

6

*The cultural boycott: an act of censorship or a tool of liberation?*¹

Karin M Skawran

Department of History of Art and Fine Arts
University of South Africa

At this time there is consensus, worldwide, that apartheid is immoral. There are different opinions, however, on what morality requires us to do about it; on how to demonstrate our response to its discriminative laws and show our solidarity with the oppressed. The cultural boycott is one way of reacting against the apartheid system. It is also a fact — one that we may not ignore and which demands a definite response from us (Shaw 1986:59–72).

It is necessary to begin with a brief outline of the origins and historical development of the cultural boycott.²

The focus on this campaign has intensified considerably since the 'Culture in another South Africa' Conference in Amsterdam in 1987 and the 'Culture against apartheid' Symposium in Athens in 1988.

Relevant for my discussion is the policy statement by CASA that recognizes the emergence of a culture of the oppressed people in South Africa, expressing opposition to apartheid and furthering the liberation cause.³ At the conference a pledge was made to develop a democratic culture which is characterized by a spirit of internationalism

and humanism, and which is rooted in the cultural tradition of the various peoples of South Africa. Cultural activities of South African liberation movements, recognized by the OAU, the African National Congress and the Pan Africanist Congress of Azania, amongst others, are to be encouraged as non-violent yet forceful alternatives to effect change in this country's apartheid policies (CASA 1987).

The cultural boycott contrasts cultural freedom with the apartheid system's denial of all basic freedoms to the black majority in South Africa and with the restrictive formulae of 'official culture'.

The first concerted attempt to create an awareness of the real meaning of apartheid was made in 1954, when Father Trevor Huddleston called for a cultural boycott. It was a powerful signal to the white minority in South Africa that the systematic institutionalization of racism in every sphere of social life, including the arts, was unacceptable to the outside world.

The response to his appeal was immediate. Equity put a ban on its actors performing in front of segregated audiences in South Africa. Their example was soon followed by the Musicians' Union, the Screenwriters Guild, and others.

There is no doubt that South Africa perceived such grassroots resistance as of crucial importance, because it soon implemented some minor reforms in the area of 'petty apartheid' in an attempt to frustrate boycott actions and create an illusion of 'normality'.

The total cultural, academic and sports boycott, called for by the United Nations in 1968, must be seen as a challenge to such reform policies and as an attempt to expose the fraudulent nature of Bantustan policies, propagated by government as oases of multiracialism.

In 1980 a specific resolution was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly to compile a register of entertainers, actors, etc., who violated the cultural boycott by performing in South Africa. The first register was published in 1983 and was seen to be a significant deterrent to overseas artists performing in South Africa.

What, then, are the components of the cultural boycott?

In an interview with Hein Willemse, Mi Hlatswayo, of Cosatu's Cultural Desk, defines 'a culture of apartheid' as one which encourages

tribalism, racism and white supremacy. It is believed that such a culture promotes the interest of the individual and aligns itself with the foreign imperialist cultures of Britain and America (Willemse 1989:42).

'A culture of resistance', on the other hand, is practised and controlled by the people, promoting the interests of the majority in their struggle for liberation. It does not seek, in the first place, to further the interests of the individual, but relates to the broader issues of the community.

Two types of artists are distinguished: the individual artist, schooled and educated, and cherishing individual freedom more than the freedom of the masses. This type of artist is not seen as relevant to a 'culture of resistance'. Then there is the artist who came forward during the Black Consciousness era and whose art relates to the feeling of the people and their socio-political realities. It is an art that cannot be evaluated in terms of Western aesthetic standards and it has little respect for the academic tradition. Artists of this group recite or write spontaneously in their own language.

As for the criteria which are applied when decisions have to be made about the acceptability of art works, the response of the Pan Africanist Congress is significant. It states categorically: 'Apartheid is a crime against humanity. Artists *must* convey the message. This *must* is an order.' Posters, cartoons and graphics, anti-apartheid plays and musicals have been suggested as means to furthering the national democratic struggle.

Individuals like Barbara Masekela and Wally Serote of the African National Congress are much more flexible in their demands. As individuals, they acknowledge artworks which do not necessarily carry an explicit political message, provided the artists who produced them have taken a firm stand against apartheid (Masekela 1987:19-21; *Weekly Mail* 1988; *New Nation* 1988). Such updated and more sophisticated views are, however, regularly thwarted by the Anti-Apartheid Movement which consistently pursues its totalitarian strategy of a blanket boycott, still rooted in South Africa's repressive laws of the sixties (Bauer 1988; Gordon 1988).

Much confusion still exists about the structures envisaged for the effective implementation of the cultural boycott. The intention is to create local, regional, national and international forums for cultural debate where artists can share ideas and skills and where they can learn about historical connections. Cultural workers are to operate in every city and from every factory. Cultural leadership is to be developed to ensure continuity, and the ultimate goal is a national cultural organization.

In the last five years considerable progress has been made in isolating South Africa in the cultural field. At the same time the cultural boycott has forced academics and artists to re-assess candidly their role and function in the light of rapidly changing socio-political events generally, and in terms of the cultural boycott specifically.

It is not easy for someone living in an apartheid society to assess fully the relative effectiveness of boycott campaigns versus strategies of quiet diplomacy and 'constructive engagement'. But given the facts, our own responsibilities have to be determined (Lowe 1987:265-277).

Historical precedents have taught us that it is unlikely that a cultural boycott — and a selective one at that — will dismantle apartheid. Nothing short of a total boycott, in every sphere of life, could possibly do that. Even then the results would be tenuous.

However, if we take cognizance of the dramatic unfolding of creative potential, the emergence of powerful cultural alternatives — not only in the Black communities, but in a significant number of Afrikaners as well (James 1989; Hough 1988) — and the determination to accommodate and organize divergent cultural needs, then, I believe, the boycott must be seen as a symbol of what can only be described as a call for a cultural revolution — a revolution voicing radical opposition to established social and cultural forms.

I come now to an assessment of the pitfalls and demands of such alternative action. Firstly, it is questionable whether the cultural boycott significantly affects those who are responsible for the socio-political ills of this country. By acknowledging a 'culture of apartheid' the supporters of the cultural boycott assume that apartheid *has* a culture. And if by culture we mean the upholding of Western values of humanism and personal freedom, then the denial by government of those very values to the majority of blacks in this country suggests

a total lack of culture. N. P. van Wyk Louw had in 1932 already addressed the question in an article entitled 'Cultural leaders without a culture' (Louw 1986a:72-79). Since then nothing much has changed. The visual arts still have a low priority for the government. We still do not have a Ministry of Culture, nor does the Nationalist Party have a distinct cultural policy.⁴ And as for the four million rand recently allocated to the arts (De Klerk 1989), well, even President Roosevelt, true to his sense of the proper, abandoned his art projects when he concluded that they added nothing significant to his winning the Second World War. But then, perhaps the four million rand may be used for another Info Song?

There is distinct evidence that the cultural boycott has merely served to strengthen the laager mentality of the supporters of apartheid and taught them to be more self-reliant. The motto of the Afrikaner Volkswag is significant here. It reads: 'Op weg na ons EIE' (*en route to our OWN*).

The sporting boycott — yes, that hurts. Sport in this country is much closer to a culture than the arts can ever be under the present regime. Government won't change its policies because it can't see a Pinter play. Nor will Dolly Parton or Kenny Rogers signing a pledge not to perform in Sun City be persuasive enough to change its ideas. Ironically, then, the cultural boycott has adversely affected only those South Africans who would also like to see radical social change take place (Pretorius 1988:16).

The cultural boycott theory is simple, but its application is not. Half-hearted or poorly structured boycotts produce cynicism and confusion.⁵ While the goals of the boycott have been clearly stated, the strategies and tactics best suited to achieve them still lack credibility and are, at best, counter-productive. The decisions made by the Anti-Apartheid Movement as to what is socially and ideologically acceptable in the field of art have exposed double standards and muddled ethics which are unhealthy and serve merely to retard the whole process of liberation. The situation in which the production *Sarafina*, having the black struggle as chorus line, is showered with Tony awards on Broadway, while another anti-apartheid play, Robert Kirby's *The Bijers bird*, runs into pickets in London, seems absurd. Johnny Clegg's music is one of the most potent forces expressing the

vibrancy of an emergent Euro-African art, yet he was prevented from participating in the first London Mandela concert (Silber 1988:16–19). The Paul Simon affair is another example which highlights the senselessness of decisions taken by some overseas anti-apartheid movements (Herbstein 1987:33–35). And in this respect, I'm afraid, one has also to question the exemption of the University of the Western Cape from the cultural boycott, when it is well known that the universities of Cape Town and the Witwatersrand, among others, have also made their anti-apartheid position perfectly clear.

Directly linked to the question of acceptability is the demand that art must serve to further the quest for a truly democratic South Africa. It is hardly necessary to remind the reader of similar demands made by the Nazi regime, and of the virtual annihilation of Russian avant-garde art by Soviet officialdom. Are the demands for an art depicting the liberation struggle not essentially the same? Do they not foreshadow the replacement of one kind of officialdom or élite with another, and do they not demonstrate the same hostility towards creative freedom?

