

## ARE THERE MORAL HINGES?

### ¿HAY BISAGRAS MORALES?

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**Abstract:** Hinge philosophy has several versions – mine is based on the idea of a progression in Wittgenstein’s way of identifying ‘shaping’ forces on forms of life, from logic through grammar to hinges. I argue that hinges are like concepts – realised in hinge-practices which are *possible*, and expressed in (doppelgänger) hinge-propositions, which are *empirical*. If there are moral hinges then the relevant hinge-practices must be matched by doppelgänger hinge-propositions which are empirical. This would be a direct challenge to Hume’s aphorism – one cannot deduce an ‘ought’ from an ‘is’ – though doppelgänger-hood is not deduction, its close. The paper proceeds to test the idea that hinge-philosophy undercuts Hume’s aphorism by examples – some from *On Certainty*, some not, for example ‘The world did not come into being a minute ago’ and ‘There are two sexes’, and so on. This leads to the question of whether prudence is a moral virtue, the Jane Fonda thesis.

**Keywords:** Hinge, empirical, moral, doppelgänger propositions, Hume.

**Resumen:** La filosofía de las proposiciones bisagras tiene varias versiones, identificándose la mía con la idea de una progresión en la forma en que Wittgenstein identifica las fuerzas básicas en las formas de vida, desde la lógica pasando por la gramática para llegar a las bisagras. Discuto que las bisagras son conceptos, encarnadas en prácticas bisagras que son *posibles*, y expresadas en proposiciones bisagras idénticas que son *empíricas*. Si hay proposiciones bisagras morales entonces las bisagras prácticas relevantes deben estar pareadas con proposiciones bisagras idénticas que son a su vez empíricas. Esto sería un desafío directo al aforismo de Hume: que no se puede deducir el “deber” de un “es”, aunque las proposiciones idénticas no son deducción. El trabajo testea la idea que la filosofía bisagra debilita el aforismo de Hume a través de ejemplos, algunos provenientes de Sobre la Certeza. Este trabajo nos lleva a la pregunta si acaso la prudencia es una virtud moral, conocida como la tesis de Jane Fonda.

**Palabras clave:** Bisagra, empírico, moral, proposiciones idénticas, Hume.

## 1. Introduction

I AM a **Hackerite** rather than a **Bakerian** in my attachment to Wittgenstein as a philosopher – that is I am unabashed in making use of his insights and developing them into orderly philosophical positions and methods. I don't doubt that Wittgenstein aimed at curing himself and others of torments, but in so doing philosophical work is done<sup>1</sup>.

For the most part, Wittgenstein uses 'hinges' in *On Certainty* (hereafter *OC*) as exemplars for working through epistemological issues that arise in resolving what he interprets as G. E. Moore's grammatical errors in his uses of 'know', 'believe', 'certain' and so on (Moore, 1903). In this way Wittgenstein brings to light the philosophical temptations that misleading grammatical models of the uses of epistemic words encourage. But the idea of looking at life as the realisation of hinges has more to offer. In *OC* § 344 Wittgenstein says 'My life consist in my being content to accept many things'. Nearly all his examples are concerned with his life in the material world of time, space and things. Should the same be said of some of the 'things' we might call 'moral'?

My argument will survey a number of cases in which there are hinge-practices that seem to be person preserving or protecting but for which the associated hinge-propositions are empirical. There are many aspects of personhood that could be targets of preserving practices – bodily integrity and/or comfort, dignity, honour, intellectual honesty and integrity, and no doubt many more. Betraying oneself and betraying others might be worth exploring. Are any of these plausibly declared to be moral? And what would that mean in some sample of these cases?

Wittgenstein's later writings display an overall and pervasive atmosphere of normativity – the leading concepts of the *Philosophical Investigations* (hereafter *PI*) such as meaning-as-use and rule-following require notions of contextualised correctness. The central examples in *PI* such as the block-slab game, shopping, reading from a text and so on also depend on implicit standards of doing it right. The dominance of the idea of 'practice' in Wittgenstein's later writings contributes to this atmosphere since practices are doings which can be correct, well-done or wrong, inappropriate, bad and so on. It seems right to reflect on whether any of the implicit norms of hinge-practices are moral. Of course, we have to decide what that means!

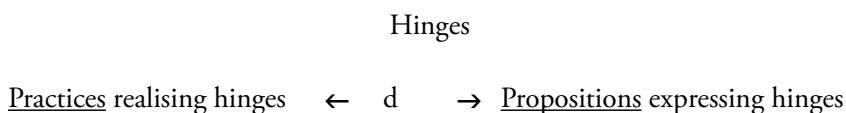
<sup>1</sup> The contrasting viewpoints of Peter Hacker and Gordon Baker are very clearly presented in Morris, K. (ed.) (2004), *Wittgenstein's Method*. Oxford: Blackwell.

