Opposites

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Abstract: Irony appears to be deeply rooted in the practice of ethics. Attempts to prescribe morally obligatory duties, and to will morally justified actions, often bring about the opposite of their intended result. Imposing imperatives, e.g., justice, in efforts to produce fair, equitable, caring societies, inadvertently plants seeds of failure. The imposition of moral imperatives increasingly appears to generate polarities rather than unities, as cases of abortion, euthanasia, reactions to liberal immigration, and environmental protection policies have illustrated. Imposed imperatives generate counter imperatives and counterclaims of having justice on "our" side. I attempt here to explain this phenomenon and, in the process, argue that attempts to resolve such conflicts by defending one's position against its opposition is, in a certain way, destructive of moral life. I conclude with a sketch of how an ethic of attunement can help rectify this problem.

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Irony appears to be deeply rooted in the practice of ethics. Attempts to prescribe morally obligatory duties, and to will morally justified actions, often bring about the opposite of their intended result. Imposing imperatives, e.g., justice, in efforts to produce fair, equitable, caring societies, inadvertently plants seeds of failure. The imposition of moral imperatives increasingly appears to generate polarities, rather than unities, as cases of abortion, euthanasia, reactions to liberal immigration, and environmental protection policies have illustrated. Imposed imperatives generate counter imperatives, and counter-claims of having justice on "our" side. I attempt here to understand this phenomenon and, in the process, argue that attempts at resolving such conflicts by defending one side over its opposition to others is, in certain ways, destructive of moral life. I conclude with a sketch of how a different approach can be formed.

The idea that opposites produce one another is traceable in the West to Platonic thought in the *Phaedo* (Plato, 1973:70e ff), to Hegel (1979) and his view of the dialectic between opposites, and in the East to Taoism (theory of yin/yang). The dominant traditions in ethics and

moral theory, however, have paid little attention to this view of how the world works, resulting, I want to argue, in misunderstanding the consequences of imposing imperatives and how this results in large-scale moral failure, describable as rebellion (inversion of moral values), reversal (turning moral principles against accusers), and hypocrisy.

Two kinds of oppositional relations are relevant here. The first involves the opposition between ideal and real, an artifactual opposition; the second involves natural opposites. The former is constructed whereas the latter is comprised of "givens" or basic facts of life. Failure to understand how these oppositions play out, results in a blindness to actual lines of causality that operate in motivational systems. To set the stage for understanding how this occurs, a brief summary of the history of moral scepticism – the denial that moral commitments to principles of justice can be the motivations for action – discloses how such causal connections have come to be ignored by moral prescriptivists. Moral scepticism goes back at least to the Thrasymachus-Socrates exchange, (Plato, *Republic*, 338c ff) and "The Ring of Gyges" (359a ff), in response to which Socrates attempts to show that rational agents can actually act on commitments to justice, as such, once they know and understand justice. Socrates refuses to admit that a person can know what justice is and not act on it; he refuses to admit the possibility of *akrasia* or weakness of will (Plato, *Protagoras*, 358d). Failure to act justly must, then, be a matter of ignorance.

This response seems rather naive today, but even Aristotle (*Nichomachean Ethics*, Bk. VII:1-10) had his doubts, arguing that moral failure is more a problem of opinion interfering with the knowledge of justice one has. His explanation admits that other-than-moral ideas and forces can interfere with the knowledge one has, which assumes a more complicated and nuanced moral psychology than that of Socrates. Later, Hume challenges the underlying belief that reason can cause action in and of itself, when he attempts to show that it is a mere slave of the passions.

Kant, being awakened from his dogmatic slumber by Hume, dedicated two major works to recovering something of the Socratic measure of moral authority and efficacy. Others have responded, in turn. Nietzsche (*On The Geneology of Morals,*1:7) for instance, declared that ethics is the product of a slave mentality, determined to exact revenge on the powerful. It derives from *resentiment* (1:10), or anger and the need for revenge, not reason.

In the 20th century, logical positivists regarded ethics (normative pretensions) as nonsense, like metaphysics, deeming both to be little more than emotional expression, and supported the behaviourist project of eliminating ethics (and practical reason) from explanations of human behaviour. Capping off the eliminativist program, B.F. Skinner (*Beyond Freedom and Dignity*) argued that ethics should have no place in the ordering of human relations. Ethics should be replaced by stimulus-response mechanical means to engineer behaviour.

