate operation. Including all the materials and people needed for the surgery, the price would be upwards of ten million dollars.[39] This suggests two major points: firstly, that if successful and implemented as a surgical norm, the procedure would only be accessible by the extremely wealthy and would have very limited resources to extend to the general population. Secondly, pulling monetary resources of this magnitude from a hospital's transplant fund would threatened the lives of many people. It would be a choice in potentially saving the life of one person with a minimal chance of success, versus the extreme likelihood of saving multiple patients waiting to receive standard transplants. This would put those facing health disparities at an even greater disadvantage and would be a violation of the justice principle of ethics, which requires:

> "that the burdens and benefits of new or experimental treatments must be distributed equally among all groups in society…procedures uphold the spirit of existing laws and are fair to all players involved. The health care provider must consider four main areas when evaluating justice: fair distribution of scarce resources, competing needs, rights and obligations, and potential conflicts with established legislation."[40]

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[34] Harding K, Mersha T, B, Pham P, -T, Waterman A, D, Webb F, J, Vassalotti J, A, Nicholas S, B, Health Disparities in Kidney Transplantation for African Americans. Am J Nephrol 2017;46:165-175

[35] Ibid.

[36] Ibid.

[37] Ibid.

[38] Office of Minority Health. "Office of Minority Health." Organ and Tissue Donation - The Office of Minority Health. August 17, 2016.

[39] "$11mn, 36-Hour Historic Head Transplant to Be Carried out in China in 2017." *RT International*, 12 Sept. 2015.

[40] Johnson, Amber. "What Are the Basic Principles of Medical Ethics?" Medical Ethics 101.

This violation would occur due to the immense threat the head transplant procedure would put on the discriminated population, pinning their lives as subsequently less valuable than that of the individual receiving experimental surgery. With the current skepticism and worry of black market organ trading being conducted today, a potential worry would be how the bodies needed for the surgery would be obtained. China, receiving past scrutiny for auctioning bodies for organ harvesting, is an example of how such medical advancements benefit the lives of some, while infringing on the ethical rights of others. China was investigated for harvesting the organs of death row inmates, after they were put to death, and selling them to wealthy people.[41] This showed they were willing to "sacrifice the life of an offender in order to save the life of one wealthier."[42] Although this practice was outlawed after backlash in 2007, it raises concerns that a new influence could reignite the practice. This coupled with Dr. Canavero's idea that the surgery would move to be a routine use to give people a sense of immortality, gives a sense that the surgery would be used as a luxury tool than as a tool to heal the masses.

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[41] Woan, Sunny. "Buy Me a Pound of Flesh: China's Sale of Death Row Organs on the Black Market and What Americans Can Learn from It." Santa Clara Law Digital Commons, 1 Jan. 2007, digitalcommons.law.scu.edu/lawreview/vol47/iss2/5/.

[42] Ibid.

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    Market and What Americans Can Learn from It." *Santa Clara Law Digital Commons,*
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Informed Consent and the Suitcase Trolley Problem

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Abstract: Hare[1] introduces the Suitcase Trolley Problem, a situation where an agent must decide whether to push a suitcase containing her friend to stop a trolley from running over five other friends of the agent. This decision must be made despite the agent not knowing which of the six friends is in the suitcase that would be pushed. Hare argues that, if asked, everyone would consent to pushing the suitcase since it is more likely than not that they are on the trolley track. This situation highlights a subtlety about what constitutes informed consent. Specifically, for consent to be informed, an agent must not only tell the person from whom they are requesting consent the relevant information but also to choose a method of asking consent that gives the most information. I argue that informed consent must satisfy the above requirement, and, therefore, the presumed consent argument to push the suitcase made in Hare is flawed because the consent given is not informed.

The Trolley Problem is a moral dilemma studied by many philosophers, yet it still generates disagreements between them. The Trolley Problem involves a situation where, to save multiple people from an incoming trolley, the person involved must kill someone. I will discuss a variant of the trolley problem which is proposed in "Should We Wish Well to All?". In this variant, which I will call the Suitcase Trolley Problem, there are six people put into a suitcase, all of which the agent knows well and cares about. One of those people is on the ledge with the agent and the remaining five are on trolley track, although no one knows who is in which suitcase. A trolley is coming and the only way to prevent the death of the five on the track is for the agent to push the person on the bridge to their death, which would cause the trolley to stop before hitting the other five. What should the agent do? According to Hare, the agent should push the suitcase on the bridge. One of Hare's arguments focuses on presumed consent. Hare remarks that, if asked, each of the six people in suitcases would tell the agent to push, as it seems to increase their odds of living. Therefore, he concludes that the agent should push the suitcase. I will argue for a new requirement of informed consent and show that, in light of this requirement, the argument of presumed consent fails, as the consent given is not informed.

First, I will present the presumed consent argument from Hare[2] in more detail. Imagine the Suitcase Trolley Problem but where the agent can talk to each of the six people in suitcases over the phone, although still neither the agent nor the people in suitcases knows who is in the briefcase on the bridge. In this case, the agent calls all six people in suitcases, explains the situation, and asks whether to push the suitcase on the bridge. I will call this the 'Calling method' of obtaining consent. Hare argues that because none of them know where they are, given the information they have, pushing will reduce

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[1] Caspar Hare, "Should We Wish to All?," Philosophical Review 125, no.4 (2016):415-472.

[2] Caspar Hare, "Should We Wish to All?," Philosophical Review 125, no.4 (2016):415-472.

their chance of death from 5/6 to 1/6 and therefore everyone will tell the agent to push the suitcase. The agent would have consent from everyone to push, which includes the person on the bridge, and therefore the agent should push the suitcase.

