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## *Colonialism, Conceptual Loss and Normative Disorientation*

According to a common way of understanding the cultural devastation brought about by colonisation, colonisation is said to estrange or alienate its victims from their culture (Lu, 2017). My aim in this paper, is to argue (i) that this characterisation turns on a mistaken assumption before (ii) outlining a more illuminating way to understand this aspect of colonialism. I will argue (i) that the use of the notions of being 'estranged' or 'alienated' – especially understood in Marx's sense of a subject having been separated from some object – mistakenly implies the continued existence of that which the victims of colonisation have been estranged from; namely, their culture. That is, this particular metaphor of alienation implies that, despite having undergone the loss of their form of life, victims of colonialism still possess a kind of theoretical knowledge of how they should live and therefore that their understanding of how to live is unharmed and can be re-applied in more cooperative circumstances. Against this account, I will argue (ii), appealing to Jonathan Lear's work on colonialism and cultural devastation (Lear, 2006), that, given the practical nature of our judgements concerning how we are to live, the cultural devastation brought about by colonialism engenders a loss that is practical in nature. This is a particular kind of loss that the above construction offered by global justice theorists like Catherine Lu (2017) elides.

Talk of 'practical loss' here is intended to foreground the idea that suffering the collapse of a culture entails the loss of one's practically orienting concepts: those concepts that provide action-guidance in terms of how we ought to live, and which feature centrally in our judgements concerning how we are to act across various circumstances. In this sense, practically orienting concepts are akin to what Sebastian Rödl terms 'infinite ends': ends like eating healthily which do not come to an end in certain actions, but rather exhibit a kind of generality and are such as to get us to act in a certain manner (Rödl, 2010). So, for example, as Lear (2006) details, before they were forced by dwindling population numbers, as well as the encroachment of expansionist settlers, to transition from their traditional nomadic way of life to life on a reservation, the Crow Nation's concepts of courage and honour, oriented their way of life. When the Crow lost these concepts – in the sense of no longer knowing what it would look like to manifest courage or honour in their actions – they struggled to make sense of the ends that their actions aimed at, losing the ability to answer the central 'why?' question of practical reasoning.

What Lear's account illustrates is, given that concepts like honour or justice are concepts to live by, when circumstances have become so disfigured that one can no longer be guided by such concepts, then these concepts have no application and have thus been lost. This is a kind of normative disorientation that cannot be grasped through the ideas of estrangement or alienation.

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## *Caring for Valid Sexual Consent*

When talking about the conditions for valid sexual consent we often talk about conditions that the consent-giver must fulfil, but very little to none is said about the consent-receiver. In this paper, I argue that care for the consent-giver is a condition for valid consent in sexual relationships. I begin by drawing on Lamb et al.'s recent paper "Mutuality in Sexual Relationships: a Standard of Ethical Sex?" (2021) in which they argue that ethical sex requires more than valid consent and present mutuality as an additional necessary condition for ethical sex. According to Lamb et al., ethical sex requires care for the partner, in the sense of a moral obligation to ensure that the act is mutual. They say that the person must "look beyond consent to seek to understand the other person's intentions and psychological state, to understand if the sex that is about to occur or is occurring may be harmful in some way to the other." I endorse the requirement for mutuality, or, more specifically, its component of care, but I contend that this requirement is not external to valid consent. Instead, I argue that sexual consent is only valid when the consent-receiver cares about the consent-giver, because care is part of what makes the consent-receiver trustworthy, and sexual consent should be given as a result of this trust.