The history of Western moral thought can be described as a debate over the motivational efficacy of ethics and the ontological status of moral agents. It has been, among other things, a debate over the lines of causality relevant to the control of action. Over this history, traditional prescriptive ethicists have faced a gradual erosion of supposed solid foundations, established by *a priori* reasoning and knowledge. Being ignorant of the actual physical conditions that made rational thought possible, moral agency (e.g., causally independent reason, rationally determined will, *a priori* determination of moral concepts, persons as rational repositories of intrinsic value), could be conceived as independent of physical conditions. As counter-evidence from neurophysiology, psychology and sociology has arisen to support the sceptic, however, these foundations have eroded.

Consequently, claims and assumptions by prescriptivists that persons can act independently of these physical conditions have become increasingly dogmatic. Further, with

developments in areas such as artificial intelligence, complexity, emergence and chaos theories, alternative explanations of personhood are being formulated, which, in turn, obviate the need to make references to radically free wills as determinants of action. The associated belief that our moral agency is connected to something like intrinsic value, which justifies treating ourselves as somehow independent of the natural, causal order of merely instrumentally valuable beings, must also be asserted dogmatically. To the extent that we accept evolutionary and ecological theories – the view that everything is the result of long historical processes and exists as a consequence of the inter-relatedness of all things – moral theories that assign human moral agents special powers (causal status) and value independent of natural processes, are being exposed as constructions, whose justifications are losing force. Thus, as prescriptivists continue to assert that persons have capacities to know and act on moral imperatives that they do not actually have, we can begin to see why imposing moral imperatives engenders reversals, inversions and hypocrisy.

To see how the structure of traditional moral thinking produces the opposite of what it intends, a critique of Kant's attempt at a comprehensive and rigorous defence of moral prescriptivism helps identify central factors. His is a construction (to him, a discovery) of an ideal rational world, operating independently of the world of natural (phenomenal/physical and psychological) causes, "the mechanism of nature." In both the *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals* (Kant, 1976) and the *Critique of Practical Reason* (Kant, 1956), he argues that the rational mind can determine moral imperatives independently of the mechanism; hence, practical reason can be "pure." After formulating the categorical imperative, as derived from pure practical reason alone, he proceeds to show how moral agency works, or how pure practical reason can have a causal effect in the phenomenal realm. Since the separation of pure practical reason from the mechanism of nature implies an incommensurability between the intellectual and

sensuous or phenomenal, like Plato's soul/body and Descartes' mind/body incommensurability, Kant encounters the interaction problem. How can fundamentally different realms have any connection, especially of a causal nature? For Kant, a one-way causal connection from reason to the mechanism of nature exists by way of the will (*Wille*), which determines action in the phenomenal realm. Moral agents, then, not only must, but can override non-moral motivations. As rational determiners of the will, persons are causal agents, who not only compel their internal mechanisms of nature to conform to the principle of universalizability, but they must and can treat themselves and other agents as ends-in-themselves, whose duty is to construct a kingdom of ends on the Earth. These duties and values do not admit of compromise with other motivations and values (instrumental).

Kant, however, admits that we cannot prove that pure practical reason is that which determines a particular action. In the *Critique of Practical Reason,* he recognizes that pure practical reason cannot cause anything in the phenomenal realm in and by itself, precisely because it is detached from the phenomenal. It requires an intermediary, similarly to how pure reason requires an intermediary (the schemata) to connect the categories of pure reason to the sensory realm in *The Critique of Pure Reason* (1929, B177/A138-B178/A139). Kant must show how a one-way causal connection is possible between the pure and the phenomenal realms. He does this through reference to the typic (1956, 70-74]**.** As mediator, the typic enables principles to be applied through acts of pure will, but no evidence can ever prove that reason causes action through an act of pure will to anyone (even to ourselves). This is as it must be, since there can be no mechanism connecting the phenomenal to pure reason, and therefore no evidence-based proof of a causal connection. As he puts it, the moral law has only to do with the abstract notion of freedom, which makes no reference to natural (phenomenal) connections. The typic, then, is only

a presentation of the idea of law, in the most general sense, to the senses, not a body of concrete evidence demonstrating that reason causes action in and by itself. In the end, how the moral law "can be the direct determining ground of the will ... is an insoluble problem for the human reason" (1956, 75). Hence, we never know whether it is the categorical imperative, or some hypothetical imperative, that determines action. Shocking as this conclusion may be to Kantians, it is a logical consequence of Kant's argument.

