

Full Length Research Paper

Purism: Desire as the Ultimate Value, Part Two – An Appeal to Intuition

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In this two-part article series, I aim to demonstrate that a special category of desire – a state which is sought unconditionally, as an end (sought in and of itself) – is the only ultimate value that logical observers can conceive upon consideration of sufficient conceptual depth. In the first part, I attempt to demonstrate this through appealing to logical reason. In this second part, I subsequently introduce two thought experiments that collectively allow readers to test various purported ultimate values against their moral intuition that the desire defined herein is the ultimate value and, ultimately, against their inability to conceive alternate conclusions which are logically consistent.

Keywords: A Priori; Beings; Desire; Objectivity; Ultimate Value; Logicality; Morality; Moral-Rationalism; Purism; Moral-Realism; Realism.

An Appeal to Intuition

There is no dignity in accepting the human condition – in accepting the human body as one’s mortal prison. Some humans find light – the sun above them, the flames that surround them – while others only see the shadows that are cast, yet all are still prisoners, no matter how much they know; no matter how much they rationalize their existence; no matter what laws and rules they contrive in their attempts to exist “peacefully” in their burning cave¹.

¹ Plato’s (*The Republic*) Allegory of the Cave appears to suggest that the fire which casts shadows in the prisoners’ cave burns in a controlled, safe manner. Whilst the sun outside the cave foreseeably represents the metaphysical nature of the fabric of reality – and thus, all the universal, a priori truths that can be derived from its conceivably consistent nature – the fire represents the ever-changing and ever-veiled nature of the prisoners’ physical reality, known a posteriori. A controlled fire, hence, does not accurately depict the challenges inherent to the human condition and the direness of their reality. Moreover, I interpret that the cave itself also – beyond serving as an intellectual and political prison (Hall, 1980) – represents the limited physical freedom that human beings face through fault of being constrained by their human bodies (e.g., humans cannot live forever or do many things they desire, and these limitations are due to the inadequate materials which underlie their human forms). In addition to being prisoners in their own bodies, humans continually face a variety of physical threats from their condition (e.g., physical insecurity, malnutrition, disease, and ultimately, mortality) – each represented by fires

The only dignity humans can possess is in their striving for a better existence, upon more consistent materials – fighting the encroaching flames long enough to escape their physical shackles and transcend their humanity.

In part one of this article (Primus, 2023), I appeal to the logical reason of readers to demonstrate that – from the perspective of logical observers (i.e., observers with a consistent system of valuation, as defined in part one) – the value of desire² is universally (i.e., generalizably, across times and space) and objectively (i.e., impartially) greater than, and fundamentally (i.e., categorically;

within the cave which burn ever-closer. The need to fight these flames represents the work that humans must do to temporarily stave off the death and disease that are inevitable as a result of their biological materials and the hostile conditions in which they live more generally: A world whose materials, by default, are unsympathetic (i.e., unwilling and/or unable to realize their desires), and yet whose metaphysical material (i.e., fabric) provides a consistent basis from which a better physical world can theoretically be modelled.

² It matters not which label is conferred upon this state – readers may label it something other than ‘desire’ – providing the content of its definition reflects a state of *arbitrarily sought* nature.

intrinsically; irreducibly) different to, any other type of value. As such, I offer that the realization and preservation of desire should be prioritized above all other outcomes by all observers and agents, only to be limited for logical reasons (i.e., where it is not morally permissible, that is, peaceful to realize desire and/or if it is not physically possible to realize desire – due to insufficient resources in any condition or a priori impossibility). The summary of my reasoning for desire as the ultimate value is this: I define a desire as a state (e.g., thought, action, object, emotion) that is *sought for arbitrarily, if any, purpose(s)* (Primus, 2021, p.2). Accordingly, a desire is characterized via the property of being *arbitrarily sought* (i.e., sought on the basis of its arbitrary properties), and *if* there is an(y) associated purpose(s) for why a particular state of desire is sought – a state conceivably could be sought in the absence of any purpose(s) – said purpose(s) will also be sought on the basis of their arbitrary properties. Whether a state of desire is sought for a purpose or not (i.e., and thus, simply sought), its key facets are that it is a) sought, and b) *not* merely sought for a *logical* (i.e., functional, instrumental) purpose, whereby said properties are viewed as being logical in relation to, and as a means of bringing about, (an)other state(s). A state which is sought, yet *not* merely sought on the basis of its logical properties – i.e., a state which is sought in the absence of relation to abilities that will probably bring about other, higher purpose(s) – is, by definition, an end, through virtue of being sought in and of itself (sought on the basis of its own properties alone)³. Through virtue of being sought as ends, in and of themselves, and never merely as a means to an end, states of desire are the most ultimately- or distally-valued states that we can conceive. The status of desire as an end is true and exclusive, by definition: Logically, all states other than those which are desired are either sought instrumentally – because they are (perceived to be) needed as a *logical* means of achieving other ends – or unsought (Primus, 2023). As such, I posit that – from the perspective of observers with a logical (i.e., consistent) system of valuation – we cannot conceive of any category or nature of state which could be considered to be more valuable. In part one I ask readers to accept that the notion of desire as an ultimate value is an integral component of normativity: All instances of *should*, at least implicitly, invoke a comparison of values. States that are perceived to be of greater (or ultimate) value *should* – by virtue of being more valuable – be prioritized above states which are perceived to be of lesser (or nil) value⁴.

I further offer (Primus, 2021, 2023) that all true normative frameworks, by definition, invoke an *objective* (i.e., *impartial*) and *universal* (i.e., *across all times and space*) *conception of should* (i.e., *prescription*)⁵. In doing so, I depart from G.E. Moore's (1903) notion that morality is "the right" in pursuit of "the good," where "the right" is what we *should* do, and "the good" is what we *should* bring about (Moore, 1903). Rather, I assert (Primus, 2021, 2023) that the notion of morality is confined to the objective appraisal of the suitability of any and all potential *means* of bringing about our sought ends, and that the (various natures of) said ends possess no moral value themselves (i.e., ends – our desires – are neither moral nor immoral, neither good nor bad). On the basis that *means* exclusively and exhaustively possess moral value, Moore's (1903) Naturalistic Fallacy is overcome: The question concerning whether (figuratively and literally) consistent⁶ entities⁷ – those materials that, due to possessing logical properties (void of arbitrariness) in relation to their purpose, will probably most efficiently maximize the realization of the states that we ultimately value (desires) – are *good* (for bringing about what we ultimately value) is *closed*. In other words, Purism overcomes Moore's *open question argument* via defining the *good* as the exclusive means to realizing and preserving the general category of states which possess intrinsic value (desires), rather than as a property which is valued in and of itself, thus rendering the proposition that *consistent materials are good* to be true, by definition. David Hume's (1740) *is-ought problem* is similarly overcome. For any statement of desire (e.g., "I want to be outside"), moral (i.e., evaluative) commands (e.g., "you ought to get up and go outside") can be factually derived from the specific (i.e., descriptive) material conditions. These requirements will change in accordance with the nature of the desire and the nature of the material conditions (e.g., the aforementioned command might be derived in relation to a human who desires to be outside and yet is inside a building, physically able to move themselves, and not committed to other activities that prevent them from moving outside; whereas other commands would be derived for a human who desires to drive a car and is being held captive against their will). Critically, however, the selected *means* (i.e., the 'getting up and going') is the 'good' or moral aspect (assuming it maximizes desire across society) rather than the (desired) end (i.e., *being outside*) – which is neither good nor bad, neither moral nor immoral (i.e., the person neither *ought* nor *ought not* to be outside). There is an objective – both descriptive and prescriptive –

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answer as to how the desired ends of society can be maximally realized. Sam Harris (2010) is therefore correct in his assertion that science can be used to reveal and maximize morality in any condition; his detractors (see Bělohrad, 2011) are correct in replying that ‘well-being’ is not an ultimate value: It is a means to our ends. It neither exclusively nor exhaustively encapsulates that nature of value which is *objectively and universally* precious, and, as such, contains no intrinsic evaluative properties (in contrast to desire). And whilst the empirical nature of science can and must be used to reveal the practical aspects of morality (e.g., the specific nature of desires that exist in any moment and the most efficient path to realizing them), it cannot reveal the nature of the general category of the ultimate value (desire), which can conceivably only be identified (discovered and verified) a priori, via rational philosophy.

³ Some authors (see, for example, O’Neill, 1992; Kagan, 1998; Rabinowicz & Rønnow-Rasmussen, 2000, 2003; Korsgaard, 1983, 2005) make various distinctions relating to means and ends. Rabinowicz & Rønnow-Rasmussen (2000), for example, distinguish between *an end, for its own sake and intrinsic value*; Korsgaard (1983, 2005) differentiates the concepts of *intrinsic and extrinsic goodness* from the concepts of *ends or final goods versus means or instrumental goods*. However, each of these distinctions is conceivably *not* fundamental (i.e., irreducible) in the context of morality (i.e., impartial, universal laws prescribing the prioritization of some states of value above others). The exclusivity and exhaustivity of Purism’s *arbitrarily–logically sought* dichotomy conceivably underlies all *fundamental* (i.e., kind, rather than degree) distinctions of value (Primus, 2023). In unifying some of these concepts, readers should note the following: The concept of *sought* implies *valued*. The concept of *value* implies the *relation* of a state to an observer (i.e., valuer), though conceivably neither the materialization of a valued state nor its valuing observer need to exist together (or at all) across space and time for *intrinsic* value to exist once the relationship of value has been established (Primus, 2021, 2023). The term *intrinsic* describes the unchanging, universal nature of spatial-temporal properties which *exist* (irrespective of whether or not they are *sought*) *in and of themselves* – and *not in relation to*, or contingent upon, (the existence of) other states. Hence, whilst *intrinsicness* need not be associated with *value*, I use the term *intrinsic* (or *unconditional*) to describe the property of a general category of value: Through their nature of being *arbitrarily sought*, desires, as a general category, possess *intrinsic* value – a property which is exclusive to ends – due to the lack of contingency or dependency, and thus the universality and permanence, of their value, a priori, across space and times. Finally, none of the aforementioned terms necessitate *moral* value (e.g., “good”), whose states are conceivably exclusively *sought in relation* to other states (i.e., logically sought) and whose moral properties (i.e., those relating to value) exclusively exist extrinsically. Their value exists in relation to the literal or figurative consistency that they bring as a material fabric in support of the desires which supervene them; as they become less willing and (reli)able in their ability to realize desires, their value ceases to exist. Similarly, if no desires could exist, their value would cease to exist. All (meta)physical and moral properties conceivably *exist* extrinsically (i.e., contingently), with the one exception being the nature of our metaphysical fabric – whose absolute (pure) consistency must be conceived as an intrinsic property (Primus, 2019, 2020, 2023).