The revolutionary power of art is not being questioned here. The impact of Diego Rivera's mural paintings in Mexico cannot be denied. Also, there is a time and place for propaganda art in the form of posters and cartoons. But it must be realized that much of this kind of art is one-dimensional and transitory because it is dependent for its imagery and language on a socio-political crisis. The end of such a crisis inevitably eliminates the reason and the feeding ground for such art.

It seems natural that the communication of radical non-conformist goals demands an equally non-conformist language for breaking the barriers of oppressive rule and established language and ideas. It seems equally natural that if such language is to be 'effective', the traditions of those who support the revolution provide the language and the images.

History shows that times of socio-political crisis mark a return to a more direct art which addresses itself to the emotions rather than the intellect. It seeks to give expression to the feelings and needs of the majority. At the same time it develops anti-forms which are unable, ultimately, to bridge the gap between real life and art. The subversive use of art inevitably leads to the destruction of aesthetic form.

And, according to Herbert Marcuse, it is because of this very form that art is able to transcend and thus *contradict* reality (Marcuse 1987:195). Art cannot change reality, and it can also not subject itself to the demands of a revolution, without denying itself. The political dimension in any artwork remains accountable to its aesthetic dimension which, in turn, takes on political dimensions. Art protests against social conditions in that it transcends them. In such transcendence art breaks with existing norms and revolutionizes experience.

Marcuse believed that 'A truly revolutionary art is so only inasmuch as it expresses goals that are universal and transcendent ... Art can fulfil its inner revolutionary function only if it does not itself become part of any establishment, even the revolutionary establishment' (Marcuse 1987:115). Such conviction is verbally echoed in a letter written to a young friend by N. P. van Wyk Louw in 1952. He maintains that the artist's loyalty is to something that exists above and beyond people, and which no political leader can prescribe for him. He furthermore believes that in a time of crisis

... he must do *his* kind of work, with greater dedication, with greater passion perhaps; but it must remain *his* kind of work, executed in *his* spirit; he must judge himself what his work will be (Louw 1986b:463).

There are poems by Bertolt Brecht which have no direct political references and which surpass many of his explicitly political plays. Using everyday language he manages to conjure up, for one fleeting moment, images of a liberated world. Closer to home, J. M. Coetzee in his *Waiting for the barbarians* succeeds in transcending the particular by creating a timeless empire of injustice and indecency (Rich 1984:365-393). That there is a place for landscape and still-life painting, at this point in time, is demonstrated by many South African artists. Clive van den Bergh's ominous and angst-filled images of his surroundings, William Kentridge's sharply satirical urban cityscapes, and Penny Siopis's still-lives of opulence and decadence, are but a few examples. Remember, too, that Matisse painted flowers during the Second World War, as metaphors for another side of life, of freedom and serenity.

Clearly, freedom of expression is never also freedom from responsibility. And such responsibility can only be determined by the artist himself. Art survives only where it preserves autonomy.

To conclude: I believe that any interference with academic or artistic freedom, whether it be in the form of internal or external censorship, of arbitrary arrests or bannings, strikes at the very heart of civilization. It is our responsibility to assist in the fight for freedom and in the pursuit of truth. But it is also our responsibility to ensure the continuous flow of culture, to stimulate new growth points of cultural expression, to identify areas of collaboration, and to share ideas, skills and expertise.

I believe that nothing but good for the anti-apartheid cause could come from the freest exchange of ideas at the cultural, scientific and academic levels. Did we not support such a traffic of ideas with Eastern Europe for precisely these reasons?

We must face the frightening reality that the cultural vacuum and general dehumanization created by apartheid rule cannot be rectified merely by dismantling legalized discrimination. Universities will have to reassess their position in the transition towards a hopefully new, democratic South Africa, and devote themselves to developing and facilitating action programmes that further communication and understanding between all the peoples of Southern Africa.

Notes

- 1 'The cultural boycott: what is our response?'. Address delivered at the graduation ceremony of the Faculty of Arts, University of the Witwatersrand, on 11 April 1989. The subtitle of my address was subsequently 'borrowed' from A. Dangor's 'Report on a workshop on the "Cultural Boycott"'. See bibliography.
- 2 I am indebted to Jane Duncan for making accessible to me her dissertation 'Contending ideologies in the debate on, and administration of, the selective cultural boycott', submitted to the History of Art Department, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the Honours Bachelor of Arts Degree in History of Art, January 1989.

I also gratefully acknowledge the opinions of the following who kindly granted me interviews or made available to me material concerning the cultural boycott:

Prof. C. Boshoff (Afrikaner Volkswag)

Prof. A. Coetzee (University of the Western Cape)

Mr J. Miles (University of the Witwatersrand)

Mr W. Liebenberg (University of the Witwatersrand)

Mr I. Powell (*Weekly Mail*)

The cultural boycott: act of censorship or tool of liberation?

Mr J. Schoeman (Standard Bank, Johannesburg)
Dr W. de Klerk (Randse Afrikaanse Universiteit)
Dr F. van Zyl Slabbert (Idasa)
Prof. M. Wiechers (University of South Africa)
Prof. J. Degenaar (University of Stellenbosch)
Dr S. J. Saunders (University of Cape Town)
Mr J. van Rooyen (Former editor: *De Kat*).

- 3 That there is a body of literature, oral and written, in many languages of southern Africa which has long since formed part of the African heritage of cultural resistance was clearly revealed at the Culture and Resistance Symposium held in Gaborone, Botswana, in 1982. On this see K. Kgotsile, 'Culture and resistance in South Africa', *Black Scholar*, 17(4) 1986:28-31.
- 4 'Culture' is administered by the Department of National Education and is considered by it to be an 'Own Affairs' matter of each cultural group.
- 5 Examples of such confusion are reflected in the 'Report on a workshop on the "Cultural Boycott" as an act of censorship or a tool for liberation hosted by the Congress of South African Writers 14 May 1988' by Achmat Dangor in *Staffrider*, 7(2), 1988:90-92; and in the response to this report by Marianne de Jong in *Staffrider*, 8(1), 1989:121-124.

Bibliography

- Bauer, C. 1988. This is the pulling power of the British Anti-Apartheid Movement. We cannot ignore them. But can't they ignore us? *Weekly Mail*, 4(34), 2-8 September.
- United Nations Centre Against Apartheid. 1988. *Notes and documents. CASA resolutions and appeal to artists.*
- Dangor, A. 1988. Report on a workshop on the 'Cultural Boycott' as an act of censorship or a tool of liberation, hosted by the Congress of South African Writers 14 May 1988. *Staffrider*, 7(2):90-92.
- De Jong, M. 1989. Response to A. Dangor's report. *Staffrider*, 8(1):121-124.
- De Klerk, F. W. 1989. Address by the Minister of National Education, on the occasion of the establishment of the Foundation for the Creative Arts in Pretoria on 24 February 1989.
- Gordon, S. 1988. Why the British are so unhappy with that word 'selective'. *Weekly Mail*, 9(34), 2-8 September.
- Herbstein, D. 1987. The hazards of cultural deprivation. *Africa Report*, July/August: 33-35.
- Hough, B. 1988. Klapping the Volk. *Frontline*, 8(3).
- James, A. 1989. New Afrikaners sing a different tune. *Sunday Star Review*, 5 March.
- Louw, N. P. van Wyk. 1986a. Kultuurleiers sonder kultuur (Feb. 1939). In *Versamelde Prosa I*. Cape Town: Tafelberg. Quoted by Dr R. van Niekerk (1987) in 'Too Looze Low Dreck', *Leadership*, 6(4).
- Louw, N. P. van Wyk. 1986b. Kultuur en krisis (25 Julie 1952). In *Versamelde Prosa I*. Cape Town: Tafelberg. Quoted by Dr R. van Niekerk in 1987, 'Too Looze Low Dreck', *Leadership*, 6(4).

- Lowe, G. R. 1987. The communications challenge of a post-apartheid South Africa: the intercultural agenda. *International Journal of Intercultural Relations*, 11:265-277.
- Marcuse, H. 1987. *Schriften Band 9: Konterrevolution und Revolte. Zeitmessungen. Die Permanenz der Kunst*. Frankfurt a.M.: Suhrkamp Verlag, p. 195.
- Masekela, B. 1987. The ANC and the cultural boycott. *Africa Report*, 32(4): 19-21.
- New Nation. 1988. Interview with Wally Serote: 'Serote on politics and people'. *New Nation*, 14 December. 'From exile to the Baxter Theatre by phone'.
- Pretorius, W. 1988. The silence deepens. Censorship and the cultural boycott. *Frontline*, 8(1):16.
- Rich, P. 1984. Apartheid and the decline of the civilization idea: an essay on Nadine Gordimer's *July's people* and J. M. Coetzee's *Waiting for the barbarians*. *Research in African Literature*, 15:365-393.
- Shaw, W. H. 1986. Boycotting South Africa. *Journal of Applied Philosophy*, 3(1):59-72.
- Silber, G. 1988. To beat the cultural boycott. *Excellence*, IV(4):16-19.
- Weekly Mail. 1988. Poet Mongane Wally Serote by phone to *Weekly Mail Book Week* in Cape Town. *Weekly Mail*, 4(43), 2-8 December.
- Willemsse, H. 1988/89. Fighting for new definitions — interview with Mi Hlatswayo. *Die Suid-Afrikaan*, 18, Dec./Jan.