I have dwelt on Kantian prescriptivism in order to identify the explanatory and justificatory gap that persists in pure and ideal world thinking, to make clear why proponents of the view must at some point assert that we can in fact act on pure ideal imperatives. The interaction problem, which looked more like a puzzle from Socratic or Cartesian perspectives, for Kant is an increasingly difficult problem in the face of developing physical and psychological theories. His attempt at a systematic and rigorous justification and admission that interaction remains an insoluble problem demonstrates why, as the notion of the *a priori* loses purchase, prescriptivists must become increasingly dogmatic about our ability to obey imperatives.

What else has supported the prescriptivist's confidence that persons can follow ideal world prescriptions? First, although not universal, this structure of prescriptive moral theorizing is ubiquitous. A description of these other expressions helps illustrate what gives confidence in prescriptivism. It is connected to absolutist sensibilities, which seem to obviate the need to solve the interaction problem. Kant's was a reference to an absolute ideal of pure reason, much like Socrates' appeal to some pure form of reason sourced in an absolute Good. Hinduism similarly holds Brahman to be the Absolute. Brahman assigns human beings duties which. according to Krishna (the manifest form of Brahman) in the *Bhagavad Gita,* (Mascaro, 1962, Chapter 3), override and counter the influences of the *gunas* (desires, passions). Our higher (pure) natures

call us to renounce these lower aspects of life (of utilitarian value only), in much the same way as Kant (and Socrates) calls us to apply the pure moral law over and against desire and emotion. Krishna is describing a pure realm whose dictates cannot admit compromise with lower order forces. While not admitting of influence by the lower realms, pure moral forces emanating from Brahman can command human beings to act. Krishna appeals to this metaethical framework to demonstrate that Arjuna has a duty to fight for his sovereign, to kill other arguably legitimate claimants to the throne, even though some of those whom he is obligated to kill are his relatives and loved ones. Given that the sovereign gained his seat on the throne through less than virtuous means (a broken promise), the only reason Arjuna has for listening to Krishna is the absolute authority of Brahman. In the end, Arjuna is not rationally convinced by Krishna but simply overwhelmed by the force and sublimity of Brahman. Something like this seems to operate in the mind of the prescriptivist: the force of the idea of the moral law is so impressive and formidable, because backed by an absolute, that there is no need ultimately to justify that the gap between realms can be bridged.

In the challenges to Confucianism, similar debates play out, but in a way that helps lead the discussion specifically toward the theme of opposites. As in the West, metaethical issues concerning personhood and agency are raised in response to Confucian claims that *ren* can override base desires and other lower order motivations, deriving as it does from some higher authority (Heaven) (Confucius, 1989, Book II, VII). Albeit not as radical as in Kantian/Hindu ethics, persons belong to a different order from that of other creatures and their lower natures. In emulating the *chun-tzu* (gentleman), human beings have the power to override their lower desires. While Confucius thought it unnecessary to engage in metaethical justification for this claim, his follower, Mencius, did not. Mencius faced Thrasymachus-like challenges by critics

like Kao Tzu, who rejected the claim that there are moral motivations that can operate independently of desire and (natural) forces (Mencius, 1970, Book 6: 4). Mencius' response is that *ren* is not "natural," in the sense that everyone ordinarily acts on and from it, although it is natural, in the sense that we are born with it. The capacity has to be awakened and nurtured. Ultimately, the capacity originates in a higher-order, transcendent source, giving us the power uncompromisingly to override earthly forces, without, in turn, being subject to Earth's forces. Again, ultimately, it appears that belief in some absolute, transcendent authority is that which grounds confidence in our ability to override lower orders.

Confucius, however, despaired over finding a genuine *chun-tzu* (1989, Book IV: 6). He despaired, because people everywhere failed in their responsibilities; everywhere the opposite of our Heaven-mandated behaviour was compromised and violated. As a result, he felt more at home with the barbarians, defined as those without a true understanding of the moral law, than with his so-called civilization. A life informed by Heaven-defined *jen* (goodness), it turns out, is not consistent with living in the real world. We can ask, how then can the real barbaric world display more of what Heaven demands than the cultured world that is allegedly informed by Heaven? If something about societies not organized around ideal world constructions can be more genuinely moral, Confucius seems to be blind to the problem of interaction his explanatory system creates.

