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## *Do Personality Effects Mean Philosophy is Intrinsically Subjective?*

**Abstract:** *This paper identifies several ways in which personality informs philosophical belief. In the present study, individuals holding doctorates in philosophy were given a personality inventory and asked to respond to nine philosophical questions, seven of which produced significant sample sizes. Personality predicted response to three of these seven questions, suggesting that philosophers' beliefs are determined in part by their personalities. This is taken as evidence that philosophy is intrinsically subjective, a claim which is herein developed more completely and defended against several objections.*

**Keywords:** agreeableness; Big Five; conscientiousness; dualism; embodiment; experimental philosophy; extraversion; intuition; meta-philosophy; naming; neuroticism; openness; personality; physicalism; rationality; reasoning; subjectivity; thought experiments.

### **1. Introduction: The Nature of Philosophical Debate**

Why do arguments that seem so plausible to some philosophers always fail to persuade others? Philosophical enquiry is supposed to be a rational<sup>1,2</sup> pursuit, so it is curious that even highly trained philos-

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- [1] In order to avoid confusion, I will define my usage of certain key terms, consistent with familiar usage as indicated by the *Oxford English Dictionary*.
- [2] Rational: Based on universal norms of good reasoning, as opposed to emotion or individual preferences.

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ophers, versed in all the same arguments and thought experiments, disagree about so many points. To the extent that philosophical conclusions are reached through intuition and reason, the persistence of philosophical disagreement suggests that something very personal drives philosophical intuition.

In this article, I consider the view that philosophers' beliefs are partially founded on the basis of individual character and disposition rather than objective reason and evidence. The present study examined the relationship between philosophers' personalities<sup>3</sup> and their responses to several thought experiments. The data generated provide strong evidence that philosophers' personalities inform their beliefs regarding specific philosophical problems. I consider several alternative interpretations of my findings, but ultimately conclude that personality sometimes affects philosophical belief.<sup>4</sup> I further argue that differences in belief owing to personality and individual differences are rightly characterized as subjective.<sup>5</sup> In so far as this is true, belief about some philosophical problems is subjective and, in so far as belief regarding philosophical problems is central to philosophical practice, philosophy that relies on these intuitions can properly be called subjective.

### *1.1. Experimental Philosophy*

Historically, philosophers have drawn conclusions about the world on the basis of intuition and formal reasoning. More recently, experimental philosophers have begun to apply scientific methodologies to philosophical questions in order to understand how people think about them. One problem with traditional philosophical approaches is that a particular philosopher may have peculiar and unpopular intuitions. In an effort to address this concern, experimental philosophers have recently begun polling average people in order to discover 'folk intuitions', the philosophical beliefs of the average person. What these experimental philosophers have found suggests a fragmented and manipulable 'folk' (Cokely and Feltz, 2009a).

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- [3] Personality: The set of qualities that distinguish an individual. These include, but are not limited to, stable, long-lasting, internalized traits. I will use the term 'personality' consistent with the broader set of personality traits; context will make clear when it is also consistent with the aforementioned subset.
  - [4] Philosophical belief: Attitude towards philosophical problems. Response to such problems presented as vignettes is sometimes referred to as philosophical intuition, but this latter term carries a connotation of unreasoned immediacy, which is inappropriate to describe the response of philosophers to questions they have likely considered at length.
  - [5] Subjective: Reflective of an individual non-privileged perspective, as opposed to entirely mind-independent, universal standards.

Folk intuitions have been found to vary across cultures (Machery *et al.*, 2004), to demonstrate frame effects (Nichols and Knobe, 2007), and to differ from the intuitions of professional philosophers (Machery and Systma, 2010). This paper focuses on the relationship between personality and philosophical belief among philosophers, a relationship that has already been partially explored among lay people by Feltz and Cokely (2009a). They found that extraverts are uniquely predisposed to consider certain socially deviant acts harmful and immoral. They also identified a relationship between the personality trait 'openness' and the belief that moral and physical facts may be subjective (Feltz and Cokely, 2008).