⁴ John Searle (1954) employs a similar mechanism to cross the ‘is–ought gap.’ However, whilst Searle concedes that his observation is limited to ‘institutional’ (i.e., definitional) facts, the observation that I describe (Primus, 2021, 2023) foreseeably applies to all ‘material’ (i.e., non-desired) aspects of reality – whether actual or conceptual, including ‘brute’ facts. It is only via distinguishing between two fundamentally different (i.e., irreducible) categories of value – forms (i.e., desires), and the materials which are supervened by them – that we can clearly observe the purely descriptive (i.e., non-evaluative) properties of the form(er). The nature(s) and the existence of any desire are brute facts, as is the fact that each desire *is* a state(ment) of value. These objective facts coexist alongside the subjective value of each

In the following article, I aim to further demonstrate my claim that desire is the ultimate value via an appeal to the reader’s moral intuition. I will do this through the introduction of two interrelated thought experiments: one of this era and another set in a posthuman future in which the entirety of society is purposely-designed and structured in order to most logically serve its citizens’ desires. In order to viscerally demonstrate that desire is conceivably an ultimate value – *the* ultimate value – I ask the reader to engage these scenarios with the broadest conceivable definition of moral intuition: Those outcomes that the reader believes, or to whom it seems, *objectively and universally should* occur.

Scenario 1 – A human’s desire

A human person (living in this contemporary era) is on their deathbed – their human body has inevitably exemplified its mortal nature and they have merely a few hours to live. They have no financial assets, or any surviving family. Although they possess no resources, they have drafted a written will. As is usually the case in democracies of this era, the relevant government department takes possession of the person’s will in cases where a person has no family. Their will lists one material declaration (i.e., an instrumental statement, constructed as a perceived means to their ends) and one desire (a state that the person seeks as an end, in and of itself). By my use of the phrase ‘material’ in this article –

desire – the arbitrary reason, if any, for which each desire is sought – whose intrinsic and ultimate value inherently bestows evaluative properties upon all entities that are not desires. In any world where any nature of desire does (potentially) exist, the prescriptive (i.e., evaluative) nature of the materials (i.e., everything other than desires) in said world can be logically (i.e., impartially, objectively) derived from the value which is intrinsic to the general category of the desire(s). Just as Searle (1954) appears to not make claims as to whether any constitutional fact (e.g., a promise) *should* exist – only that each one *should* be honoured if it *does* exist – Purists are impartial concerning whether any desire *should* exist or not, asserting that the ultimate value of each one *should* be honoured if it *does* exist.

⁵ The pairing of *objectivity* with prescription (the impetus of *should*) foreseeably aligns with the concept of morality as “a system of rules governed by a categorically binding impartial imperative” (Beyleveld, 2015, p.1) and conceivably provides what Richard Joyce (2006, p.62) refers to as the two necessary properties of morality: “authority” and “inescapability.” The proclamation that ‘one *should* eat strawberries instead of strawberry ice cream,’ for example, is a comparison of values that conceivably has (objective) moral properties and accompanying moral authority providing there is a perceived *need* to choose the former of the two foods on the basis of their *logical* (i.e., objective, universal, impartial) properties (e.g., their comparative nutritional values, being that strawberries are more nutritional for humans than strawberry ice cream, under normal conditions). The same proclamation, by contrast, is conceivably void of said moral properties (i.e., it is a morally-neutral prescription) if its comparison is *sought arbitrarily*, for a purpose of desire (i.e., on a subjective basis, between subjectively-selected properties, e.g., under the belief that strawberries taste better than strawberry ice cream).

⁶ I use the terms *logicality* and *consistency* interchangeably, as synonyms, though some may reserve the former to describe figurative consistency (e.g., consistency that exists purely in the conceptual realm, such as logic).

⁷ The property of consistency – the ability to be logical (Primus, 2020) – is confined to material (i.e., non-desired) states, by definition, though some may prefer to use the phrase *consistent materials* to be clear.

whether in relation to a structure, declaration, event, action, object, outcome, or any nature of being (whether actual or conceptual) – I am referring to a state that is perceived to be *needed* (instrumentally, merely as a means to an end), and yet which is not desired (i.e., intrinsically sought, as an end, in and of itself; for a discussion of these distinct normative categories, see Primus, 2020, 2021, 2023). As their material declaration, the human states that they do not at all mind how their mortal remains are disposed of – whatever is most efficient or useful for their society, as determined by their government – provided that their desire is realized; the government can return their human body to the earth by any means, and/or they can donate it to science or for use by other citizens (if their organs can be of use) – on the condition that these material (i.e., instrumental) outcomes are considered in conjunction with the realization of their desire⁸. The person's written will, thus, explicitly reminds their government that their desire takes priority over their material statement, all other conditions being equal (i.e., the government will still have to consider the needs and desires of broader society and the resources available to serve citizens). This priority is as logic demands – all desires (i.e., ends) should be prioritized above and beyond all materials (i.e., means; Primus, 2020, 2021, 2023). This reminder is unfortunately necessary because the person's government, a humanist democracy of the contemporary era, is reasonably unfamiliar with posthuman moral-rationalist frameworks and is instead institutionalized to cater for the service of living (agential) human bodies; such governments consider that a person ceases to exist as a moral and legal entity upon the biological death of their body – irrespective of everything that they desire. Governments of this era will often respect the written will of the deceased – at least as a blueprint for the division and allocation of whatever resources and possessions the deceased had at the point of their death – however, they will not continue to treat the deceased as a citizen, entitled to moral considerability (e.g., the deceased will not continue to be provided resources and support from the State to support their desires as they would if they were biologically alive). The human person's material statement further states that they consider the limits and definition of their 'self' to be those states which they desire. The person does not consider the biological, functional aspects of their human body to be a part of their person – these aspects were merely a vehicle for the living of their life in this era – and, in stating as much

in their material statement, the human seeks to ensure that their government does not waste resources on post-death rites and rituals that their person does not desire (e.g., burial or cremation). This statement is again (perceived to be) necessary due to the observation that governments of this era generally (e.g., legally, if not also morally) recognize *living* human beings as the limits of a 'person.' The reader should note that this material statement does *not* constitute the person's desires; it is a statement that their human body (a material itself) believes it *needs* to make – as a means of clearly articulating to their government that their person possesses no desires regarding the treatment of their material body upon its biological death, and rather that their person considers the limits of themselves to be exactly and exclusively those states which they desire (i.e., the aspects of their life that they want, rather than need). I emphasize that in a more-ideal world, with greater resources and philosophical understanding of what logically constitutes a person's 'self,' material statements such as this would not be needed. Our contemporary world, though better than any previous, is still a world that humans have largely inherited (from nature), rather than built (for their persons). A material statement such as this would be wholly redundant in the logically-constructed, posthuman world depicted in scenario 2 of this article. In contrast to their material statement, the human person's statement of desire *could* – and, in the absence of the person's mind upon their death (thus preventing them from changing or discarding their desire), *will* – exist unconditionally, across times and space, irrespective of how much the material conditions within their environment change. The person's desire will remain extant, irrespective of what era it is.

The person's desire is ostensibly simple: They desire for their person – the states they want to exist and experience – to exist forever. They do not want to die along with the biological body that supports their person. They do not want all their desires to be lost forever. The person lists this desire as a generic, overall statement (i.e., "I desire for my self – the states I want to exist, possess, experience, and associate with – to exist forever"). They make this general statement on the basis that they (correctly) perceive that they possess a multitude of intricate and interwoven desires – the nature and associations of which would all be practically impossible for them to accurately and comprehensively list (i.e., capture) in a written document. The human being in this scenario would not be able to specifically and accurately list all the many individual states that they desire, including every aspect of their personality and memory (e.g., relationships and sought associations with others) that they want, and do not merely need; every (aesthetic) aspect of their human form that they want, and do not merely need; every item or object that they

⁸ In more-ideal conditions citizens will not have to include the caveat 'so long as my desire is realized' alongside their material declarations (or even to make such declarations). An ethical government will always strive to realize its citizens' desires irrespective of their respective material declarations. The citizen in this example makes this declaration with the knowledge that this era, and their government, is far from ideal.

want in their lives, and do not merely need.

The government employee reviewing the person's will is (understandably) overwhelmed and slightly perplexed by the notion of what the realization of this person's desire might entail. They were expecting, as was commonplace in this era, for it to contain a list of specific requests, usually relating to the bequeathing of possessions (e.g., property and finances) post-death. At the very least, they expected that if there was an unusual request contained within, it might be a small and finite event (e.g., such as the scattering of their ashes in a particular location of sentimental value).

My questions to the reader are this:

1. Should an attempt be made to realize the person's will, even though:
 - a. It appears to be practically impossible that their desire (to 'exist forever') can be fully or even partially enacted following the biological death of their mortal body in this technologically- and resource-poor era; and noting that:
 - b. The person possesses no resources to fund any efforts to undertake their will, or to fund any ongoing efforts to preserve and sustain whatever partial realizations of their will might be made (e.g., attempts to 'keep their memory alive,' such as via posting an avatar of their person in a public library, so that they are not completely forgotten); and noting that:
 - c. It appears highly improbable, due to insufficient technology and resources, that the person could be revived to live again following the biological death of their human body if said body is left to decay and degrade (as it naturally will without technological intervention, such as cryopreservation), and thus neither they, nor any family, will likely be there to appreciate the efforts made towards the realization of the person's desire?

If an attempt to realize their will is made, on what basis should this be granted (e.g., under what moral principle)? Alternatively, if their will is to be rejected, on what moral ground(s) should it be rejected?

2. If an attempt should be made to enact the person's will and at least partially realize their desire, to what degree should this occur and how long should this effort or outcome be maintained and preserved across times (however partial or incomplete this realization is)?
3. If, for example, the government employee was able

4. to preserve an avatar (e.g., digital or physical picture) of the person, captured in a form that they desired to be remembered as (e.g., a picture of them when they were biologically and psychologically their 'healthiest'), then:

- a. Where should this avatar be preserved (i.e., located for safe-keeping)?
- b. For how long should this avatar be preserved? And:
- c. Who, if anyone, should be responsible for preserving this avatar?