## 2. Taking a view on the meaning of ‘hinge’

We have all learned the need for elaborate and careful presentation of hinge philosophy from Danièle Moyal-Sharrock (2004). I will adopt her terminology of doppelganger to mark the relation between a hinge-practice and an associated hinge-proposition.

Here is how I understand the hinge philosophy that I will be making use of in this paper. A ‘hinge’ is a being somewhat like a ‘concept’, i.e. it does not appear in *propria persona* anywhere but is realised in practices, and expressed in doppelganger propositions.

With the left arrow representing ‘realisation’ and the right arrow representing ‘expression’ the hinge philosophy looks like this:



This scheme fits in, so I believe, to a progression in Wittgenstein’s thought of the means for ensuring the orderliness of discourses. Wittgenstein’s progression of life form/discourse shapers goes like this:

- i. Logic – *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (hereafter *TLP*)– an *a priori* product of the basic rules for ordering true and false propositions and particular and universal statements.
- ii. Grammar – *PI* – an expression of semantic rules that shape forms of life, but which are not abstracted from discourses of nature or society. Grammar is not quite arbitrary but it is, in a sense, autonomous.
- iii. Hinges – *OC* – a deep constraint that is realised in practices subject to local norms or standards of correctness and expressed in doppelganger propositions, broadly empirical hypotheses that could have been otherwise.

A minor hinge is realised in a practice and associated proposition that differentiates a version of a broader form of life. For example, Protestants and Catholics are both Christians, but differ over the hinge-proposition expressed in ‘The Body and Blood of our Lord, Jesus Christ’. Thus the hinge-practices of the Eucharist are subtly differentiated in their significance.

Protestants and Catholics differ over the empirical truth or falsity of these minor but key sectarian hinge-propositions.

A major hinge is realised in a practice and associated proposition that identifies a form of life on a grand scale - 'Jesus was the Son of God' is the propositional doppelganger of Christianity as a practice, while 'God is Great and Mohammad is his Prophet' is the propositional doppelganger of Islam as a practice. Each believes that the constitutive proposition of the others' religion is false and their own true. This is exactly the hinge situation.

In quasi-Kantian terms some hinge-practices are regulative, but some are constitutive of forms of life – and doppelganger hinge-propositions as expressions of norms fall into parallel types. Since a hinge-proposition correlative to a hinge-practice is taken to be an empirical truth of great generality but one that could have been otherwise, atheists, Buddhists and others cannot even begin to argue about the doctrine of transubstantiation among themselves.

What are the characteristics of a *moral* hinge?

1. It is realised in a hinge-practice that is moral.
2. It is expressed in a hinge-proposition that is empirical.

What are the characteristics of a moral practice?

1. Person preserving –person destroying practices whether physical or psychological are immoral – c.f. modes of torture in Iraq, massacres anywhere and so on.
2. Person enhancing – treating with respect, honour, dignity and so on; and also person-diminishing - treating with contempt and disdain.
3. Permitting autonomous choice of actions; denying autonomous choice

It is important to see that good and evil spring from the same hinge, which appears as the content of a hinge-proposition. Deleting a hinge from a form of life deletes both good and evil, since both the practices and the propositional doppelgangers are then insignificant and vacuous.

In the first instance whether a hinge-practice is moral is shown by how that practice is contested.

Example: when walking as a couple it was customary for a man to change track from time to time to maintain a position on the kerb. However, once when a certain philosopher was walking with a lady of a radical feminist persuasion he was denounced as acting immorally because the old-fashioned the practice of the man taking the kerb-side denigrated women by presuming

their physical weakness. So the practice is morally relevant and the hinge is expressed in a contestable putative empirical proposition, 'Women are more fragile than men'. The hinge was attacked by contesting the factual status of the hinge-proposition which rendered the formerly immoral hinge-practice empty. Which side of the pavement you now walk on is morally indifferent as a practice.

Practices are managed by reference to rules. However, there is an ambiguity in the notion of 'rule' between an instruction for correct performance and an expression of a norm implicit in the practice itself. Applying this distinction in the hinge philosophy suggests that some relevant norms are immanent in the performances that are carried through by members of a society while some relevant norms are transcendent to the practices they shape, for example they serve as explicit instructions. So sometimes practices are related to hinges via rules, sometimes not. The realisation of a hinge in a hinge-practice by means of a set of rules looks propositional, but it is to be sharply distinguished from the expression of a hinge in a hinge-proposition, which is the propositional doppelgänger of both the hinge practice and the hinge rules. The former are normative, the latter empirical. Hinge-rules are just a form of a hinge-practice.