Now, I will discuss what informed consent is and why it is important. Informed consent is given when a subject gives explicit permission to do an action involving them to an agent who has, to the extent of their knowledge, fully informed them of the situation. If consent is something that is important to any degree in a moral theory, then it should be held to the standard of informed consent. After all, consent should not hold much weight if is given as a result of being told incomplete information or outright lies by the agent requesting it. One explanation for why consent is important is that it respects the autonomy, or ability of an agent to think about a situation and decide what to do, of the people involved in a situation. Clearly, if a person asking for consent chooses to misrepresent the situation in order to influence the reply, then they are disrespecting the autonomy of the person asked. One subtlety of informed consent that I wish to expose in this paper is that if the agent can choose between two methods of requesting consent where they truthfully tell the agent all they know but one method gives the person being asked consent more information, then it can only be considered informed consent if they choose the method that gives the person asked more information.

The reader may be concerned about whether the proposed additional requirement of informed consent is correct, so I will justify it here. Informed consent involves telling the person who would be affected as much as possible, so they can decide for herself. One cannot be truly said to be respecting the decision-making faculties of the affected person unless the agent tells that person all the relevant information she knows. Regardless of whether information the agent has is left out due to neglecting to tell the person or choosing a method that gives the agent a way to leave it out without withholding information directly, the agent is still hiding information from the affected person. Therefore, as proposed earlier, this additional constraint of informed consent must hold. An example may make this clearer. Consider a doctor who has five patients who need the same surgery or will die within a year. The surgery is very safe generally, it is always successful except when the patient has a genetic disorder, in which case the probability of success is 75%. The doctor knows one of the five patients has the genetic disorder but does not remember which one. All patients have told the doctor that they are willing to undergo surgery if the probability of success is at least 95%. Since the doctor thinks it is in the best interest of everyone, even the patient with the genetic disorder, to get the surgery, he decides to tell the five people that one of them has the disorder, but he does not remember which. Each patient does the calculation and, from what both they and the doctor know, the surgery has a 95% chance of success and therefore automatically give consent to the surgery. The doctor could have checked the records and then could better inform the person with the disease, which would affect their decision. The choice of going about it without checking the records makes it very clear that the consent is not informed and even seems morally questionable. The topic of how the principle of choosing the method of informing that gives the most information applies when multiple people need to give consent (in a way where we do not have all but one person consent either way like in this case) deserves further study. The extension of this principle is not applicable to the Suitcase Trolley Problem, so it will not be discussed any further. But it should be clear that, in the case where only one person needs to give consent, choosing a method that gives the affected person less information is a form of deception.

Returning to the Suitcase Trolley Problem, I will explore an alternative situation of receiving consent. Solely for ease of reference, the person in the suitcase on the bridge will be referred to as Bridgey. The agent tells Bridgey the same information that he would have told on the phone but instead by talking through the suitcase so only Bridgey can hear. To keep the situation from changing, suppose that the agent can hear Bridgey's answer but Bridgey's voice is muffled so, although the response is heard, the agent still cannot identify who Bridgey is. I will call this the 'Talk to Bridgey' method of obtaining consent. If Hare is right, then, in the Calling method of consent, Bridgey will give consent for the agent to push. But the consent given is not informed consent as the agent is neglecting to tell Bridgey an important piece of information: that, even if the agent does not know who Bridgey is, the person being asked for consent is the person who is on the bridge. Therefore, in order to obtain informed consent, the agent must tell Bridgey that they are on the bridge. If the agent simply cares about reducing their chance of death as supposed in Hare[3], then they will not give the agent consent to push. That said, it is conceivable that Bridgey may decide that pushing is the best course of action, and only in that case is it okay for the agent to push the suitcase.

Here I will be more explicit about the differences between the Talk to Bridgey and Calling methods of obtaining consent. It should be clear that the only person whose consent matters is Bridgey as she is the one that the agent kills if the agent decides to push. In both cases, Bridgey may give consent. Whether or not the consent is informed in the Calling method deserves further explanation. In the Calling method, Bridgey is told everything the agent knows but, by the setup of the method, is not told that she is on the bridge. The fact that she is on the bridge is incredibly relevant information to the decision, and she would know that if the agent chose the Talk to Bridgey method. If an agent can choose between methods of asking consent, then it can only be considered informed consent if the agent chooses the method that gives the person in question more information. Therefore, by using the Calling method, although the agent is telling Bridgey (and everyone else) everything he knows, he is choosing a method of obtaining consent that hides from Bridgey the information that she is the person on the bridge. Therefore, the Calling method cannot be used to obtain informed consent to push Bridgey.

The reader may be suspicious of whether the conclusion drawn in the surgery example applies to the Suitcase Trolley Problem. The concern might be that the sick person would want to know whether or not they were sick, but Bridgey may not want to be asked consent via the Talk to Bridgey method over the Calling method. I would like to point out that Bridgey not giving consent to use Talk to Bridgey method depends on the method the agent uses to ask. If the agent asks Bridgey via the Calling method about how to ask Bridgey about pushing, she will prefer the Calling method. On the other hand, if the agent asks Bridgey via the Talking to Bridgey method, she will prefer the Talking to Bridgey method. This casts some doubt on the concern but does not resolve it in itself. The second response is that with respect to whether consent is informed, it does not matter whether the agent wants to hear the information. Suppose Alice asks Ben for a favor, and he asks for time to think about it. By the time Ben decides to accept the favor, Alice tells him that she just thought of something relevant to making the decision. Ben, having spent enough time thinking about it, tells Alice to not tell him this information. If Alice tells

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[3] Caspar Hare, "Should We Wish to All?," *Philosophical Review* 125, no.4 (2016):415-472.

Ben anyways and he chooses to ignore it, then it can be considered informed consent. But, even if Alice does not tell Ben this information because he does not want to hear it, she is still withholding information and therefore any consent he gives is not informed. After all, by not telling Ben the relevant information, she deprives him of knowing something that may very well be a deciding factor in his decision. Therefore, for consent to be informed, the agent must give the other person all relevant information, regardless of whether they want the information. This means, the difference in whether or not the agent wanted the information should not cause a difference in treatment between the surgery example and the Suitcase Trolley Problem.

