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The SHPRS Undergraduate Digital Humanities Journal is a student-run publication that holds pieces from historical, philosophical, and religious studies. It is housed under Arizona State University's School of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies. The journal serves as an opportunity for ASU undergraduate students to submit their research work from classes or outside research they have done in the past. Submissions for papers are taken in fall and spring, and the editor team of the journal reviews and chooses the submissions to be published in the journal. The publication is free of cost to access and view. The opinions mentioned in the papers do not reflect the opinions of SHPRS Undergraduate Digital Humanities Journal or the School of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies. If you have any questions or are interested in submitting your work for the fall semester, please email us at shprsdighumanitiesjournal@gmail.com .

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Olivia Johnson is a rising senior studying Philosophy (Morality, Politics, and Law) and English Literature. She will be spending her fall semester living abroad in Verona, Italy, where she plans to complete her honors thesis doing a comparative study of American and Italian abortion law. She hopes to utilize philosophy's logical argumentation and literature's reading analysis to bolster her law school applications upon returning from Italy. When she isn't busy cramming for the LSAT or brushing up on Italian, she loves reading fantasy novels and admiring the campus birds.

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Kathryn Greenberg is in her third year at ASU working towards a BA in History with an Art History minor. During her time at ASU, she has found focus in the history of motherhood as well as the ways that women interact with male-dominated societies. In addition to this, she also finds interest in the public memory of women. Outside of course work, Kathryn volunteers at several museums in the Metro Atlanta area. Following the completion of her undergraduate degree, Kathryn plans to attend graduate school working towards a PhD in History.

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EDITOR'S NOTE

Welcome to our third publication of the SHPRS Undergraduate Digital Humanities Journal! We are thrilled to announce our release of our Spring 2022 edition of the Digital Humanities Journal.

I want to extend my gratitude to the editors, authors, and faculty at SHPRS for some unexpected delays in getting the third edition out.

First, we start off with Olivia Johnson's piece on Moral Permissibility. The piece delves deeper into literature practices, such as censorship and book banning, and how these are practices are immoral and restriction on ethics. Olivia walks us back in time by using Aristotle and Machiavellianism to understand the evolution of immoral literature.

Kathryn focuses on women authors and how they dealt with the ridicule and barriers in trying to get their work published. As a result of this, women wanted to educate their children on these barriers by publishing children's books as a means for them to gain skills in loyalty and honesty. The paper dives into the journeys of nineteenth century European women navigating the world of family and publishing.

Our final piece focuses on rejecting the contingentist thesis. Alexander details his perspectives on why Joshua Rasmussen's is false and inaccurate. He offers his insight and arguments and why his argument is better suited.

We all hope you learn something new about these topics that have been impactful and influential in these respective fields. From immoral literature to women's role in society, these are a growing list of topics that benefit from such research like these articles. We want to thank the authors for taking the opportunity to have their work recognized and the time to meet with our editors to finalize their papers.

I also want to thank the editors who have left ASU or have graduated. Your support and effort are valuable to the team, and we couldn't have done it without them.

Thank you to Anna Espinoza and Chris Horvath in serving as the philosophy editors. I appreciate all your expertise in the field of philosophy, and I couldn't have done it without you all. What's next for Anna is law school, and Chris's longer term plan is to apply for PhD programs in political philosophy.

My final thanks for our editorial team go to Mackenzie King, who was the executive editor for two years. Mackenzie served as

EDITOR'S NOTE

our final set of eyes and helped develop our style guide. She will be going to University of Tennessee and will be pursuing her PhD in history, focusing on medieval history.

We want to extend our thanks to Dr. Katherine Osburn in supporting and overseeing the journal as well as guiding us through the process. Dr. Osburn was our faculty advisor for the journal, and she helped guide us in the management and buildup of our team. We are sad to see Dr. Osburn leave this year, but are grateful for her guidance throughout these two years in providing students a platform to get their research recognized. Our team is also gratified to have the support of the SHPRS Social Media team in advertising our journal and promoting our work.

Sincerely,

Anusha Natarajan
Editor-in-chief

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THE MORAL PERMISSIBILITY OF READING IMMORAL LITERATURE

Olivia Johnson

Abstract: From book burnings to censorship, the idea that some literature is immoral and the ensuing debate on what should be done with it has been a continual discussion. In this essay, I argue that immoral literature has significant ethical value. I first consider the argument that moral literature is immoral because it promotes vices before presenting my argument that moral literature has ethical benefits due to its emotive power and from its status as a cautionary tale. I then examine a potential objection: that literature can teach the same ethical benefits without presenting immoral characters as sympathetic. Finally I conclude that the value of immoral literature lies precisely in its ethically nebulous portrayal of moral issues.

Keywords: Immoral literature, virtue ethics, Machiavellianism, theory of mind, Aristotle, moral antiexemplar

I. Introduction

Literature has long been intertwined with the study of ethics. Plato, speaking as Socrates, outright bans most poetry and fictional literature in his perfect city on the basis that it only imitates reality and can lead to immorality.[1] This is immediately followed by Aristotle, who defends literature as an expression of internal emotion and a way to better understand ethics due to its nature as an imitation of real life.[2] Debates on book bannings and what literature should be taught in schools persist in modern society. It's clear that literature has a significant impact, but what exactly that impact is and which types of literature produce what effects are not questions with easy answers. In this essay, I consider the question of whether or not reading immoral literature is morally permissible. I begin by providing my definition of immoral literature before considering a potential reason why some might consider it immoral to read such texts. Then I argue that reading immoral literature is actually morally permissible on the basis that it provides both a way to more fully understand moral principles and examples of how not to behave. I conclude by considering and defending against a potential objection to this argument.

In order to begin thinking about "immoral literature," the definition of the term itself must be established. I use "immoral literature" to refer to fictional narratives dealing with subjects generally considered immoral. The use of the word "literature" is relatively simple in this context: fictional prose. Although literature can cover a wider variety of genres, in this essay I will be considering written fictional narratives. The far more controversial aspect of the term is

the word "immoral." I use it here to refer to literature that deals with subjects generally agreed upon as immoral, specifically by modern American society. The rather thorny nature of immorality, of course, is that it is not universally agreed upon and is often subjective. I don't intend to make claims on the wide variety of literature that considers topics in the gray area between the morally good and the morally bad. Instead, I focus on literature that deals with topics viewed, almost universally, as immoral. Take, for example, Vladimir Nabokov's *Lolita*, a novel that chronicles a man's grooming and rape of his twelve-year-old stepdaughter. That statutory rape is immoral is hardly a controversial claim in today's mainstream society, and at least for the purposes of this essay I take it for granted. It is stories thus situated within the realm of generally-agreed upon immorality that I consider in this essay.

One final caveat to the concept of immoral literature is the way in which the stories explore their themes. A novel about murder that wholeheartedly condemns murder and never once allows for alternate interpretations does not enter into the discussion, as it quite neatly moralizes in a way that aligns with generally accepted moral tenets. Instead, stories that can be argued to glorify or that can at least be read as sympathetic to their immoral themes are relevant. Returning to *Lolita*, the reader experiences the story from the predator's point of view as he attempts to defend his relationship with the titular Lolita and paint himself as a sympathetic character. Although most critics, and the author himself, agree that the story is intended to be understood as condemning the practice of pedophilia,[3] the burden of sorting out the narrator's idealization of immoral practices from the legitimate moral message of the author falls to the reader. Even under "correct" interpretation of the novel,[4] the view that it presents is complex and nuanced. It is entirely possible that a reader could misconstrue the text or twist it to suit their own purposes. It is stories like this, for which a reasonable argument could be made that the story in some way romanticizes immorality, that I include under the category of immoral literature.