Because extraverts devote excessive attention to social aspects of situations, Feltz and Cokely also hypothesized that extraverts might lose sight of deterministic aspects of such situations (2009b). This, they argued, would cause extraverts to be particularly likely to consider free will and responsibility compatible with determinism. The authors asked undergraduates to consider a deterministic universe, and found that extraverts were indeed more likely than introverts to consider murderers free and to hold them responsible for their actions. Studies have since confirmed that this effect only occurs when participants are given high-affect, concrete scenarios, a finding that strengthens the claim that extraverts' attention to social details is responsible for the effect (Feltz and Cokely, 2009b; Nadelhoffer, Kvaran and Nahmias, 2009).

Unfortunately, findings like these have often been dismissed as trivial on the grounds that unlike lay people philosophers are uniquely capable of reasoning in a formal, objective manner, or that they possess the requisite expertise required to answer philosophical questions (Kauppinen, 2007; Devitt, 2011). This study undermines those claims and allays concerns that the effects of personality on philosophical belief are circumscribed to social and moral questions, as none of the three effects identified in this paper falls within those domains.

### *1.2. The Big Five Personality Traits*

Allport and Odbert (1936) launched modern personality research by examining the English lexicon, and identifying 18,000 words that describe human behaviour. They chose to focus their research on the 4,500 or so words that describe stable, long-term personality traits, the kind that we often consider part of a person's identity. Over several decades, they and others constructed numerous personality assessments, slowly eliminating highly correlated terms.

In 1961 Tupes and Christal (see Tupes and Christal, 1992) were the first to identify a five-factor model of personality, and by the 1990s a consensus was reached about the comprehensiveness of five traits: Extraversion (or Surgency), Agreeableness, Conscientiousness, Neuroticism (as opposed to Emotional Stability), and Openness to Experience (or Intellect). Because of the enormous breadth of each category, the factors became known as the Big Five personality traits (Digman, 1990; Goldberg, 1992). Further research has shown many of these characteristics to vary across cultures (Eap *et al.*, 2008), between genders, and with age (John, Gosling and Potter, 2003).

The precise definition of each trait remains controversial. Agreeableness measures several tendencies, including compliance, altruism, and supportiveness. Extraversion gauges how shy or outgoing a person is, and encompasses warmth, dominance, and sociability. There is debate as to whether conscientiousness is best understood as a sort of governor on impulsive behaviour, or as an organizer of deliberate action. Neuroticism measures the frequency and extent to which individuals experience negative emotions, and the form and severity of their responses to these emotions. Openness measures intellect, aesthetic sensibility, creativity, and a number of other highly correlated factors (McCrae and John, 1992).

Several instruments have been developed to assess the Big Five, each with its pros and cons. The most commonly used assessment contains 100 unipolar trait descriptive adjectives; the most effective test, the Revised NEO Personality Inventory, contains 240 items. Recruiting participants to answer 240 questions online, and expecting them to do so with accuracy and attention, raises practical concerns, and so participants in the present study were given the Big Five Personality Inventory (BFI). The BFI is a well-regarded personality survey composed of 44 questions (John and Srivastava, 1999).

## 2. Method

1,195 participants were recruited through the social networking site *Facebook* and the general interest philosophy blog *Leiter Reports*. Of those who completed the entire survey, this paper looks only at the 234 philosophers who held PhDs or DPhils in philosophy. Philosophers who participated were predominantly white (94%), male (82%), from Western or Australasian countries (100%), and were of all ages and socioeconomic backgrounds.

Participants were directed to a five-page survey on the website *SurveyMonkey*, where they were required to mark all questions but

allowed to indicate a preference not to respond. On the first page of the survey, participants were briefed and asked to acknowledge consent and age of majority. The second page consisted of nine randomized ‘Yes’ or ‘No’ philosophical prompts, listed in the Appendix. Questions 5, 6, 7, and 9 borrowed heavily from famous thought experiments devised by other philosophers (Kripke, 1980; Gettier, 1963; Jackson, 1986; Thomson, 1976). Page 3 had 51 personality questions that were scored on a Likert scale from 1 (Disagree strongly) to 5 (Agree strongly), the first 44 of which comprised the BFI. These questions were not randomized, and BFI items were presented first and in the same order described in John and Srivastava (1999). Page 4 consisted of 7 demographic questions, and the last page thanked and debriefed participants. Because all responses were self-reported and unmonitored, there was the usual risk of false reports.