In the problem originally posed by Hare, the agent cannot talk to his friends in the suitcases and therefore requesting actual consent is not possible. In his argument, Hare is not considering a situation where the agent can actually ask the people in suitcases for consent, but instead using hypothetical consent, where the agent considers what would happen if the agent asked. If receiving consent is to be seen as important, then the agent should seek informed consent from Bridgey before pushing if possible. The agent should seek informed consent because the agent's best guess regarding Bridgey's answer about being pushed may be incorrect. Therefore, the agent should only settle for hypothetical consent if the situation makes actual consent not possible. If asking for consent is not possible, for example if everyone in the suitcases was unconscious, only then should the agent resort to hypothetical consent. So, if only one of the Talk to Bridgey method or Calling method are possible, then in that case the consent received is informed by using whichever method can be used. If the agent has to resort to hypothetical consent, then he should use hypothetical informed consent for the same reasons as using informed consent when actual consent is possible. Hypothetical informed consent is done when the agent imagines how each person in a suitcase would respond if they were Bridgey and informed of the situation and that they are Bridgey. If the agent thinks they all would still consent, then he should push and if he thinks they all would not consent then he should not push. The case for what the agent should do if he thinks some, but not all would consent is complicated and would require further study. But leaving this case aside, hypothetical informed consent is the standard the agent should use when asking the people in suitcases is impossible.

I have argued that the presumed consent argument, as stated in Hare[4], cannot be used to argue for pushing in the Suitcase Trolley Problem as the consent (hypothetical or not) is not informed. Informed consent is important if consent is relevant in a moral theory as it is the only way of fully respecting the autonomy of the individual directly affected. Since telling Bridgey directly both about the general situation and that she is on the bridge gives Bridgey more information, the method used in the presumed consent argument cannot be considered informed consent even though the agent technically tells Bridgey everything she can given the method in use. Then I mention why actual consent should be used, regardless of what was intended in Hare and how to apply hypothetical informed consent to the situation if obtaining actual consent is not possible. As a consequence, the only case where the Calling method can yield informed consent is when the Calling method is possible but the Talk to Bridgey method is not. Meaning, in all other cases, Bridgey's consent in the Calling case is not grounds to push Bridgey. While this may not

4 Caspar Hare, "Should We Wish to All?," Philosophical Review 125, no.4 (2016):415-472.

undermine the main argument presented in "Should We Wish Well to All?," it does show that the presumed consent argument mentioned is flawed as well as the various appeals to intuition based on it. Regardless, one cannot find a definite answer from examining the Suitcase Trolley Problem; rather, one can come to a better understanding of what is required for consent to be informed.

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The Responsible Self in the Face of Situationist and Automaticity Challenges

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Abstract: Contemporary situationist and automaticity research poses a great challenge to our traditional conception of moral responsibility and requires a picture of agency that accounts for these compelling empirical results. In light of the emerging scientific evidence, we might need to reevaluate our intuitions about the close connection between responsible agency and issues of choice and control. Appealing to Sripada's care-based conception of the real-self and motivational support account of self-expression, this paper aims to preserve moral judgment and responsibility, as well as a distinct sense of control. As an alternative to the rationalistic and identificationist accounts centered around conscious states and processes, this care-based view takes a relationist and pluralist approach to the questions "what constitute the real-self" and "how do actions reflect the real-self". Based on the wide-ranging functional properties and action-directed mechanisms, unreflective cares fundamental to an agent's identity incline channels outside of conscious awareness that issue in care-promoting actions, thus accounting for a broad array of conducts that are non-conscious or non-deliberative but nevertheless self-expressive. We might not have a conscious deliberative self with as much direct control as we expected, but we have a responsible self with ample control to mitigate the situationist and automaticity challenges.

Background

Contemporary situationist and automaticity research poses a great challenge to our traditional conception of moral responsibility, and requires a picture of agency that accounts for these compelling empirical results.[1] Situationist literature shows that various environmental features influence our actions without our awareness and even contrary to our intentions and expectations.[2] Meanwhile, automaticity literature suggests that conscious deliberation and control are often bypassed or overridden by automatic sub-cognitive processes.[3] The source of many, if not the majority of, our day-to-day actions thus seems to lie in such situational factors and automatic processes—forces we have previously underestimated or neglected—that are separate or even disconnected

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[1] Manuel Vargas, "Situationism and Moral Responsibility: Free Will in Fragments," in *Decomposing the Will,* ed. Tillman Vierkant et al. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 325-349.

[2] Dana Nelkin, "Freedom, Responsibility, and the Challenge of Situationism," *Midwest Studies in Philosophy* 29, no. 1 (2005): 181-206, PhilPapers; Alfred Mele and Joshua Shepherd, "Situationism and Agency," *Journal of Practical Ethics* 1, no. 1 (2013): 62-83, PhilPapers.

[3] John Bargh and Tanya Chartrand, "The Unbearable Automaticity of Being," *American Psychologist* 54, no. 7 (1999): 462-479, APA PsycNET; Michael Brownstein and Alex Madva, "The Normativity of Automaticity," *Mind and Language* 27, no. 4 (2012): 410-434, PhilPapers.

from our conscious deliberative self. In addition, there is growing empirical evidence—complementary to the situationist and automaticity research—of a "boundedly rational" mind driven by non-conscious associative processes and with limited intentional conscious control.[4] All of these result in the apparent loss of control and undermining of agency, threatening our conceptions of freedom and responsibility for actions, and our intuitions about the close connection between responsible agency and issues of choice and control.