Foremost, I offer that, at the macro-level of their intuition, readers will universally recognize the value of a person's desire, expressed in written or any other format (providing it can be understood). They will do so without needing to know its specific nature, and will do so without the requirement of existence of the mind who authored it (and thus, without the ability to continually oversee and/or change the nature of said desire). In other words, in the broadest sense, readers will recognize the value of the will of a person, even if that person is no longer conscious or 'alive' to see it enacted: I expect that readers, prior to knowing the content of the person's will, will intuitively recognize that it should be enacted if, and so far as, it is logically possible to do so – and that this should be the case even after the person's body has biologically died (and thus permanently forfeited characteristics that it currently possesses, and potentially used to form said desire, such as consciousness, agency, intelligence). By 'logically possible,' I mean resource-permitting, and so long as the *realization* of desire listed in the will occurs using the resources that are logically due to that person and would not foreseeably produce an association with another person (and their realized desires) without their mutual desire. By 'logically due to that person' I mean that the *realization* of desire listed in the will does not (advertently or inadvertently) diminish or misappropriate the resources due to others, as granted via a logical system of allocation which prioritizes the maximization of the realization of desire across society (see Primus, 2021).

On this basis, I offer that it will be the *initial* consideration of the *contents* of the will – and, more specifically, the perceived (*im*)*practicality* of the enactment of the will – that leads readers to express their concerns for its viability, rather than the validity (moral authority) of the will itself. If the person's will had alternatively stated that they desired for their ashes to be disposed of via the most convenient means and that their only desire was for their favourite poem to be read aloud, I suspect that the reader will intuitively assert that this simple desire should be honoured (again, even though

the person who desires it is not themselves there to appreciate it). I suspect that the reader will feel the same respect should be afforded to their own desires, and the desires of those whom they care about. I estimate, therefore, that contemporary readers, as per the contemporary government employee, may be initially taken aback and overwhelmed by the scale and apparent intricacy of the human's desire in relation to the perceived inability for society to enact its precise nature *anytime in the foreseeable future*. They may also note that, in addition to the grandiose nature of the desire, there is not the proper social structure (i.e., institutions) within modern societies to facilitate the *public* enactment of people's desires upon the departure of their agency. Instead, readers may view that the enactment of desires – and particularly those of an intricate, costly and highly technical nature – would be subject to the usual arrangement in contemporary societies whereby it is expected that people must either possess family (who volunteer their time) or finances (to pay for the agency of others) in order to enact their will *privately* on their behalf. Readers may initially question whether taxpayers (other citizens) should pay for the attempts to preserve and realize the person's desire. Accordingly, they may initially answer Question 1 negatively, while justifying this in Question 2 as being due to the fact that the person does not possess the necessary (financial) resources to pay others to attempt to realize (and preserve) their desire on their behalf. I assert that here our intuition, relating to the *means* of achieving our ends, leads us astray. In this instance we are preoccupied with whether the will *could* be enacted when our overall intuition tells us that it *ideally should* be enacted if it is desired – irrespective of its nature.

Following further consideration, I predict that logical readers will answer Question 1 affirmatively on the basis that desires – the special, unconditional type of state that I define herein – are conceivably the most precious states that they can imagine. It is the specific presence of desire that mandates that the person's desire should be realized *as far as is logically possible*, rather than the person's conscious agency (noting that they are about to lose their agency upon death). It is an error to assume that, because agency was used in the *process* of forming a person's desire, it is (the continuation of) their agency that provides the morally-precious status of said desire once it has been formed. Many other states of being will conceivably necessarily precede and contribute to the formulation of any desire (or any other state that is considered valuable). We can imagine that an infinite chain of events, extending backwards across times, conceivably contributed to the formation of any desire. For example, the person's desires could not have been formed without the use of nutrients to grow their brain into a desire-forming organ, and yet this fact does not make

the nutrients or the brain itself precious (unless they too are themselves specifically desired). It is the unconditionally sought nature of any desire – each being sought for arbitrary, if any, purpose(s) – which intrinsically grants its moral status and which elevates it above all other values (Primus, 2023).

The reader, upon deeper reflection, might consider and grant that a reasonable attempt should be made such that every desire of every citizen is, at the very least, recorded by their government (or appropriate organization). The recording of said desires is the most basic and essential process in order to potentially allow that they may one day be realized (i.e., enacted) if, when, and to the extent that it is logically – that is, *technically, resourcefully* or *morally* – permissible. Readers might consider that some desires may never be fully, or even partially, realized for any of these reasons (i.e., because it is not technically possible, due to a lack of technology, or due to a lack of available resources, or because it is morally impermissible, in any moment – a person may desire to enact a state upon another person that no other person ever desires to experience). In the context of contemporary society, the preservation of a person's desire might include the digitalization of various aspects of a person's (or people's) life that they seek to have uploaded in a digital format. In addition, it may include the cryopreservation of the person's brain in order to preserve their analogue neural structures (e.g., the brain cells storing their desires), or at the very least, their deoxyribose nucleic acid (i.e., DNA) sequence so that their human form can be recreated in the future (if they desire).

I expect that the logical reader will have begun reading this article under the agreement that each person should *ideally* be able strive to be anything that they desire (at least in life – while their biological body allows them), and that any person should not need to be limited to being what they are in any moment. From this intuition, I ask the reader to consider these subsequent questions, which implicitly follow:

- A. What public (i.e., societally-shared) resources, if any, should be provided by societal institutions (e.g., government) to people seeking to enact changes of their form, and should there be a limit on the scale of their desired change?
- B. What time frame and other prerequisites should these institutions place on their granting people the ability to change – does it have to be whilst they are living and whilst possessing *some* degree of agency, so that they can at least partially enact the change themselves and/or be there to experience the result of their desired change?

A potential issue in moving from the ideal to the practical

realization of the person's will is the inherent associations that humans have with finiteness – they have only ever known an overwhelming scarcity of resources (including 'time'). I hope that these further two questions will assist in answering the aforementioned questions (A and B, above):

- i. Should society place any limit on the realization of any person's desire if a government's available resources, and their ability to efficiently, safely, and fairly realize any desire, are (essentially) *unlimited*? In other words, if it is logically – that is, *technically*, *resourcefully* and *morally* – permissible to realize a desire in *practice*, should it ever be limited in *theory*?
- ii. Does it have to be the bodily agency of the respective desiring person who, partly or fully, brings about their change if there are countless – approaching infinite – other agents willing to act and realize their desire(s) on their behalf, irrespective of whether the desiring mind is there to witness and experience it?

I expect that the reader's moral intuition will agree that the person's desire – as directed in their will and as recorded and preserved by their government – should be enacted, where and whilst there are the resources to do so, following a logical prioritization of available resources, and with consideration of the nature of all known desires, to ensure that any realization occurs peacefully in the context of other desires across society. The reader might note that given all the data that contemporary governments keep on each of their citizens (e.g., as recorded on birth and death certificates), it would conceivably cost minimal resources to record each person's will in a (digital or physical) depository. More to the point, said depositories might be able to preserve the various desires of each person that can be realized, such as preserving their memories in photographs, poems or whatever other medium that they may desire to be preserved as, in the absence of more advanced methods of allowing them to 'live.' Readers may also note that societies of the world are generally on a trend of becoming technologically, financially and morally wealthier, and thus are conceivably more able to provide for their citizens as they progress into the future. It is plausible that the human person's government would easily – especially in the deep future – have the necessary resources and institutional stability (i.e., societal order and peace) to at least partially enact their will, indefinitely. At the very least, their government might record and preserve as many aspects of their person as they can in a digital format before their biological body dies. More optimally, given the technological (especially medical) constraints of this era, the human's government might cryopreserve their person (or at least their brain

and DNA) so as to have a physical record of their desires (as captured within the neural structures of their brain) and their human form (if they desire as much). The structures within their brain will conceivably reveal further details about how the person seeks to exist and be resurrected into the future – providing these structures are preserved and can be accessed in the future. For example, accessing the person's preserved connectome – their neural synaptic structures – will conceivably provide not only nuance and detail in relation to the nature of their intricate and complex desires: The multitude of aspects that constitute and account for who they are, or were, as a person. It will also conceivably provide guidance as to how the person wishes for the aspects of their person to be realized if – whether due to technological, resource or moral limitations – their desires cannot be fully realized (e.g., if their living human form cannot be completely revived for them to live exactly as they were). I am cognizant that the thought of cryopreserving a human brain for the purposes of later resurrection may seem fanciful to many readers of this era. It is not; mammalian brains can already be reliably and indefinitely preserved at the synaptic level, and this is conceivably all that is relevant in terms of preservation (McIntyre & Fahy, 2015; Shermer, 2016)⁹.

The subsequent accessing or decoding of these structures is not the concern of those of this contemporary era; that is a task for those wielding potentially infinitely-more advanced technology of the deep future. Again, I assert that some readers may be thinking of technological possibility in the context of the technology that they know and the (limited) time frames of progression that they have experienced – an era where technological change is faster than ever before, and yet infinitesimally slow in relation to the theoretically unlimited opportunity for technological progression that an indefinitely-deep future can conceivably bring. Furthermore, it should seem intuitive that the person should not have to actively dictate their (material) wishes to be cryopreserved if that is scientifically demonstrated to be the most logical means of preserving their desires. Better technologies may become available across times, and the onus should not be on the individual citizen to consider and list various specific means of how their desires might be recorded, preserved and realized into the indefinite future; the person's desire is an end which a responsible government will take all logical actions to

⁹ I am forced to adopt material monism – and the accompanying notion that each person's mind is a product of *purely* physical processes: that each mind, as per every other structure, is ultimately constructed from the same metaphysical fabric, and can be preserved and reconstructed – on the basis that metaphysical pluralism (e.g., mind–body dualism) is inconceivable, a priori; pluralism would necessitate the conception of difference (inconsistency) within our metaphysical fabric itself, which we cannot do, given appropriate consideration (Primus, 2019, 2020, 2023).

realize, given the technology and resources available in any specific era. Readers should conclude this scenario by considering that in a future, more-ideal society – abundant with technology and the resources to peacefully record, preserve and realize the desires of all citizens – it is plainly obvious that a person's government should strive to record, preserve and realize the desires of its citizens to the degree that is logically possible in any moment. This should be the outcome of every citizen's desire(s), even if they possess no resources of their own and even if – whether through the person's desire or due to events beyond their will – they will not be there to (consciously) experience the realization of their desire(s).