### 3. Results

Participants’ BFI scores were calculated from raw data as the average of responses given for each facet. Respondents who chose not to answer a given philosophical question were excluded from that question’s analysis. For each philosophical question, a binary logistic regression was run, in which all five personality traits and a constant were entered into the model. A summary of results for each overall model and each trait-belief pair is presented below (Table 1).

|                       | E | A | C | N | O | Overall |
|-----------------------|---|---|---|---|---|---------|
| 1. Compatibilism      |   |   |   |   |   |         |
| 2. Fairness           |   |   |   |   |   |         |
| 3. Somatic Identity   |   |   |   |   |   |         |
| 4. Reductionist AI    |   |   | * | * |   | ***     |
| 5. Descriptivism      |   | * | * |   |   | *       |
| 6. Gettier/Knowledge  |   |   |   | * | * | ***     |
| 7. Knowledge Argument |   |   |   | * |   |         |
| 8. Embodied Cognition |   | * |   |   | * | **      |
| 9. Trolley Problem    |   |   |   | * |   |         |

*Table 1.* Correlations between personality factors and philosophical beliefs. Note: E = Extraversion, A = Agreeableness, C = Conscientiousness, N = Neuroticism, O = Openness. Numbered philosophical beliefs were tested with the corresponding prompts listed in the index. \*  $p < 0.05$ , \*\*  $p < 0.01$ , \*\*\* *Bonferroni-corrected*  $p < 0.006$ .

In order to reduce the risk of false positives, each personality trait was force-entered into the regression, rather than entered stepwise. Only those questions for which a significant overall effect was found are considered below, in order to keep the number of initial comparisons to 9, rather than 45. A Bonferroni correction for the use of 9 comparisons provided an even more conservative test. Question 3 (which did not exhibit significant overall effects) and Question 6 (which did exhibit significant overall effects) were excluded from further discussion because 10 or fewer participants responded ‘Yes’ to these questions, reducing the number of questions discussed from nine to seven.

For each regression model,  $\chi^2$  measures the extent to which the observed pattern of responses differed from what one would expect if personality and philosophical belief were entirely independent. The associated Hosmer and Lemeshow  $\chi^2$  reflects the extent to which the observed results differed from those predicted by the model. Greater  $\chi^2$  scores reflect greater dependence of philosophical belief on personality, and greater Hosmer and Lemeshow  $\chi^2$  scores reflect greater independence. The p-value of each of these scores represents the probability that the observed score was due to chance.

### 3.1. Dualism: Could a Robot Feel Love?

Participants were asked the following question:

Suppose neuroscientists are able to identify every part and every connection in the human brain. Working with a team of computer scientists, they then build a robot that has a complete electronic replica of the human brain. Could this robot experience love?

Most philosophers (73%,  $N = 202$ ) believed that a robot with a replica human brain could feel love. The Big Five had a significant overall effect on this belief,  $\chi^2 = 16.498$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , and the model was a somewhat good fit, Hosmer and Lemeshow  $\chi^2 = 14.522$ ,  $p = 0.069$ . As shown in Table 2, neuroticism and conscientiousness were both significant predictors of response.

| Personality Trait | $B$     | $SE\ B$ | 95% CI for $\text{Exp}(B)$ |                 |       |
|-------------------|---------|---------|----------------------------|-----------------|-------|
|                   |         |         | Lower                      | $\text{Exp}(B)$ | Upper |
| Conscientiousness | -0.916* | 0.37722 | 0.191                      | 0.400           | 0.839 |
| Neuroticism       | -0.728* | 0.294   | 0.271                      | 0.483           | 0.860 |

Table 2. Could a robot feel love? Note:  $B$  = Regression coefficient,  $\text{Exp}(B)$  = Odds ratio. \*  $p < 0.05$ .

$B$  is the value used to predict philosophical response from each significant personality factor. Negative values indicate that a factor is associated with disagreement, and positive values signal agreement.  $B$  was also converted into the odds ratio,  $\text{Exp}(B)$ , which indicates that for each unit increase in a given personality factor (on a four-unit scale), philosophers' odds of holding the target belief changed by that factor. For each unit increase in neuroticism or conscientiousness, philosophers' odds of believing that a robot could feel love fell by more than half.