II. The Argument Against Immoral Literature

The most straightforward answer to the debate of reading immoral literature seems to be that it is, in fact, immoral. If studying moral exemplars in literature can help foster virtuous character traits, then so too can studying immoral literature emphasize vices. The virtues that are most relevant to immoral literature vary widely, as literature may be about any number of virtuous or vicious characters. However, based on available empirical research, Machiavellianism[5] is a relevant character trait that can be directly influenced by literature. One study has found correlations between a reader's preference for villainous characters and the Machiavellian traits in the reader themself.[6] Although this does not necessarily imply causation, it represents a potential concern. Extreme pragmatism often goes against virtues like generosity, honesty, and compassion. Although there is no proof that literature is what causes these Machiavellian tendencies, the correlation between them may be enough to convince some people that reading and enjoying immoral literature is itself immoral, given that it may produce or emphasize vices in the reader themself.

However, I don't believe that this answer can truly support itself. The most glaring problem with the argument is that correlation does not equal causation. Although vicious character traits and immoral literature may be linked, this does not indicate that immoral literature causes ethical character defects. It seems far more likely that people who already appreciate Machiavellian ideals find themselves drawn to literature that reflects their personalities and interests. On this assumption, the literature is not a significant contributor to the actual development of these vices. Further, there is evidence to suggest that the content of a book does not have a negative effect on the actions of readers, at least in certain circumstances. In a 2013 study on motive-related imagery in children's books, Engeser et al. found that although achievement imagery is positively correlated with children's academic success, there was no significant relationship between power or affiliative imagery and youth crime.[7] These findings seem to suggest that positive motifs can have beneficial effects on readers even while negative motifs do no harm. Thus, condemning immoral literature on the basis that it promotes immoral action does not seem to be a satisfactory conclusion.

III. The Argument for Immoral Literature

I propose instead that reading immoral literature is entirely morally permissible, so long as the reader is aware of the immorality of the text. There are two primary benefits that can be gained from reading immoral literature. Firstly, fictional immorality provides a more powerful way to comprehend morality on the emotional level than moral theory. Secondly, characters in these stories can serve as sorts of anti-moral exemplars and model what not to do in ethical quandaries. There are significant ethical benefits that can be derived from reading fiction that deals with these problems. However, the reader must be conscious of the fact that what they're reading is immoral. The reader must be aware of both the content of the story and its ethical ramifications in order to actively engage with the problematic nature of the text. Such engagement includes recognizing that the text is not a model to follow, rather than glorifying or validating the immoral actions of characters.

Perhaps the greatest ethical strength of literature is its ability to create an imaginary environment in which controversial scenarios can be simulated. As a medium, fictional literature allows the reader to explore hypotheticals without real-world consequences in such a way as to further develop one's own moral awareness. Philosopher Martha Nussbaum describes the way in which "To show forth the force and truth of the Aristotelian claim that "the decision rests with perception, "we need, then— either side by side with a philosophical "outline" or inside it—texts which display to us the complexity, the indeterminacy, the sheer difficulty of moral choice."[8]

In her work on literature as moral philosophy, she explores the value that fiction brings to moral philosophy by harnessing the emotional power of characters and narrative that result in a much more visceral reaction than moral theory. It is through the cathartic power of literature that moral truths can be comprehended more deeply than can mere theoretical knowledge. Literature as a medium is beneficial for realizing ethical truths because it is "a form that is the

most appropriate one for their expression."[9] The complexities of fictional stories resonate more deeply with readers than empty theory because of the sympathetic bonds to characters and parallels with one's own life that can only be found in realistic fiction.

With regard to immoral literature in particular, the dramatic moral reactions to the immoral behavior of characters can help readers to internalize the wrongness of certain actions in a way that is difficult to achieve on a theoretical level. Writing specifically on *Lolita*, Peter Levine argues that "doing the right thing is often not a question of knowing what is right in general, but of possessing techniques or skills, such as the interpretive skill that the novel teaches us."[10] He claims that by reading *Lolita* while paying special attention to the ethics of the novel, the reader further hones their ability to apply knowledge of right and wrong to complex real life situations. Literature, then, is a way to develop the Aristotelian virtue of phronesis.[11] It serves as a kind of transitional state in applied ethics, bridging the gap between entirely theoretical knowledge and actually living out the good life.

In fact, wrestling through these difficult scenarios can measurably help develop particular skills that can be applied to making more moral decisions in real life. Multiple studies have demonstrated a link between fiction and increased theory of mind.[12] Theory of mind is the ability to understand how others feel, which can be used to develop greater empathy.[13] This link is also scientifically demonstrated, as fiction readers have significantly higher empathy and reading is connected to social support networks.[14] Thus, literature can and does have quantifiable and beneficial effects on the brain.

A second major benefit of reading immoral literature is that it provides readers with a guidebook on how not to act. Just as studying moral exemplars allows a person to construct guidelines for their own behavior, so too does learning from the mistakes of others. Reading literature is a way for individuals to "experience" the consequences of immoral behavior without actually committing immoral actions. Moral exemplarist Linda Zagzebski, who advocates for a moral theory based primarily on people we seek to emulate or not emulate, argues that "antiexemplars" or "contemptible persons" have value as well. She claims that "exemplars are motivating, and antiexemplars are motivating in the contrary direction."[15] Not only is it important to be able to identify these antiexemplars and recognize the immorality of their actions, but a person can significantly benefit from learning not to act as they do. These contemptible persons act like they do. When the reader comes to terms with the fact that these three dimensional and nuanced characters are not to be imitated, this realization is heightened by the fact that the characters are sympathetic and compelling. act like they do. When the reader comes to terms with the fact that these three dimensional and nuanced characters are not to be imitated, this realization is heightened by the fact that the characters are sympathetic and compelling.

IV. Objections to the Argument for Moral Literature

It could be argued that none of these benefits are actually inherent to immoral literature specifically. A potential objection to my argument might be that it fails to fully take into account the role of moral or morally neutral literature, terms defined here by their opposition with my concept of immoral literature. Moral literature then, is literature which glorifies moral exemplars and generally agreed upon moral tenets. Morally neutral literature, although whether or not any literature can truly be entirely morally neutral is debatable, is literature that takes no stance on moral matters and concerns itself instead with non-ethical subjects. As far as the benefits of literature demonstrated by scientific studies, this objection has merit. The role of literature in developing theory of mind is connected only to the nature of literary fiction, rather than the actual content of the narratives. Under this analysis, a story espousing generosity would have the same benefits in developing empathy as a story that explored the brutality of violent crimes. Thus, it seems entirely plausible that given the vast literary canon, there is plenty to read without straying into the murky waters of immoral literature. Further, it is possible to find literature containing anti-moral exemplars that doesn't glorify or sympathize with them. There exist many stories in which the antagonists are clearly delineated as immoral and wrong for their actions, not portrayed as complex and sympathetic characters.

I rebut this objection, however, by arguing that it is the unique characteristic of immoral literature's portrayal of immoral characters that makes it valuable. The ability to glimpse the mind of outrageously immoral characters while simultaneously being somewhat sympathetic to them is essential to the realization that immorality is truly tempting. Reading immoral literature makes one aware of the lengths that people can go to to rationalize their own unconscionable desires and actions. Even the disgust a reader may experience upon realizing that they sympathize with such a terrible character is a healthy and significant emotion. However, these are all responses that are only possible with immoral literature. Real life is not a perfect moral experience with every action neatly labeled as "good" or "bad." Rather, real life is full of difficult moral questions upon which even moral philosophers constantly disagree. Immoral literature effectively illustrates many of these impossible situations and, when read with intent and awareness, heightens the reader's ability to recognize these complex and unpleasant occurrences in their daily lives.

To return to the example of *Lolita*, it can be said that "strange as it may seem, *Lolita* (the famous dirty book) meets Aristotle's criterion for excellent, edifying fiction."[16] Aristotle argues

that good fiction must provoke emotions on an ethical level, and thereby teach the reader an ethical lesson.[17] It is precisely the nature of *Lolita* as a "dirty book" that allows it to have the intense emotional power that makes it a meaningful moral motivator in a reader's life.