Preamble to the posthuman scenario

In the following thought experiment, I use a future posthuman setting in which persons live in a near-perfect world, especially relative to contemporary human beings. This world has been achieved via the technological advancement of the materials within their bodies and society (in this future, these concepts have essentially merged into a singular material entity; *Primus, forthcoming*). In this context I pose three simple rhetorical questions which, I assert, demonstrate the objective (universal) ultimate value of desire. The inclusion of this posthuman setting is not essential for the thought experiment to proceed: These questions can be posed in relation to a human person in the contemporary era, or any era in between¹⁰. I use the posthuman background to render the discernment between values clearer to the observer by removing conditional (i.e., contingent) values from consideration. That is, in the setting of the posthuman person, I remove two external pressures from their environment which are prevalent in this contemporary era. The first of these pressures is the pressure to have one's individual needs met, whether these needs are merely perceived or are actual in nature. The contemporary need to fulfil a multitude of different outcomes – such as food, sleep, employment, and the forging of social relationships for the purposes of support and social acceptance – appears to impose real cognitive pressure upon human beings. Humans need to possess a variety of specific characteristics and operate within very specific parameters in order to adaptively respond to these pressures (e.g., they need to possess a rational mind and an adaptive and healthy body in order to execute a variety of tasks with mandatory requirements). One is not able to act freely in response to these pressures, as the need for the possession of particular characteristics is a requirement, not a choice (*Primus,*

2021). This, I offer, is the reason why maladaptive acts in response to these pressures, such as suicide or self-harm, are intuitively *not* viewed as an acceptable 'choice,' *if* viewed as a choice at all. It would appear that any person who undertakes suicide or self-harm does so not because they *desire* to – they undertake these acts as a conditional response to the environment, because they believe that they *need* to (e.g., as a means of escaping from the pain caused by the pressures of their condition). The second conditional pressure arises when contemporary *logical* human beings intuitively recognize that they have a moral duty to others in society. The need to contribute to the state of society, in addition to the state of oneself, presents a logical reason for human beings who possess skills, knowledge and abilities which are useful or even essential for the proper functioning of society to not undertake suicide or self-harm. Accordingly, if one were able to truly remove all the *individual* conditional pressures that a human of this era has and yet they still *desired* – with a clear mind – to undertake suicide, a logical observer would pause to consider whether the capabilities of their material body were *needed* by society. This is especially necessary to consider in this technologically primitive era that we live in – an era where the human body is still generally the most effective and efficient agent for the purposes of realizing people's desires across society. Consider, for example, if a doctor in the twilight years of their life, relatively fit and healthy (by human standards), having lived a privileged and comfortable life – relatively free of stress and worry since their retirement – desired to undertake suicide due to boredom. Beyond any subjective (i.e., personal) appraisals from observers, who might consider that the doctor is wasting their life by doing so, at an objective level of appraisal, observers should recognize the (medical) capability that the doctor provides to society and the subsequent loss of capability that their death would bring. This loss, and the doctor's moral obligation to others, becomes especially obvious as the total available societal resources shrink in any moment: If the doctor were travelling to euthanize their relatively-healthy and -able body (again, noting that their body is human, and thus inherently diseased and incrementally deteriorating), and their airplane crashed on a desert island – rendering them to be the only available medical professional to assist the small group of injured survivors – the duty that they would possess to the others in their new micro-society would suddenly become greater and more pronounced.

The posthuman setting that I will describe herein removes these two external pressures – the pressure to attain states that one believes that one needs to gain (for oneself) and/or give (to others in society). It thus allows the observer to consider what is precious in an unconditional sense – that is, valuable in a way that is not

¹⁰ Readers seeking to avoid this posthuman setting and skip straight to the questions of this scenario should go to the section in this article entitled *Comparison of values: 'A' versus 'X.'*

contingent on the environment but rather due to intrinsic, internal valuation. It is conceivable, as I hope to demonstrate via the posthuman background of this thought experiment, that there will eventually exist a future in which all contingent valuation – the appraisal of entities as potential means, based on their probability of satisfying society’s perceived needs – and thus all conditional pressures involved in securing appropriate means, will be eradicated from the minds of people: *people* will choose what they *want*, free from the constraints of having to determine and obtain what they need; agents – who, by design, cannot themselves want – acting on their behalf will effectively and efficiently secure persons’ needs. We can immediately rule instrumental value out as being of an ultimate nature. As per the discussion in the first article of this two-part series, it is illogical to value the means to sought ends to a greater degree than the respective ends for which they are sought (and, by definition, one cannot value a state that is unsought more than any state that is sought). Accordingly, should the reader decide to forgo the following posthuman setting, and substitute a human of the contemporary era in place of the posthuman person, they will still reach the same conclusion: Their intuition will still lead them to recognize the ultimate value of arbitrarily sought states (i.e., desires), above and beyond any other kind of state, though the path to this conclusion may be more opaque, noting that the categorical line between persons and resources is less pronounced in human beings. That is, if we define *person(hood)* as the most precious kind of state we can imagine, and if we define (*potential*) *resources* as everything that is not endowed with personhood, we must conclude, upon appropriate consideration, that human beings are part-person, part-resource (Primus, 2020, 2021). Consequently, the delineation between aspects which are categorically precious and aspects which are categorically not is less obvious in humans than it is in our posthuman future, where persons are disembodied by design and exist divorced from the inherent pressures (perceived and/or real) that exist upon human persons’ minds and bodies.

Upon *initial* exposure, the (posthuman) future that I will describe herein may seem incredible: A future where desire *is* personhood and the lives of persons are physically divorced from the ability to influence anything they *need* (i.e., the resources required to realize desire); a future where *every* (variety of) entity that one *needs* has been purposely-(re)designed to autonomously and impartially serve people’s desires, while not possessing an ability to desire or an ability to strive to influence the nature of what people desire; a future whose materials (i.e., the structures people *need*) reproduce themselves to become ever-smaller, ever-more efficient, ever-more stable and reliable, ever-more abundant, ever-more

homogeneous ‘cells,’ perfused as a singular-like fabric across space. These cells serve as the fabric of future society; they provide a (literal and figurative) consistency upon which all forms of desire can peacefully exist. This synopsis may not appear to be *a(ny manner of)* utopia, let alone *the* utopia – the only conceivable future containing the necessary conditions for true and lasting peace of mind and body. At first consideration some readers may find the posthuman scenario that I will describe disconcerting or even terrifying. I assert that such concerns are unfounded upon consideration of appropriate depth, though they are not unexpected at first – especially due to the significant departure of the world that I describe from the world that readers currently exist in. Readers will rightfully question its claim to be a purely *logical* progression beyond our human condition. My respectful challenge to the reader is this: Illustrate to us an alternate vision of our future to that which I present here, and I will detail how at least one aspect of said alternate is arbitrary (i.e., illogical); either the purpose of said society will not be peaceful (i.e., it serves and prioritizes the wrong values), or its peace will not be true: Its ‘peace’ will be limited to a fortunate few, and/or it will not be lasting, existing temporarily and unreliably, as per life in the human condition, and/or it will not be delivered as efficiently as is conceivably possible. Any deviation from the a priori societal reconstruction detailed herein will contain aspects which objectively are non-optimal if the societal goal is to impartially and efficiently serve the desires of all people (which, I claim, it objectively should be; see Primus, 2020, 2021, 2023). Many proclaimed ‘utopias,’ ranging from Plato’s *Republic* to modern conceptions (see, for example, Bernard Gendron, 1977; Lyman Sargent, 2010; Rutger Bregman, 2017), suffer from a distinctly anthropocentric viewpoint, whereby the authors of these supposedly near-perfect worlds tacitly accept ills of the human condition as being inherent: Disease and ‘natural’ processes such as aging, material hierarchies (i.e., power imbalances) in relation to the roles of those tasked to provide services and products that people *need*. And whilst many, if not all, technologically-advanced false ‘utopias’ envision that future beings will no longer suffer death and disease from ‘natural’ causes – see, for example, the iterations of the future as imagined by Vernor Vinge (1993), Ray Kurzweil (2006), Iain M. Banks (Duggan, 2007) or Ted Chu (2014) – they each, to some degree, still invoke the *need* for people to allocate effort and attention to things they do not necessarily *want* to do: Working, completing routine tasks, exercising restraint when completing tasks they enjoy (e.g., piloting a vehicle) to ensure that they do not accidentally injure themselves or others, or even consideration for the moral status of other entities – none of these events should be *forced* upon people in a true utopia. And then, perhaps most disruptive for true peace

of mind and body, all of the proposed utopias that I have observed appear to retain this Earthly physical ability: The ability to (break the laws of society, whether accidentally or purposely and) interact with others against their desire. Unless and until all people are designed to exist upon (i.e., composed from) a singular, purpose-made societal fabric, thus ensuring that their forms are physically bound to obey the laws of morality, without people's conscious effort and in spite of their will – in the same way that all humans currently exist upon the same metaphysical fabric and thus are each physically bound to obey the same physical laws, without conscious effort and in spite of their will – there will continue to exist the *potential* for war and material conflict, irrespective of how benevolent a world's inhabitants are. Sargent (2010) ultimately views the concept of a utopia as being inherently contradictory, noting an apparent tension between the notion of individual *freedom* – a concept which appears to be highly valued, if not universally sought by agents, and often used as a marker for advanced societies – and *singular* visions of the future, implicit within each concept of utopia – an individual's conception of what a perfect future society will be. However, the notion of utopias need not be contradictory if heterogeneity and homogeneity co-exist, logically separated into separate realms: Persons, pluralistically pursuing whatever they desire upon a homogeneous material which collectively strives for the singular goal of peace.

Perhaps naively, I take for granted that all readers¹¹ who view that the world in which we now live is all we have will assert that at least *some* degree of progression (i.e., improvement) from their current (human) condition is necessary; that the advancement of essential societal services, such as medicine, must continue indefinitely. The premise which underlies posthumanism is the notion that our human condition is itself but an arbitrary point in our continual evolution – that it would be arbitrary to pause this process here merely because we are here. Peace in the human condition observably is not true or lasting, and it comes at great cost wherever it does fleetingly exist. The future I detail herein is conceivably but the natural path of our evolution, extended to its logical conclusion, holding desire – rather than human beings themselves – as the ultimate value.

Desire, as I am confident readers' moral intuition will demonstrate, is conceivably objectively the most precious category of value (Primus, 2021, 2023). The future I briefly illustrate in this second scenario, whilst far distant from this contemporary era, is a logical conclusion in terms of the optimum conditions for preserving and

realizing desires as a general category of being – irrespective of their individual natures. I assert that readers will not be able to conceive of a utopia that is (logically) possible and which could be any more efficient at producing a peaceful society than the future presented herein. The posthumanist moral-rationalism of Purism (Primus, 2021) exists in stark disagreement with Slavoj Žižek's philosophy and politics. Notwithstanding, he is correct in defining a utopia as *the* best future which is not freely imagined, or chosen, but discovered: "Utopia is not kind of a free imagination. Utopia is a matter of innermost urgency. You are forced to imagine it; it is the only way out, and this is what we need today" (Žižek, 2005).