Taoists, in contrast, do not seem blind to this problem and the relationship between opposites, noting how the production of an opposite can be anticipated, implying that Confucians should be aware of the problem. Taoists take the world, including the moral world, to be a play of opposites, capturing the notion in the theory of yin/yang. The world is constituted of opposites, where life and death, dark and light, good and bad, right and wrong, usefulness and

uselessness, are in constant dynamic relation, such that attempts to eliminate one side of the equation results in imbalance, in dysfunction, futility. Moral principles cannot be absolute from this perspective. The *Tao* may be considered an absolute, but when we somehow reside in it, we do not override, renounce, or command desire and emotion. My approach to oppositional relations is, in part, inspired by Taoism, because it helps highlight how thinking in terms of moral imperatives as absolutes creates a kind of blindness to problems generated by the theory. However, I will not appeal to it to make my case but rather look to empirical evidence and contemporary theories.

Natural Opposites

As Taoism anticipates, evolutionary and ecological theories describe the world in terms of a play of opposites (see Levins and Lewontin, 1985). In ecosystems, construction/destruction, affirmation/negation, prey/predator, host/parasite relations are constitutive. For organisms to live, there must be destruction of other life and non-living forms. The structure of sources of nutrition must be broken down in order to be utilized by the organism for its own growth and survival. Evolution involves the emergence of new forms and species, which, because of competition, involves the extinction of others. At more fundamental levels, it involves the destruction of entire systems (e.g., of stars to form elements like iron).

Curiously, the once deemed "natural" opposition between reason and emotion is being exposed as false. At neuronal levels, cognitive areas of the brain that enable reasoning are connected to limbic systems (responsible for emotions, contributing to learning and the ability to appreciate consequences) (Norden, 2007, Lecture 21, and Purves et al., 2001), indicating that reasoning does not take place without some emotive component, at least with respect to decision and action. As we discover how inter-connected structures and functions of the brain are, the

reason vs. emotion opposition is exposed as artifactual. This has implications for how we analyze lines of causality between thought and action. The straightforward relation between reason, determination of principle, determination of will (in overriding emotion) and action cannot, therefore, be the structure through which reasoning operates. Actual lines of causality must be more complex and non-linear than that. Where ideal world prescriptions and imperatives assume such linearity, they also, in principle, demand that agents act in ways in which they are incapable (e.g., without regard for emotion). Moral failure figures into the equation, then, at fundamental levels, because of a failure to understand just what constitutes an oppositional relation.

To the extent that we ignore natural oppositions and create false ones, lines of ethical justification also become suspect. For instance, the idea that to have property x (e.g., intrinsic value) justifies assigning the bearer of those properties an inherent right to life has become fundamental to much ideal-world prescriptive ethics. However, it is not recognized by ecosystems, evolution, or even a person's own biology. To assert this kind of property, then, is to fly in the face of counter-evidence. The related idea that we must respect the non-negotiable status (absoluteness) of those to whom inherent right is ascribed, fails to take the complexity of human life into account, as is evidenced by the fact that we must sometimes decide to place people (soldiers and police officers) in situations where we know some will be killed. If the context in which bearers of value of any kind evolves is complex, and is constituted by oppositional relations, then the properties (including valuational ones) relevant to establishing moral standing cannot be separated from natural properties. Hence, to act as if we can stand apart from these properties and linearly determine what we ought to do courts failure in much the way that caused Confucius to despair.

Failure to recognize natural opposites results in processes like those that led to the Trump electoral victory of 2016 in the U.S.A. Donald Trump exploited and, as of this writing, continues to exploit, the anger and disenchantment of his follows by blaming environmental protectionists and supporters of liberal immigration policies for their loss of jobs, their decline in prosperity, for corruption in the federal capital, and for removing America from the world pedestal of "greatness". He has accused the champions of social and environmental justice of injustice, in effect reversing the meaning of justice in response to the imposition (as he sees it) of policies and laws that operate as imperatives to protect immigrants and the environment. By articulating his position as one of righting the wrongs perpetrated on the workers of America, he has appropriated the language of justice, inverted its meaning, and turned it against so-called progressives. To appreciate the impact of such a reversal on the moral lives of U.S. citizens (and the world), moral psychology becomes critical to ethics. When principles (of justice, for instance) are imposed, some groups are disadvantaged. Feelings of resentment, anger, and the need for revenge are generated because of feeling morally and politically violated, economically disadvantaged, and culturally insulted. Those who feel violated are motivated to do and produce the opposite of what the imposed measures of justice intend. Of course, this psychological turn plays out in more than matters of immigration and environmental protection. We see it being played out in the pro-life versus anti-abortionists conflict, liberals and conservatives, *et cetera*. The more absolutist one side gets, the more the other side attempts to reverse the effects of the imposition.