My argument goes as follows. First, I argue that trust is what grounds sexual consent. I argue that sexual consent has a contractual feel, but it lacks the formal aspects that usually bind a person to a contract – in practical terms, there is no outside force compelling them to respect one's consent, and even legally, there is a lot of grey area that doesn't suffice to ensure that no harm is done. Trust, I believe, fills this void because it is the perception that a person will not do anything that will harm your interests. Second, building on Nussbaum (1995), I contend that for trust to exist, the trustee must respect the trustor as a person (i.e., have a goodwill towards them) because there is nothing but respect binding the trustee to the limits of the trustor's consent. Third, I argue that although sexual consent has a contractual component, the vulnerability involved in sexual acts requires both partners being attentive and sensitive to one another (instead of taking into account only explicit consent). "Care"—in Lamb et al.'s sense or as "as a disposition to behave in certain ways: to be attentive and sensitive to other people's needs and willing to help them" (Gheaus 2022)—can be seen as a form of respect that addresses the fragile nature of sexual relationships.

By rejecting the need for an additional condition for ethical sex, I not only provide a simpler alternative to Lamb et al., but I also assign responsibility to the consent-receiver. As a result, we may consider completely detached casual sex or even unilateral romantic relationships to be nonconsensual and thus morally impermissible and we arrive at a conception of ethical casual sex that requires only that both parties remain attentive and sensitive to the will of the other throughout their interaction.

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## *Deliberative Diversity and Democratic Respect*

According to the systemic approach to deliberative democracy, parliamentary debate should function as a partisan adversary process that brings out a diversity of intelligible reasons, perspectives and claims (cf. Goodin 2005; Leydet 2015). This paper questions whether sustaining the deliberative quality of the larger political system requires us to unrestrictedly tolerate partisan adversary rhetoric. This question goes back to a dispute between public reason and classic deliberative conceptions of political justification. Whereas the former restricts the range of views admissible in public debate to public reason, the latter endorses the incorporation in the political process of as many ethical reasons as possible, as long as these are reasons on matters of common concern. My account follows a recent trend to expand on the classic deliberative conception by endorsing the incorporation of reasons on common concern as well as self-interest in public debate (cf. Mansbridge et al. 2010). However, while accepting a diversity of reasons, values and opinions in public debate, I do not advocate an unrestricted toleration of any view or claim. Rather, I argue for preventing disrespectful and polarizing rhetoric and suggest furthering intra-party and intra-constituency deliberation to prevent the worst excesses of such rhetoric in parliamentary debate.

My argument rests on the idea that an important function of a deliberative system is to promote democratic respect among citizens (cf. Mansbridge et al. 2012). Democratic respect concerns the respect for others as co-rulers: It is a recognition of the equal standing of fellow citizens (cf. Rostbøll 2017). A full instantiation of democratic respect requires that citizens' reasons, values, and opinions are given appropriate weight in political decisions, simply because they are those of co-rulers. Partisan adversary processes in parliamentary debate promote democratic respect by ensuring that the broad spectrum of perspectives available in the citizenry is represented in parliament and by making the represented perspectives intelligible to citizens, thereby enabling citizens to effectively exercise their political agency. Any restriction on partisan adversary rhetoric would deny the equal standing of those citizens whose voice is excluded. However, this does not imply that all rhetoric in parliament should be tolerated, as we face a dilemma: While any restriction on partisan adversary rhetoric would undermine democratic respect, highly partisan rhetoric that itself expresses disrespect for adversaries and furthers polarization also undermines democratic respect. To overcome this dilemma, I explore the incentive structures that could increase representatives' engagement and responsiveness to adversaries' positions in parliamentary debate and suggest that furthering opposition and dissent in intra-party and intra-constituency debate would be a potential way to prevent the worst excesses of partisan adversary rhetoric, while upholding a presumption of equal consideration for each citizens' views in parliamentary debate.

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## *Qualities of Will and Ambivalent Moral Worth*

On many accounts, moral praise- and blameworthiness for actions depend on the quality of will agents manifest in their actions, i.e., on whether the agent acts out of good will, ill will, or indifference (see Strawson 1962; McKenna 2012; Arpaly and Schroeder 2014; Shoemaker 2015). In my talk I will call attention to a pertinent but overlooked phenomenon, the simultaneous manifestation of more than one—in particular, of a commendable and an objectionable—quality of will in an action, and investigate its significance for agents' praise- and blameworthiness.