General Real-Self Views

It is intuitive that mental states or attitudes that are genuinely our own are the source of free and responsible actions, rendering the general real-self view an attractive theory. The notion of real-self marks out an agent's distinct mental states that produce and govern his actions and are relevant to moral judgments as the locus of agency and responsibility. Amongst real-self theorists, the exact element with agential authority and the exact nature of an agent's identification relation to that element are much disputed. However, identificationist views always require that an agent is consciously aware of and evaluates his desires and motives, and decisively identifies with what he wants to be effective or judges to be desirable, for those mental states to genuinely belong to him.[5] Preliminary problems these views face include the regress of identification, and the assumption of a rational being with reflective capacities.

Advancing a less rationalistic account of the real-self, Sripada selects cares as the agential element.[6] Cares are defined as a distinct class of pro-attitudes of importance and fundamental to oneself, which play a characteristic functional role in motivating actions. Distinct from a conscious deliberative self, a care-based responsible self could account for a broader array of non-deliberative but self-expressive conducts—including those faced with situationist and automaticity challenges—that pose a problem for the highly agentially-demanding views. An agent can be responsible for actions that are expressive or reflective (used interchangeably) of his cares that are subsets of the real-self, but are nevertheless influenced by situational features or unconscious processes. For one's cares to constitute his real-self, and for his care-promoting action to reflect the real-self, an agent need not be conscious of his cares that motivate his action at the moment.

Conception of Self: Cares v. Conscious States

Is consciousness truly indispensable for mental states or attitudes to genuinely belong to the real-self as rationalists suggest? According to Sripada, inner sources including conscious reflective thoughts—despite lying within the boundaries of one's psychology—

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[4] Michael Brownstein, "Attributionism and Moral Responsibility for Implicit Bias," *Review of Philosophy and Psychology* 7, no. 4 (2016): 765-786, PhilPapers; Bargh and Chartrand, "The Unbearable Automaticity of Being".

[5] Harry Frankfurt, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person," *Journal of Philosophy* 68, no. 1 (1971): 5-20, PhilPapers.

[6] Chandra Sripada, "Self-Expression: A Deep Self Theory of Moral Responsibility," *Philosophical Studies* 173, no. 5 (2016): 1203-1232, PhilPapers.

could be alienated from an agent's real-self.[7] Reflective and endorsed attitudes or judgments might fail to articulate one's genuine perspective, or might be simply mistaken.[8] Empirical evidence suggests that information encoded at the conscious level does not necessarily have greater accuracy compared to automatic evaluations.[9] An example might more clearly illustrate this. Jack firmly believes in the importance of civility in the workplace and judges politeness to be a desirable quality. In moments of stress, however, he treats his co-worker Amy disrespectfully and focuses solely on his tasks at hand, without conscious endorsement of or identification with such behavior.

In this case, there is minimal voluntary control, explicit choice, or conscious beliefs associated with Jack's rude behavior towards Amy; meanwhile, he consciously endorses ideals of politeness and civility. Rationalists or identificationists would likely excuse Jack's rudeness. Levy, for example, would highlight his conscious beliefs in politeness as the real-self, discarding any non-conscious and unreflective mental states as not genuinely Jack's.[10] However, it might be tempting to locate some anchoring of Jack's rudeness in his self—we might say "he (some part of him) was surprisingly rude to Amy"—rather than deny any connection to his real-self, and say "Jack is never rude" or "that rude guy is not Jack". It might also be tempting to assign judgment especially if Jack's rudeness marks a pattern over time—we might say "the rude Jack is terrible". Thus, it might be unreasonable to consider Jack's real-self as only constituted by his conscious evaluative judgments and beliefs. Sripada's notion of cares offers an alternative—certain non-rational psychological attitudes, cares, which might be unconscious, constitute Jack's real-self and motivate his unreflective rude actions. In stressful situations at least, meeting deadlines and performing his tasks well, possibly at the cost of civility, are of great importance to Jack. Such cares— more fundamental and integral to Jack's self—seem to bypass and contradict his conscious beliefs that are alienated from his real-self in the given situation.

Cares are inherently internal to an agent and underwrite one's identity as the source of deep or real-self.[11] They serve a characteristic functional role in inclining one's intrinsic motivation, practical reasoning, and emotional connection in favor of achieving care-promoting actions. As the source and foundation of motives for actions, cares shape positive "evaluative, commitmental, and emotional" effects in the prospect of care-promoting actions, exhibiting functional properties that are "conceptually tied" to what is of importance to the agent and fundamental to his identity, thus constituting the real-self.[12] Importantly, cares define the ontological conception of real-self, which is to be distinguished from the psychological one—what *in fact* constitute the real-self based on the characteristic functional roles does not depend on what one *takes* to be fundamental.[13] Therefore, whether one consciously identifies with certain contents of the self, they

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[7] Ibid., 1204.

[8] Ibid., 1207-8, 1212.

[9] Bargh and Chartrand, "The Unbearable Automaticity of Being," 475.

[10] Neil Levy, "Expressing Who We Are: Moral Responsibility and Awareness of Our Reasons for Action," *Analytic Philosophy* 52, no. 4 (2011): 243-261, PhilPapers; Neil Levy, "Consciousness, Implicit Attitudes, and Moral Responsibility," *Noûs* 48, no. 1 (2014): 21-40, PhilPapers.

[11] Brownstein, "Attributionism and Moral Responsibility for Implicit Bias," 773.

[12] Sripada, "Self-Expression," 1209-11.

[13] Ibid., 1211-2.

constitute the real-self and serve as the basis for moral responsibility as long as they are cares characterized by the relevant properties.

If cares fulfill such essential functional roles that they constitute the real-self, why does "what we are conscious of" often seem closely and uniquely associated with "what is ours"? What might explain such a strong intuition is that consciousness of our attitudes conveys a sense of voluntary control and choice involved in owning or integrating those attitudes as "ours". King and Carruthers highlight the important role of reflective reasoning and endorsement in either generating states that belong to one's real-self, or *appropriating* into the self those states imposed upon oneself that originate from the outside.[14] Levy similarly argues that consciousness of the content of attitudes is necessary for their *integration* into an agent's self-conception.[15] The irresistible desire due to addiction is an example of a mental state whose origin lies outside of the agent, and which is alien to the self unless appropriated by conscious reflection.