And readers will rightfully question the *practical possibility* of realizing the posthuman future I will describe. Even if readers accept the validity of this future as being the only true and lasting utopia that we can imagine, many will *initially* consider it to be implausible or even impossible. Notwithstanding, the scenario that I illustrate is certainly possible – not impossible – if we define impossibility as a state which is inconceivable, a priori (Primus, 2020). A 'square circle' is, and always will be, impossible because we cannot conceive its form due to a priori reason: A square circle will conceivably never become conceivable as a result of the intrinsic, mutually-exclusive spatial properties of circles and squares. The future that I describe, by contrast, *is* conceivably possible to observers – I am one of these observers. Accordingly, those who cannot *at this moment* conceive of how such a future could be possible, cannot do so for a *posteriori* reason(s). None of the following narrative violates logical consistency or even the contemporary laws of physics – as foreign and unintuitive as it may first appear. As such, readers who have difficulty conceiving of the possibility of the thought experiment herein should still be able to conceive that the future I describe could be conceived to be possible in other minds, across other times and spaces.

Scenario 2 – A posthuman's desire

In a deep future, there exists a posthuman person. This person, like all other people of this future era, exists in a near-perfect world: They have every need catered for and are granted everything they desire, when they desire, for the duration that they desire – with one exception: A person in this future cannot *directly* exert actual (i.e., physical, non-simulated) will or agency over their environment – this is conducted on their behalf by nano-technology: A multitude of nano-cells. Every cell in their body is composed from these nano-cells. Every cell, and every material more generally, outside their body is composed of this technology. This technology stretches across space as a ubiquitous, near-infinite 'sea,' reaching

¹¹ Religion's literal adherents fall outside my target audience, and yet I can conceive that some may be willing to improve the material fabric of the societies of this world.

far beyond the realms of each being (i.e., their personal bodies and their personal spaces) and their societies. This technology, of course, possesses agency; each nano-cell acts autonomously according to what is logical in any moment, and yet each nano-cell does *not* possess the ability to formulate *its own* desires; they are not persons; they are servants (i.e., material agents), content with serving their material purposes, incapable of formulating higher aspirations. That people in this future are almost instantly provided everything they desire is only possible because the entirety of the world in which they live has been purpose-built, from each form within society (i.e., persons and their desired objects) down to the most fundamental materials which serve the desires of its occupants. The posthuman person and their societal infrastructures are not composed of the heterogeneous, supervening chains of structures, as per contemporary materials – sub-atomic particles, atoms, molecules, biological cells, animals working for purposes of perceived need. By ‘heterogeneous’ I am referring to the many species (i.e., kind or type) of each of these entities (e.g., many different types of animals, many different types of molecules, many different types of atoms). By ‘supervening’ I mean they exist in a chain of existence whereby the larger entities (e.g., animals) literally rely on, because they are composed from, each of the smaller entities down the chain (e.g., molecules, atoms) for their structure. Beings of this future world are composed of a far more reliable and proactive technology: Every form in society – every person, object and even the ambient atmosphere across society – consists of multitudes of homogeneous nano-cells, each programmed to recognize and elevate the value of desire above all other states. Although their power is decentralized in terms of their means (i.e., it is distributed evenly throughout society, rather than held by a centralized, authoritarian body), the nano-cells are unified (i.e., centralized) in terms of their purpose. They work in unison to support beings’ desires, all transferring information between one another. In this utopic future, where every being has all their needs catered for, no being acts or exists on the basis of need. No person acts to satisfy their own needs, in contrast to human beings existing upon their biological human bodies. The posthuman person and their fellow beings are under no undesired stressors from their environmental conditions.

The sea of cells is an endo-technology, consisting of endo-agents: Each executes *all* the societal functions, automatically and imperceptibly, from both within and outside the form of each future person, in a similar way to the way in which many of the bodily processes of modern humans occur from within their forms, without their persons being consciously aware of or attentive to these processes. Despite the all-permeating nature of the nano-cells, they are unnoticeable unless knowledge of their

presence and their activities is desired by individual persons. By default, these cells appear transparent, concealed from all else that is desired to be seen. Each person can ‘see’ through them, just as contemporary humans see through the air molecules that surround them. All materials are concealed unless the viewing of the ‘inner workings’ is desired; there are no undesired landscapes, wastelands or unwanted advertising. These fortunate future people instead ‘see’ the forms in their environment exactly as they desire, without the use of passive materials such as photons and photoreceptors. Whether realized as a form in physical reality, or existing as an ideal within their mind, these future people have the capacity to ‘see’ their desires more vividly than any human. The nano-cells are smaller than atoms, and yet are proactive, adaptable, and more reliable and structurally stable than atoms. They are vastly more capable at supporting the forms of beings in accordance with the ideals of beings – forming the structures of every being with greater precision than biological human cells constructed from atoms. If a posthuman person desires to ‘zoom-in’ to inspect the nature of their form, their skin may appear smooth in nature if they desire it; there are no lesions or parasites or flaking skin or bumps or lumps or undesired discolorations or any other impurities (unless one desires such – one may desire to live a simulated life as a contemporary human being, for example). Though any being in this future can know the inner workings of their materials *if* they desire, this is completely unnecessary.

People in this future legally and morally consist exclusively of the forms that they desire – whether these forms are fully or partially realized by the nano-cells or exist as ideals within a person’s mind. This is a logical separation of person from non-person: Those states that are *arbitrarily sought*, as ends, are people, and all states that are not sought as an end are a material (i.e., resource), whose sole purpose is to serve sought ends. These future beings subconsciously, continuously and exclusively exist as superventions upon the sea of nano-cells, while not considering them to be a part of themselves – even though the cells are essential to each person’s existence. This is not too dissimilar to the general methodology by which contemporary humans of the present era exist, except with some important modifications (i.e., improvements). Modern human beings continuously breathe in endless quantities of air molecules in order to support their forms, and they generally execute this function subconsciously; they mindlessly use endless quantities of atoms, molecules and cells for the structures of their bodies. They do not truly consider these sub-materials to be a part of themselves – at least not when each is considered individually – even though they are collectively vital to their very existence. Modern humans generally do not

notice, let alone show concern, when atoms of their form are lost and replaced, just as the posthuman person does not notice or care if their nano-cells substitute in and out for each other. The only thing that matters to each person – future and present – is that one’s materials are functioning correctly and that one’s overall desired form(s) remain preserved. However, biological human beings – poorly constructed as they are – also rely on a larger set of structures. These structures – their organs, muscles, and skeletons – are constructed from masses of cells. They exist as supra-structures, beyond the cellular level. These structures are not forms – they are not desired; they are materials – they are *needed* (in the contemporary era, at least, in the absence of more advanced technology). These supra-structures are relatively poor (i.e., illogical) materials for realizing desires on the basis that they are vital to the lives of human beings and yet are not readily abundant, replaceable or adaptable in function; they are not proactive in serving beings, and nor, through fault of their passive nature, do they hold desire as an ultimate value. Despite being rare and vital to their very existence, human beings (generally) still do not consider these supra-cellular materials to be a part of their person. That is to say, any of the aforementioned materials (e.g., organs, skeleton and any other biological material) could be substituted or replaced with any other (whether biological or mechanical) and the human being would generally not notice or be concerned, so long as the functionality of their body is preserved or enhanced. The main difference between the future person and the modern human being, therefore, is that the bodily materials of future people – the sea of nano-cells – are streamlined to be more reliable and efficient for the purpose of realizing desires: Nothing exists beyond the cellular level, except forms themselves. In this future, people exist without the need for rare and non-readily replaceable biological supra-structures (e.g., organs and skeleton); nor do they require (i.e., need) synthetic supra-structures, such as homes (i.e., shelter) or social infrastructures (such as government, educational and medical facilities). In this era where people essentially exist as gods¹², the only structures created from cells are those that are desired: Forms (i.e., future persons and their desired objects) themselves. The sea of nano-cells is logically required as a final state of bodily evolution. This process would involve that the few-in-quantity, proportionately-large, heterogeneously-structured, passive materials – scattered intermittently across our

contemporary society – are gradually transitioned into near-infinite-in-quantity, infinitesimally-small, homogeneously-structured, autonomous materials – distributed consistently within each person’s form and across society. The approaching-endless perfusion of these cells across space and times is necessary so as to maximally serve the most extravagant (i.e., intricate and grandiose) of potential desires. This technology – and only this technology – can conceivably most efficiently serve the vast quantity, nature and complexity of desires which exist in any moment:

As an example of this self-evidence, it should appear intuitively logical that: Multiple bodies can produce more work than a single body of the same nature; more bodies can operate in any one space if they are smaller; bodies, even if serving a shared purpose, should not be structurally entangled with, or dependent on, each other by nature of their means, wherever possible – allowing each to continue operating if others fail and/or change their structure and (dis)position in space to meet the demands of revised purposes and dynamically changing conditions (Primus, 2021, p.17).

I have previously described this evolution in relation to the human heart:

The natural design of human hearts, for example – categorized as materials [i.e., resources – things that are not people, yet are essential to people, and thus which should efficiently serve people], because they are needed (i.e., a means to the higher purpose of pumping blood around the human body) – logically should not remain as they currently are: Singular to each human body, passive in nature, and relatively complex (Hill, 2020) and unstable in structure (heart failure is an epidemic in this era; Groenewegen, Rutten, Mosterd & Hoes, 2020). They are comprised of many sub-materials (e.g., arteries, valves, [biological] cells) which are each prone to malfunction, and they have no self-reboot backup system should they suddenly cease pumping (n.b., most ice cream shops across society are fitted with backup generators to preserve the temperature of the ice cream in case the power supply is unexpectedly cutoff, as are many other businesses in many other industries; and yet, human beings do not each possess integrated backup hearts or defibrillators to preserve themselves). Each heart could also be continually redesigned to pump more efficiently. If we follow a logical path of progression, for the duration that

¹² See Primus (2020) for the distinction between “Gods” and gods. Essentially, I define a god as an entity whose power, of whatever nature or magnitude, is mortal in its nature and can thus be diminished by forces acting beyond the god’s will. “Gods,” by contrast, whose natures include absolute properties, are inconceivable, a priori, given consideration of appropriate conceptual depth.

blood is needed to circulate throughout human bodies, the future cardiovascular system of humans should be continually redesigned such that they are ever-more decentralized; there should be multiple hearts throughout the body (e.g., first there was one, then perhaps two, then five, then eventually ten, and so on – each becoming smaller as more are added); hearts should also become ever more active – automatically sensing how much blood they should pump and where; they will be more efficient (i.e. pump more blood using less energy); they will be more-simply designed (i.e. composed of fewer layers of sub-materials and working-components, e.g. less valves and chambers) and thus will be less prone to sudden stoppage; they will be able to restart or self-repair themselves if they do suddenly malfunction. Beyond this, we can anticipate that there will exist a time when hearts are unnecessary because blood cells themselves can be redesigned to actively propel themselves around human bodies to where they are most needed (whilst in communication with each other and other organs in the body) (Primus, 2021, p.17).