Consider Robin Hood, who, say, by pressing a button, takes from the rich and gives to the poor, and suppose that he does so both because he despises the rich and because he sympathizes with the poor. Assume further that in our case the rich acquired their fortune in morally innocuous ways and do not deserve to be despised. A natural understanding of the scenario, so I will argue, is that Robin Hood manifests both good will and ill will at once.

In the talk, I will argue, first, for the existence and relative commonness of cases in which an agent manifests different qualities of will in an action at once, and for the claim that all the manifested qualities of will affect the agent's praise- and blameworthiness, i.e., her action's moral worth (see Arpaly 2002). I will do so by comparing cases like that of Robin Hood with as far as possible similar ones in which the agent only manifests one quality of will. A version of Robin Hood who acts out of hatred for the rich and sympathy for the poor, so I will show, is not equally praise- and blameworthy as a version of Robin Hood acting solely out of hatred for the rich. The upshot of the first part will be that it is intuitively plausible that one action can manifest different qualities of will. In the second part I will discuss the question of how this affects the overall moral worth of the action. I will start by considering what I call the Balance option, according to which all the manifested qualities of will cancel each other out and the remaining quality of will determines the agent's praise- or blameworthiness. While this option has some merit, it also faces certain problems that lead me to arguing for an alternative option, labeled Ambivalence. It says that agents can be simultaneously both praise- and blameworthy for an action. I conclude with considerations about the prospects and limitations of our blaming and praising practices when we face holding agents responsible for actions with ambivalent moral worth.

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## ***Conditions of Legitimate Authority: Reductionism, Justification, and Limitation***

When is political authority legitimate? Many political philosophers and theorists have argued that authority in general is legitimate if it meets a set of legitimacy conditions, which are defined in various ways, but which are supposed to hold for all types of authority. Other scholars have recently defended what I call a “reductionist” account of authority (Hershovitz, 2011; Marmor, 2011a&b), which advances that different types of authority are subject to different legitimacy conditions. Proposing to explain authority solely in terms of social practices, the reductionists claim that, since authority is embedded in social practices, authorities are legitimate if and only if the social practices are legitimate. On the reductionist view, legitimacy conditions of authority are reduced to legitimacy conditions of the social practices that authority is embedded in.

This paper critically engages with the reductionist account and argues that it is in need of refinement. I suggest that we must distinguish conditions concerning the justification (Why should there be an authoritative position?), the distribution (Who should hold the authoritative position?), and the exercise of authority (What can authority (not) do?). I then argue that the reductionist account might be able to explain the first two types of conditions, however, it cannot account for exercise conditions. To exemplify this, I draw on the common intuition that authority is legitimate only if it is limited in its scope, no matter what particular type of authority it is. I show that this “limitation condition on authority” follows from what it means to be a legitimate authority, independently of the type of authority under scrutiny. I conclude that the reductionist account lacks the conceptual means to account for the limitation condition. However, after anticipating some objections, I offer an account of the nature of legitimacy conditions on authority that salvages the valuable insights of the reductionist account and simultaneously accounts for legitimacy conditions which hold for authority generally. This account lays the first bricks for a general theory of legitimate authority which allows us to account for the differences in legitimacy conditions on authority without ignoring general legitimacy conditions.

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## *The Nature of Intention and Its Consequences for Practical Normativity*

Talk about intentional action and practical normativity raises the question: What is an intention? According to Partial Cognitivism (PC) it is both a cognitive and conative state—that is, an agent's intention to  $\varphi$  is partly constituted by a credence (or partial belief) that she will  $\varphi$  and a pro-attitude (e.g., desire) to  $\varphi$  (Pears 1985; Setiya 2008, 2009). Strong Cognitivism (SC) is the view that intention is a practical belief (Marusić & Schwenkler 2018; Schwenkler 2022). Contrary to Non-Cognitivism that claims intention to be a desire-like state (Davidson 1987), both PC and SC have their strength in the conceptual advantage of being able to explain how an agent can plan based on a prior intention's success: Planning on prior intention necessitates (at least) a partial belief in this earlier intention's success—if an intention is a (partially) doxastic state, the necessary presence of a doxastic state is guaranteed. PC avoids counterexamples raised against SC.