However, Jack's cares do seem to have unifying effects in constituting his identity and his integrated disposition as a rude and accomplishment-driven person *in stressful situations.* On the other hand, his explicit conscious beliefs in politeness—which supposedly constitute a relatively coherent and person-level concern or perspective—seem to fall short of imposing unity on his identity in the given situation. What seems more integrated into his real-self is the cares that lie outside of his awareness and voluntary control. This strongly suggests that unreflective cares could achieve the kind of unification of a person on which moral agency arguably depends. Smith similarly argues that our moral practice is not an activity of voluntary choice or control; what is "ours" reflects what we judge to be of value, whether we consciously and voluntarily choose and endorse it.[16]

Expression of Self: Motivational Support v. Identificationism

For an action to express the real-self and thus be morally judged, rationalistic accounts of expression require conscious mental states that cause actions and processes to produce, sustain, and govern those states. For example, Frankfurt highlights reflective self-evaluation of one's desires and motives—either endorsement or criticism—and eventually decisive commitment to the desire that one wants to be operative.[17] Levy similarly argues that the degree of personal control and consciousness marks different ranges of agency and responsibility in actions,[18] and that one needs to consciously identify with the "personally available" mental states—easily retrievable and poised to guide his behavior—in order for it to fully express one's stance.[19]

Returning to our example of the rude Jack, where we previously have the temptation to attribute his rudeness to his real-self, it might also be reasonable to consider his action

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[14] Matt King and Peter Carruthers, "Moral Responsibility and Consciousness," *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 9, no. 2 (2012): 219, PhilPapers.

[15] Levy, "Consciousness, Implicit Attitudes, and Moral Responsibility," 36.

[16] Angela Smith, "Responsibility for Attitudes: Activity and Passivity in Mental Life," *Ethics* 115, no. 2 (2005): 237, PhilPapers.

[17] Frankfurt, "Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person," 7-8.

[18] Neil Levy and Tim Bayne, "Doing without Deliberation: Automatism, Automaticity, and Moral Accountability," *International Review of Psychiatry* 16, no. 4 (2004): 213, PhilPapers.

[19] Levy, "Expressing Who We Are," 246.

as attributable to and reflective of at least some part, however small, of the real-self, rather than dismiss his action as out-of-character or disconnected from the self. Instead of simply taking a rationalistic approach that considers Jack's unreflective and unendorsed rude behavior as non-self-expressive, it might be best to explore Sripada's motivational support account of expression.

As an alternative to the highly reflective enterprise involved in Frankfurt's endorsement-based account, Sripada's account of the expression relation hinges on the motivational and causal influences of cares on attitudes and actions. Both Brownstein and Sripada highlight the causal power of cares in motivating actions that express something morally important about oneself.[20] For expression to occur, cares must exert influences—corresponding to their functional properties aforementioned including motivational, commitmental, evaluative, and emotional elements—on wide-ranging action-directed mechanisms that issue in care-promoting actions. Cares incline processes of evaluative deliberation, habitual reinforcement, and emotional appraisal—channels within or outside of conscious awareness that motivate actions.[21] Thus, an agent does not necessarily *need* to comprehend or judge consciously his cares anchored in his real-self that motivate and govern actions, nor does his reflective judgment or deliberation *need* to align with his cares. Actions—including those that are non-conscious, non-volitional, or even divergent from one's will—are open to evaluation and an agent subject to moral judgment, since one's actions issued by aforementioned mechanisms do reflect upon his cares and express moral agency.[22]

Why does consciousness seem essential for actions to be self-expressive and genuinely responsible? Indeed, the motivational support account faces difficulties, especially the seemingly obscure operation of action-directed mechanisms through which cares issue in actions. Meanwhile, the way consciousness provides a direct link between actions and the self—and thus factors into the expression relation—is straightforward and intuitive. Actions motivated by conscious attitudes seem to naturally express one's overall evaluative stance and the real-self. However, such rationalistic identificationist accounts operate on atomistic and monistic assumptions underlying our common understanding of free will.[23] An agent is responsible for his actions only when he identifies with some special agential element, a single unified cross-situationally stable entity, via monistic self-governing mechanisms involving only conscious endorsement or evaluative judgment—independent and irrespective of contextual inputs from past or present circumstances in response to which our attitudes might automatically move us to act.

However, various unconscious agential systems shown to be relevant and even pervasive in our daily actions, along with the limitations of our conscious mechanisms and capabilities, seem to challenge our traditional conceptions of agential elements and mechanisms. Given the empirical and conceptual evidence of automatic self-regulation processes,[24] spontaneous attitudes and reactions,[25] automatic tension-alleviating

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[20] Brownstein, "Attributionism and Moral Responsibility for Implicit Bias," 773; Sripada, "Self-Expression," 1215-6.

[21] Sripada, "Self-Expression," 1217-9.

[22] Brownstein, "Attributionism and Moral Responsibility for Implicit Bias," 767; Smith, "Responsibility for Attitudes," 263.

[23] Vargas, "Situationism and Moral Responsibility," 333.

[24] Bargh and Chartrand, "The Unbearable Automaticity of Being".

[25] Smith, "Responsibility for Attitudes".

responses,[26] and unreflective reason-directed actions,[27] it seems that consciousness does not necessarily play a more direct role in producing genuine and responsible actions. Therefore, an alternative to rationalistic accounts of expression abandoning atomistic and monistic assumptions might be more attractive. The motivational support account takes exactly such a relationist and pluralist approach to the expression relation. The following section shows how cares—as context-specific subsets of the real-self—are less intrinsic and robust than conscious reflective judgments, and how cares—through action-directed mechanisms—issue in actions much more heterogeneous than rationalistic mechanisms of conscious identification.

