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A NEW PERCEPTUAL ADVERBIALISM*†

In the philosophy of perception, two views on the nature of perception dominate the theoretical landscape: representationalism and relationalism.¹ Representationalism can be formulated in a variety of ways, but generally, representationalists hold that fundamentally, perceptual states are representational states. Representational states are, or at least involve, relations to semantically evaluable contents; typically, representationalists treat such contents as propositional—involving the ascription of a property to an object—and so as capable of being true or false.² For a perception to be

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¹In adopting this terminology, I am following John Campbell, *Reference and Consciousness* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2002). This is not the only terminological option for distinguishing between the philosophy of perception's two dominant views, but I choose it partly for definiteness, and partly because the terms help to highlight the features of the two kinds of views with which I am concerned.

²Some prominent representationalists who approximately fit this description include Tyler Burge, *Foundations of Mind* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2007); Tyler Burge, *Origins of Objectivity* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010); Alex Byrne, "Intentionalism Defended," *The Philosophical Review*, CX, 2 (2001): 199–240; Alex Byrne, "Experience and Content," *The Philosophical Quarterly*, LIX, 236 (2009): 429–51; Fred Dretske, "Experience as Representation," *Philosophical Issues*, XIII, 1 (2003): 67–82; Jerry Fodor, "Methodological Solipsism as a Research Strategy in Cognitive Science," in Richard Boyd, Philip Gasper, and John D. Trout, eds., *The Philosophy of Science* (Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1991), pp. 651–69; Ruth Garrett Millikan, "Biosemantics," this JOURNAL, LXXXVI, 6 (June 1989): 281–97; Adam Pautz, "Why Explain Visual Experience in Terms of Content?," in Bence Nanay, ed., *Perceiving the World* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2010), pp. 254–309; Christopher Peacocke, *Sense and Content: Experience, Thought, and Their Relations* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1983); John R. Searle, *Intentionality: An Essay in the Philosophy of Mind* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge

A HOSTAGE SITUATION*

Moral life sometimes involves life-and-death decisions, and philosophers often consider them by examining intuitions about ideal cases. Contemporary philosophical discourse on such matters has been dominated by Trolley-type cases, which typically present us with the need to make decisions on whether to sacrifice one person in order to save a larger number of similar others. Such cases lead to a distinct view of moral dilemmas, and of moral life generally. The case I present here, "Hostage Situation," is quite unlike them, and should generate intuitions that differ greatly from those brought forth by standard Trolley-type cases. The implications are surprising, and suggest that familiar and widely prevalent perceptions of the normative field are inadequate.

I. A CASE STUDY

It seems a day like any other. You think you will go and have lunch. You park and pass through the hotel on your way to the restaurant, only you do not get there. A dreadful situation confronts you upon entering the lobby: several terrorists have closed the area, taken one hundred people hostage, and tied vests with explosives to each one of them, turning them into living time bombs. They then wired all exits with explosives, which they activated two minutes after leaving. You happened to enter right in between, just before the activation of the exits. The vests have enough explosives to ensure the death of those wearing them but will not hurt those farther away. The vests cannot be taken off without exploding. The explosives at the exits are electronically connected to all the vests so that no one can enter or leave without causing everyone, except you, to die. All devices will go off within twenty-four hours, killing everyone wearing them (or earlier if anyone tries to

*Versions of this paper were presented at the British Society for Ethical Theory annual meeting at the University of Oxford, at the Rocky Mountain Ethics Conference at the University of Colorado, Boulder, at Seth Lazar's Oxford War Group, in classes I gave at the University of Haifa, and at colloquium talks in the departments of philosophy at Durham, Leeds, Scripps College, St Andrews, and the University of Southern California; and I am grateful to participants in the discussions. I am very grateful to Darren Domsky (who commented on my paper in the RoME conference), and to Aaron Ben-Ze'ev, David Enoch, Amihud Gilead, Michael Gross, Meir Hemmo, Guy Kahane, Arnon Keren, Iddo Landau, Sam Lebens, Tal Manor, Jeff McMahan, Ariel Meirav, Alma Smilansky-Teichner, Daniel Statman, and Rivka Weinberg for lengthy discussions of the ideas of the paper and comments on drafts of it.

tamper with the exits). The police have been informed, but no rescue from outside is possible.