7

Empirical justification

Jeanette Malherbe
Department of Philosophy
University of South Africa

Some of the ideas in the following pages first saw the light of day in '15/30's' — departmental seminars organized by Professor Michael Macnamara. Others surfaced in the course of a long-leave project to which he gave unfailing encouragement. Thank you, Mike, for creating a research climate in which it was possible to pursue an interest in epistemology.

THE PROBLEM

This article seeks to develop an argument concerning the character of *empirical justification* as opposed to other possible kinds of justification. If it is sound, the argument provides support for foundationalism and poses a problem for coherentist accounts of empirical justification. In essence, the strategy will be to show that the general assumption that *empirical justification* is simply *the justification of an empirical belief* is mistaken. There are at least three distinct kinds of reasons (semantic, probabilifying and empirical) that can be offered in justifying an empirical belief; they may be distinguished by reference to the different relations they bear to the belief to be justified. The first two kinds of justification may apply to any sort of belief, while the last is peculiar to empirical beliefs.

We shall not get so far in this article as to say what constitutes good justification for an empirical belief. It should be borne in mind, then, that when the claim is made that x is necessary to the justification of a belief, or that x , y and z are adequate to its justification, what is meant is a belief's subjective justification, or the reasons that an epistemic agent thinks sufficient to justify his holding of some belief.¹ There remains the question of whether this is objectively sufficient justification, that is whether it is adequate to the justification *simpliciter* of a belief. The view is being taken here that the two are commensurate in that justification *simpliciter* is subjective justification which meets certain objective standards.

The issue of empirical justification may be approached by looking at one of the standard objections to foundationalism. The foundationalist maintains that the structure of empirical justification is linear. There are certain beliefs of an agent which are basic in that (i) they are justified without depending on any other beliefs of the agent for their justification, and (ii) they serve as the terminus of justification for all other, non-basic empirical beliefs of the agent. The first condition, concerning the independence of basic beliefs, seems immediately implausible. For any example of a basic belief that the foundationalist can give (typically beliefs about either simple observable facts in the agent's current environment or the contents of his current state of consciousness²), there seem to be many other beliefs of the agent which are somehow involved in its justification. Suppose the basic belief to be that S believes (at time t) that there is a grey cup on the desk in front of him. In order to hold such a belief, S needs to have a great many other beliefs about the nature of material objects in space and their properties in general, and about cups and desks and the colour grey in particular; he will have to have some general ideas about what constitutes reliable conditions for observing physical objects in his environment (lighting, visual apparatus, relative positions and distances of object and observer), and some particular beliefs about the conditions of his immediate situation.³

All of these beliefs are relevant to the justification of S 's particular belief that there is a grey cup on the desk in front of him (B_p). They make B_p the belief that it is and they provide grounds which encourage S to accept B_p . All and any of the other beliefs mentioned above might well be offered by S as a reason for his holding B_p , in answer to the

question 'Why do you believe that there's a grey cup on the desk in front of you?'

If this is so, however, then how can it be claimed that Bp is a basic belief, independent of all other beliefs of the agent for its justification? How can it and beliefs like it serve as the ultimate justificatory basis of all S's empirical beliefs if they themselves require justification in the ways just mentioned? The answer in brief is that Bp does not depend on these further beliefs for its *empirical* justification, but only for what we shall call its *semantic* and its *probabilifying* justification. In respect of its empirical justification, Bp is self-evident and *prima facie* justified. As such, it serves as the terminus of all empirical justification. Before going on to explicate the character of these different kinds of justification, however, some clarification is needed of the way the term 'justification' is understood in this paper.

JUSTIFICATION

Epistemic justification applies only to a belief or a set of beliefs. It would be inappropriate to predicate it (except perhaps in unusual cases) of knowledge, whose epistemic status is assured by definition, or of mental states like wishing and hoping, in which the belief component is not material. Beliefs are the natural bearers of epistemic justification.

However, not all the justification that is appropriate to beliefs is epistemic justification. A belief may be morally justified and epistemically unjustified, as when S believes, loyally but against the evidence, in his old friend's innocence; or it may be pragmatically justified and epistemically unjustified, as when a mortally sick S believes that he will recover, since a positive state of mind is essential to his recovery. Epistemic justification fails in both of these cases because S believes against the evidence or without sufficient grounds. Notice that even if it turned out later that S's old friend *was* innocent or that S *did* make a miraculous recovery, S would still not have been epistemically justified in believing as he did, if he did not have good reasons for his belief. The truth of what is believed is not sufficient to justify S in his belief, nor is it necessary for justification — S may be epistemically justified in some belief which is in fact false.

This does not imply that truth is irrelevant to justification. What rendered the two examples of belief above epistemically unjustified, was just that S did not have grounds for thinking p to be true, so that the justification of a belief is obviously linked in some way to its putative truth. Moser (1985:5–8) suggests that justification is essentially related to 'the cognitive goal of truth', and that 'a theory of empirical justification does purport to provide us with criteria of truth' (1985:5), which 'warrant' rather than 'guarantee' the belief in question. BonJour (1985:5–8) finds that 'the goal of our distinctively cognitive endeavors is *truth*: we want our beliefs to correctly and accurately depict the world'. In the light of this fact about rationality, 'the basic role of justification is that of a *means* to truth, a more directly attainable mediating link between our subjective starting point and our objective goal' (BonJour 1985:7).

It would, however, be a mistake to conclude from the close connection of truth and justification that for S to justify Bp at t, he has to show that his belief is true, or even likely to be true. Firstly, proving truth is forever beyond the powers of finite epistemic agents. Truth is here being taken to consist in some sort of relation of correspondence between belief and world. Since it is not possible to confront the world except through the mediation of belief, we are precluded from ever conclusively establishing that a particular empirical belief is true. The most we can do is fix some degree of probability of the belief's truth.

Moreover, even though this is the case, it would be wrong to think S's epistemic responsibilities consist in showing the likelihood of his *belief's* being *true*. In the case of an empirical belief (Bp), his primary obligation is to show the likelihood of his belief's *content* (p) being an *existent fact*. If he succeeds in this, Bp will at the same time have been shown to be very likely true. From S's point of view, the two processes are identical anyway; saying why he believes p to be the case is the only way S has of saying why he thinks that 'p', and so also Bp, is true.

The rationale for making the distinction, and taking empirical justification to be a process of the agent's showing (ineluctably from his own point of view)⁴ the likely existence of the fact in question, rather than the likely truth of the belief, is that it is easier to distinguish different

kinds of justification in relation to the first definition than the second. If they were to be listed, S's reasons for thinking that there is a grey cup on the desk might prove to be the same as his reasons for thinking that his belief is true, but where they are all equally related to Bp's truth conditions, in the second case, the beliefs which are his reasons play different roles in establishing the likely empirical fact of there being a cup on the desk.

The second most important aspect of justification (apart from its relation to truth) is its deontological character. If truth is thought of as the highest epistemic value, then an epistemic agent will be conceived of as having a responsibility to aspire to truth in each of his individual beliefs and to maximize truth in his whole epistemic set. Accepting or holding a belief is a rational act with a moral dimension, and to justify such an act, the agent will have to show that he has met certain truth-related standards of rationality. To justify his *initial accepting* of a belief, S (if he is rational and it is a bona fide empirical belief) will typically cite its originating causes, that is the reasons which caused him to believe that p in the first place. In justifying his *continued holding* of a belief, S may cite reasons which did not figure in his coming to believe that p, but which increase p's likelihood and so provide additional reasons for Bp. The first kind of justification is essential to any empirical belief (as will be shown below), while the second may be regarded as corroborating grounds.⁵

In sum then, we may say that S is justified in Bp if he has good evidence for p, and if he can produce good grounds or reasons for thinking that p.⁶ The requirement that S have *evidence* for p (as defined in note 6), in order to be justified in believing it, ensures that his justification will embrace originating as well as sustaining causes, as will be explained more fully in the section 'Empirical reasons' below. In this section and in the two sections preceding it ('Semantic justification' and 'Probabilifying reasons') some of the features of three discernibly different kinds of justification for empirical beliefs are discussed; the discussion is not intended as an exhaustive or definitive taxonomy of such justification.