Application: A Relationist & Pluralist Approach

Applying the care-based conception of self and the motivational support account of expression that reject the requirement of conscious identification, we are able to preserve moral responsibility in a broader array of conducts and accommodate the compelling situationist and automaticity research. The earlier example of Jack can be framed as a case that poses situationist and automaticity challenges. Jack's unreflective rudeness might be overwhelmingly influenced by deliberatively-irrelevant situational features, such as his boss' passing comments about the importance of his project, the presence of his stressed colleagues, or his unpleasant experience earlier in the day with his lunch order. Presented with such environmental stimuli, Jack's motives and actions might originate from automatic mechanisms that operate effortlessly and without conscious guidance—through an automatic *evaluation* of the importance of task performance, and the automatic *activation of goals* or cares for task performance and achievement, due to situational features or habitual and emotional effects.[28]

Abandoning the assumption of atomism (or internalism), Sripada's mosaic conception of the real-self is relationist, allowing for conflict of cares and taking into account the situational influences. Jack's real-self can be understood as involving rich complexities and occasional conflicts—there exist distinct subsets as well as divergent sets of prioritization that exert causal and motivational influence on his actions in different contexts.[29] The source of his rude actions is not solely internalist and non-relational; past and present contexts factor into cares and thus self-reflective actions—the cue of stress in Jack's past and present situations is closely connected to his fundamental cares for achievement. Thus, the appearance that the environmental features cause such actions and that his rudeness is non-self-reflective can be explained as situational triggers and cues mapping onto subsets of Jack's real-self. His rude treatment of Amy is likely motivated by his cares for task performance in *moments of stress.* In a different context without the cue of stress, Jack might prioritize his belief in politeness and act civilly towards Amy.

The motivational support account is pluralist rather than monistic. Instead of serving as a single agential structure, cares motivate actions through a variety of distinct action-directed mechanisms, and thus a wide range of actions can be expressive of the real-self.

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[26] Brownstein and Madva, "The Normativity of Automaticity".

[27] Caroline Arruda and Daniel Povinelli, "Chimps as Secret Agents," *Synthese* 193, no. 7 (2016): 2129-2158, PhilPapers.

[28] Bargh and Chartrand, "The Unbearable Automaticity of Being".

[29] Sripada, "Self-Expression," 1225-6.

Jack's cares for meeting deadlines and performing well can provide motivational support for actions through channels covering a wide spectrum of consciousness.[30] Via conscious assignment of evaluative weights, non-deliberative reinforcement learning, or automatic production of affective markers, cares incline his deliberative *or* automatic processes in favor of rude actions.[31] However, his conscious evaluation might not and *need* not be involved, as his rude actions could be simply motivated through channels outside of his awareness, such as via spontaneous learning of habits and the automatic operation of his affective system—the prospect of rude treatment of Amy is likely affectively marked as positive based on past situations where Jack's cares are satisfied, reinforcing this tendency and pattern of rude actions.

Sense of Control Revisited

Despite the apparent lack of control in cases of situationist and automaticity research, as well as the limited capacity and role of conscious processes in general, this paper advances a positive view about moral responsibility. The care-based conception of self and motivational support account of expression help preserve not only moral responsibility, but also a sense of control—albeit distinct from the one commonly associated with a conscious deliberative self—which seems to be of intuitive importance to responsible agency. Specific issues of control are beyond the scope of this paper, but the following brief suggestions might shed light on different ways of understanding control.

Instead of being aware of our desires and motives at the moment of action, a different sense of control lies in forming causally efficacious implementation intentions to carry out plans that promote intentional goals.[32] Jack might reflect on his cares after his rude treatment of Amy, and commit to improving his actions in the future in a similarly stressful situation. By means of such conscious distal intentions, Jack could mitigate the effects of his unreflective cares on his reaction time while promoting his conscious belief in politeness—an example of exercising control.[33] Through practice and habituation, Jack could exercise long-range control on his cares for achievement at the cost of civility in moments of stress—impossible to be willed away yet susceptible to revision—by means of indirect self-regulation strategies including evaluative conditioning and mental imagery.[34] Additionally, Jack might improve his moral vision—the capacity for perceiving morally relevant considerations—so as to detect situational effects of stress that map onto his cares, and to limit similar motivating forces in the future. Indeed, the conscious deliberative agency does play a role—albeit not direct or immediate as we thought—in resolving conflicts between unreflective attitudes and conscious intentions to regulate actions.[35] We might not have a conscious deliberative self with as much direct control as we expected, but we still have a responsible self with ample control to mitigate the situationist and automaticity challenges.

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[30] Ibid., 1216.

[31] Ibid., 1217-9.

[32] Mele and Shepherd, "Situationism and Agency," 77.

[33] Ibid., 74.

[34] Brownstein, "Attributionism and Moral Responsibility for Implicit Bias," 770, 781.

[35] Vargas, "Situationism and Moral Responsibility," 340-1.

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Moral Blame and Responsibility: Microaggressions, Implicit Bias, and Racial Injustice

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The question as to whether one is morally responsible for their implicit bias has been at the center of philosophy and psychology discourses for over the past decade. Implicit bias is difficult to call attention to, primarily because it is generated implicitly and executed subtly. What one can gather from these discourses is that the consequences of one's implicit bias are complex, with many theorists taking opposing viewpoints. Some believe that one simply is not morally blameworthy and responsible for their implicit biases. For example, some posit that if a person is not aware of their action due to implicit bias, then they are not blameworthy for their action. However, there are some who believe that a person is or somewhat aware of their implicit attitudes and actions, and therefore they are more or less morally responsible and blameworthy for these attitudes and actions.