Recently, it has also been argued that PC cannot explain the psychological framing of prior- success planning (Alonso 2022). According to this objection, if the agent has a low credence in the success of the prior intention to  $\varphi$ , forming a further intention to  $\varphi$  based on this prior intention's success is psychologically implausible. That is, it is argued that a low credence in  $\varphi$  corresponds to suspension of belief in  $\varphi$  and the agent will plan as if the prior intention will be unsuccessful. Thus, the necessary doxastic constituent of an intention is not given to form an intention that is based on prior success.

Against this and other challenges I defend the conceptual significance of PC by discussing the overlooked meta-epistemological dimension of the debate: the relation of credence and belief. The upshot is (i) an updated PC-account of intention, and (ii) to shed some light on the connection between epistemic normativity and practical rationality.

Firstly, contrary to most cognitivist accounts of intention, I defend Belief-Credence-Dualism (BCD)—the view that neither doxastic state is reducible to the other. Based on this, PC+ can explain prior success planning while avoiding common counterexamples: If a low credence in the success of a prior intention to  $\varphi$  does not entail a suspension of belief or disbelief in successfully  $\varphi$ -ing, it is psychologically possible to form an intention that is based on a prior success of an intention to which the agent assigns a low credence.

Secondly, I offer a new perspective on how some cases of prior success planning can be rationally implausible by considering akratic cases. Given BCD, PC+ allows both a belief and a credence to simultaneously constitute an intention for the same action. I argue that akratic intentions can be rooted in epistemic akrasia—that is, maintaining a doxastic state despite one's better judgment. Thus, it can be irrational to plan on a prior intention to which's success the agents assigns a very low credence. Cases like these illuminate the distinction between psychological possibility and practical rationality by following considerations from epistemic normativity.

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## *When Ignorance is Bliss: Phenomenological Empathy, “Loving Ignorance” and Mutual Understanding*

Mutual understanding is usually regarded as the building block of our interpersonal lives: the more knowledge we have of the other person, the more intimate the relationship (Morton 2003). In this sense, empathy is often considered a fundamental tool for accessing other people’s thoughts and emotions in a variety of different contexts: from personal relationships to clinical and therapeutic ones (Stueber 2006; Bailey 2020; Slote 2009; Halpern 2001).

I will try to challenge both of these ideas. First, I will argue that not being understood has epistemic and moral value (Bailey 2018). In some cases, recognition of the impossibility of mutual understanding is a necessary condition for the flourishing of the relationship. This is typically true for asymmetrical relationships in which there is a strong power imbalance: for example, relationships in which both individuals from marginalized communities and privileged individuals are involved (Liebow and Ades 2022). In this context, I will try to demonstrate that the traditional way of framing empathy as an affective perspective-taking skill can exacerbate the unequal distribution of power within the empathic relationship (Hollan 2008; Bubandt and Willerslev 2015; Garden 2015). Affirming the epistemic, affective, and existential limits of the empathizer’s understanding in grasping the other person’s perspective and the inner world might be an effective way for subjects belonging to marginalized groups to reclaim the epistemic power over their experiences.

Second, I will suggest that we should reconceptualize empathy to account for a specific kind of fruitful and positive lack of understanding. In particular, I believe that a phenomenological definition of empathy inspired by Edith Stein, combined with Tuana’s concept of “loving ignorance”, might be able to achieve this positive lack of understanding between privileged and marginalized subjects (Stein 1917; Tuana 2006). Stein’s concept of empathy does not require the empathizer to imaginatively take the other’s perspective or reproduce the same emotional states, reducing the risk of misinterpretation, projection, or distortions (Summa 2017; Zahavi 2014). Importantly, although according to Stein the ultimate aim of empathy is to grasp the other person’s motivations and values (Stein 1922; Magri 2015), I will propose a less demanding goal for empathy: it is sufficient that the empathizer recognizes the other person as a bearer of hierarchically organized motivations and values. The exact content of those values and motives and their precise hierarchy is not required. This concept of empathy should be able to preserve the positive lack of understanding without resulting in the dehumanization of others, often caused by the inability to recognize them as bearers of values and motives (Buber 2020; Baron-Cohen 2011).