The evil plan was for everyone to be blown up after twenty-four hours, and then the time bombs blocking the entrance will stop operating. The terrorists, however, were somewhat careless and have left behind a bag with three safety pins. The pins can be inserted into the individual explosive devices to defuse them, but each pin may be used only once. They can, moreover, be inserted only by a person who has no explosive device strapped onto him or her, namely, you. Within twenty-four hours, then, the doors will be opened and you, together with three people whom you choose to save, would be able to exit as the sole survivors.

At first overwhelmed, you compose yourself and try to assess the possibilities. You have some access to information but cannot communicate with the outside to seek external guidance. You cannot change the basic conditions. You cannot neutralize the explosive devices (except for inserting three pins), nor can you do any good by sacrificing yourself—you cannot choose yourself instead of one of the ninety-seven. Declining to save three people would simply mean that everyone would be killed. Concerns with one's agency and integrity are not paramount in Hostage Situation, as they are in Bernard Williams's classic thought experiment of "Jim and the Indians." You are not required to kill anyone in Hostage Situation, and refraining from any decision and thereby allowing all the captives to die would be manifestly callous without benefiting your integrity. You would not be cooperating with the terrorists by saving three of the one hundred they had intended to kill.¹ Saving three hostages is a moral obligation; it is neither supererogatory nor only an imperfect duty.

You realize that you will live, but you also need to choose three other people to be saved. The facts of the situation are clear. You are not an official of any sort nor in any position of authority, except that of ad hoc choosing three people. All the hostages are adults. None of the women are pregnant. None of the one hundred people are members of your family or close friends. No situation is extraordinary—no one is on the verge of curing cancer, for example. No one is mentally impaired, or suffering from a fatal disease. It is a fairly typical group such

¹In the impersonality of the people potentially affected, in its emphasis on the doing-versus-allowing and killing-versus-letting-die issues, and in the significance of numbers, Jim and the Indians is close to traditional Trolley-type cases (and induces a similar bias in our thinking). The case I present is very different. See Bernard Williams, in J. J. C. Smart and Bernard Williams, *Utilitarianism For and Against* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 1973).

as can be found in the hotel lobby of a big city on the East Coast of the US. Let us say that half are men and half women in a broad age range; fifteen are black, ten are Hispanic, seven are Jews, and ten are foreign tourists; and they come from a great variety of professions, educational levels, sexual orientations, and so forth (except for an over-representation of dentists due to a convention taking place at the hotel at the time).

II. SOME POSSIBLE CRITERIA

Who should you choose? How, morally, ought you to go about deciding? Below, I review some ways in which you might proceed, and note some that are morally unacceptable, and then try to reach some tentative conclusions. The list is long, but that is part of the point of exploring this situation.

Here are some possible suggestions for saving the three:

- 1.1 A straight lottery.
- 1.2 A straight lottery among those under (say) seventy.
- 1.3 A weighted lottery giving greater preference to people the younger they are, but including everyone.
- 2.1 Saving the people who have the largest number of young children or who are responsible for more vulnerable dependents.
- 2.2 Saving the three who are most likely to maximize overall expected utility.
- 2.3 Saving the people who we think are most likely to have the happiest lives from now on.
- 3.1 Saving the three who, from a moral point of view, are most admirable, and seem most deserving of being saved, on account of how they have lived their lives.
- 3.2 Saving those people who are most deserving of being saved due to having accomplished the most admirable undertakings and contributed most of value.
- 3.3 Saving the people who are likely to live the best moral lives, all considered, from now on.
- 3.4 Asking for volunteers willing to forgo being considered candidates for rescue, and then saving them (if there are more than three, choosing among those volunteers).
4. Asking for volunteers to forgo being considered candidates for rescue and then considering only the others, which would still leave the question of how to choose from among those left but would reduce the pool.
5. Saving the three people who have had the worst lives so far, at no fault of their own.
6. Saving the three people whose rescue most opposes the terrorists' values or would vex them and their supporters the most.