SEMANTIC JUSTIFICATION

Justification is a function of (a subset of) the epistemic agent's beliefs, of which the belief to be justified is one. It consists then in the relations

of Bp to other beliefs of S. If S has sufficient and sufficiently good reasons he will be justified in Bp. The further contention here is that reasons are of different sorts, to be distinguished by the different relationships they bear to the fact that p.

Semantic reasons are beliefs of the agent which make Bp the *particular* belief that it is. It is not necessary to read 'semantic' as implying 'linguistic'. It implies only that the representative content of the belief is cognitively formed by other, and antecedent beliefs of S. In the example above, S's beliefs concerning material objects, cups, space, the colour grey, etc., would furnish his semantic reasons for believing that there is a grey cup on the table. They individuate the belief, give its content an intelligible shape; they enable S to recognize (and perhaps articulate) the particular empirical fact p. Semantic reasons for Bp would be those beliefs that stand about Bp, in a Quinean web of belief, in constitutive relations to it.

Being a belief about some current empirical fact, Bp cannot be reduced without remainder to the antecedent beliefs which constitute its semantic content. Such beliefs might be sufficient to make S entertain the thought of a grey cup on a table, but he will have no reason to believe that there is one there unless he has the requisite experience, perception being the 'causal process that injects beliefs about physical objects into our doxastic system' (Pollock 1986:87). Commenting on the essential roles that such antecedent beliefs play in all kinds of mental states, Davidson (1984:157) writes: 'Even to wonder whether the gun is loaded, or to speculate on the possibility that the gun is loaded, requires the belief, for example, that a gun is a weapon, that it is a more or less enduring physical object and so on. There are good reasons for not insisting on any particular list of beliefs that are needed if a creature is to wonder whether a gun is loaded. Nevertheless, it is necessary that there be endless interlocked beliefs. The system of such beliefs identifies a thought by locating it in a logical and epistemic space.' (For 'epistemic' read our 'semantic'.)

Semantic reasons may legitimately be given by S in response to a challenge of his belief. 'Why do you believe there's a grey cup on the desk?' might be met with 'Because a cup just is that shape, and that colour's a dark grey.' Depending on the context of the challenge, this might even qualify as an adequate justification of Bp — if, for instance, both parties can see the object plainly, so that the belief's existential

content is agreed upon, and the only features of the belief which might reasonably be called in question are the item's colour and its classification as a cup. Semantic reasons thus play a justificatory role by fixing certain features of a belief's content in a (shared) semantic network.

Semantic reasons by themselves justify B_p only when its empirical justification is already agreed upon; they play an adjunctive role to empirical justification. Being justified is having good reason to think something is the case. Suppose S to have seen the grey cup on the desk at time t . At $t - 1$, his doxastic set included a wide range of general beliefs about cups, physical space, desks, etc., that is all the semantic reasons for B_p , and yet S did not have any good reason to believe that there was a cup on the desk. At $t + 1$, his belief set includes B_p , the experientially acquired belief that there is a grey cup on the desk, and now S does have good reason to believe that there is a cup on the desk. B_p is necessary for its own justification — the special case of a self-justifying basic belief.

The same point may perhaps be more convincingly made by considering an inferential empirical belief, S 's belief (acquired while he cannot see the kettle) that there is steam coming out of the kettle. At t , S hears a whistle in the kitchen and identifies it as his kettle's, thus acquiring the belief that the kettle is whistling — B_q . From this and antecedent beliefs about his kettle's properties he infers that the kettle is steaming — belief B_p . At $t - 1$, before hearing the whistle, he had no good reason to think the kettle was steaming. At $t + 1$, he has every reason to think so. At $t - 1$, he had no justification for B_p ; at $t + 1$, he had adequate justification. What is absent from his belief set at $t - 1$ that is present at $t + 1$, is B_q and B_p . In this case, B_p is not self-evident, that is, it does not act in its own justification. What is essential to the justification of B_p is thus B_q , the experientially acquired belief that the kettle is whistling. This is the empirical reason that S has for B_p . (The discussion of empirical reasons follows below; there are also probabilifying reasons among the antecedent beliefs relevant to the justification of B_p . They are discussed in the section below, 'Probabilifying reasons'.)

The point of these two examples has been to show that semantic reasons play an adjunctive role in justifying an empirical belief. They are

necessary to its complete justification but alone do not give S good reason to believe an empirical fact.

PROBABILIFYING REASONS

Unlike their semantic counterparts, probabilifying reasons are not always perfectly general. Some will be general, for example beliefs about what constitutes good conditions for, and thus reliability in, visual perception — beliefs about the relative frequencies of such facts as *p* in different contexts. Some will be particular beliefs about actual background conditions, the reliability or otherwise of S's own perceptual processes, the likelihood of a *p* occurring in that particular context. They are relevant to the particular empirical fact which is believed, in that they render it more or less likely that *p*.

In terms of the distinction between evidence and reasons or grounds, it seems that probabilifying reasons, since they may be beliefs about empirical facts, can also function as evidence, where semantic reasons are reasons or grounds only. Particular probabilifying reasons such as S's belief that his eyesight is excellent could certainly be 'adduced as an empirical fact in support of the further empirical fact' (the definition of evidence) that there is a cup on the desk. General probabilifying reasons, e.g. the fact that desks are just the sort of place to look for cups, would be allowable as evidence in so far as it could be agreed they were empirical facts. Being evidential, however, does not make probabilifying reasons into empirical reasons for *B_p*. We are reserving that term for a third kind of justification.

Probabilifying reasons alone are no more good reasons for believing a particular empirical fact, than were semantic reasons. The same strategy as was applied in the semantic case, of looking at S's belief set before he acquires *B_p* (a basic empirical belief) or *B_q* (an empirical reason for *B_p*) and noting that, with all his probabilifying reasons in place, he still has no justification for thinking that *p* is the case, will serve to show that probabilifying reasons alone, like semantic reasons alone, do not serve to justify an empirical belief. The same strategy will show that semantic and probabilifying reasons together are also not enough to provide S with reasons for thinking that some empirical fact is the case.

Probabilifying reasons, unlike semantic reasons which are necessarily antecedent to Bp in S's doxastic set, may be either antecedent or subsequent to Bp, that is, S may have such beliefs before coming to believe p, or he may only acquire them after Bp. It seems that such reasons may be of at least two significantly different types (and quite likely more).

- (i) Probabilifying reasons may be beliefs about the particular physical causal conditions in which Bp was acquired, in relation to the ideal conditions for reliable perception. These are the conditions that the reliabilist claims are objectively necessary for the justification of Bp. As *reasons*, they do not, as is sometimes claimed,⁷ figure as originating causes for Bp. What is necessary to S's acquisition of Bp is not the belief that his eyes are good enough to see such things, but good enough eyes, and not the belief but the fact that there is sufficient light to see by. When S offers such a probabilifying reason in justification of Bp, it will be *ex post facto* justification, acting usually as a rough indicator of the statistical probability of p's being the case.
- (ii) Probabilifying reasons may be beliefs about natural regularities. S hears a whistle which he identifies as that of his kettle, acquiring thereby Bq, a basic empirical belief. He already holds the general belief that a whistle of that kind is invariably accompanied by steam issuing from the kettle — Br. Together, the two beliefs produce Bp, the inferential empirical belief that the kettle is steaming: $Bq + Br \rightarrow Bp$. Here, the probabilifying reason Br is a belief about an inductive regularity which does seem to play an originating role in Bp's genesis, since it guarantees passage from perceptual evidence to the inferential conclusion. By itself, however, Br does not produce Bp. It plays an adjunctive role to the empirical reason.

EMPIRICAL REASONS

A good deal has already been said by default about empirical reasons in the discussion of the other two kinds of reasons. They are originating reasons for Bp; they contain the evidence that S has for Bp; they cannot be subsequent to Bp; they are compelling reasons for Bp.

In 'Justification' above, an argument was developed from the universally agreed (within an internalist context, anyway) definition of empirical justification as S's giving of reasons for the truth of Bp, to its definition as S's saying how he came by Bp. Justification = df. 1: S's showing the likely truth of Bp = df. 2: S's showing that p is probably the case = df. 3: S's saying why he thinks p is the case = df. 4: S's saying how he came to Bp and what else makes p credible for him. On dfs. 1–3, Bp may be justified by producing semantic and probabilifying reasons for it, though something would be missing from its complete justification. On df. 4, however, justification must include the reasons S has for thinking that p in the first place, that is, the beliefs which originally cause S to believe p and not just the beliefs that sustain him in Bp. These last include semantic and probabilifying reasons as well as empirical reasons, but the originating causes of Bp are, by definition, empirical reasons.

Thus, in the example above, where Bp is the inferential empirical belief that the kettle is steaming, what causes S to think that this is the case is just that he can hear the kettle whistling, Bq — his empirical reason for Bp. If such reasons are held to be essential for the justification of all empirical beliefs, as seems correct, then we shall also have to say what S's empirical reasons are for a basic experiential belief like Bq, where there are no antecedent originating reasons. Here Bq is its own justification. Basic beliefs are the special case of beliefs that are, though defeasible, self-evident, and so prima facie justified. A full explication of these notions is beyond the scope of this paper, but basic beliefs so conceived are not a problem for the present definition of empirical justification; rather, they provide additional grounds for thinking it correct.