At another level, Nancy Ann Davis (1990) has argued that ideal world constructions and related prescriptions systematically lead to hypocrisy. Since moral justifications for action are detached from explanations of how people are actually motivated to act, there is no logical, and

therefore, no coherent articulation of the connection between ideal world prescriptions and real world mechanisms of action. Since ideal world prescriptions are not based on real world motivations, people must pretend to act on them, while acting for other reasons; hence, the hypocrisy. By implication, their actions are motivated by other forces, such as fear of sanction, or anticipation of reward. Those who claim to act because of moral principle must, then, construct cover stories to suppress and hide their actual motivations from themselves and others. Unlike Kant, who could rely on the once powerful references to pure reason as his cover story, today's prescriptivists must increasingly rely on different means (e.g., dogmatic assertion), since the metaethical eroding effects of physicalism have been so effective. The systematic and hypocrisy Davis describes is more than ever becoming tolerated, similarly to how Harry Frankfurt describes bullshit (Frankfurt, 2005). The distance between what we avow as reasons for action and what are the actual reasons for action seems to be growing to such an extent that members of Western society, at least, are having to adapt to the exigencies of life by, not only tolerating, but by being hypocritical and using bullshit strategically.

What Then?

Does this imply that ethics can be trivialized and eliminated? I think not. For present purposes, I must assume that alternative explanations for ethics and personhood can be given, not explained away, even when we accept physicalism in its contemporary articulation. Explaining today's physicalism, however, is too complex a task for the space allotted. But I do want to claim that it sheds new light on ethics and moral life as emergent functions, arising from the complex structure and function of brains and evolving social relations (those dependent on language use).

Given the above, in order for ethics not to be self-defeating, moral thought cannot separate the theoretical from the practical, as if metaethical considerations are not important to

the practice of ethics. As explanations for what we call "person" and "agency" come under review, moral psychology (moral causality) becomes increasingly important to the practice of ethics, in determining what we can do, under what conditions we can do it, why we do what we do, and why we formulate ideas concerning what we ought to do. In the history of the West, and to a large extent the East, ethics has enjoyed a general agreement over what these concepts mean (ethics as duty, persons as more closely related to the divine than the Earth), largely it seems, because of generally accepted appeals to absolutes and the impressiveness of such appeals on people's psyches. This has helped establish a relatively stable set of metaethical concepts grounding assertions about moral values and imperatives. Metaethical reflection on the nature of personhood, agency, the good, ultimate foundations of justice, and the like, could then be relegated to the more ethereal theoretical activity of scholars, whose conclusions were thought not to bear immediately on practice.

But if my argument is sound, and the dominant way of thinking ethically itself leads to moral failure, re-thinking metaethical foundations and thereby thinking differently ethically (in non-absolutist, non-linear ways) are among the most important practical matters today. Indeed, the very polarizing issues of abortion and euthanasia, as well as assisted suicide, underline the need to re-think, since the resulting entrenchment of positions is leading advocates from both sides of these debates to adopt evermore irrational and manipulative techniques (e.g., demonizing the opponents, misrepresenting opponents' positions) to advance their own positions. Erosion of communicative activity aimed at establishing mutual understanding, agreement and unity is threatening to undermine our abilities to build robust moral communities.