V. Conclusion

To shy away from unpleasant ethical questions is to avoid a broad swath of life. A person cannot study history, or the arts, or politics without encountering moral dilemmas for which there is no immediately clear solution, and often no fully satisfactory resolution exists at all. To be human is to ponder these questions and struggle with the moral implications of them. So called immoral literature provides a way to understand these aspects of life in a more holistic sense than ethical theory alone. It also allows the consequences of immoral behavior to be explored and understood, further motivating moral behavior, without actually causing any harm to other people. For these reasons, I argue that reading immoral literature is not itself an immoral act. Rather, reading immoral literature is entirely morally permissible and can actually have significant moral benefits. Immoral literature holds a unique role in moral education that other types of literature cannot fulfill. However, this essay only considers the moral permissibility of reading immoral literature with the awareness of its immorality. Further work is required to adequately discuss reading immoral literature solely for pleasure, or without fully understanding the nature of the content within the story.

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[2] Aristotle and S. H. Butcher, *Poetics* (Project Gutenberg, 2008), 4.

[3] Peter Levine, "Lolita and Aristotle's Ethics." *Philosophy and Literature* 19, no. 1 (1995): 37.

[4] The implication that there is one "correct" way to read a novel may lead to a discussion of whether or not authorial intent truly matters or if the individual experience of the reader holds more weight, and the existence of a "correct" interpretation is thus arguable.

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SUCCESSFULLY NAVIGATING EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY CENTURY SOCIETY: HOW WOMEN UTILIZED CHILDREN'S LITERATURE TO PREPARE CHILDREN FOR ADOLESCENCE

Kathryn Greenberg

Abstract: Women in eighteenth-century Europe began to create and enter into the sphere of publishing as authors of children's literature. These authors broke down barriers and faced public ridicule for accessing an industry outside of the home. In order for authors to face this sort of backlash, they must have deemed the lessons contained in their literature to be critical. These lessons such as honesty, familial loyalty, and maintaining proper decorum were so essential to the daily lives and survival of these women that they faced public ridicule and backlash in order to transmit these ideas to children. As these texts were designed for children, the lessons contained in these pieces of literature show what women deemed necessary to know in order to navigate and survive society. Through this lens, the lessons taught to children in these works reveal how women navigated the world of eighteenth-century Europe.

Keywords: children's literature, gender, values

I. Introduction

Within eighteenth-century Europe, women gained greater access to the children's literature industry, creating a modality in which to transmit essential knowledge to children about the world in which they lived. The lessons and moralities taught in these pieces of literature often prepared children for adolescence within the constructs of eighteenth-century culture and society. Permeating a child's worldview in order to teach a lesson about the culture or environment around them implies the necessity or significance of that lesson. Looking at children's literature through this lens provides insight into what mothers considered important. As women did not predominantly work in the publishing industry, penetrating this male dominated space was not an uncomplicated or painless endeavor. At times, women were publicly ridiculed for attempting to access the space. Here, women included information that gives unparalleled insights into eighteenth-century European culture and society. These texts, although designed for children, teach lessons and moralities that their mothers or maternal figures deemed crucial to life in eighteenth-century Europe such as honesty, familial loyalty, and proper decorum.

II. *Lessons from the Literature of Edgeworth: Honesty*

Though prior to the eighteenth century there were stories and handbooks for children, "sometime between the end of the sixteenth century and the end of the eighteenth century, children ceased to be perceived as a part of a large, semi-literate audience, and came to be perceived as pre-literate, that is, as people who must be schooled in literacy."[1] Rather than being perceived as small adults who already contained worldly knowledge, children began to be viewed as people who needed to be taught about the world. This shift in ideological thinking regarding children created a space where women could insert themselves. Women were not easily accepted into the literary world, but they were, on the other hand, commonly seen as overseeing the household. This gave women the ability to present a unique view on children's literature that men could not. For women entering the field of children's literature, the task of educating the next generation was not taken lightly, nor was it simple. Often including prefaces which spoke to the motivation behind the collections, these women were determined to universally improve the education of children. Maria Edgeworth, a female author of children's literature wrote in her preface that, "those only who have been interested in the education of a family…who know with what ease and rapidity the early association of ideas are formed, on which future taste, character, and happiness depend, can feel the dangers and difficulties of [writing children's literature]."[2] Edgeworth confirms here that women were able to write children's literature as they were well versed in the rearing and raising of children. As it was their societally mandated duty, they were knowledgeable on the development of children as well as their education.

Facing Backlash

As women broke barriers and entered the literary space, not all men were pleased by this development. Women, who historically were more likely to be confined to the sphere of home and family, were expanding children's literature in ways that men had not. These women were not abiding gendered societal expectations. In fact, they were shattering those expectations. A man named Richard Polwhele, specifically, had a great problem with this. In a criticism of women writing and publishing their work, Polwhele calls on his reader to "survey with me, what ne'er our fathers saw,/ A female band desiring NATURE'S law,/ As 'proud defiance' flashes from their arms,/And vengeance smothers all their softer charms./I shudder at the new unpictur'd scene,/ Where unsex'd woman vaunts her imperious mein."[3] Noticeably disgusted by what he calls 'unsex'd' women, Polwhele criticized women who were abandoning traditional gender roles. Although these women had the experiences of rearing and raising children- experience that Polwhele lacked- the credentials and experiences that these women held were disregarded due to their gender. Polwhele was not the only one whose disapproval was publicly heard. These women faced countless men, such as Polwhele, who disapproved of their participation in the literary sphere. Lissa Paul, author of The Children's Book Business: Lessons from The Long Eighteenth Century, writes that "for a woman to be both learned and literary in the late eighteenth century seemed something of an oxymoron, though no one was worried about the credentials of a man with no child-rearing experience writing a child-rearing manual."[4] Here, Paul draws attention to the double standards that permeated many of the arguments presented by men as to why women should not be present in the literary scene—specifically, in the realm of children's literature.

The Lesson of Honesty

Centered in many ethical arguments of the time, the importance of honesty was also emphasized time and time again in children's literature of the eighteenth century. Honesty, defined as the principle of not deceiving others, was represented in children's stories at various levels. It is a cornerstone of ethical thinking and societal sustainability. Without engaging young children in the ethical expectations of a society, parents ran the risk of rearing an immoral or criminal child. It is not outlandish to suggest that it is one of the most important lessons a child learns.

Maria Edgeworth's 1796 collection of children's stories teaches ethical and practical lessons to children of various ages. As stated in the preface to the collection, Edgeworth notes that "the two first stories, 'The Orange Man,' and 'Trusty,' were written for a much earlier age than any of the [other stories]".[5] The second story that Edgeworth mentioned is a story of honesty and the negative ramifications of lying. In the story, "The Little Dog Trusty; or The Liar and The Boy of Truth," two brothers were alone playing with their pet dog, Trusty, but the boys knocked over a vase accidentally. One of the brothers, Frank, who was prone to telling the truth, rushed to tell their mother what had happened. The other brother, Richard, was prone to lying about incidents like this one. When their mother returns, Richard claims that the dog knocked over the vase, and is ordered to retrieve a punishment tool for their dog. Frank admits to their parents that the dog did not knock the vase over, but since Richard had previously deceived his parents, he was beaten.[6] While the anecdote is quite simple and seems rather extreme, for a child who was just beginning to learn how ethics works, it would be easily digestible. This point was where children's literature splintered away from other forms of literature. The material was intentionally scaled down and diluted in order to make the ethical lesson more digestible. This profession sought to improve the ethical education of children. Since the intended audience was a child, the more simplistic and easily understandable the information was, the easier it was absorbed. Women experienced, while rearing and raising their own children, that there were gaps in the ethical education of children, and sought to rectify it. Imploring children to be truthful is beneficial to society as a whole; however, these women aimed to educate children on the matter in order to better inform the next generations of society.