I will conclude that this way of understanding empathy capable of fostering the concept of loving ignorance that – especially when implemented by privileged subjects – can be a useful tool for restoring some epistemic power to marginalized groups.

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## *Free Will as an Epistemically Innocent Delusion*

Many contemporary accounts which deal with the potential “illusion” of free will seek to describe the pragmatic benefits of belief in free will, such as how it facilitates or grounds our notions of moral responsibility or basic desert. While these proposals have their place (and use), I will not explicitly engage with them. Instead, I suggest another reason why belief in free will might be good. More specifically, I argue that our belief in free will has certain epistemic benefits and I aim to establish that our false belief in free will is an epistemically innocent one. I will show that if we carefully consider the circumstances in which particular beliefs (such as our belief in free will) are adopted, we can come to better appreciate not just their psychological but also their epistemic benefits.

There are cases in which it is possible that the adoption of a false belief can prevent an epistemic harm from occurring, and in such a case we may say that the belief is innocent. I will argue that free will is one such epistemically innocent belief. This belief, while not epistemically good overall if it turns out to be an illusion, can still offer some epistemic benefits to the individual, such as a more coherent sense of self and the acquisition and retention of true beliefs over time. In the first case, the opacity of the molar-level phenomena such as beliefs and desires mean that we might be unable to introspect the ‘real causes’ that lead to the retention or adoption of our beliefs.<sup>1</sup> However, belief in free will could potentially mitigate this by giving us a plausible ‘just so story’ about what ‘caused’ us to act in this or that way. In the second case, believing that ourselves and others are free facilitates many of our social relations with each, encouraging us to share our ideas and engage with others. Social interaction can encourage us to make explicit our beliefs and facilitate a process of interpersonal hypothesis testing, and the process of reason giving itself can confer epistemic benefits.

Consequently, in conjunction with the many pragmatic benefits of this belief that have been the focus in much of the literature (such as an enhanced sense of moral responsibility), there might also be further epistemic benefits that have yet to be explored. The implications, therefore, for future investigations into the philosophy of free will are that we should consider whether we have been too narrow in our pragmatic defences of free will, and that we should also be sensitive to epistemic considerations.

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<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, there is a case to be made that the a priori concept forming abilities at our disposal are not geared towards fruitful introspection, as this introspection specifically relates to our understanding of the working of our minds (e.g., McGinn, 1989).

## *What is Desert?*

In ordinary conversations about moral matters, as well as several debates in philosophy, talk of desert is abundant. However, the topic of desert is as divisive as it is wide-spread. Scholars disagree about who can be a deserver, what kind of things can be deserved, and, probably most important, who deserves what on which basis. But what exactly is desert? Here, many scholars remain silent, opting for a form of primitivism. The other prevalent alternative in the literature is an appeal to the notion of fittingness which then remains in the dark. In this talk, I want to improve upon this state of the literature. First, I set up a set of criteria by which to judge an account of desert. Afterwards, I show that the use of 'fittingness' in the desert literature is ambiguous, allowing for two diverging interpretations. Finally, I evaluate how good either fittingness account of desert fares.

I envisage four earmarks of desert, one of which has been frequently overlooked. (1) Desert claims have a certain three-placed structure. Any account of desert has to make sense of a deserver, a desert, and a desert base. (2) According to the widely accepted aboutness principle only properties of the deserver can yield a desert base. (3) Desert facts come with some axiological import. (4) Given the function of desert claims in an analysis of justice, desert facts have to make a difference to the directed deontic structure (DDS) of a situation.