Basic beliefs are thus independent of any other beliefs for their justification, and the line of empirical justification terminates in them. This is incompatible with a coherentist account of justification on which every belief in a set enjoys the same justificatory status as any other. The coherentist usually gets past the difficulty, at considerable cost to his theory, by saying nothing about experiential beliefs. BonJour (1985:112–113), however, tries to accommodate observation beliefs in a coherentist account. His argument to this end demonstrates just what the coherentist makes of the definition of empirical justification set out above.

BonJour starts by explaining the problem that observation beliefs present for a coherentist view of justification: such beliefs are by definition noninferential; by the regress argument, there must be some noninferential beliefs, yet the coherentist maintains that all beliefs are inferentially justified. The solution to the apparent inconsistency lies in putting two different constructions on the term '(non)inferential'. An observation belief may be *arrived at* immediately and noninferentially, and yet *be justified* inferentially, by its relations to other beliefs in some set, so that it is noninferential in origin but inferential in justification. The means by which it is arrived at are thus distinct from, and quite irrelevant to, the belief's justification, and BonJour gives as an illustration of this possibility, a belief that S comes to have as a result of 'a spontaneous hunch' (i.e., there is nothing in its origins to justify it), which is 'subsequently ... seen to cohere with the rest of the system of beliefs in a way which would yield justification' (BonJour 1985:113).

It is hard to see how this could apply to a basic empirical or 'observation' belief, acquired by definition through the senses, but it might be true of an inferential belief, say the belief that Dad will arrive on the 12:30 flight. S might well arrive at such a belief by spontaneous hunch or wishful thinking (also a paradigm of unjustified believing), and subsequently find it to be justified by other beliefs of his. It could be justified by the belief that Dad has lately said he's too old to drive far, that he always prefers the midday flight and that generally gets in at 12:30 — reasons that make it probable that *if Dad's coming*, he's on the 12:30 flight. It could be justified by beliefs about the set of interrelated practices which form the institutions of air travel and the visiting of relatives — reasons which explain why S's belief *about a certain forthcoming event* has the particular form that it has. But if it is to be adequately justified, then S will also have to say what made him think in the first place that Dad would be visiting, that this particular event would be forthcoming. If his explanation is that he has a hunch about it, or that he hopes it is the case, S will be saying in effect that he does not have good reason to think that p is the case. In order to show that he is justified, he will have to say how he arrived at the idea in a way that reveals his evidence for it, where citing evidence is adducing one or more empirical facts which support the fact that p. S might remember, for instance, that Aunt Sal had said

that Dad would be coming (Bq), or he might realize that today is his birthday (Bq) and Dad always visits on his birthday. Bq is then the empirical reason for Bp.

What about the case in which S has a hunch that Dad is coming, comes to believe it, and then remembers what Aunt Sal said? Then the origins of the belief are a hunch, BonJour would want to say, and yet it is fully justified by an evidential, non-originating reason Bq which strikes S only after he has acquired Bp. Here, the foundationalist would want to say that Bp is psychologically overdetermined for S in that the hunch and Bq are both sufficient causes for it. The role that Bq plays is to give S a compelling reason to believe p, so that it is originative of Bp, whether S held Bp prior to Bq or not. Empirical reasons are those reasons without which S could not justifiably come to believe that p.

In reply to BonJour then, the foundationalist claims that the origins of an empirical belief, i.e., the reasons for which S comes to believe it are essential to its justification, and that this fact entails that basic beliefs are noninferential in both their origin and an essential aspect of their justification. Inferential beliefs must include empirical reasons in their justification, and by the regress argument these reasons must do likewise, until basic empirical reasons are reached. The structure of empirical justification is thus linear.

SOME CONCLUDING REMARKS

The thesis of the above sections has been that there are at least three means of effecting the justification of an empirical belief, in terms of the distinctively empirical reasons for which S holds some content true, the semantic reasons which define that same content, and the probabilistic reasons which make it credible for S. We might say that the epistemic status of an empirical belief is of three kinds (at least). This is a view with powerful and interesting applications in fields other than the purely epistemological, though of course its primary deployment will be there. I can do no more here than sketch some possible lines of development.

In epistemology itself, the thesis invites fuller explication into a theory of the determining conditions of empirical belief; it offers a way of understanding the contentious *de re* / *de dicto* distinction, and of

accommodating differences among beliefs which have the same content, and so which, on the canonical 'propositional attitude' definition of belief, would have to be identified as the 'same' belief. In other fields, the thesis provides an argument for a metaphysics of realism: there is a real world to which a rational agent has access through the empirical relations of his beliefs; he is not confined to his own doxastic system. That perennial question in the philosophy of science as to the relations between observation and theory might be approached with a fresh eye from this perspective, since it is hardly controversial that science deals in empirical beliefs. The justification of moral, religious and aesthetic judgements might also be thought amenable to analysis in terms of a triplet of relations, if it be agreed that such judgements have an empirical element.

Notes

- 1 The context of this paper is the traditional mainstream of epistemology which takes knowledge to be paradigmatically the justified true belief of an individual epistemic agent.
- 2 It is widely agreed that the attempt to define *basic* beliefs with reference to the *contents* of the belief has failed. A more promising direction in which to look for such defining marks seems to be the *character* of the belief — its phenomenal aspects, especially its indexicality. 'Basic belief' will, however, have to remain an undefined term for lack of space, along with a regrettably large number of others — 'empirical belief' and relations of 'support' between reason and belief for instance.
- 3 The naturalistic epistemologist would wish to cut his cloth to fit real epistemic agents, and there's some doubt about imputing so many and such seemingly sophisticated beliefs (e.g. about the identity of objects over time) to a simple epistemic agent. The doubt may be dispelled by pointing out that the beliefs in question do not have to be occurrent beliefs of S or even beliefs that he has at any time in the past formulated to himself. The criterion for whether S believes something or not, is whether he would assent to some suitable formulation of the belief's content in a sentence.
- 4 Empirical justification is assumed here to be doxastic and internal, that is it is a function of the beliefs of the agent — something that S is not aware of cannot be effective in justification of a belief of his. This must not be misread as implying a coherence theory of justification; what is essential for such a theory is the like justificatory status of all the beliefs in a set. Thus Davidson (1986:310): 'What distinguishes a coherence theory is simply the claim that nothing can count as a reason for holding a belief except *another* belief' (my italics). If one allows the possibility of *self*-justifying, basic beliefs though, then the doxastic and internalist conditions are seen to be compatible with foundationalism.

- 5 The difference between the original and the sustaining causes of a belief is crucial in the current debate between foundationalists and coherentists. The distinction is set out in Armstrong 1973:79–82 ('efficient' and 'sustaining' causes); and discussed in Haack (1988:ca 6). The exchange between Kvanvig and Lemke in *Analysis* (Kvanvig 1987) illustrates some of the difficulties of defining a causal requirement for inferential justification, without minimizing its intuitive plausibility.
- 6 A terminological note: *evidence* = df. empirical facts adduced in support of (the existence of) a further empirical fact; *grounds, reasons* = df. beliefs of S adduced in support of (the truth of) some further belief of S's. If we allow that the justification for Bp is the set J, then for S in his role of unreflective believer, it will consist of elements e_{1-n} , facts in an evidential relationship with the fact p. For S in his role of critical examiner of Bp, and for an observer, J will consist of elements r_{1-n} , beliefs of S's in a relationship of support with Bp. While evidence is essential to, it is not the only kind of justification for, an empirical belief, so that e_{1-n} will correspond to a subset of r_{1-n} .
- 7 See for instance Kornblith 1987:121, where 'background beliefs' of the agent concerning his eyesight are said to play a role in an empirical belief's 'justificatory status'. Kornblith thinks that justification is essentially a matter of originating beliefs, so that beliefs about S's eyesight are seen by Kornblith as part of the doxastic process by which S arrives at basic visual beliefs, that is, as originating beliefs.

Bibliography

- Armstrong, D. M. 1973. *Belief, truth and knowledge*. Cambridge: University Press.
- BonJour, L. 1985. *The structure of empirical knowledge*. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press.
- Davidson, D. 1984. *Inquiries into truth and interpretation*. Oxford: University Press.
- Davidson, D. 1986. A coherence theory of truth and knowledge. In D. Henrich (ed.), *Kant oder Hegel?* Stuttgart: Klett-Cotta.
- Haack, S. 1988. *Rebuilding the ship while sailing on the water*. Paper read at the Quine Conference, Washington University, St Louis, Mo., in April, 1988; appearing in the Proceedings of that Conference.
- Kornblith, H. 1987. Beyond foundationalism and the coherence theory. In H. Kornblith (ed.), *Naturalizing epistemology*. Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, A Bradford Book.
- Kvanvig, J. 1987. On Lemke's defence of a causal basing requirement. *Analysis*, 47(3).
- Moser, P. K. 1985. *Empirical justification*. Boston: Reidel, Pallas Paperbacks.
- Pollock, J. L. 1986. *Contemporary theories of knowledge*. Totowa, NJ: Rowman & Littlefield.