III. *Lessons From the Literature of Pilkington: Familial Loyalty*

Family as a Necessity

Women progressed through life with the need for family. Without a home or a family, a woman would have found herself with a lack of social and monetary opportunities and mobility. Women knew the power of familial loyalty as they were taken from their childhood household to one of their very own as soon as they were married. According to The Female Aegis, a publication (1798) outlining the roles and responsibilities of women in various life stages, "home [was] the centre round which the influence of every married woman [was] principally accumulated."[7] The household in which a woman managed was the central, defining presence of her life. Women were expected to focus solely on their home and children, so there was no room in a woman's life for work, according to this male author. For this specifically, women were

discouraged from working, as it would be dishonorable. In a letter to his daughter, George Saville, Marquis of Halifax advised that "if you either desert [the government of your house, family, and children] out of Laziness, or manage it ill for want of skill, instead of a Help you will be an Incumbrance to the Family where you are placed."[8] To women, this was a warning. If a woman was to work or focus on anything other than the management of the home, she was a burden. As well as exemplifying how a woman's life centered solely around the family and her connection to it, this excerpt from the Marquis of Halifax discourages women from pursuing work. In the same way that Polwhele spoke ill of "unsex'd" women,[9] Halifax cautioned his daughter of the dangers associated with pursuing work.

In the eighteenth century, women were surrounded and defined by her home and family. These women were expected to manage the household domain and the rearing of children. Family loyalty was the only true safeguard that many women had. This dynamic of being tied to families for their entire lives surely impacted how important this issue was to women entering the publishing industry—especially in children's literature. Naturally, it is no surprise that women found this to be an especially critical topic that they wished to pass onto their children. It safeguarded them for their whole lives.

Lessons from Pilkington

Authored by Mary Pilkington in 1798, Tales of the Cottage; or Stories, Moral and Amusing, for Young Persons utilized the same anecdotal method of transmitting important ethical information as Edgewood; however, Pilkington purposefully added humor and amusement to her stories in order to capture the attention of the readers. In contrast to Edgewood's collection of stories, Pilkington aimed to not just educate children, but also to entertain and capture their attention. In Pilkington's own words, "for if the youthful mind can be informed at the same time it is amused, how much more likely is the lesson to be impressive than forced upon it under the appearance of advice, or in the form of reproof?" [10] Here, Pilkington addressed the children's literature industry in the preface of her collection. There was a mutual understanding between the author and reader that appreciated and understood the positive effects of humor and amusement on the child's learning experience. The popularity of Lockian ideology at the time surely contributed to Pilkington's line of thought; Pilkington's technique, at least, aligns with Locke's writings. Locke advocated for reading to be taught to children as an associative activity.[11] In practice, this would have consisted of the materials of which the book was constructed (such as wood or other tactically stimulating materials), reading aloud with a parent, or anything else that brings the child into the story as an active participant.[12] In the same way, Pilkington's use of humor aimed to engage the reader and the child.

The Lesson of Familial Loyalty

Combining amusement and ethical education in her collection of stories, Pilkington authored stories that engaged children and deepened a desire to understand the core lesson at hand. One of the stories in the collection, "The Sick Soldier; or The Dutiful Son" centered around the idea of being rewarded for continued loyalty and commitment to family ties. In this story, a wealthy woman meets and speaks with a young boy who seemed unusually unhappy. The boy then explains to the woman that his father was a soldier and was

wounded in battle. After meeting his father, the woman offers to house and educate the boy. Being loyal to his father above all else, the boy refuses. Through conversation, the woman offers to help the father receive a military discharge and welcomes both the son and father into her home. The boy was educated well, and the father was cared for and nursed back to perfect health.[13] Not until near the end of the story does the woman offer to house both the father and the boy. The boy refused to leave his father, which the woman greatly admired and respected. In appreciation for his familial loyalty, the boy was granted an education and home. This story, specifically, taught children unequivocally that family loyalty would always be rewarded, and it should be placed above all else.

Pilkington's story is not the only story that features conversations between the upper and lower classes. In fact, children's stories published during the eighteenth century often "presented young middle-class readers with countless representations of the poor and the rich, and with narratives depicting how they should (and should not) interact with each[other]."[14]Stories such as this one gave children a script to follow when interacting with other socio-economic classes. Although not everyone with expendable wealth was intended to read this story and house a boy and his father in need, upper and middle class children were encouraged, through Pilkington's story, to prioritize charity. A defining feature of the story, the benefit to the boy and his father is also emphasized. Giving children tangible evidence of the fruits which came from charity, Pilkington successfully taught children to have compassion and empathy towards others—as well as to give to charity when possible.

IV. *Lessons From the Literature of Barbauld: Maintaining Decorum*

Concluding the analysis of ethical themes in children's literature, the idea of maintaining decorum frequently appeared in these publications. Specifically popular in pieces of literature aimed at younger children, these texts emphasized the idea of etiquette and the proper way to act in certain situations. As these women authors experienced themselves, the ability to maintain proper etiquette stems from the necessity that women felt to appear in a sophisticated manner. This was transmitted specifically to younger children who might have been too young to grasp larger ethical topics such as honesty or familial loyalty.

Barbauld's Influence

Specifically written for younger children, Anna Laetitia Barbauld's 1787 publication entitled Lessons For Children From Two to Three Years Old centered around concepts essential and appropriate for those younger ages. As a caregiver herself, Barbauld found that "amidst the multitude of books professedly written for children, there [was] not one adapted to the comprehension of a child from two to three years old."[15] Barbauld, here, exemplified the motivational factors that influenced and pushed many women into the children's literature space during the eighteenth century.

These women held knowledge about the raising and rearing of children that was not being translated into the texts for such children. Barbauld influenced other writers, and her books "enabled parent-authors to use their credentials as the real-life caretakers of young children to justify their literary

efforts."[16] At this time, women were breaking into spaces where only men had previously had access to. Those same men also had opportunities to earn credentials which women did not. According to Paul, "Part of the backlash against the female writers of the Enlightenment— including Catharine Macaulay, Mary Wollstonecraft, Anna Barbauld, and Maria Edgeworth—was that they were constantly having to define themselves in terms of what it meant to be educated, especially if they were going to be in the business of educating." [17] Barbauld utilized her experience as a mother to qualify herself, and many others followed suit. Barbauld created a new qualification for women who wished to join the space of children's literature. These women knew how to raise and educate children regardless of any credentials or lack thereof. While entering the publishing sphere would have absolutely had its obstacles, Barbauld published this book, which was written for one specific child, in order to fill a gap within the industry that had not been previously explored. In the process of doing so, Barbauld opened up opportunities for women to follow in her footsteps and use their experience to better educate the next generation.

Lessons From Barbauld

The story told on the pages of Barbauld's book invited children to begin reading the short and simple words utilized in the piece. Along with the simplified language, the lessons were straightforward and could easily be comprehended by her target audience. Barbauld's storytelling followed a young boy named Charles. Throughout the pages of this piece of literature, Charles explores the dangers of the house such as dogs, flames, colors, and counting. However, the theme that underlines all of these is the importance of maintaining proper decorum despite these challenges that Charles faces.[18] At one point in the storyline, Charles hits his head on a table and his mother exclaims that she "heard somebody cry just now, [and she wonders] who it was. It was some naughty boy, [she fancies]. Good boys do not cry. Little Babies cry."[19] Rather than comfort the child, the mother chastised Charles for crying. For this to be included in a text specifically for young children, it indicates that proper behavior was crucial in eighteenth-century Europe. In a society that policed these women authors and how they were to act, it is no surprise that this was a lesson valuable enough to these women to pass on through their literature.

Women, during the eighteenth century, were held to high expectations of behavior themselves. Much like Charles, women had a script of behavior that they were to emulate in public. These expectations were strictly gendered and taught to young girls at an early age. Women were to emulate this throughout their lives. In a 1740 letter to a young woman, Wilkes instructs that "when a young lady is praised for her merit, good mein or beauty, she should not reject such commendations, with an angry look, or a scornful disdain; but receive it with ease and civility, if it be obligingly offered."[20] This direction, in particular, was not limited to childhood, but it was threaded throughout life. Women were under intense pressure to adhere to these societal rules, lest someone such as Polwhele reprimand her.[21] As this tremendous pressure constantly weighed on the heads of women, it is no surprise that women were so eager to pass the information along. Maintaining the proper decorum at the proper time was a constant factor in their day-to-day lives. This great, constant pressure to act properly impacted women in such a way that they felt it imperative to teach these skills to children at such a young age.