Some taken for granted societal hinge-practices, realising hinges, have turned out to be linked to false empirical beliefs, dubious hinge-propositions, expressing the implicit belief content of the relevant hinges. We need to add a further aspect of hinge philosophy at this point.

- a. Should the 'root' factual hypothesis as doppelgänger hinge-proposition turn out to be false the hinge-practice would be an empty gesture.
- b. A hinge-change occurs when a practice is abandoned for another practice and the associated hinge-proposition is explicitly formulated and rejected as false, while another is asserted in its stead.

Here are some examples.

- a. 'The earth is a flat disc' is the doppelgänger proposition of the hinge-practice of sailing close to land. Once the hinge-proposition is seen to be false the practice of coast hugging is pointless. The practice of sailing westward to arrive back in Lisbon from whence one set out goes with the doppelgänger hinge-proposition 'The earth is a globe'.
- b. 'Women's reproductive powers are damaged by education' is the doppelgänger propositions of the hinge-practice of creating 'men-only universities', and much else.

Both are major hinges. I will argue that the second is the realisation of a moral hinge. Women are diminished by this practice. If the doppelganger proposition is false the practice has no point as a practical programme, but sustains an immoral practice.

However, how can we reconcile Hume's Principle that an 'ought' cannot be deduced from an 'is' if the practice, the axiological character of which we are considering, has an empirical proposition as a doppelganger (Hume, 1739)? Does not that make the root hinge a misbegotten being that is both normative and factual? Or perhaps the seemingly empirical doppelganger is covertly evaluative after all?

Would establishing the viability of the concept of 'moral hinge' undermine Hume's contention that an 'ought' cannot be deduced from an 'is'? If it were to do so the relevant hinge-practice would have to be linked more than contingently to an empirical hinge-proposition. However, the relation between hinge-practice and hinge-proposition is not deductive even though hinge-practice realises a hinge and the doppelganger hinge-propositions expresses the same hinge. If the practice is normative and the proposition is contingent and they are derived from a common hinge then Hume's Principle has been outflanked.

### **3. The Argument for Moral Hinges**

Here are some examples of possible morally relevant hinge-propositions.

- a. 'Childhood, adolescence and adulthood are three phases of the human life course'. (C.f. Ariès, 1965).
- b. 'There are two sexes'.
- c. 'Animals are machines' (Descartes, 2006: Mediation 5).

My project is to explore the possibility that these are empirical hypotheses which are the propositional doppelgangers of moral practices. These examples will serve to test the hypothesis that there are hinges that escape Hume's critical aphorism.

There seem to be two possibilities for making sense of the idea of the possibility of a moral hinge.

1. There are moral hinges because the doppelganger hinge-proposition to a normative practice is not truly empirical but covertly normative. Hume is right after all.

2. There are moral hinges because the hinge-practice is embedded in a norm-infested life form but the hinge-proposition is embedded in an empirical discourse – these are linked by a unique relation – doppelgangerhood – which is not a logical relation.

We could come to think that the hinge-proposition was false but continue to follow the hinge-practice, c.f. women's education above. Practice and proposition are derived by different routes from the invisible, unspeakable hinge. The hinge-proposition describes a culture, while the hinge-practices realises that culture, normatively.

### **3.1. Immanent norms**

The idea that some immanent constraining normative practices are culture determining but only locally necessary has been elaborated by Shweder (1991). He calls these principles 'contingent universals'. They are hinge-propositions. For example, the practice of refraining from eating fish in the same month one's father has died shapes family meals among all the members of the Brahmin community, but not among the people of any other community. This is a hinge-practice. The associated hinge-proposition can be used to criticise someone who is careless of these ritual demands. In short, the propositional doppelgangers of these root normative practices seem to be used normatively to enforce local customs. However, Shweder argues that their main role is to remind people that as a matter of fact among Brahmins a son does not eat fish in the month in which his father died. If people think that it is false that a son does not eat fish in the month his father died they belong to a different culture. 'We Brahmins do this as a matter of fact and that is what differentiates us from low life [moral condescension?] people like Jains and Harajans'.