### 3.2. Descriptivism: Are Names Identical with Descriptions?

The next question on the survey asked the following:

Suppose that all you know about Einstein is that he developed the Theory of Relativity. But suppose it turns out that Einstein actually stole the idea from some guy named Moynahan, who nobody has ever heard of. In this case, when you use the name 'Einstein' are you actually referring to Moynahan?

The predominant view among philosophers (87%,  $N = 202$ ) was that the name 'Einstein' could not refer to someone other than Einstein. Overall personality predicted response to this question,  $\chi^2 = 14.140$ ,  $p < 0.05$ , and the model was a very good fit, Hosmer and Lemeshow  $\chi^2 = 8.359$ ,  $p = 0.399$ . Agreeable philosophers were less likely to identify the name 'Einstein' with Moynahan, the man who fit the description, but conscientious philosophers were more willing to assign Moynahan the name 'Einstein' (Table 3).

| Personality Trait | $B$     | $SE\ B$ | 95% CI for $\text{Exp}(B)$ |                 |       |
|-------------------|---------|---------|----------------------------|-----------------|-------|
|                   |         |         | Lower                      | $\text{Exp}(B)$ | Upper |
| Agreeableness     | -0.922* | 0.364   | 0.195                      | 0.398           | 0.812 |
| Conscientiousness | 1.043*  | 0.486   | 1.095                      | 2.838           | 7.354 |

Table 3. Are names identical with descriptions? Note:  $B$  = Regression coefficient,  $\text{Exp}(B)$  = Odds ratio. \*  $p < 0.05$ .

### 3.3. Embodiment: Could a Brain Think Without Being Connected to a Body?

The following question probed belief about the embodied mind thesis:

Suppose scientists are able to use stem cells to grow lungs that breathe without being connected to a body. They then grow a

heart that pumps without being connected to a body. If they can do all this, can they create a brain that thinks without being connected to a body?

About half of philosophers believed that a disembodied brain could not think (54%,  $N = 205$ ). Differences in overall personality modelled differences in belief,  $\chi^2 = 15.375$ ,  $p < 0.01$ , and the model was a good fit, Hosmer and Lemeshow  $\chi^2 = 3.220$ ,  $p = 0.920$ . Increases in agreeableness and openness were associated with more negative responses, indicating an increased belief in the embodied mind thesis (Table 4).

| Personality Trait | $B$     | $SE\ B$ | 95% CI for $\text{Exp}(B)$ |                 |       |
|-------------------|---------|---------|----------------------------|-----------------|-------|
|                   |         |         | Lower                      | $\text{Exp}(B)$ | Upper |
| Agreeableness*    | -0.549* | 0.273   | 0.338                      | 0.577           | 0.985 |
| Openness*         | -0.752* | 0.308   | 0.258                      | 0.471           | 0.861 |

Table 4. Could a brain think without being connected to a body? Note:  $B$  = Regression coefficient,  $\text{Exp}(B)$  = Odds ratio. \*  $p < 0.05$ .

#### 4. Discussion

The present analysis found that of the seven thought experiments considered, three were subject to overall personality effects. Running seven tests on a single data set can significantly increase the risk of a Type I error, but the likelihood of finding two effects in seven tests, each significant to  $\alpha = 0.015$ , is itself significant to  $p = 0.004$ ; the likelihood of finding three such effects is  $p = 0.0001$ . In a separate analysis conducted for another paper, a fourth thought experiment in this study showed specific hypothesized personality and gender effects (in preparation), and a fifth question has already been found by other authors to be subject to frame effects (Nichols and Knobe, 2007). In essence, philosophically irrelevant factors have been shown to affect intuitions in five of the seven cases tested here. It remains an empirical question whether the two remaining vignettes appeal to subjective factors, but given the countless number of psychological and sociological factors in play, it seems highly likely.