Conclusion

Throughout the course of the eighteenth century, women infiltrated the male dominated literary space and commanded attention towards children's literature. These women faced public ridicule and personal slander in order to publish works specifically for children; however, Maria Edgeworth, Mary Pilkington, and Anna Barabauld persisted through these hardships and published their works. The lessons that permeated the pages of these works, such as honesty, familial loyalty, and maintaining decorum, held such importance to these women that they persevered through tremendous backlash. It is no surprise that these lessons were at the forefront of their works, as they played such an important role in the lives of women. The knowledge of these lessons was essential to the survival of many women. Through their works, female authors of the eighteenth century transmitted what they deemed essential knowledge through their works of children's literature to better educate the next generation.

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AN OBJECTION TO JOSHUA RASMUSSEN'S 'FROM NECESSARY TRUTH TO NECESSARY EXISTENCE'

Alexander Jasso-Onsurez

Abstract: Being a contingentist about propositions implies that propositions exist, but not necessarily. Rasmussen (2013) gives an argument for the conclusion that there is some proposition that necessarily exists, thus rendering the contingentist thesis false. In this essay, I consider an argument against a key premise in Rasmussen's argument. If sound, my argument will successfully defend the contingentist from the clutches of Rasmussen's argument. I will not, however, give an argument in favor of contingentism. First I will give a brief introduction to key terms and the logic that is used to understand the arguments put forth. Second, I will give a charitable extraction of Rasmussen's argument in premise-premise-conclusion format and explain each premise independently and show where the disagreement lies. Third, I will consider an argument that, if true, defends the contingentist view and renders Rasmussen's argument unsound. Fourth, I will consider some objections and give my replies. I conclude that the objections to my argument do not work and thus, Rasmussen's argument fails.

Keywords: contingentist, proposition, premise, Rasmusssen

I. Introduction

Being a contingentist about propositions implies that one accepts that propositions exist, but denies that propositions necessarily exist. Such that there is some possible world *w*, where no propositions existing in w correctly describes *w*. [1]

Rasmussen (2013) argues that there is some proposition that necessarily exists.[2] The crux 2 of Rasmussen's argument holds that a proposition cannot be necessarily true, unless it necessarily exists, i.e., if some proposition is necessarily true, then it necessarily exists. If this is true, then the contingentist is in trouble. The argument Rasmussen presents is formulated from two modal logic systems, namely, **K** (here I will explain **T** throughout the essay; **K** is contained within **T**, so nothing is left out) and **S4**.[3] If Rasmussen's argument is sound, then there is some 3 necessarily existent proposition.

In this essay, I argue that Rasmussen's argument is indeed unsound. First, I will review

the key terms of the debate and the modal systems used therein. Second, I will charitably extract Rasmussen's argument and review the premises independently. Third, I will consider an argument that challenges a key premise in Rasmussen's argument; the crux of the argument says that there are different kinds of possible worlds and the necessity Rasmussen uses considers only some of these worlds. I will introduce a type of necessity that makes a pathway to a proposition being necessarily true whilst not necessarily existing. Finally, I will consider some objections and give my replies. I conclude that the objections to my argument fail and further inquiry is needed to support an argument for a necessary existent proposition.

II. Key terms and Modal Systems

I'll adopt the naming conventions Rasmussen uses in his paper, thus, I will use the following denotations:

- Let 'P' denote the necessary truth 'if there are philosophers, then there are philosophers'.
- Let '<...>' denote 'the proposition that'.
- With the two conventions combined '<P>' we get, <P> = the proposition that 'if there are philosophers, then there are philosophers.'.

The modal systems **T** and **S4**, are axiomatic systems within modal logic. In modal logic we add the following operators: the diamond '◇' which means 'it is possible that', 'possibly'; the box '□', meaning, 'it is necessary that', 'necessarily'. The system **T** allows us to conclude that, whatever follows from a necessary proposition, is also necessary. So, if it is true that necessarily, 'if P, then Q', and it is also true that P is necessary (□P) , then it follows that Q is also necessary (□Q). **S4** allows us to conclude that, whatever is necessary, is also necessary. So if it is true that □P, then it is true that □□P. [4]

I have explained the key terms and modal systems that will be present throughout the argument. I will now move on to my extraction of Rasmussen's argument, consider a few premises within the argument, and subsequently develop my argument and respond to a few objections to key premises within my argument. [5]

III. The Extraction

(1) □P (Basic)
(2) □P → □□P (Basic)
(3) □□P (1,2 MP)
(4) □(□P → it is true that P). (Basic)
(5) Thus, □P → it is true that P. (4, □-Elim)
(6) □(it is true that P → <P> is true). (Basic)

(7) Thus, it is true that P → <P> is true. (6, □-Elim)
(8) □(<P> is true → <P> exists). (Basic)
(9) Thus, <P> is true → <P> exists. (8, □-Elim)
(10) Thus, □<P> exists.[6] (See footnote 6)

I have offered a charitable extraction of Rasmussen's argument (2013: 3) and will now explain some of the key premises of the argument and note where the point of disagreement lies. I will omit premises (5), (7) and (9), which were premises added to help see why the overall argument is valid. I will also omit line (10), as the truth of this conclusion depends on the truth of premise (8) within the argument.

Premise (1) says, necessarily, if there are philosophers, then there are philosophers. To see the truth of this, we can use possible world semantics. If we have any world *w*, such that, it is true that 'there are philosophers', then it would thereby be true that 'there are philosophers'. It would also be true for any world w that if it is false that 'there are philosophers' it would still be true that 'if there are philosophers, then there are philosophers', given that a conditional is false only when the antecedent is true and the consequent is false, otherwise it is true. Thus, the conditional is true in every world whether or not it is true that 'there are philosophers' or false that 'there are philosophers'. Thus, necessarily 'if there are philosophers, then there are philosophers'. I don't deny the truth of this premise, so let us continue.

Premise (2) says that premise (1) is necessarily true, this follows from **S4**, I do not deny this. This is an obvious truth that both Rasmussen and I accept.

Premise (3) follows from (1) and (2) from Modus Ponens.

Premise (4) says that necessarily, if it is necessary that 'if there are philosophers, then there are philosophers', then it is true that 'if there are philosophers, then there are philosophers'.
This is quite plausible, just by supposing it is false that 'if there are philosophers, then there are philosophers' we get a contradiction. Thus, it is not the case that it is false that 'if there are philosophers, then there are philosophers'. Thus, it is true that **P**.[7]

Premise (6) says, necessarily, if it is true that P, then the proposition that P is also true. I accept this.

Premise (8) says that necessarily, if the proposition that P is true, then the proposition that P exists. Such that through **T**, we eventually get that it is necessary that <P>, thus, for any world w, <P> is true, but it is also true that <P> exists. This is the point of disagreement. I think that it is plausible and possible for a proposition to be necessarily true whilst not necessarily existing. The argument that I will give stems from our basic intuitions about the world. The crux of the argument states that, if there are

kinds of possible worlds, then the argument that Rasmussen presents only states something about one of those *kinds* of possible worlds.

I have reviewed key premises of Rasmussen's argument, explained the truth of some of the premises, and noted which of these premises I disagree with. I will now give an argument that, if true, renders the inference in premise (8) of Rasmussen's argument invalid, and thus renders Rasmussen's argument unsound.

IV. The Argument

I will propose an argument that objects to the conclusion in RM, where 'RM' denotes 'Rasmussen's argument'. First I offer a definition of *kind*:

We can take kind to mean:

'*Kind*' =df 'x is a kind iff there is some class P such that x denotes some way of being a P that is separate from the other P's.'