8

Not exactly making believe: an essay in the philosophy of literature

Jennifer Wilkinson
Department of Philosophy
University of South Africa

As humane beings who can feel pity and compassion for our fellows, we expect of all other so-called humane beings that should they in any way witness or come to hear of the terrible suffering of one or of a group of people, they should also be emotionally moved. We hear of the drought and starvation in Ethiopia and instead of sitting back and saying 'How terrible', some of us at least are motivated to action by the realization that the suffering of these people can be alleviated. We do whatever we can do to help. Alternatively, we might hear of a tragic event affecting a friend and are motivated in a similar way to assist in relieving her grief. This action or desire for action is apparently because of the pity and compassion that we feel for her.

Suppose, however, that we are now told that the event that has warranted the emotional reaction that was so appropriate in the first instance has not actually occurred and that in fact the whole thing has been a hoax designed to deceive. We would no longer be moved to pity or concern but may instead be angry because we have been deceived. That is something very different. We would no longer feel compassion because we would no longer *believe* that something dreadful

had happened to cause suffering. A change in belief seems to bring about a change in emotion.

If this is the case, then it seems that we can be moved by someone's plight only if we *believe* something dreadful to have happened to her. If we do not believe her to have suffered then we are not emotionally moved — at least we are not moved by the belief of her having suffered in any way that we know about. We grieve or are saddened by what we believe to be the case. We are horrified by the famine in Ethiopia or by the suicide of the desperate lovelorn friend. The way in which we might act on that feeling of pity or horror will depend very much on our situation and on the prevailing qualifying conditions on action such as opportunity, overriding reasons for acting in a different way or even on whether or not we draw the correct or appropriate inferences from the beliefs and desires that we have. These conditions notwithstanding, we will act or will desire to act in some way appropriate to alleviating or even preventing that suffering. If we are saddened by someone's plight then our compassion will motivate a desire to help. If we do not have this sort of desire then we may very well wonder if what we feel is real pity or real compassion.

There are numerous examples that one could give, but what does seem to be common to the examples that one could think of is that we seem to think it natural to be so moved and to act on the emotion that we experience — in whatever way that seems to be appropriate in the circumstances. In this way we seem to think it natural to feel concern and pity for the suffering of historical figures or for those who have suffered harm in the past even if we know that no action of ours could have prevented or alleviated that suffering. We believe them to have suffered, we pity them their plight and we probably wish that things could have turned out differently for them. Even if we ourselves are in no position to help there is nothing odd in wishing that someone else could have helped at the time, had he been in a position to have done so. Think no further than the 'if onlys' we feel about the Kennedy assassination — if only someone had observed Oswald acting strangely or if only Kennedy had cancelled his trip to Dallas, and so on and so on.

What does seem less intelligible, however, in fact it seems not only puzzling but actually paradoxical, is that there are situations where we can experience the same emotions as those discussed above and

yet without the belief requirement; also without any charge of irrationality. When we read *Anna Karenina* or watch *Othello* we feel compassion and pity for them as well, knowing all the time that the characters in these works do not exist nor have they ever existed, therefore, we cannot believe them ever to have suffered. We might even wish that Othello would come to realize Desdemona's faithfulness or that Anna would be less impulsive, knowing all the time that this can never be the case. When, finally, Othello smothers Desdemona and Anna jumps under the train, we grieve and might even weep but at the same time we have no real desire to save them. Instead, combined with our sadness may be a feeling of satisfaction because everything has turned out as it should. We might even sigh and say something like 'How beautiful' or 'Wasn't that marvellous!' Although we might smile at ourselves for reacting in what seems to be such a silly way, we might even actually weep. We look askance at those who admit to remaining completely unmoved. Although we may be overwhelmed by pity, we either laugh at the local yokel who jumps onto the stage to save Desdemona or we attempt to prevent him from interfering, furious that he is interrupting our pleasant experience!

Clearly this is a peculiar situation. If emotions are essentially tied to beliefs and if therefore we must believe someone to have suffered or something awful to have happened in order to be emotionally moved by their plight, and if that emotion is the motive for action or at least for the desire to act in ways appropriate to that emotion, how is it possible to be moved when we know not only that no one has actually suffered but that those whose fate has moved us do not exist and never have existed? Further, how is it possible, given that we can actually explain emotions with reference to the beliefs and desires that partially comprise them, and that we can predict and explain actions by these beliefs and desires and therefore by the emotions that they presuppose, that we can feel compassion and even weep real tears and yet at the same time have no real desire to act in any way appropriate to that grief? In other words, how is it possible for us to be emotionally moved by the fate of fictional characters? If we are so moved and if, at least in most cases, emotions can be said to motivate action, why is action either absent in the fictional situation or else inappropriate, as in the case of the local yokel?

There have been several attempts to explain this puzzle but I intend concentrating on only one of these. The reason for this is that this particular theory has been widely embraced and endorsed by a variety of influential thinkers in an equally varied number of ways — from Coleridge and his willing suspension of disbelief to John Searle, Gareth Evans and David Lewis. It has however been presented in most detail by Kendall Walton in a series of articles (Walton 1974, 1976, 1978a, 1978b). The claim — and attractive and compelling it is on initial examination — is that what is going on in the fictional situation is a particular kind of pretending. The implication is that no beliefs are involved and that what we feel is not real emotion. At least one condition for emotion is absent. The expected consequences, therefore, cannot follow. Moreover, action is not only not required, it is not even considered. The move that is being made by proponents of this type of theory is that to claim that the belief requirement on emotion *per se* cannot be dropped and if there is no belief that would normally give the appropriate emotion, it must follow that there can be no emotion either. If there is no emotion it follows further that there is no reason to seek an explanation for the failure to act. We just do not act in ways that would be considered apt in the ordinary situation.

Now, pretending, as J. L. Austin has argued, is a way of not exactly doing things (Austin 1979). Pretending entails not doing or being what one is purporting to do or be. It seems that there are two main kinds of pretending, one of which involves deceit, the other not. Joe might, for example, pretend to do or be A while in actual fact he is not really doing or being A. He does this in order to get someone to believe (falsely) that A is the case. This will be for whatever purpose he may have — generally devious. This is the deceit kind of pretending. It is not, so it is claimed, the kind of pretending that we have in the fictional situation. At no time do we, as spectators, believe falsely that Desdemona is being murdered while she really isn't — in fact it is an important part of the puzzle that we should know that no murder is being committed. The *oddity* lies in the fact that it is in spite of what we know that we can respond in the way that we do. It is not the case that the actors — or Shakespeare — are trying to deceive anyone even though it is in place to talk of theatrical illusion. What is happening here, or so it is claimed, is that the pretending is of a different kind. We, as spectators, together with the actors and the author, are pretending

in a different kind of way. We are playing a game of make-believe in which we are supposing what it would be like if these events were actually taking place. There is no deceit — we are all knowingly part of a game and as willing participants we pretend that things are this way although we know that they really are not. Because we know that this is not the way things really are, we know that no one need suffer the consequences of a real tragic situation. We are all just playing a game which has its own rules of which we are at least implicitly aware.

I want to argue that persuasive and pervading as this account of the fictional situation and the spectator's role in it can be shown to be, it commits the holder of this view to certain logically unacceptable consequences. It therefore fails to answer the questions posed.

The argument that the fictional situation, that is the situation in which we read, view or otherwise come to experience a work of fiction, is none other than a more sophisticated version of the games of make-believe that children play, is developed most extensively by Kendall Walton in the articles already mentioned. First, Walton argues that make-believe worlds — that is the worlds we posit and become part of when we agree to adopt the rules pertaining to what it would be like if so and so were the case although we know that it really isn't — are not figments of the imagination. Make-believe worlds have a strong tie to fact in that within a particular make-believe world we can discover what is make-believedly the case. A children's game of mud-pies illustrates his point. The children agree that blobs of mud are make-believedly pies, that a designated area is make-believedly the oven and that blobs of mud with pebbles are make-believedly raisin pies. If the children put three blobs of mud, one containing pebbles, into the make-believe oven then it is make-believedly true (but not literally true) that make-believedly there are two make-believe plain pies and one make-believe raisin pie in the make-believe oven. It is make-believedly false that there are three plain pies or three raisin pies in the oven.