Regardless, the extent of the demonstrated effects shows just how dependent philosophical belief is upon philosophically irrelevant factors. Taken alongside findings that cultural upbringing and gender affect the philosophical intuitions of lay people, a picture emerges in which philosophical belief is subject to any number of personality factors. Participants in this study had devoted anywhere from five years

to decades of their lives to studying philosophy at the highest level, but even this extent of philosophical training did not eliminate certain arational<sup>6</sup> prejudices.<sup>7</sup>

The mechanism by which personality affects response to thought experiments deserves attention, but will not be discussed here. In what follows, I argue that because personality affects philosophical belief, philosophical belief is subjective. I then develop the further view that large swathes of philosophy are therefore also subjective. Finally, I consider four major but not exhaustive objections to the contention that personality affects philosophical belief, and conclude that none holds up to scrutiny.

#### *4.1. The Connection Between Personality Traits and Subjectivity*

Beliefs affected by personality are by their very nature subjective. The fact that personality varies from person to person, and that there is no 'right' personality to have, are central to the notion of personality. If philosophical beliefs are adopted in part on the basis of their appeal to non-objective values or motivations such as those measured by the BFI, then it is only fair to describe these beliefs as partially subjective.

Consider the possibility that personality traits affect philosophical beliefs without lending them any sense of subjectivity — that philosophical problems are simply underdetermined, not subjective. A doctor, for example, may maintain objectivity when choosing a course of treatment even if she is unsure what will work best. She has to fill in the unknowns somehow, but every doctor does, and this does not give us reason to call doctors' opinions subjective. If philosophical problems are likewise underdetermined, a philosopher could fill in the blanks on her own without properly being described as subjective. Unfortunately, this argument is convincing only in its vagueness.

The findings here demonstrate that particular personality traits predict particular philosophical opinions. Therefore, a better analogy would be the discovery that the more neurotic a doctor is, the more likely she is to recommend prophylactic surgery, or that the more agreeable she is, the more likely she is to dispense painkillers to anyone who asks. These are obvious medical biases, ones so glaring and deleterious to medicine that they could present serious ethical con-

[6] Arational: Not within the domain of rational analysis, and therefore neither rational nor irrational. The results of arational processes may accidentally appeal, or fail to appeal, to rationality, but that this is a separate matter.

[7] I take 'prejudice' to be capable of referring to both favourable and unfavourable inclinations. Prejudice, as understood here, may lead its subject towards or away from the truth, or may apply in the absence of any objective standards at all.

cerns. To deny that the findings here are equally worrying for philosophy is wishful thinking.

#### *4.2. The Connection Between Philosophical Belief and Philosophy*

It certainly seems as though many important zeitgeist shifts in twentieth-century philosophy owe primarily to thought experiments and the specific beliefs they elicit. The purpose of Kripke's Gödel cases was to disabuse the descriptivist masses of beliefs Kripke thought to be mistaken. Jackson's black-and-white room might not confine anyone to a unique view, but it would be difficult to argue that every belief about his thought experiment is consistent with every set of philosophical beliefs. Still, it is an empirical question whether deep philosophical theories demonstrate the same effects as philosophical vignettes, and whether vignettes actually affect philosophers' views, and I can't claim to answer those questions here.

Regardless, philosophy's purpose is not merely to construct general theories about the structure of the world. It is also to describe the actual world in ways consistent with those theories. It is the objectivity of this latter aspect of philosophical practice — in which ethicists claim to know what the right thing to do is, and metaphysicians claim to know who is whom — that this study impugns. In so far as philosophy purports to provide tools for understanding our world, the subjectivity of philosophical belief in a given domain can properly be called the subjectivity of philosophy in that domain.

Of those philosophical endeavours that utilize intuitions about cases, some may be more prone to subjective effects than others. The objective evidence in favour of some beliefs may be so strong as to eliminate most or all subjective effects, but many problems fall somewhere along a spectrum of subjectivity. Just how much of philosophy is subjective, and just how subjective, remains an open question.

One might protest that philosophers could be subjective without causing philosophy to be. It is possible, after all, for individual doctors to be subjective without endangering the objectivity of medicine. However, the same cannot be said of philosophers and philosophy. Medical treatments and experiments yield observable outcomes, which provide an objective indication of which notions are right and which are wrong. But for some philosophical problems, the only data we have are our beliefs. Without any impersonal check on personal views, the subjectivity of practising philosophers can rightly be called the subjectivity of philosophy.