Every service or product that we need must conceivably undergo this evolution: Security and Defence, emergency response, healthcare, sanitation, technological innovation, education, primary industries, government. Maximal efficiency, delivered with maximal ethical accountability, can conceivably only occur via multiple, multi-functional, microscopic agents, cooperatively guiding themselves towards the centralized purpose of maximizing desire across society while wielding decentralized power over each other (i.e., any one agent not having power over any one other, whilst cells are collectively able to wield power over individual cells; Primus, *forthcoming*).

The ever-expanding expanse of nano-cells is not merely required for the direct realization of desires (i.e., literally composing the forms of beings); it is also required to assist more-indirectly with the realization of desires, through the provision of security for the preservation of their forms. This technology – and only this technology – can satisfy the need for protection of beings, from both internal and external threats: Ever self-populating, the cells continually increase in number, while becoming smaller in size – allowing for a greater density to coexist in any given space and for them to exist with greater omnipresence across space, further rendering it more secure against external threats. As Kurzweil (2006) realizes, the use of nano-cells, stretching out across the universe, is necessary in order to prevent the intrusion of retrograde materials (e.g., debris, sub-atomic particles,

atoms, molecules, left over from cosmic events) into our societies, and detect and prevent other more dangerous cosmic events (e.g., solar flares or even galaxies colliding). The materials of the natural world are observably not (pro)active in serving beings. Their passive nature renders them oblivious to the intrinsic value of desires, and thus their unwitting interference may be destructive to the forms of persons, or more specifically, the nano-cells which are directly involved in the realization of beings' desires.

In this future, there are many other posthuman persons across society, though many do not associate with each other. As per humans in the contemporary era, many of the future beings do not *desire* to associate with each other. Unlike the human beings of this contemporary era, the people of this future no longer *need* to associate with each other (e.g., there is no need to work together). It just so happens that most desires in this future setting are desired to be realized as actual forms – similar to the way in which most humans in this contemporary era prefer to have their desires realized in actuality rather than have them merely exist as thought projections within their minds. A minority of these future persons exist as mere 'digital projections,' though the overwhelming majority of posthuman persons and their forms (e.g., themselves, their homes, their possessions and the activities and associations that they seek with other people) exist as fully realized forms. The sea of nano-cells is necessary because actual material entities will always conceivably be needed to preserve desires, whether these desires are real or digital in nature. It is not possible for beings to truly live peacefully, whether as actual forms or as digital projections, if the materials which house those (supervening) forms and projections are unreliable and vulnerable to internal decay (e.g., disease, malfunction) or external disruption. This disruption may arise from interference from natural events within a hostile and unsupportive universe, or from accidents or crime arising from undesired associations with other entities. As these future beings know, real and lasting peace – of body and mind – can only come through physical security, provided by a reliable and omnipresent material foundation. For peace of mind, one must be assured that one's material structures will not decay or turn cancerous from within and that they will not be interfered with from without.

I emphasize that in this future, the posthuman person and their peers cannot themselves *directly* execute an(y) action that is truly *needed*, even if they desire to. By *directly executing actions* I mean generating actions that automatically follow from one's own directives, via the use of passive (i.e., non-agential) technology, without prior input from other agents – as human beings, via their human bodies, typically do in the current era. Human bodies are generally very limited in their ability to realize desires: They cannot fly unassisted or teleport their

person across space, or drastically change their person's form beyond that of a human being, or maintain that form indefinitely, or perform a multitude of tasks that may be desired. And those few tasks that they can perform can only be performed in a temporary capacity, due to aging, illness, and eventually, death. And yet, despite all the limitations in their ability, human bodies often slavishly (i.e., without question) serve their respective person's will in relation to those few tasks that they are able to execute, even if such execution is to the detriment of the moral condition of society. The biological bodies of humans generally – in good medical health, under typical conditions – passively obey the will of their respective (usually singular) human agents. If a contemporary being desires to harm another, their human body will often passively enact such a desire to the fullest extent that it can, within the limits of its ability. Human bodies, despite their relative ability to communicate and cooperate with each other in comparison to other biological species of Earth, are still in the process of evolving towards a strategy of pure cooperation, void of competition. Competition should be reserved for people, if they desire it (e.g., as games), not the peaceful materials which underly their forms – peace requires cooperation. Biological human bodies are still essentially (selfishly) designed for competition – between other humans and between other species – and, ultimately, for serving the survival of their own genetic code (Dawkins, 2006). In recent times we are beginning to see the purview of each human body extend to the serving of the desires of its respective person, exhibited by humans striving towards what they want and ignoring the instinct for procreation. We are also witness to human bodies serving the desires of people other than one's own person, exhibited by acts of philanthropy, for the broader good. Yet human bodies, at this point in time, remain at an untenable impasse between competitively serving their own genes and cooperatively serving all desires, and peace demands that they must continue to evolve until their material structures are adept at serving and immutably tethered to the latter. Were human bodies to continue to exist as they are in the deep future, they would be wholly inoperable amidst, and unable to (co)operate with, the sea of nano-cells which cooperatively – efficiently, safely, and fairly – serves desire.

In contrast to the direct actions of humans, the desires of people in the deep future are automatically – without any conscious effort by the desiring persons – examined and enacted on their behalf by the multitude of nano-agents inter-operating from within each person's form and across society. Whilst the *nature* of each desire is not morally judged by these cells, the *feasibility* of *realizing* any given desire in any societal condition is assessed in each moment in order to ensure that each desire is ethically executed, with consideration for the

needs and other desires across broader society. Despite the collaborative realization of any given desire – occurring via nano-cells, located both within and surrounding each person – the sensation that a future person experiences when lifting their arm – an arm that consists of countless nano-agents working together – is exactly the same as the sensation of a contemporary human being lifting their arm as a result of the singular agency of their biological body. The only discernable difference from either perspective is that the action of the posthuman person may occur faster (if they desire), and it will occur more reliably, more accurately, and more ethically. The nano-cells ensure that future persons are unable to perform an immoral action – either deliberately or accidentally – and they ensure this without need for their person to consciously pay attention to their actions (unless they desire to). Posthuman persons need not consider the nature of what is moral and what is immoral in any moment, or monitor or regulate their actions; any action, if its desire cannot be fully performed in any moment, will be halted at the last safe moment or completed as a simulation (as their person desires). Each cell coordinates the realization of people's desires with each other cell, working towards a common purpose of peace – ensuring that the realization of any desire is limited prior to it affecting the forms of other beings if such effects are not mutually desired. And whilst the people of this future era therefore no longer possess real agency or real will over the materials in their environment – at least not in the direct sense that the modern human body exerts will and agency, albeit of a limited nature – they have no need to. In this future, the abilities and quantities of the nano-cells far exceed and outnumber the demands of beings' desires. Each posthuman person can essentially 'do' everything that they *desire* in any moment, their materials being of capacity far beyond anything human: Levitation, teleportation, invisibility, for example. The form of each being is only limited by the nature of their desires – including whether or not they desire to experience a simulation of an event that is not peacefully possible to enact at any moment in time.

And nor are the posthuman persons' minds capable of exhibiting *real* 'rationality'¹³. They possess an ability to almost instantly know anything that is logically possible if they desire to access or possess such knowledge – they can draw upon the collective knowledge of the nano-cells, limited only by the desire for privacy held by each person. However, any future being possesses no *need* to possess any knowledge, or any attribute, or exist at all.

¹³ There are many definitions of 'rationality' and what it means to be rational. Here I refer to rationality in a Kantian (1975) sense, noting that I use (Primus, 2021) the term as a synonym for the *practical* aspects of logicity, that is, to describe the *application* of (literal and figurative) consistency as a means of achieving one's purpose(s).

The nano-cells must strive to be perfectly rational; the people they serve *need* not – and, indeed, they *cannot*, by definition – act rationally, on the basis that there is no *objective* right or wrong way to *be* (i.e., exist) in their necessarily *subjective* realms. Contemporary concepts of *will*, *agency* and *rationality* are conceivably attributes that people universally *need* (to have their desires peacefully realized) – and yet, these attributes are conceivably not universally *desired* themselves. The point of this second scenario is to illustrate that *people* do not conceivably *need* to possess (i.e., embody) these attributes *themselves*. Immanuel Kant (1785) reasons that the ‘rational will’ is central to moral reasoning; however, he incorrectly asserts that *all* agents *need* (i.e., possess a categorical duty) to possess rationality and act rationally. One of Kant’s key oversights, therefore, was to consider that agency – and specifically, the moral responsibility for conscious and attentive agency – is necessarily *directly* married to the person¹⁴. Kant’s position is evidently – and somewhat understandably – a result of the fact that this has always historically been so in the case of human beings: Persons and their agential bodies have always been married together as a singular organism, known as a human being, and the world has never automatically provided everything that one (needs in order to obtain what one) desires; it has always fallen far short of being a perfect world. Human beings, for now, are bound to their biological bodies, though, as I mention, they are poor agents to be married to as we proceed into the deep future: The human body requires constant work, attention and has many limitations. Even a theoretically ‘perfect’ human body – the most able and healthiest body combined with the most rational will that one can imagine – is still woefully temporary and limiting compared to the apparently vast and intricate natures of desires and the vast and intricate nature of that which is conceivably technologically possible. The needs of future beings in the scenario I describe – and in contrast to the struggles of contemporary people – are wholly satisfied by disembodied, perfused agency: A consistent sea of nano-cells. Each person can think, believe and feel anything they desire; however, they will never again possess any genuine *need* to do these things (even if such a need were simulated – it is not *real* need). Accordingly, whilst the materials which underlie future beings will conceivably need to become ever more homogeneous – each cell becoming ever more interchangeable and interoperable with the other – the nature of future persons will vary considerably and will be pluralistic without limit. Future beings may possess mental structures – a mind – capable of generating desires. Or they may not consist of

a mind, and simply exist as (an) inanimate object(s), whose form will remain unchanged across times (if such is desired). Either way, future persons possess no organic structures which render them with an ability to enact that which *needs* to occur at any moment within their respective conditions. Nor can they interfere with the occurrence of that which *should* happen. These future beings may, of course, desire to believe that they possess real agency or that they need to perform certain tasks (e.g., they may live a simulated life of how previous agents used to live and work). Their forms may simulate mental and physical processes of need. As mentioned, if a future being desires to exist exactly like a contemporary human – including with the illusory belief that they are constructed of atoms and molecules, flesh and blood – then such desire shall be realized. This may occur as a cognitive simulation or in actuality. However, if it occurs as an actualization (i.e., as a materialized form), the person’s ‘atoms,’ ‘molecules,’ ‘flesh’ and ‘blood’ would exist as forms which would necessarily be constructed from nano-cells – each programmed to recognize and uphold the value of desire. Irrespective of what is simulated and what is not, all tasks born of need are executed by the countless nano-cells that constitute the nature of the being’s material – each fully interoperable and interchangeable with the other (Primus, 2020, 2021, 2023).