Some of the prominent theorists who believe that individuals are not blameworthy and therefore not morally responsible for their implicit biases are Saul (2013) and Levy (2017). Their premises for this notion of non-blameworthiness are rooted in the fact that people who are not aware or in control of their implicit attitudes cannot be held responsible for them, since it does not reflect their external beliefs. On the other hand, there are those who posit that one is more or less morally responsible for their implicit biases.[1] These theorists have different methods of assessing blameworthiness and responsibility for implicit biases, but nonetheless arrive at the general conclusion that individuals are to some extent blameworthy and morally responsible. Agreeing with neither of these viewpoints, some scholars consider that the criteria for moral responsibility, due to implicit biases, are situational and unique across contexts, and therefore must be assessed differently.[2] It is within this last group that I will discuss further.

To begin with, what is implicit bias? I define it for this paper as negative evaluations on people that occur without a conscious awareness of that behavior. However, as noted above some would not agree with this definition. That being said, my focus remains on racial implicit biases in the form of microaggressions. Unfortunately, racially biased incidents are not conducted in a manner that can be easily articulated and recognized. Microaggressions, which fall under the purview of implicit biases, function in maintaining racially implicit behaviors. Purposefully, I try to not define microaggression in any simplistic objective way, for this mode of objectifying and labeling is what sustains systems of injustice. The ways in which microaggressions could be defined is as limitless as the ways it could be enacted. While microaggressions occur on the individual level through relational interactions, the explications derive from larger patterns of oppression in a broader cultural context, and thus serve to support these systems of injustice. Because of the role microaggressions play in reinforcing oppressive ideologies, those who wish to dismantle oppressive systems have reason to place their attention on microaggressive behaviors.

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[1] See: Washington and Kelly (2016), Holroyd (2012), Zheng (2003), and Madva (2018).
[2] See: Faucher (2010) and Glasgow (2016).

In this paper, I will first give an in-depth summary of Glasgow's conception of moral responsibility in relation to victim harm. Next, I will illustrate some examples of racial microaggressions and the harmful impact it has on the victim and on their moral trust. Then I will combine Glasgow's work with the context of racial microaggressions to argue that microaggressors should be held morally blameworthy and responsible for their transgressions, more so than explicit racism and actions. To conclude, I will respond to some common objections against my argument to prove that, although there are valid concerns regarding my thesis, it is nonetheless able to withstand these criticisms. Utilizing the work of Glasgow, I defend the claim that implicit attitudes and actions, manifested in the form of racial microaggressions, cause significant harm to the victims of the microaggression; in fact, more harm than explicit racism and aggressions, and due to the content and impact of that harm, microaggressors should be held to the fullest extent of moral blameworthiness and responsibility.

Glasgow's Conception of Moral Responsibility in Relation to Victim Harm

Joshua Glasgow argues that the impact of implicit bias is variant across contexts. He argues that the criteria for moral responsibility is contingent upon the context in relation to harm caused, regardless of whether one feels alienated from their behavior.[3] Alienation, according to Glasgow, is when "an attitude that I harbor or an action that I perform does not represent me, that is, if it does not express the part of me that is my responsible, agential self, then my responsibility for it is significantly diminished."[4] These criteria for moral responsibility is based on what he calls Harm-Sensitive Variantism. According to Glasgow, "Content is just a proxy for harm,"[5] therefore moral blame and responsibility is determinant upon the degree of harm caused, regardless of whether the oppressor claims alienation from the behavior. Additionally, he explains that society has a set standard of non-negotiable values, meaning that the value is not tolerated by society, and therefore the agent will always be morally responsible if the value is broken, and negotiable values, meaning that the broken value is somewhat not as serious as a non-negotiable value, and therefore moral blame/responsibility on the agent may not apply. He posits that situations such as infidelity or "racist attitudes, even unconscious ones"[6] violate a societal non-negotiable value. This differs from situations such the "kleptomaniac [who] cannot resist swiping the candy bar or the drug user [who] seeks out one more fix,"[7] where the violation was a negotiable value. Therefore, Glasgow would state that a person who commits an infidelity or acts upon their implicit biases is morally responsible because of the harm it caused to the victims of these acts.

Examples of Racial Microaggressions and the Harmful Impact it Has on the Victim

Now to fully understand the lived ramifications microaggressions inflict on the victim, I utilize an article by Ross Gay (2013) titled "Some Thoughts On Mercy". In it, he

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[3] Glasgow, J. (2016). Alienation and responsibility. *Implicit bias and philosophy, 2.*
[4] *Ibid,* 4.
[5] *Ibid,* 5.
[6] *Ibid,* 7.
[7] *Ibid,* 8.

describes a first-person account shopping as a young black man with his white friend:

> "I remember being thirteen and walking into a clothing store at the mall with
> a white pal. As we perused the racks, it didn't take long for me to realize the
> security guard was following me and was oblivious to my friend. So, I gradually
> made my way to the back of the store while I glimpsed my pal up front stuffing a
> few hundred dollars' worth of merchandise into his backpack."[8]

This instance exemplifies the core of microaggressions. This security guard's behavior is systemic to the constructed bias of the black criminality myth. This false belief is so deeply ingrained in cultural institutions that people are socialized to perceive African-American people as untrustworthy, to such a degree that these notions become implicit in the ways we discuss, define, and interact with each other.

Consider what would have happened that fateful day if Gay had confronted the security guard's action. Recognizing the ingrained socialization processes of racial oppression, one could posit that the security guard would have responded and perhaps whole-heartedly believed 'I was just doing my job, don't be oversensitive.' This response would have exculpated him of any inconspicuous racial wrongdoings, at least in in his own mind. Remember that because microaggressions rely on a larger oppressive context to gain their meaning, if someone is unaware or has limited knowledge of those larger contexts, they may be unable to grasp the meaning of the microaggression their committing and thus makes it easier to deny it. The problem that this presents is a complicated one because if microaggressors are able to deny their microaggressions, they can consequently flip and reorient the situation, making it appear as if it is the microaggressee is 'attacking or falsely accusing' the microaggressor. This denial and reorienting allow microaggressors to avoid actively engaging with their own microaggressive behaviors. By making the moral focus of the conversation the supposed wrongness of the microaggressee's confrontation, the microaggressor is able to reaffirm their moral conscious, which leaves the burden of proof solely on the shoulders of the victim. Microaggressees will then begin to question whether their evaluations of microaggressive behaviors are true and will also question whether their decision to express these evaluations is appropriate. These sorts of challenges from microaggressors can work to destabilize a sense of security in one's own rationality regarding the context of bias interpretation.