Now the argument:

(11) There are different kinds of things, different propositions, colors, food, numbers, shapes; different kinds of things seem to make up our world. (Basic)

(12) The totality of our reality (or total way things are) is made up out of kinds of things, such that as a set of existing things, each has a kind. (Basic)

(13) If (11 & 12), then it seems that the total way things are is of a kind. (Basic)

(14) 11 & 12 (11, 12 &-intro)

(15) Thus, the total way things are is of a kind. (13,14 MP)

(16) If the total way things are is of a kind, then there are kinds of possible worlds. (Basic)

(17) Thus, there are kinds of possible worlds. (15,16, MP)

(18) If there are kinds of possible worlds, then RM considers only one of those kinds. (Basic)

(19) If RM considers only one of those kinds, then RM correctly describes some worlds and not all. (Basic)

(20) Thus, If there are kinds of possible worlds, then RM correctly describes some worlds and not all. (18,19, HS)

(21) Thus, RM correctly describes some worlds and not all. (17,20, MP)

(22) If RM correctly describes some worlds and not all, then the conclusion of RM fails. (Basic)

(23) Thus, the conclusion of RM fails. (21,22, MP)

I will now review each premise and consider some objections.

Premise (11) is formulated from basic intuition about the world, namely, that there are things that have a class, and within that class, there is a distinction between each element of that class such that they share the feature of being a color while not being identical, i.e., the distinction between red and blue. So, each kind of thing is reducible to different types/kind of things (which are also a kind, i.e., a dessert is also a kind of thing), similarly, I have in mind this view of possible worlds where 'possible world' is reducible to different types or kinds of possible worlds, such that, a feature of one type might not be shared by another type. They are colors (red and blue), which is a kind of thing, but each a different kind of color. Another way to think about this idea of kinds is to think about propositions, this will work nicely with the main theme of this essay. There are kinds of propositions, in the sense that there are necessarily true ones, contingently true ones and possible ones. To elaborate, all propositions that are true, are also propositions that are possible. Propositions that are contingent, i.e., possibly true and possibly false, are necessarily so. Contingent propositions can never be contingently contingent.[8]

Necessary propositions are those that are true in every world, thus not contingent. The basic idea is that everything has a kind, kinds are everywhere.

Premise (12) states that everything is of a kind. So, if we take everything, and conjoin it into one big proposition, it seems that each of the members is of a kind. Such that, each of the kind has their own kinds, i.e., the color red is a particular kind of thing, among others of a similar kind, that are all part of an overarching kind of thing, namely, that of being a color. Likewise, we can adopt Rasmussen's ontology of true things existing, so we have the kind, true things, within our entire set of existing things.[9]

Premise (13) says that premise (1) and (2) imply that the actual world, which is a possible world, is of a kind. Some may question the inference here; why should we attribute some feature *f* that is a part of some particular thing R, to R?

To proceed confidently, I propose the following argument. Consider the following denotations, 'R' which describes a 'Rubik's Cube', '*f*' denotes some feature that is a part of R. Suppose that feature is blue. Suppose that R has some parts, and all the parts of R are *f*.

(13.0) R has some parts and some of those parts are *f* and all the parts of R are *f*. (Basic)
(13.1) If R is not *f*, then either R contains some parts that are not-*f*, or R contains no parts that are *f*. (Basic)
(13.2) R is not *f*. (Assume for indirect proof)
(13.3) Thus, Either R contains some parts that are not-*f*, or R contains no parts that are *f*. (13.1, 13.2, MP)
(13.4) R contains some parts that are not-*f*. (Assume for disjunctive elimination)
(13.5) Thus, not all parts of R are *f*. (13.4, Equiv)
(13.6) But, all parts of R are *f*. (13.0, &-Elim)
(13.7) Thus, contradiction. (13.5, 13.6, ⊥-Intro)
(13.8) R contains no parts that are *f*. (Assume for disjunctive elimination)
(13.9) But, R contains some parts that are *f*. (13.0, &-Elim)
(13.9*) Thus, contradiction. (13.8, 13.9, ⊥-Intro)
(13.9**) Thus, contradiction. (13.4-13.7, 13.8-13.9*,V-Elimination)
(13.9***) Thus, it is false that Either R contains some not-*f*, or R contains no-*f*. (13.3-13.9**, ~-Intro)
(13.9****) Thus, it is false that R is not *f*. (13.9***, 13.2, MT)

Through the law of excluded middle, either R is f or R is not f. Thus, R is f, viz., (13.9****) and disjunctive syllogism.[10] This argument provides a way to the conclusion that the 10 world is of a *kind*. The argument shows that in order for something not to be considered as having an attribute/feature that the parts have, then either none of the parts have that attribute or there are some parts that do not satisfy that attribute. The soundness of this argument rests upon premise (13.1). I will give this argument and premise (13) more treatment when considering Objection 1.

Premise (14) conjoins premise (11) and (12), this makes use of a valid inference rule. No further elucidation needed.

Premise (15) concludes from (13) and (14) that the way things are, the actual world, which is a possible world, is of a kind. So, the possible world is of a kind.

Premise (16) makes the inference that kind implies others of the sort. The idea is that if you have anything, say some color, and concede that it is a kind of color, say blue, then there must be some non-blue things that are also colors, hence a different kind of color.

To take this further, just by recognizing that there are such things as things, we commit ourselves to there being different kinds of *things*. There are those things that have truth values, i.e., there are true things, namely, 'propositions' and those things that are colors 'blue, red', which are of a different kind of thing.

Premise (17) infers from (15) and (16) that there are kinds of possible worlds. Such that, the infinitely many possible worlds that we describe when noting possibility says something about a kind of possible worlds.

Premise (18) says that if (17) is true, then the conclusion in Rasmussen's argument, namely, □<P> exists, describes one of the kinds of possible worlds. To elucidate the intuition behind this premise, if it is true that P correctly describes all worlds of a particular kind *w*, then P is true in all worlds of *w*. However, the truth of P correctly describing all worlds of a particular kind '*w*', only states something about that particular kind. It doesn't say anything about the kind of possible worlds y. So, within the scope of □<P> exists, that proposition only considers the kind of possible worlds that are attributed to *w*.

Premise (19) says that if □<P> exists only considers all the possible worlds within a particular kind '*w*', then is says something about some worlds, not all. To elucidate, if I say all cars have some property *t*, then there would be no cars that didn't have the property *t*. Similarly, if I make a statement that something exists necessarily, then I am quantifying over all possible worlds. Thus, to say that <P> exists necessarily, is to say that it exists in all worlds and not only some. But if (18) is true, that implies that there are other kinds of possible worlds, each with their own set of possible worlds. Thus, by not also correctly describing all of the other kinds of possible worlds, we have all other worlds of a different kind that are left out. Thus, if Rasmussen's argument were to remain sound, it would need to include all kinds of possible worlds. There is a *prima facie* good response to this and the above premise (18), and I will consider such a response in Objection 2.

Premise (20) uses the valid inference rule hypothetical syllogism citing (18) and (19) to conclude that 'If there are kinds of possible worlds, then RM correctly describes some worlds and not all.' This is reasonable, now for three remaining lines.

Premise (21) follows logically from (17) and (20) viz., Modus Ponens.

Premise (22) I believe is an obvious truth. If it is true that RM or true that (□<P> exists), then it would describe all worlds. As something being necessarily existent entails that there is no world where it does not exist, i.e., (□<P> exists) says something about all worlds, namely, that <P> exists in all of them. Thus, through transposition, if it is not the case that RM describes all worlds, then RM is false.

Premise (23) follows logically from (21) and (22).

I have explained the premises and I will now consider some objections and give my response.

V. Some Objections

I will consider some objections that I believe to be the most challenging that, if true, would render my argument unsound.

Objection 1: Rasmussen could reply that the argument for premise (13) just begs the question, it just restates what premise (13) says viz., equivalency. Specifically premise (13.1) commits such. It says that if something is not *f*, then either it has some parts that are not-*f*, or has no parts that are *f*. The consequent when false is equivalent to the following conditionals antecedent through Demorgans, and the antecedent is equivalent to the consequent in the following conditional through LEM[11]: if it is false that something has some parts that are not-*f* and false that it has no parts that are *f*, then that something is *f*, viz., transposition, what would make this antecedent true is if there were some parts that are *f* and all parts were *f*, this is equivalent to premise (11) and (12) being true. Thus, premise (13) is true iff (13.1) is true, and the key premise in the argument for (13) is that premise. Thus, the argument fails due to fallacious reasoning. Additionally, the inference in premise (13) commits the fallacy of composition, i.e., it is a fallacy to infer from part to whole.