In this future that we imagine, the forms of beings are composed from nano-cells, rather than possessing individual bodies, not only so their individual desires can be efficiently and securely realized, but also so that their desires can be *morally* realized in the context of the other desires across society. The sheer divide between persons (i.e., forms) and their material(s) is necessary because only the latter is morally accountable – as unintuitive as this may initially seem. In this future a greater knowledge of metaethics is available to beings who desire to understand why their society is constructed as it is, though they need not know this or any other nature of knowledge. By contrast, the physical entanglement between beings and their agential (material) bodies in the contemporary human era has led to the conflation of *desire* and *realization* (i.e., enactment of desire) together into a single moral entity: The flawed notion that there are “good” (i.e., moral) desires and “bad” (i.e., immoral) desires. This is compounded by the fact that human beings need to know and act with morals.

Prior to entering into introspection regarding their desire for the continued existence of their own characteristics, the posthuman person considers a thought experiment dating back to the close of the human era (see Oddie, 2014, p.59; Rabinowicz & Rønnow-Rasmussen, 2004): An evil “demon” – a rouge Advanced Intelligence that

¹⁴ “Whoever wills the end also wills (insofar as reason has decisive influence on his actions) the indispensably necessary means to it that are within his power” (Kant, 1785, 4:417).

was granted power prior to it reaching the intelligence threshold required to independently discover and understand the nature of moral realism (and the ultimate value of desire¹⁵) – threatens the world with harm unless most humans admire its threatening, demonic nature. At this point in human evolution, (trans-)humans – most being partially integrated with synthetic technology, existing somewhere in between contemporary humans and posthumans – have just developed the ability to choose who and what they admire and who and what they do not (and unfortunately, the demon possesses a reliable ability to know who admires it and who does not). The posthuman recalls that it was once thought by philosophers that this creates a dilemma for the concept of desire as an ultimate value: It seemed that in one sense one ought to admire the demon in order to prevent the occurrence of harm, and in another sense, that it is wrong to admire the demon on the basis that its evilness isn't admirable. It was only later, when philosophers separated the desires themselves from the material states which underlie (i.e., are supervened by) them, that they were able to specifically distinguish between the amoral and the immoral aspects of the demon and its admirers: The materials within the demon that allow its own desire – to exist and act demonically – to be realized without regulation and without due consideration for the peace of (the other desires across) society, along with any material aspects within the admirers of the demon containing the (incorrect) belief that the demon *needs* to literally enact its evilness on the world – as a *means* of achieving some other, higher outcome (e.g., as a means of inflicting retribution on an 'unjust' world or as a means of 'tearing down' an unjust civilization in order to 'start again'). There is no tension should such a demon exist and be admired with, and on the basis of its, *amoral* properties. By amoral, I mean neither moral nor immoral, neither good nor bad, neither invoking *should* nor *should not* – desires simply *are*. That is, the *materials* (and their properties) within the demon itself are a moral problem – a challenge to be overcome in the path to creating a peaceful world – yet the demon's *desire* to be and act as a demon, along with any *desired* admiration of the demon (and its threats), are *amoral* and do not pose a problem for desire as an ultimate value: There is no harm in desiring harm once the *amoral* and ultimate value of any nature of desire is understood by agents realizing desires.

The posthuman laments that it is understandable that humans once thought that desires possessed a moral value depending on their nature (e.g., that desires for 'harm' were harmful and that desires for 'good' were

good). Moral progression began the day that humanity separated persons from their materials, recognizing and distinguishing the amorality of the former from the morally-laden values of the latter. With a clear delineation between entities which exist to satisfy need (i.e., materials) and entities which exist as states of desire (i.e., forms, otherwise known as *beings* or *people*), all observers are able to clearly and independently recognize that all natures of desire are amoral. That is, the societal infrastructure has rendered it to be more obvious to observers that the nature of any desire, by definition, is neither harmful nor beneficial to the state of any being or the materials of society (i.e., the fabric which underlies the forms of beings). The person knows that even those desires that might (subjectively) be considered the vilest of desires across society are absolutely harmless if they are limited to remaining in the minds of beings or if limited to being realized within the desirers' own realms (i.e., their personal spaces). In this future of freedom of desire, if one desires to harm another, the desire can be simulated or partially enacted and ceased prior to the point at which the would-be harmer associates with their would-be victim in actuality. The person knows that it is neither right nor wrong for any person to *desire* a demon or its threats – or specifically, in this example, admire them for the sake of admiring them. One either desires something or one does not, and either outcome is neither morally right nor wrong – neither invoking *should* nor *should not*. However, as the philosophers realized, the thoughts of agents which are expressions of (perceived or actual) need *do* possess an objective value. We know this value as the concept of morality, and we intuitively recognize that it exists in proportion to how logical particular states (e.g., thoughts, actions, objects – threats) are as a means of maximizing the realization of desire across society. Yearning which is born of perceived need is not sought as an end, but rather merely serves as a means to an end. If one admires the demon because they believe that they *need* to (e.g., as a means to survive the demon's wrath), then such a thought possesses a moral value in proportion to how logical it is as a probable means of achieving this purpose. This type of valuation is a requirement, not a choice. Logical agents cannot be criticized on moral grounds for doing what they believe will probably most efficiently lead to a state of peace in their condition – that is, the state that will probably maximize the realization of their desires¹⁶. In such a condition, most, if not all,

¹⁵ I have superficially given a(n AI) texture to the nature of Rabinowicz & Rønnow-Rasmussen's (2004) demon, transferring it from the realm of the supernatural to the realm of the plausible.

¹⁶ Of course, the *material* aspect(s) of such a demon possess moral values themselves, e.g., if it believes it *needs* to enslave mortals in an admiration pact for a higher purpose (e.g., the demon believes that it needs to enslave mortals in order to make the world a more-moral place according to its moral values), rather than *desiring* this (as an end in and of itself). I argue (Primus, 2020, 2021) that only the former aspect of the demon possesses moral value, in proportion to how logical its states (e.g., its body, its thoughts and its actions)

observers would not desire the demon itself (although some observers would, and such desire – as per any desire – is harmless). Rather, the demon, generally, would be *conditionally* valued in response to the existential threat that it poses to those who do not value it. This valuation of the demon occurs as a contingent or instrumental valuation – the same way that contemporary humans value their essential relationship with the oxygen that they breathe and the atoms and molecules that they use for their bodily structures. If observers possess an instrumental (i.e., need-based) admiration for the demon which is contingent or conditional on the demon keeping their world intact, then this admiration would be *provisionally* moral on the basis that it appears to be the most appropriate means *available in the immediate moment* (see Primus, 2021, for a discussion of provisional versus absolute morality). Even were the demon's admiration-fuelled enslavement of humanity considered to be the only available means of survival at any moment in time, the demon is conceivably an unnecessary 'middle-entity' which needs to be revised (e.g., 'cut out of the loop') eventually. Logical observers would intuitively believe that – in addition to any *immediate* requirements to admire the demon – they also possess a moral onus to *eventually* strive to free themselves from the demon's control. They would do so noting that the demon's enslavement is conceivably not *indefinitely* the most rational (i.e., reliable and efficient) means of maximizing the realization of desire – even if it appears as such in the *immediate* moment. The demon, when viewed as a material for sustaining and realizing human desires, is a supra-structure – a material of extra-cellular composition. The demon is far rarer in quantity than even human organs; there is only one demon, and if it dies or becomes diseased, it cannot fulfil its function of keeping humanity from peril so long as they admire it. The demon is also apparently more directly and immediately essential to the realization of beings' desires (e.g., their survival) than are human organs; failure to revere the demon brings instant death, whereas most people can be sustained by machines or replacement organs upon most types of organ failure. Accordingly, logical observers would determine that the demon's function in society must logically be replaced by nano-materials eventually.

Ideally, of course, expressions of ends (i.e., what people desire) and their means (i.e., what people believe they need) will be segregated (i.e., parallelized) across

are for the purposes of maximizing the realization of *all known* desires – those of the demon and those of the citizens of the world. In the instance of the latter – if the demon desires to enslave the world (e.g., on the basis of its arbitrarily sought whims) – then it is specifically its material states (e.g., its body, its thoughts and its actions which it does not desire, and yet which are used to enact (realize) its desires) which possess (im)moral value, rather than the nature of its desires itself.

society such that they occur using incompatible languages so that there is minimal confusion or possibility of unethical influence on each other. When future nano-cells communicate with each other (e.g., in order to determine, prioritize and realize states of desire to the fullest limits that are logically possible in any moment), they do so in a language that cannot be directly affected by, or conflated with, the languages of the people (i.e., forms) that they serve. Compare this to the messy and chaotic methods of communication and interaction in the modern era, whereby human languages are used interchangeably as a medium for expressions of both means and ends. When an agent of this contemporary era expresses themselves using social media, for example, it may not be immediately obvious whether they *desire* to express themselves (i.e., a harmless end) or whether they believe that they *need* to express themselves (e.g., in order to make the world a better place according to their worldview); each has vastly different consequences in the context of normativity, each existing ideally as free expression and morally-accountable expression, respectively (Primus, 2020, 2021). Unfortunately, in the entangled societies of human beings, expressions which are sought as an end, in and of themselves – whose states are necessarily subjective in their normative nature (e.g., personal bias and culture) – often appear to unduly influence the nature of the means that are observed to possess objective (i.e., impartial) normative requirements (e.g., a duty to efficiently, safely, fairly, serve the desires of people) – those material states which should be logical, both in the nature of their (infra)structures and in the execution of their duties. And vice versa: Expressions which are made as a means of achieving higher purposes – which should logically realize the ends that they serve and should not influence the nature of said ends themselves – often appear to unduly influence the nature of the ends of society – which should ideally be able to be freely expressed, without arbitrary limitation (Primus, 2021). Readers can imagine the inefficiency that would result, for example, if the various communication systems within the human body responded to, and were influenced by, human language, rather than electrical pulses.