#### *4.3. Objection: The Discovered Effects are Philosophically Uninteresting*

It is important to determine whether the personality differences identified here truly predict philosophical disagreement, or merely differences in gut reaction. Only in the former case would these findings tell us something meaningful about philosophy. There are three distinct questions in this vein.

First, do neurotic philosophers object to certain ascriptions simply as a matter of antagonism? Jesse Prinz and Joshua Knobe (personal communication) have both suggested that neurotic philosophers might simply object to a robot feeling love out of resistance to liberal use of the term 'love', not necessarily as an expression of their deeper philosophical views regarding the relevant phenomena. However, this explanation cannot be right. Antagonism is defined on the BFI as the opposite of agreeableness, and though neuroticism and agreeableness have been shown to correlate slightly negatively ( $-0.28$ ) (John and Srivastava, 1999), agreeableness itself did not predict response to this particular question.

Second, when disagreeable philosophers respond 'No' to questions, are they expressing genuine theoretical beliefs, or merely being negative? Disagreeableness actually predicted a 'Yes' response to both questions for which agreeableness was a predictor of response, so this worry also seems unfounded.

Finally, when disagreeable philosophers express dissident views, are they expressing genuine theoretical differences from the mainstream, or merely being curmudgeonly? In this study, antagonism correlated with heterodox responses to both questions for which it was a predictor. Whether or not this is because disagreeable philosophers are preconditioned to adopt unpopular views is unclear, but even if that were the case, that would only bolster the claim that subjective factors influence professional philosophers' philosophical beliefs.

#### *4.4. Objection: The Big Five Do Not Truly Assess 'Personality'*

Neuroticism, for instance, is not wholly reducible to the kinds of questions asked on personality inventories, and a highly neurotic person could score lower on this facet of the BFI than someone we would not consider highly neurotic. Though the BFI measures certain prominent personality traits effectively, one might hesitate to grant that it measures extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness *per se*. And even if the BFI were a perfect metric, the kinds of self-reports used here face obvious limitations.

Nonetheless, the objection is myopic. Even if BFI scores do not perfectly reflect the personality traits they claim to, they still evaluate important personal inclinations. And even though self-reports may be biased,<sup>8</sup> they still reflect the personality of the subject. In fact, even if the BFI reflected nothing that it purports to, its correlation with philosophical beliefs would still be disturbing. BFI scores reflect highly reliable<sup>9</sup> subjective differences, and these subjective differences predict philosophical differences. Supposing that all of the above accusations are true, this study would still reveal a meaningful relationship between subjective factors and philosophical beliefs.

#### *4.5. Objection: Personality Does Not Affect Philosophical Belief*

It is possible that the present theory reverses the order of causation, and that philosophical belief affects personality and not the other way around. However, this is highly unlikely for a number of reasons. BFI scores remain relatively stable throughout a person's lifetime, not changing much even after education (John, Gosling and Potter, 2003). Personality develops long before philosophical belief, and lifelong characteristics cannot be informed by factors that form later. And many people may never think deeply about philosophical problems, despite having rich personalities.

One could go a step further and suggest that personality and philosophy do not affect each other at all, and are instead shaped by some common force. But if such a force shapes personality, it could only be described as affecting a person's subjective values. Appealing to such a force, then, does little to support the claim that philosophical values are objective.

#### *4.6. Objection: The Philosophical Prompts Were Not Worded Fairly*

The prompts used in this study were created to be as neutral as possible, but are not perfect. Some readers will undoubtedly decry that the questions that were based on famous examples seem contrived and unrealistic. Other questions may appear to bring in concerns beyond those they claim to test. I will not defend the prompts against these charges, because I think the charges are apt. I believe that many of the vignettes may have been loaded or unrealistic, or at least failed to

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[8] I intend 'biased' to be interpreted without its occasional connotation of being skewed towards or away from the truth. I simply mean skewed, regardless of any objective standards.

[9] For definition and estimates of reliability, see John and Srivastava (1999).

control for philosophically irrelevant factors. I admit that they appealed to certain sensibilities that may have clouded the issues. How else could I have found an effect?