Reply: Indeed, (13.1) and (13) due seem to entail one another, however, I maintain that this is correct and does not render my argument unsound. For, what then do we mean by 'this is not blue', if not it contains some non-blue features or no blue features? It seems that generally when we say something is not blue we attribute non-blue parts to that thing. If we deny the inference in (13.1) and say that it is false, then we are committed to there being a thing that is not blue whilst at the same time holding that it is true that all the parts of that thing are blue, and this is absurd. I urge you to find something that is not blue whilst being blue all over. Alas, there are no such things. Thus, accepting the equivalence avoids such absurdities as believing something is not blue whilst being blue all over.

The other part of this objection states that premise (13) commits the fallacy of composition. Which is to say that we cannot infer from part to whole, i.e., just because some part of an engine is a good working piece, say the spark plugs, it doesn't follow that the whole, the engine, is also a good working bit of machinery. Thus, the inference in (13) is fallacious.

While it may be true that some features of a part aren't shared by the whole, it doesn't follow that none are, e.g., if I have a stack of plastic toys, and it is true that all the toys in the stack are made out of plastic, wouldn't it thereby be true that the whole is made out of plastic?

I take the view that it is. If one denies this, then the same absurdity for (13.1) reveals itself. If it is true that the whole of plastic toys is not plastic, then we have a non-plastic whole made out of entirely plastic parts. Again, an absurd conclusion which I maintain lends credence to my position, that a possible world that is made up of kinds of things is itself a kind of thing, of which there are other kinds of possible worlds where a feature may be held by one and not the other.

Objection 2: Rasmussen can just reply by saying that the necessity in his argument applies to all kinds of worlds. Thus, it is still consistent to say that <P> exists in all worlds, i.e., the necessity that Rasmussen refers to is just a necessity that covers all kinds of possible worlds. Thus, it correctly describes all the possible worlds regardless of what kind they are.

Reply: This objection would deny premises (18), (19) and (21). I will consider this objection to be the most fatal to my argument if true.

Why should we think that the necessity Rasmussen refers to attributes to all the *kinds* of possible worlds?[12] If it is true that there are different kinds, then what may hold of one kind may not hold for another, i.e., the features or rules for those worlds, say, the *logical possibility* or *logical necessity* of some kind of possible world may vary from other kinds of possible worlds.12 So, the necessity within the *kind* that Rasmussen refers to, may be of a particular kind of necessity, i.e., it may not be logically possible in the kind of possible worlds that Rasmussen refers to for a proposition to be necessarily true and not necessarily exist. However, it doesn't follow that it is not logically possible in *all the kinds* of possible worlds, i.e., I can concede that it is not possible in the kind of worlds that Rasmussen refers to for a proposition to be necessary and not necessarily exist.

Suppose that there is some A-necessity (□A) that allows one to have a possible world w where there is some necessary truth Q that is true at w while not existing in w. Call the necessity Rasmussen refers to as B-necessity (□B), where a necessary proposition entails its necessary existence in a particular kind of world. To support this intuition, we can look to the modal systems described in the beginning of the essay. The reason that **S4** is stronger than **T** is that it permits one to do all the things within **T** but drop certain requirements that prohibit **T** from reaching certain conclusions. This is the reason why we can say that **S4** is stronger than **T**.

Similarly, we can say that the □A necessity is stronger than the □B necessity in the same way that S4 is stronger than T. I'm aware that these systems aren't necessities in themselves, but it does allow for some understanding of how the view of 'kinds of necessities' could work.

reaching certain conclusions. This is the reason why we can say that S4 is stronger than T. Similarly, we can say that the □A necessity is stronger than the □B necessity in the same way that S4 is stronger than T. I'm aware that these systems aren't necessities in themselves, but it does allow for some understanding of how the view of 'kinds of necessities' could work.

I'll give the following argument in support of this idea in the following:
(24) There are generally accepted modal concepts, that of logical necessity, metaphysical necessity and ontological necessity. (Basic)
(25) If there are generally accepted modal concepts, that of logical necessity, metaphysical necessity and ontological necessity, then there are different kinds of necessities. (Basic)
(26) Thus, there are different kinds of necessities. (24, 25, MP)

This argument takes an already accepted view about necessity and infers that there must be different kinds of necessities. Something that is metaphysically necessary, say Clark Kent being identical to Superman, doesn't say that Superman is ontologically necessary, i.e., it doesn't say that Superman necessarily exists. Furthermore, those things that are logically necessary, that either P is true or not, doesn't say that P necessarily exists, i.e., either my table is red or not red, however it being necessarily (here what I mean by 'necessary' is that [P v ~P] is true in every world, not that necessarily P or necessarily ~P) one or the other doesn't entail its existence.

The point is that it is plausible that there are kinds of necessities beyond the ones that we already generally accept. By showing that each necessity in premise (24) is of its own kind (when I say 'own kind' I don't imply that they cannot be true together) we can see why it is plausible to think that there are other necessities out there that might not be contained in our kind of possible world or contained but not in the same way, i.e., that of A-necessity. Thus, the argument shows that we cannot *prima facie* rule out the idea of a kind of necessity that would allow for some proposition to be necessarily true without necessarily existing.

Further inquiry is required if we are going to conclude that the contingentist position is the correct one. It seems to be equally plausible that there might be some A-necessity or not, proponents of either view would need to give a symmetry breaker for believing one over the other, i.e., reasons to think it is true that there is some A-necessity over not and vice versa. I have argued that it *might* be the case that there is some A-necessity or that it is plausible that there be some on grounds that we cannot rule out such, given certain held beliefs about necessity. I do not claim that there is some A-necessity, to do so would be beyond the scope of this essay. However, the idea of different kinds of possible worlds seems to back this up. It would be quite the assumption, if it is true that there are different kinds of possible worlds, that the necessity we attribute to our kind of possible world covers all the kinds of possible worlds.[13] Again, further inquiry is required to establish the dominant position.

VI. Concluding Remarks

In this essay I have argued that Rasmusen's argument for a necessarily existent proposition fails. The argument that I give begins with a basic premise about how there are different kinds of things around us, and implies that the conclusion in Rasmussen's argument, that □<P> exists, only considers some possible worlds and not all, and thus it is false. Proponents of contingentism might take the view that it is true that there is some A-necessity. Doing so would require offering a symmetry breaker for this view. Those who deny contingentism may balk at the idea of different kinds of possible worlds, and would require further reasons for believing such. I have hoped to at least provide some insight into some basic assumptions about our views of modality and necessity, and only desire that a pathway to a fruitful discussion lies ahead.

APPENDIX

I will give the following proof of the argument for premise (13) in predicate logic. Assume for proof that there is only one R.[14]

(13.0) ∃y(Ry & ∀z(Rz → (z = y)) & ∃z(Pzy & Fz) & ∀x(Pxy → Fx))

(13.1) ∀y((Ry & ~Fy) → (∃z(Pzy & ~Fz) v ~∃z(Pzy & Fz)))

(13.2) ∃y(Ry & ~Fy) (Assume for indirect proof)

Instantiate the leading quantifier of (13.0) in a subproof for a use of existential elimination:

(27) Ra & ∀z(Rz → (z = a)) & ∃z(Pza & Fz) & ∀x(Pxa → Fx)

From (27) by simplification we get the following:

(28) Ra

(29) ∀z(Rz → (z = a))

(30) ∃z(Pza & Fz)

(31) ∀x(Pxa → Fx)

Instantiate the leading quantifier of (13.2) in a subproof for a use of existential elimination:

(32) Rb & ~Fb

From (13.1) by universal elimination:

(33) (Rb & ~Fb) → (∃z(Pzb & ~Fz) v ~∃z(Pzb & Fz))

From (32) and (33) by modus ponens:

(34) ∃z(Pzb & ~Fz) v ~∃z(Pzb & Fz)

From (32) by simplification:

(35) Rb

From (29) by universal elimination:

(36) Rb → (a = b)

From (35) and (36) by modus ponens:

(37) a = b

From (30) and (37) by identity elimination:

(38) ∃z(Pzb & Fz)

From (38) by double negation:

(39) ~~∃z(Pzb & Fz)

From (34) and (39) by disjunctive syllogism:

(40) ∃z(Pzb & ~Fz)

Instantiate the leading quantifier of (40) in a subproof for a use of existential elimination:

(41) Pcb & ~Fc

From (41) and (37) by identity elimination:

(42) Pca & ~Fc

From (31) by universal elimination:

(43) Pca → Fc

From (42) by two instances of simplification:

(44) Pca

(45) ~Fc

From (43) and (44) by modus ponens:

(46) Fc

From (45) and (46) by RAA:

(47) ⊥

From (40) and (41-47) by existential elimination:

(48) ⊥

From (13.2) and (32-48) by existential elimination:

(49) ⊥

From (13.0) and (27-49) by existential elimination:

(50) ⊥

From (13.2) and (27-50) by negation introduction:

(51) ~∃y(Ry & ~Fy)

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[1] There is a lot going on here, to explain a few terms, a 'proposition' is a sentence that has a truth value, i.e., statements like 'the cat is on the mat', or 'Socrates is a man' are either true or false. Some sentences aren't propositions. Things that are commands would not be propositions, nor would questions be. A 'possible world' is just a fancy philosophical way of saying how things could've been. A possible world is a total and consistent way things could've been, i.e., it states how everything could've been while not containing any contradictions. However, it is not a different universe or dimension, it is a complete way of saying how things could've been. The chair I am currently sitting in could've been blue instead of brown. The world we live in is the *actual* world, but it is still a possible world, none of the infinitely many possible worlds is actual, meaning, they don't exist (however, there are some views that hold that possible worlds exist in the same way ours exists, we won't consider them here).

[2] Something *necessarily exists*, if it exists in all possible worlds.Which would include our world.

[3] Modal logic is the logic of necessity, possibility, and contingency. Something is necessary if it is true in all possible worlds, .e.g., P = P is true in all worlds, i.e., there is no world where the latter is false, thus it is a necessary truth that P = P. Something is possible if it is true in at least one possible world, e.g., it is possible that this table I am currently working at be red, thus there is some world w, such that my table being red instead of brown correctly describes that world. So we can say it is possible that such and such when there is a world where it is true that such and such. Something is contingent if it is both possibly false and possibly true. To use the same example, my table being brown is contingently true, i.e., there is some world where it is red, thus a world where it is false that it is brown, and there is some world, say the actual world, where it is brown, thus a world where it is true. I will explain the systems mentioned further in the essay.

[4] To explain the systems more in depth, T includes some modal rules that we can apply in an argument that makes use of our modal operators. The rules that will be of use here are necessity-elimination (□-Elim), and possibility introduction (◇-Intro). When we have a true premise □p, we can conclude p citing that premise and □-Elim. If we have some true premise p, we can conclude ◇p citing that premise and ◇-Intro. To reiterate, T allows us to conclude that something is necessary, if it follows from a necessary proposition. For those familiar with natural deduction, in T we can create a necessary introduction subproof, similar to a implication introduction subproof except we do not assume anything and only bring lines of the form □p, into the subproof, so we are assured that whatever we deduce from such is also necessary. However, we are required to drop the □ when we enter the line into the subproof, so entering □p into our subproof gets p. We cite the premise that we are entering into the subproof using T-reit. If we somehow deduce q from p in our nec-intro subproof, we can conclude □q outside the subproof citing the q within our subproof using the rule necessity-introduction. S4 adopts all these, with the additional exception that we aren't required to drop the □ when we enter a line into our subproof. Thus, allowing us to deduce □□p, from □p.

[5] Symbol key: '◇' =df 'possibly that' or 'possibly'; '□' =df 'necessary that' or 'necessary'

[6] To see the validity of this argument explicitly (here I assume some familiarity with natural deduction, using in addition, system T), I offer the following proof:

Proof: Assume the truth of the following premises (1), (4), (6) and (8). Create a necessary intro subproof introducing 4 and 6 using T-reit, we now have (□P → it is true that P) and (it is true that P → <P> is true), thus through hypothetical syllogism (□P → <P> is true). For (8), enter it into our subproof citing T-reit. We have (<P> is true → <P> exists).Thus, through HS we get □P → <P> exists. Thus, by citing (□P → <P> exists) from our subproof and using the rule 'nec-intro' we get □(□P → <P> exists) from our nec intro subproof. Open another nec intro subproof. Enter, □P → <P> exists citing the latter premise and T-reit. Thus, from (1) and MP it is true that <P> exists. Thus, by citing <P> exists from our subproof and using the rule 'nec-intro' we get □<P> exists out of the subproof.

[7] The reason for this is as follows: a conditional " →" (here, this means material implication) is false only when the antecedent is true and the consequent is false. We see that whenever it is true, that it is false that 'if there are philosophers, then there are philosophers', would require that the antecedent 'there are philosophers' be true, while the consequent 'there are philosophers' be false. However, if this were true we would get a contradiction. Thus, it is false that it is false that 'if there are philosophers, then there are philosophers', thus, it is true that P, just by assuming that it could be false that P.

[8] For those who are skeptical of this and are familiar with modal logic, I offer the following reductio. Let P be a contingent proposition, thus, ◇P & ◇~P. Now suppose this is merely contingently so. Thus, ◇(◇P & ◇~P) & ◇~(◇P & ◇~P).Thus, ◇~(◇P & ◇~P). We don't need to include ◇(◇P & ◇~P) in our reductio since it is a basic truth of T and we only need one side for the reductio. Note also that while this argument gets the conclusion that contingent propositions are necessarily so, it doesn't get the conclusion that contingent propositions necessarily exist.

(1)◇P & ◇~P	(Main assumption)
(2) ◇~(◇P & ◇~P)	(Assume for indirect proof)
(3) ~(◇P & ◇~P)	(Assumption in an impl intro subproof within the scope of a nec intro subproof)
(4) ~◇P v ~◇~P	(3, DeM)
(5) ~◇P	(Assumption for V-Elim)
(6) □~P	(5, Equivalence)
(7) ◇P	(1, &-Elim)
(8) ~□~P	(7, Equivalence)

(9) ⊥ (6,7, ⊥-Intro)
(10) ~◇~P (Assumption for V-Elim)
(11) □P (10, Equivalence)
(12) ◇~P (1, &-Elim)
(13) ~□P (12, Equivalence)
(14) ⊥ (11,13, ⊥-Intro)
(15) ⊥ (5-9, 10-14, V-Elim)
(16) ~~(◇P & ◇~P) (3-15, Neg-Intro)
(17) ◇P & ◇~P (16, DN)
(18) □(◇P & ◇~P) (From nec intro subproof, 17, □-Intro)
(19) ~◇~(◇P & ◇~P) (18, Equivalence)
(20) ⊥ (2, 19, ⊥-Intro)
(21) ~◇~(◇P & ◇~P) (2-20, Neg-Intro)
(22) □(◇P & ◇~P) (21, Equivalence)
(23) (◇P & ◇~P) → □(◇P & ◇~P) (1-22, →-Intro)

[9] By 'ontology' I mean what is taken to exist. Such that if my ontology includes Santa Claus, then I am committed to there existing such a being.

[10] For those wanting a treatment of this argument in first-order logic, see the appendix.

[11] LEM: law of the excluded middle (P v ~P).

[12] 'Logical possibility' means that which does not entail contradiction. 'Logical necessity' means that which could not have been false.

[13] To elucidate, if there are different kinds of desserts, say a chocolate cake and sour ice cream, it may be true that they are both 'desserts', but the feature of being 'sour' is only held by one of these desserts. Likewise, the feature of having necessary propositions be necessarily existent is held by only the certain possible worlds that Rasmussen quantifies over. Thus, to say that <P> exists in all worlds assumes that all the possible worlds share the same properties that would entail such, i.e., it excludes the kinds of possible worlds where that entailment is not shared.

[14]
- ❖ 'R' =dfRubik's cube.
- ❖ 'F' =dfBlue.
- ❖ 'P' =df Part of...

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