Walton extrapolates from this kind of make-believe game to fiction. If we are knowing participants in this conniving situation of make-believe, as he claims we are, then we are in a position to explain our original puzzle, he maintains. At no time does the author make literal truth claims which would entail believing on the part of the spectator, with the resulting appropriate action — or real emotion. Nor does the

author pretend to make truth claims — he makes claims that are true within the particular game of make-believe of which we are knowingly a part. Just as it is make-believable that there are two plain pies and one raisin pie in the oven, so it is make-believable that Othello murders Desdemona. Only taken as literal truth would it be false to say that Othello murders Desdemona. Within each fictional world certain events do or do not take place — make-believe depends on positing a world that is not the actual world, and as knowing participants in this game we all understand it not to be the real world. We make-believable know that Desdemona is being murdered because we *really* know that make-believable Desdemona is being murdered.

So we do not really pity Anna or Desdemona — real pity depends on beliefs about actual suffering and carries with it the desire to act on that pity. Besides, if we were really emotionally moved in that way how could we possibly find the experience beautiful or sublime at the same time as we grieve for and pity the poor victims because of their awful fate? This would seem to be, if not impossible, then certainly unlikely for the sort of genuinely humane beings that we fancy ourselves to be. However, it is not just because we do not really pity Desdemona that we do not act or do not even have the desire to act on that pity. We know that Desdemona's world is different from ours, that she is part of a make-believe world. Even if (odd as this may sound) we wanted to save her we could not — not because of the constraints on action as such, namely lack of opportunity, lack of intention or overriding reasons for acting differently. The real reason we cannot save Desdemona is because there is a logical barrier between her and us. We might jump onto the stage like the local yokel and we might intervene but even if we did we would not be intervening between Othello and Desdemona, only between two actors each playing a role. We can stop the performance but we cannot rescue Desdemona from her awful plight. Desdemona can only be saved by someone within the make-believe world of which she is a part although of course Desdemona cannot be saved at all — not if the play we are watching is Shakespeare's *Othello*.

According to Walton, then, what we feel is not real pity which must carry with it all of its consequences, but quasi or make-believe pity. Real pity results from the *belief* that someone really is or really has suffered, quasi pity results from the belief that make-believable some-

one is suffering. Our satisfaction when the curtain falls is because we really want it to be make-believable the case that Desdemona suffers and dies. Should the producer of a particular production change this in any way then our reaction would probably be one of indignation — Desdemona *must* die.

This view is compelling. After all, children's stories are generally prefaced with 'once upon a time' indicating that we are being invited to play along. The theatre also provides us with plenty of clues such as the raised stage and the proscenium arch to give us reason to treat this context as different from one in which the events actually occur. There is also a widely held theory that the arts, specifically the visual arts, are a form of play. However, there are sufficient problems with the make-believe theory to give more than adequate grounds for its rejection. I shall discuss these with the intention of discrediting the theory but I shall not attempt to replace it with the kind of explanation that I take to be acceptable. My aim in this article is therefore modest.

1 Part of the problem in trying to explain how it is that we can be emotionally moved by the fate of fictional characters is that the emotions in the two cases seem to be so alike. Emotions, it can be argued, can be distinguished on the basis of their phenomenological characteristics. Grief *feels* different from despair and one of the reasons we can give for claiming that we are experiencing a particular emotion is that it feels a specific way to the subject. Pity for Desdemona feels very much like pity for the poor friend whose husband is unjustifiably jealous of her. We can make no distinction between the two on the basis of what it is like from the first person point of view. Nor, it can be argued further, can we be wrong about the way things seem to us. Therefore, from the subjective perspective the two experiences are of the same kind. Thus the problem is that we can be really emotionally moved in spite of the fact that the beliefs and desires that are normally required for a particular emotion to be experienced are missing. We cannot, therefore, explain how this is possible on the basis that what we feel in the fictional case is not real pity — what we want to know is how we can feel what seems to be real pity when the conditions for pity — or at least one of them — are absent.

2 If we cannot feel real emotions with respect to fictional persons because it is logically impossible for us to influence their worlds, it

must be logically impossible for us to feel real emotions with respect to totally past persons since it is also logically impossible to influence the past. But we need only think of an example to show that this is not the case. If Mary's long-dead grandmother was raped as a young girl, it is quite in order for her to pity her grandmother's plight although there is nothing that she can do about it. She might wish that the dreadful event had not taken place or that the rapist had been caught but she can have no influence on the event itself.

3 The analogy with the mud-pie game is not just incomplete as all analogies must be, it actually breaks down in certain important ways:

(a) In the mud-pie game we pretend that certain things are what they are not. Blobs of mud are pies and pebbles are raisins. Gareth Evans calls this an *existentially conservative* game (Evans 1982). We pretend that something which is there is other than it is. There are, however, other kinds of make-believe games. In the case of two boys making believe that they are cowboys, one may suddenly shout 'Watch out, there's an Indian!' although there is actually nothing there. This, says Evans, is an *existentially creative* game of make-believe where we pretend that there is something there when in fact there isn't. Fiction, if it is a game at all, must be a game of this sort.¹ This does not necessarily imply that Walton would object to saying that the make-believe involved in fiction must be existentially creative. What it does mean, however, is that Walton's central example which he uses as an analogy cannot sustain the weight that he places upon it. Actually I am not even sure that it can be a game of this sort. In an existentially creative game of make-believe we can have the possibility of someone make-believedly thinking or referring to anything, but in the mud-pie game all referential thought within the game involves reference to things outside the game. For example, when make-believedly the speaker is referring to a pie he is *actually* referring to a blob of mud.

(b) It can be argued that the participants in the game of mud-pies make assertions within the game itself and only within the game itself. They may say something like, 'The queen won't eat burnt pies'. It is claimed that there is nothing that they can say beyond the game. Just how far this point can be pushed is debatable, however. It is possible for a participant in a game to compare a game-event quite directly with an event outside the game, that is with a real event. It is quite

in order for one of the participants to ask, 'Aren't these pies much better than the ones we had for lunch yesterday?' The game of make-believe might also be used by one of the participants to make a point about the real world. A parent might, for example, join in the game to teach his child about sharing or co-operation. The thrust of the point being made, however, is that in fiction we have something very different from a game of make-believe. When in Act V Scene II Othello says, 'For nought did I in hate, but all in honour,' his claim has reference beyond the events depicted in the play to what Shakespeare himself believed about honour in general. The comment is not just about Othello's own personal notion of honour — if indeed it could be possible for Othello as a fictional character to have a notion of honour at all and further, even if that were possible, for that notion to be divorced from the general themes of the play. It is an essential fact about fiction that the author does not just tell a story. The story is in fact the means whereby he actually does something else. *Othello* is not only about what happens to the characters in the play although it is about that as well. It is, more importantly, about themes such as jealousy as a human failing and its tragically destructive power when it becomes an all-absorbing passion. A game of make-believe can be about ideas or themes that go beyond the game itself but the point is that it need not be and in fact it generally is not.

(c) Events in a game of mud-pies develop or change in such a way that things could have been otherwise. A host of possibilities are open to the children when the make-believe pies come out of the make-believe oven — they may make-believely eat them, make-believely put them on the make-believe shelf or make-believely give them away. But whatever happens in a particular work of fiction, once it has been completed, is necessary if that piece of fiction is to be that piece of fiction and no other. Othello *must* believe Desdemona to be unfaithful, Desdemona *must* be faithful and events must occur as they do. This is not to say that the text can not be interpreted in different ways and that different actors are bound by one way of presenting the part that they are acting. What it does mean, however, is that there can be only one series of events and that these must occur as presented by Shakespeare — there is room for no other possibility.

4 Putting fiction under the general heading of pretending as make-believe is too hasty. Even if fiction can be shown to be a form of

pretending, and obviously I do not think that it can, then it need not be this kind of pretending, that is, it need not be make-believe. Closer examination shows that it is not. Barrett, in criticizing Austin's article 'Pretending', points to at least three kinds of pretending that are relevant to my argument (Barrett 1969). Austin's claim that pretending entails not really doing and being, and its converse, really doing and being entails not pretending, does not hold in all cases. This can be illustrated by using Austin's own example: Someone is pretending to clean the windows while actually noting the valuables in the room. The following variations can be considered:

- (a) Someone merely performs cleaninglike actions. He pretends to clean but does not actually clean. The above entailment holds.
- (b) Someone is doing (a) but is really noting the valuables in the room. The entailment still holds.
- (c) Someone actually cleans the windows while noting the valuables. This is more problematic.

In the mud-pie game we have a situation of type (a). What is happening is that someone pretends to make pies but really doesn't. (He really makes mud-pies.) But is this so in the fictional case? What is it that the author pretends to do and doesn't? Maybe at first glance he is pretending to assert certain things but really isn't. He is just pretending to assert that there is a certain woman named Anna Karenina who lives in a particular place, and so on and so on. If we look no further at what pretending can involve then it seems plausible that all participants in the fictional situation are just pretending that the world is other than it really is.