To stand with those who maintain a focus on developing and sustaining robust moral communities is to refocus on the task of attuning ourselves to the actual conditions that give rise

to and support moral life, and to commit to developing mutual understanding of motivations and values among interlocutors. Much of the task is empirical in nature, where we seek to understand the physical and psychological conditions upon which moral life develops (evolves). Communicative activity between interlocutors concerning interpretation and assigning of meaning to actions, relationships, and the like becomes necessary to the building of protective, reliable, caring communities. Communities protective of the goods of human life, then, need also to become attuned to the conditions of flourishing. Such processes, I would argue, would likely result in the three historically persistent ethical positions – utilitarianism, deontology and virtue ethics – retaining their position at centre-stage of moral life, however incompatible they can seem at times. What we find is that taking the approach just described results in interlocutors valuing trustworthiness and reciprocity. Related expectations and senses of obligation arise to help ensure that these values are recognized and exercised. But they also result from utilitarian concerns, as interlocutors seek ways to guarantee the satisfaction of their values (interests). Of course, the story is far more complex than I can present here, but this brief description indicates how core elements of moral life could be identified, because they naturally arise among interlocutors who find it useful to form communal life. Much more could be said, but at this point it is sufficient to note that re-thinking ethics without traditional concepts and references to absolutes is both possible and necessary.

For this paper, I only want to emphasize the importance of understanding and mutual understanding in the development and protection of moral communities. Misunderstandings of personhood, as when based on ideal world constructions, must be replaced by more explanatorily intelligible and normatively non-absolute conceptions, in order to avoid the divisiveness current conceptualizations engender. However, as we learn how persons are emergent functions of self-

organizing systems (organisms), self-referring and evaluating systems, we are also learning that they are perhaps more difficult to explain than traditional theories dreamt them to be. So, no simple replacements for traditional conceptions can be expected. But we can retain certain Kantian notions, such as that of the person as the unity of experience over time and of the unity of multiple functions (perception, understanding, reflection, action). We need to be able to explain and give meaning to this unity condition in new ways (not as autonomous self-legislator and repository of intrinsic value). While avoiding the interaction problem, a new problem, that of emergence, must now be addressed. How does a unity of experience over time that self-identifies come to be? Do concepts such as autonomy, freedom, and will still have their place in a "naturalized" ethic? If so, how are they to be formulated? Although these are questions for later discussion, we can say that each is also a topic for moral deliberation, where we may need to negotiate definitions as we continue to learn about the conditions that give rise to the use of these concepts.

Many traditionally core moral concepts will likely remain core, precisely because we can see how interlocutors who have a mutual interest in building and sustaining moral communities would develop such concepts. The concept of agency, while understood differently, would remain core as a focal point for assigning responsibility and trusting the locus of responsibility to act with integrity; likewise with conceptions of freedom and moral decision-making. Once we acknowledge that persons emerge in complex and inter-related systems, however, traditional essentialist definitions become inadequate and perverse. Replacing essentialist definitions of core concepts with relational definitions requires acceptance of some degree of experimentation in and negotiating definitions.

On the matter of mutual understanding, as we find that values, e.g., those related to aggression and violence, may be intimately related to moral values; because of the play of opposites, understanding one another becomes ever more central to moral life. If we find that the opposite kinds of motivations are embedded in human psychology and sociology, we need first to understand how even those generative of aggression and violence operate in us, not simply proscribe them. Then, understanding their potential for re-valuation, for being controlled and transformed becomes a central operation of moral life. This would be more in line with what we actually do. Those things which gives rise to violence (anger, hatred, fear, aggression, desire to dominate) are now often accepted as given motivations, which can, however, be transformed by communities by appropriating the right to their expression from individuals and giving that right over to cultural systems (e.g., as in "violent" sports), to political systems (e.g., in democracies recognizing the need for oppositional parties), and to legal systems (e.g., by requiring prosecutions and defence council).

Similar acts of appropriation are accomplished in various martial arts, which define the appropriate form that those motivations are allowed to take. They do so by creating disciplines and re-framing the values associated with violence (e.g., by valuing violence in defence of the innocent and vulnerable as honourable). By re-framing violence and transforming its expression in accordance with conceptions of right contexts, right manners and the like, it is transformed into something socially valuable and productive. Plato (*Republic* 1973, Book II, 375 ff) understood this as a measure that needed to be adopted in the training of the guardians, whose high-spiritedness had to be disciplined through gymnastics and music (without which guardians would tend to become savage). Indeed, Plato (or Socrates), perhaps ironically, demonstrates how we need to become attuned to the actual forces that operate in life, in order to build moral

communities. Through transformative processes, the high-spirited individual can be taught to be gentle toward citizens of the state yet vicious toward its enemies. In keeping with commitment to evidence-based propositions, Plaot uses the pedigree dog (375e) as a real-world proof that such a union of opposites is possible. In many ways, the alternative ethic I am proposing already operates today and in Confucius' barbarians.

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