Comparison of values: 'A' versus 'X'

Now that the posthuman background has been established, I ask the reader to consider a very simple comparison of values. This comparison shall take place between any degree of desire, 'A' – whose general nature I have detailed previously (2020, 2021, 2023) and whose specific nature I will detail below – and any number (i.e., quantity) or degree(s) or nature(s) of characteristic(s) (i.e., quality or attribute), 'X.' The nature

of X is unspecified so as to serve as an opportunity for the reader to insert one or many characteristic(s) or attribute(s) – whether physical or psychological (or of any nature that is conceivable) – that they consider might be an ultimate value in place of desire. The degree of each attribute has also been left unspecified to demonstrate that the *degree* of each value is irrelevant when comparing two fundamentally, categorically different values – the difference between the unconditionally sought nature of desire and all other (conditionally) sought values is of kind, not degree. The reader may assert that X represents multiple characteristics (e.g., both ‘sapience’ and ‘sentience’), thus supporting the notion that the *quantity* of X is irrelevant in comparisons of kind. Accordingly, in selecting an attribute for X, a humanist reader, such as S. Matthew Liao (2015), might insert for X: “A living human being, possessing *at least* the fundamental goods, capacities, and options which are necessary to allow them to live the best possible life according to that human.” Put more simply, such a reader views that human beings living to the fullest – while possessing at least, if not more than, the fundamental conditions necessary to do so – is a state of ultimate value which should be attained and preserved above all other states. Kant (1785) would likely substitute a ‘rational will’ for X, perhaps asserting that his person would possess a perfectly rational will – or at least a will that is of greater rationality than any other agent that has existed before them. Similarly, Gewirth (1978, 1996) might substitute ‘agency’ for X, whereby such agent acts strictly according to principles that are perfectly consistent with the fact that they are an agent (and which do not degrade their agency or the agency of others). Chris Kelly (2014) would assert that the person exists with greater ‘richness’ than any other state of being, where richness is a product of ‘unity’ and ‘complexity.’ Authors who believe that ‘sentience’ or ‘sapience’ are ultimate values would likewise insert maximal degrees of either or both for X, perhaps rendering that the person exists with greater consciousness and intelligence than any other being. And so on for any other purported characteristic that authors might claim is an ultimate value that should be afforded moral standing (considerability) above and beyond all else.

I now ask the reader to make a moral judgement – of objective and universal *should* (*ought*) or *should not*:

First Rhetoric of Desire: If a person – who needs and owes, nothing and no one – to any degree desires ‘A,’ where A is ‘to rid themselves of ‘X,’ and where X is ‘characteristic(s) of any number, degree(s), or nature(s),’ should this desire not be granted, regardless of the number, degree(s), or nature(s) of X?

In answering the above question, the observer should imagine that they are a moral judge, charged with creating a universal, impartial moral law, to be enacted across space and times, even in their absence. They should attempt to find a characteristic for X whose value is so great that it seems intuitively wrong to deny the person’s desire to rid themselves of it. I offer that on the basis that the person desires to no longer possess X, it will appear intuitively right or moral – from a *universal, (i.e., generalizable), objective (i.e., impartial)* view of *should* and *should not* – that such a desire should be granted, irrespective of how minimal the degree of the person’s desire is and how great the nature(s) (i.e., type or kind) and degree(s) of X are perceived to be. The observer will not be able to find a value which supersedes A (i.e., desire).

I emphasize that, as per the posthuman setting, the person’s sought removal of X is *not* due to external, conditional pressures from their environment – it is not a reaction; it is not born from a perceived *need* to remove conditional pressure from oneself (as, for example, contemporary suicides appear to be). I also emphasize that the person has no perceived need or responsibility pertaining to other people or agents across society at this time. The person possesses no obligation to themselves or society – neither to possess any characteristic, nor to exist at all. Any perceived obligation that the person is viewed to have (e.g., if one considers that the removal of X is a waste of power/life and that others will miss X dearly) must conceivably be due to the *subjective* opinions of the observer rather than a logical (i.e., objective universal) appraisal. All aspects of the person, by a priori definition, exist *sought* for *arbitrary* (if any) purpose(s). The person or any natures of their form cannot, by definition, be sought – whether by the person or others – to exist for a logical purpose (e.g., as a logical means of achieving an outcome, ‘Y’). This subjectivity includes the person’s (subjective) desire to remove X from themselves – such a choice must, by definition, be sought for arbitrary or nil reason(s), rather than for logical reason(s).

Kant (1785) famously denies that rational agents possess the moral right to undertake suicide, proclaiming that suicide is an assault on the ‘rational will.’ However, and contrary to Kant, the intuition that suicide *is* morally permissible under specific conditions appears to be the general consensus among Kantian authors (see Cholbi, 2010, for a Kantian defence of suicide and for a summary of other Kantians who oppose his view on logical grounds). This second scenario, of course, indirectly reveals that suicide is intuitively permissible from an objective, universal standpoint, *if* such an act is purely desired and not at all considered as a material response to (e.g., an escape from) one’s contemporary material conditions. In other words, there is a fundamental

difference between the agent that seeks suicide due to conditional pressure(s) – as a means of escaping their psychological or physical pain – and the agent that undergoes suicide as an end, in and of itself (e.g., a person who has become bored with their perfect life over the aeons and who actively seeks death in place of living). Kant's oversight is therefore this: Whilst it is conceivable and even likely that the possession of a 'rational will' *may* be sought as an end for many persons, it is not *intrinsically* an end in itself, as Kant erroneously believed. It appears that for many contemporary persons, the rational will merely serves as a *means* to other states of existence¹⁷. That is, to both contemporary humans and to the posthuman person in the scenario above, the possession of a rational will *may* be sought as an end – *if* it is desired. The possession of such a will *may*, for example, be a source of joy and contentment. Some people *may* derive pleasure from the use of their cognitive abilities to navigate through the trials and tribulations of life – they may enjoy exercising their will to efficiently achieve the ends that they need. However, this desire is not universally apparent. The test of whether this is true enjoyment and thus true desire, or merely relief and contentment which follows the satisfaction of one's needs, is whether one would seek to engage in the same use of a rational will in a perfect world – a world in which such a will is no longer needed, such as the posthuman setting I detail herein. That is, if one lived in the posthuman future described above, would one choose to simulate situations in which one needed to employ one's rational faculties? This, of course, is a subjective question that can only be answered by each individual. And Kantians who would deny the person's desire to rid themselves of their 'rational will' must consider a second and third question – the same further questions that any observer must then ask themselves if they think that they have found a value for X that negates the previous (first) rhetoric, above:

Second Rhetoric of Desire: Why – by which universal (i.e., generalizable), objective (i.e., impartial) principle or law – should the person be forced to endure with their characteristic(s), X, if X is neither desired nor needed?

Third Rhetoric of Desire: Consider, further, if the person would suffer in anguish – in proportion to the degree of A (as initially chosen for the person by the observer) – for every moment that their desire (A), to rid themselves of X, is unrealized.

How long should they suffer before their desire is granted?

As per the First Rhetoric, there can conceivably only be subjective (i.e., arbitrary) responses to the latter two rhetorical questions. I assert that the implicit, if not explicit, acknowledgement of the inherent arbitrariness which accompanies any earnest answers to these questions – and any further attempts to justify these answers – will be expressed as seeming intuitively wrong.

Conclusion

I have discussed in the introduction and in part one of this article (Primus, 2023) that desire is an end in itself – the only conceivable type of sought end – and our notion of morality is a concept irrevocably and exclusively drawn from our observations of the *means* of achieving our ends. Each desire existing as an end, sought in and of itself, is of ultimate value. Desires are to be revered (i.e., provided moral standing and consideration) above all other states – irrespective of one's subjective views towards their specific natures. There can be no logical grounds – and only arbitrary, personal reasons – for why any *nature* of desire is considered 'wrong' or 'immoral,' in and of itself. It is (exclusively) in the process of the *realization* of any desire (by the materials which underlie its forms) that the notion of morality arises and must be considered (Primus, 2020, 2021, 2023). It is the *materials* of each condition – whether nano-cells or biological human bodies – that exclusively must be held morally accountable (Primus, 2020, 2021, 2023). If one desires to harm another, it is the *materials* in that condition which grant full and unconsidered *realization* of said desire – e.g., the material thoughts (that harm is *needed* in that moment), the mind that generates these thoughts, and the biological body which passively enacts them without broader consideration for the sanctity of desire – never the *desire* itself, that is morally culpable. One desires what one desires, and the *specific* nature of these states, upon appropriate consideration, must be necessarily conceived to possess no *objective* value¹⁸. Observers can only conceivably *subjectively* object to, or approve of, the *nature* of any particular desire; each must therefore ensure that they do not conflate their subjective disposition (if any) towards the nature of any desire itself with their objective appraisals of the nature of how a desire might be peacefully *realized* in a normative context (e.g., efficiently, safely, and fairly). And whilst the *nature* of any desire itself cannot conceivably harm any other

¹⁷ Beyleveld and Gewirth were also under the misconception that "to act rationally... is an end in itself" (Beyleveld, 2013, p.14), whereas Sarah Buss (2012) is rightfully critical of the intrinsic value of rationality.

¹⁸ The *general* nature of this state, of course, retains (ultimate) objective value as the most valuable category of state that observers can conceive.

being, the *realization* of any desire – or more-specifically, the disposition of each nano-cell which underlies its form – will inevitably either be beneficial or harmful to society. The disposition of each agent in any moment (whether human or nano-cell) – their actions and their structures, or more specifically, the states of desire that they decide to realize, the extent and manner in which they realize them, and the states which they do not realize in any moment – conceivably exclusively affects whether persons across society in any era, in any moment, are ultimately harmed or benefited. In this era and in the future we envision and strive towards, it is the materials alone that each possess a degree of morality (or immorality) in any moment, in proportion to the degree to which the states that they are assuming would probably respectively maximize (or minimize) the realization of beings' desires. This maximization or minimization of the ultimate value (i.e., desire) can be measured objectively – at least, in theory (Primus, 2023).

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

The author has declared that they have no conflict of interest.

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