However, a closer look at (c) shows that if any of Barrett's examples fits then this must be it. If this is the case then (a) cannot give us what we require and therefore fiction cannot be make-believe. The author tells a story while *really* saying something about his view of human nature or of some other aspect of the world. So far so good. Both the author and the would-be thief are doing one thing by doing something else. But the thief *really* cleans the windows and the author *really* tells a story. They are not pretending to do this. In the case of the would-be thief, however, he is cleaning the windows *in order to conceal his real purpose* which is to note the valuables in the room. The author, however, is at no time involved in concealing one activity by means of performing another. His telling a story is the means he uses

in order to suggest, hint at or in some other way say something about what he thinks of a particular aspect of reality.²

The important points here are that, first, the author is not pretending to do anything and, second, he *really* hints at or suggests something by really telling a story. In other words he really does A by really doing B. To claim that he is part of a game of make-believe is a serious misconstrual of his role. It is to claim that he pretends to do A by really doing B.

5 There is a further argument that can be used against the make-believe account of fiction. If, in the fictional situation, we posit worlds that are other than the real world, then maybe the way to explain this game of make-believe and to give it some philosophical respectability is via the notion of possible worlds. This view has not been fully developed as a theory. Given how possible worlds are explained, however, and given the requirements of the make-believe account of fiction, the proposal to see the latter in terms of the former is, at the least, attractive. I would not like to suggest that any of the particular philosophers whose ideas I discuss would adopt this view were he to give his full attention to the problem that is bothering me. What I am suggesting is that given the similarities between possible worlds and fiction as make-believe, such a view is attractive. Further, if an explanation of the paradoxical nature of the fictional situation were to be accommodated within such a particular overall view, this is what it would be most likely to look like. I therefore do not accuse anyone whose work I discuss in this connection (Evans 1982, Kripke 1980, Lewis 1973) of holding the position that I take to be a general consequence of certain other claims. Flint Schier (University of the Witwatersrand, 1985), in conversation, has suggested that possibly there are worlds that are fictions, but this is a different matter entirely. However, it is interesting to see how far we can get with what a possible worlds account of fiction would look like. There are various versions of just what possible worlds are. David Lewis (1973, 1978) gives a counterfactual account — a counterfactual being a supposition contrary to fact, for example, if kangaroos had no tails they would fall over. He claims that it is incontrovertibly true that things might have been other than they are — for every logical possibility there is a possible world. The actual world that we happen to inhabit is just one of an infinite number of possibilities. For Lewis, possible worlds are

just as real as our actual world and it is no more necessary that we should inhabit this one than that we should inhabit any other. The use of the notion of possible worlds has been mainly to solve problems of reference and causation, among other things. Unlike Kripke who uses the notion without any ontological commitment, Lewis is committed to the real nature of possible worlds and of the entities they contain.

Although it is difficult to piece together a proper argument for the claim that fictions are possible worlds, there are at least two reasons that can be given for this view. First, reasoning about fictions seems to be very much like reasoning about counterfactuals. We make contrary-to-fact suppositions but within that counterfactual situation we make use of fictional premisses. So we suppose, contrary to fact, that there is a man Othello who comes to believe that his wife is being unfaithful, and we make comments like 'Othello's jealousy is driving him insane'. We go on to suppose that if Othello would only come to his senses, then he will not murder Desdemona. Second, following Lewis's account of the metaphysical nature of possible worlds, we can suppose them — and for each supposition there is a real possible world — but we cannot know what they are like because there can be no causation across worlds. This would explain why we cannot interfere with Desdemona's fate. Desdemona is logically unavailable to the causal laws operating in our world although, of course, she is subject to the causal laws operating within her world. (There can, of course, be possible worlds without any causal laws because the laws of physics are not necessary. This is, however, a different issue.) Now, if there is no causation across worlds, then the fate of fictional characters cannot cause us to be moved. Hence we cannot be *really* moved and the explanation of our original problem could be consistent with that given by Walton *et al.* It would seem quite possible that we are merely *pretending* to feel pity for Othello, Desdemona, Anna and all of the other fictional characters who seem to have a claim on our emotions. Evans goes as far as endorsing the view that there can be a counterfactual explanation of fiction. He argues that we formulate the rules in terms of these counterfactuals. To return to Walton's mud-pie example, if the objects had been real pies and if this had been a hot oven, then they would have been burnt pies. Evans, however, sees a problem in the counterfactual account of possible worlds when we try to explain

fictions, because in the make-believe situation all of the counterfactuals have impossible antecedents (Evans 1982). There simply are no possible worlds in which these mud-pies are pies. He suggests that it might be necessary to discard the counterfactual account of possible worlds on the basis of the fictional situation not being able to be accommodated within such a theory. Except for one point, I shall not examine Evans's account any further as the particular problem with which he is concerned is reference in fiction, a related but not identical issue. Although Evans endorses Walton's view of make-believe, he shifts the operator so that instead of getting 'S's utterance is true iff it is make-believe the case that p', we now get 'Make-believable S's utterance is true iff it is make-believable the case that p'. What happens here is that the initial pretence is that fiction gives us information about things. We know, however, that further make-believe truths are generated by the initial pretence and can be reported in the same way — the members of the audience do what they do within the scope of the pretence, they do not *pretend* to do anything. We pretend that there are people like Othello and Desdemona and within the scope of that pretence we pity them, admire them and so on. We *actually* cry or laugh or feel sad.

However, there is a problem with a possible worlds account of fiction — whichever way you look at it. Possible worlds are maximally comprehensive in that they include everything that is logically possible. They exclude all logical impossibilities. Fictional worlds, on the other hand, it can be argued, are essentially incomprehensive. The implication of this is that they can include logical infringements. For example, they do not obey the law of excluded middle.

Let me try to illustrate what I mean with an example:

- (a) A either does or does not have a mole on his back.
- (b) A has a mole on his back.
- (c) A does not have a mole on his back.

No possible world could require (a) without also requiring (b) or (c). The law of excluded middle requires that everything is either p or not p. Any possible world which requires a state of affairs $p \vee q$ therefore also requires the state that p or the state that q, that is $p \vee q$ requires either that p be true or that q be true. We know that (a) must be true of Othello, that is we know that either Othello does or does not have a mole on his back. But the fictional world containing Othello, while

requiring (a), does not require either (b) or (c) and this is because fiction is essentially incomprehensive — neither the presence nor the absence of a mole is in any way part of what is presented to us about Othello. And yet we could not have the situation in which it is not the case that either Othello does or does not have a mole on his back. In other words, a fictional world, because of its non-comprehensiveness, yields the result that such a world may require $p \vee q$ without requiring either p or q . This is a logical impossibility.

The conclusion we must reach is that, unlike possible worlds, fictions are not complete and because of this incompleteness they are able to endorse a logical impossibility that no possible world can endorse. However, it can be argued that if make-believe worlds are possible worlds and if it can further be argued that fictions are make-believe worlds, then fictions must be possible worlds. This is what I have just refuted. Fictions cannot be possible worlds because all possible worlds must obey the laws of logic and this is precisely what fictions do not or, at least, need not do.

I have made no attempt to present what I take to be an acceptable solution of the original puzzle. My aim has remained less ambitious. I have tried to show that a popular and widely endorsed and discussed account of how it is possible for us to be emotionally moved by the fate of fictional characters is unviable and I believe I have managed to do so in new ways. The evidence shows that the fictional situation is not the same as the make-believe one. I hope that I have managed to remove the temptation that most of our ordinary talk about fiction endorses. The make-believe theory has had a long history. If it can be laid to rest, the chances of a more fruitful explanation of what still remains an apparent paradox will be more likely to be forthcoming.

Notes

- 1 Wolterstorff argues that at no time is anything or anyone created in the sense that they must have some kind of existence as a result. He claims that what the author or the artist does is present a world for us to think about, look at, muse over, etc.
- 2 The would-be thief is also cleaning the windows in order to note the valuables in the room but he is doing this so that he can deceive anyone who watches him about the nature of his real purpose. There is a difference.

Bibliography

- Austin, J. L. 1979. *Philosophical papers*. 3rd edition. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Barrett, C. 1969. Not exactly pretending. *Philosophy*, 44.
- Evans, G. 1982. *The varieties of reference*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.
- Kenny, A. 1966 (1963). *Action, emotion and will*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- Kripke, S. 1980 (1972). *Naming and necessity*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Lewis, D. 1973. *Counterfactuals*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Lewis, D. 1978. Truth in fiction. *American Philosophical Quarterly*, 15.
- Paskins, B. 1977. On being moved by Anna Karenina and 'Anna Karenina'. *Philosophy*, 52.
- Radford, C. 1975. How can we be moved by the fate of Anna Karenina? *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, supplementary volume 64.
- Walton, K. 1973. Pictures and make-believe. *Philosophical Review*, 82.
- Walton, K. 1974. Are representations symbols? *Monist*, 58.
- Walton, K. 1976. Points of view in narrative and depictive representation. *Nous*, 10.
- Walton, K. 1978a. Fearing fictions. *Journal of Philosophy*, 75.
- Walton, K. 1978b. How remote are fictional worlds from the real world? *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism*, 37.
- Wolterstorff, N. 1980. *Works and worlds of art*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.