This is the nature of philosophical thought experiments. Intuition pumps often take the fore in philosophical debates, despite distorting the issues. The claim that even the purest philosophical cases bring philosophically irrelevant factors into play does not weaken my argument — it is central to my argument. As such, the objection that these vignettes evoked biased responses is not really an objection at all.

Subsequent studies could vary the wording of the prompts, but it is not clear what this would accomplish. If the same results were observed, the findings of this paper would be bolstered. But if the effects disappeared, that would only suggest that framing and personality interact in a profound way to influence philosophical belief.

#### *4.7. Conclusion: Some Parts of Philosophy are Subjective*

Thought experiments are designed to be the great deciders in many philosophical debates. When clever philosophers are convinced of a certain view, they often design thought experiments to demonstrate just how intuitive their positions are. But other philosophers invariably disagree about the results of those experiments, often for reasons they cannot explain. At such pivotal moments, their minds are already made up, in part by their unique personalities. This is why views that seem obviously right to some philosophers seem obviously wrong to others. Despite years of training, philosophers see certain problems from personal perspectives. To the extent that these philosophical stalemates are the result of intrinsic human limitations, they may never be resolved.

It has not been my intention here to claim that there are no objective philosophical truths, nor to claim that there are. I have also not attempted to identify the locus or mechanism of philosophical subjectivity, although I think that these are rather interesting problems. I only hope to have argued that at least some part of philosophy, however small, is subjective, that personality effects are one manifestation of this subjectivity, and that philosophers may need to reappraise the ability of philosophy to discover objective truths.

Philosophy's aim has traditionally been to discover truth through reason and intuition alone. I have shown that reason and intuition are intimately tied to personality. It remains to be seen whether reason and intuition, philosophical or otherwise, can be divorced from personality factors, and I have only shown relationships in a limited number of

cases. Still, the burden of proof now lies with the defender of traditional philosophical methods. In order to defend philosophy, philosophers must first defend the autonomy and transformative power of reason.

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### Appendix

1. Suppose scientists figure out the exact state of the universe during the big bang, and figure out all the laws of physics as well. They put this information into a computer, and the computer perfectly predicts everything that has ever happened. In other words, they prove that everything that happens has to happen exactly that way because of the laws of physics and everything that's come before. In this case, is a person free to choose whether or not to murder someone?
2. Suppose you drive to the local baseball stadium with some friends, and try to buy tickets at the door. There are 7 of you, but there are only 6 tickets left. You can either drive everyone to a nearby bar, which will be a lot less fun than being at the game, or 6 of you can go in, and 1 of you can take the bus home and miss the game entirely. Is it most fair for everyone to go to the bar?
3. Suppose a mad scientist takes out your brain and puts it in your best friend's head. During the same operation, the scientist takes out your friend's brain and puts it in your head. Now your body has your friend's brain, and your friend's body has your brain. Your heroic mother storms into the room to save you, but not your friend, who she believes got you into this mess. Is the person with your body still you, her son?
4. Suppose neuroscientists are able to identify every part and every connection in the human brain. Working with a team of computer scientists, they then build a robot that has a complete electronic replica of the human brain. Could this robot experience love?
5. Suppose that all you know about Einstein is that he developed the Theory of Relativity. But suppose it turns out that Einstein actually stole the idea from some guy named Moynahan, who nobody has ever heard of. In this case, when you use the name 'Einstein' are you actually referring to Moynahan?
6. Suppose you hear the sound of your cell phone, so you reach in your pocket and answer the call. Your landlord is on the line, but you realize later that your ringer was off, and the sound you heard was actually someone else's phone. When you heard that other person's phone ring and mistook it as your own, did you actually know someone was calling you?

7. Suppose you meet a man from the future who knows everything there is to know about science. He tells you that he doesn't like apples, and says that though he has never eaten one, he has figured out what apples taste like just by studying the relevant science. Could he know what apples taste like without ever having eaten one?
8. Suppose scientists are able to use stem cells to grow lungs that breathe without being connected to a body. They then grow a heart that pumps without being connected to a body. If they can do all this, can they create a brain that thinks without being connected to a body?
9. Suppose a runaway train is coming down a track, and is certain to kill five workmen who can't get out of the way. You're standing next to the controls and can switch the train to the other track, but if you flip the switch, one man working on that track is sure to die. Should you flip the switch?