The choice then becomes whether or not to try and convince microaggressors that their behaviors relate to larger institutionalized systems of racial injustice. In cases where microaggressors have some understanding about the ways in which oppression and implicit bias function, this might not be difficult. However, many microaggressors are ignorant of the ways that oppression operates and reconstructs in a reinforcing fashion. And this ignorance is no accident, since cultural ignorance part and parcel sustains oppressive social structures.

Re-thinking Gay's anecdote, consider the other people in the store that day. Due to ingrained biases in conjunction with the subtleness of microaggressions, the average person in the store would not have been able to recognize that the reason the security guard followed Gay around (and not his white friend) was because he is Black. However, speculate what would happen if the security guard was explicitly racist. Perhaps he says

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[8] Gay , R. (2013, July). Some Thoughts On Mercy.

"You blacks always steal" or something of that nature. Because of the explicitness of occurrence, he said something that is deemed racist given current societies egalitarian views, it would not be far-fetched to claim that the other shoppers in the store would have maybe confronted the security guard by saying "This is racist. You can't assume he is stealing just because he is black". Especially given the technological age we reside - in which everything is now being videotaped- if a person's racial behaviors are explicit, they are most times labeled as a racist by the general public, and consequently shunned or reprimanded by others. In this sense, the victim receives validation that his or her assessments were correct and that the oppressor should be and is morally judged. We can begin to see how microaggressions are sometimes more harmful than explicit racial behaviors if one focuses on the psychological impacts and moral-trust damage to the victim.

If not fully convinced, listen to what Gay says concluding his account:

"I've been afraid walking through the alarm gate at the store that maybe something's fallen into my pockets, or that I've unconsciously stuffed something in them; I've felt panic that the light skinned black man who mugged our elderly former neighbors was actually me; and nearly every time I've been pulled over, I've prayed there were no drugs in my car, despite the fact that I don't use drugs; I don't even smoke pot. That's to say the story I have all my life heard about black people—criminal, criminal, criminal—I have started to suspect of myself."[9]

Gay admits that due to daily experiences with racial microaggressions associating black people with criminality, he himself begins to believe that he is a criminal, even though he has done nothing wrong. This coherence between external racial microaggressions on a daily basis and one's self-esteem/moral worth creates internalized oppression within the victim, perhaps without even realizing this process is occurring. In Gay's case, his self-respect is threatened when he suspects himself of criminal activity. However, when Gay is asked "are you a criminal?" he understands that he is not. Gay therefore lacks a feeling that he measures up morally, despite knowing that he does.

In some cases, internalized oppression may make the oppressed more inclined to act in accordance with these beliefs, becoming a self-fulfilling prophecy. However, that is not to say that the opposite is not true, one may purposefully behave in a diametrical way to convey that he or she is disassociated from the stereotype. However, if one decides to negatively act in response to internalized oppression, this paradoxically creates a situation in which the microaggressor will further believe that his/her implicit behaviors are justified. For instance, if Gay had chosen to steal something that day and was caught by the security guard, the security guard (and perhaps others who witnessed the occurrence) would further believe than they implicitly did before that black people are criminals. The security guard would be validated in his implicit attitudes, and due to this positive reinforcement, he would be more willingly to trust that "gut feeling" in the future.

Combining Glasgow's conception of Harm-sensitive variation to the act of racial microaggressions seen through the analysis of Gay's anecdote, it is clear that microaggressions, even if their behaviors were unconsciously motivated, should be

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[9] *Ibid.*

regarded as morally blameworthy and responsible. The harm placed upon the victim of the microaggression is substantially damaging, to such a degree that the alienation of the microaggressor's implicit behaviors in relation to their perhaps antiracist external beliefs does not exculpate them of moral blame or responsibility. Therefore, the act of microaggressions could be considered more blameworthy and responsible than certain explicit racist behaviors in certain contexts.

I want to call attention to one possible objection to my paper: if the structure of microaggressions lends itself to promoting self-distrust in the microaggressee, could it be argued that perhaps a microaggressee's interpretation of the meaning of a microaggressive behavior is sometimes inaccurate? I respond by noting that some amount of uncertainty is appropriate with regard to microaggressive behaviors. This is because, since microaggressions occur implicitly, some degree of interpretation will always be necessary to determine whether a microaggression has occurred, and this interpretation is fallible. On the other hand, this does not lead to the conclusion that victims should enter into a state of radical self-distrust when it comes to interpreting microaggressions. While interpretations are not always reliable, this in and of itself should not foster the endless rumination on the possibility of an error. For instance, imagine I sometimes mistake one person (1) for another person (2). This does not mean that when I see 1 walk through the door it would be appropriate for me to endlessly ruminate about the possibility that perhaps it is really 2. That my visual perception tends to be reliable more often than not should be enough to generate (at least some) optimism in my own competence with respect to identifying 1—and thus harbor some degree of self-trust in my abilities.

Concluding, the structure of microaggressions, in particular the fact that they are implicit, can result in victims feeling self-distrust when it comes to their competence in the area of behavioral interpretation. This, in conjunction with how some microaggressees may begin to internalize their own oppressions creates substantial damage to one's moral self-trust. And, thus, makes it easier for patterns of microaggressions to continue uninterrupted. The fact that microaggressions are structured in this way serves to promote and reinforce large-scale oppressive social structures. Therefore, utilizing Glasgow's conception of harm-sensitive variation on moral responsibility and blame in accordance with Gay's account of microaggressions shows that these implicit attitudes and actions are indeed harmful and blameworthy.

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