'Fittingness' as used in the debate about desert comes in two varieties. According to the first variety which I label objectual fittingness, fittingness is a relation between an attitude or action and its intentional object. Admiration, for instance, is objectually fitting towards some person P iff P exemplifies some admirable qualities. Cosmic fittingness, on the other hand, is a relation between two states of affairs. I argue that this form of fittingness is best understood as the explanans of certain axiological phenomena of extrinsic final value: two states of affairs generate an organic unity iff they are cosmically fitting towards each other.

I maintain that both, an account of desert as objectual fittingness, as well as an account in terms of cosmic fittingness, can make good on the first two desiderata, the structure of desert, as well as the aboutness principle. Furthermore, the comic fittingness account has a straightforward way to accommodate the axiological import of desert facts. However, both accounts struggle with (4): there is no immediate upshot from objectual or cosmic fittingness to DDS. In order to accommodate (4), either approach has to appeal to special features of the relata of the desert relation. The most promising tenet in this regard appeals to the notion of moral status. Desert facts have an impact on DDS because, say, a subject S is owed an objectually fitting response to S's moral status. Therefore, in order to provide a complete characterization of desert, either fittingness account has to make use of further theoretical resources.

## *Stand by Me: A Victim-Oriented Defence of Third-Party Blame*

An orthodox view in the literature on blame is that, provided the wrongdoing in question is not severe, third parties possess the standing to blame perpetrators only if the matter is ‘their business’ – paradigmatically, if they’re a friend or relative of (variably) the victim and/or the wrongdoer. Otherwise, it is ‘meddlesome’ and therefore morally objectionable. Unlike other scholars (e.g., Seim [2019], Smith [2007]), I don’t hold that being an associate of either party or both parties is a necessary condition for gaining third-party standing in ‘non-severe’ cases. One of the main problems with these accounts, which my account aims to rectify, is that they can’t accommodate cases where the victim may require or prefer help from a stranger. Crucially, my account attempts to fill what I perceive to be an important lacuna in the literature; namely, the lack of concern for the victim, whom scholars usually relegate to a bit role in the examples on offer (exceptions include Edlich [2022]; McKiernan [2016]; Priest [2016]).

I proceed by first discussing what renders ‘standingless’ instances of third-party blame (i.e., case the would-be blamer lacks stand) uniquely objectionable, in Section 1. There, I adjudicate between three common theories and argue that instances of third-party blame are meddlesome when they constitute disrespect for the agency of victims. In Section 2, I develop a ‘victim-oriented’ account of third-party blame, according to which third parties (other things being equal) have or must gain standing dependent on whether the relevant victim’s agency is intact. If the victim’s agency has been either permanently or temporarily impaired following a particular wrongdoing (or otherwise) – e.g., they’ve been murdered or incapacitated by the perpetrator – then standing is passively transferred to eligible third parties. In these cases, third parties arguably wouldn’t disrespect the victim’s agency by blaming on their behalf. When their agency is intact, by contrast, concerns about meddlesomeness arise. In such cases, standing must be actively conferred upon third parties by the victim. Victims may want to do this when they are unwilling to blame because they fear confronting the wrongdoer. In other cases, they might be willing to blame but still consent to third-party blame.

In addition to the normative constraints posed by standing, I highlight that expressions of blame can be inappropriate on other grounds. Paradigmatically, they can be disproportionate to the severity of the relevant wrongdoing. In other words, my position is not that the possession of standing, by itself, makes instances of third-party blame appropriate. Before concluding, I reply to hypothetical objections in Section 3. An opponent may, for example, counter that consent issued by the wrongdoer is (other things being equal) sufficient or even necessary for a third party to gain standing. Alternatively, they may argue that my account focuses too much on deferring to the victim, thereby making cases where, say, they suffer spousal abuse and refuses to confer standing to third parties problematic. Briefly put, I argue that these (and other) objections are either implausible or that my account can accommodate such cases.

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