Why should we call these practices normative? Because to do anything else in the circumstances is not only regarded by the locals as stupid, a mistake, dangerous and so on, but also immoral because it runs counter to their form of life. For example, Jacko holding his infant out over the rails of a balcony is an objectionable practice. The hinge it realises is expressed in some such proposition as 'Doing dangerous things displays my insouciance'. Jacko's behaviour ignored the practices that depend on accommodating our behaviour to gravity. It was person threatening, ignoring the limits on practices that accommodate our behaviour to the conditions of person preservation. Hence, it was not only stupid, but, via the second

violation of local norms, was morally dubious. This macho act may be alright in some circles, but not in ours. Like the inappropriate eating of fish it was not the sort of thing our sort of people do.

### **3.2. How can hinges, expressed in activities accommodated to matters of fact, be the root of moral practices?**

The basic point is simple – hinge-propositions express beliefs about what a culture is, and these beliefs may be true or false. There are some empirical propositions that everyone believes to be true, and that express ubiquitous features of the human form of life. Let us look at three of these to see how they are related to hinge-practices.

- a. Persons exist, but there might have been only dinosaurs
- b. Societies exist, but there might have been only families.
- c. Languages exist, but *homo habilis* might have retained only the ethology of apes.

If it is the case that a major hinge-proposition can be maintained while the doppelganger hinge-practices change then there should be a distopia relative to the human world characterised by hinge-practices, different from the original doppelgangers for a, b, and c. above. In order to deprive persons of certain rights one must believe that there are persons as morally protected beings.

- a. Person preserving practices: Persons could not act without agentic powers. These can be acquired by and taken away from human beings;

Distopia; Caryl Chesson's *RUR*.

- b. Socially stabilizing practices: Societies could not exist unless there was some measure of collaboration. People can contrive to live without collaboration.

Distopia: Hobbes's state of nature – the life of man, nasty poor, brutish and short!

- c. Language necessities: Languages could not exist without mutual sincerity and trust. Violating this principle is a pragmatic paradox – if a theoretician argues that there are no universal moral principles and



uses language to do so (how else?) then this claim is contrary to a necessary condition for the possibility of language as a social practice, for example, the sharing of trust. (Holiday, 1988). However, people can contrive to live without such trust.

Distopia: Eric Blair's [George Orwell's] 1984 [Holiday argues that South Africa under apartheid was such a distopia].

Here are some further examples of changes in patterns of hinge-practices while their doppelganger hinge-propositions expressing major hinges are unchallenged. Minor hinges can change and this is revealed in cases where there has been a change of social practices important to the local moral order, which depend upon the continuation of a major hinge-proposition.

Consider sexual dimorphism as expressed in the major hinge-proposition 'There are two sexes'. There are a great many hinge-practices rooted in this hinge and a considerable number of hinge-propositions appear as their doppelgangers. Evidently there have been vast changes in social practices which are rooted in sexual dimorphism, suggesting a shifting ground of minor hinges.

Here are some examples:

- a. The English practice of publishing league tables of GCSE success sorted by gender, extolling the academic successes of girls. Once it was believed that education damaged women's reproductive powers, so this practice had no place in Victorian culture.
- b. The prosecution of a Sudanese Muslim woman for wearing trousers as indecent when millions of Pakistani women wear shalwa and kemis!

Moral imperatives such as 'Thou shalt not wear trousers in Khartoum, if you are a Muslim woman' or 'Thou hast as much right to an education as the boys, if you live in the 21<sup>st</sup> century' are not derivable from sexual dimorphism without the addition of a qualification to the original major hinge. According to my line of argument this qualification as it appears in the relevant hinge-proposition will not be evaluative but factual. As a matter of fact it is alright for Muslim women to wear trousers in Pakistan, and girls are at least as clever as boys. From the point of view of the anthropologist these matters are factual, though they are used by those who believe that these are features of their cultures as support for normative hinge-practices.

Wittgenstein's example of a gender hinge is expressed in the doppelganger proposition 'I am a man'. There are innumerable practices rooted

in this personal gender hinge – choice of rest rooms, patterns of shopping such as choosing women’s clothes, being eligible to play for a major soccer team, and so on. These hinge-practices will have their doppelganger hinge-propositions – as a matter of fact men and women use separate loos, men do not buy women’s clothes usually and so on.

However the contingency of these hinge-propositions relative to supposedly normative hinge-practices is easily demonstrable – in crowded French motorway stops in the summer women use the men’s loos; transvestites shop in the women’s section of Harrods; and so on. It is not wrong for women to use the men’s loo *in France*, or for a *transvestite* to shop for frocks, though it would be for me. Here the hinge-proposition ‘I am a man’ is sustained while the hinge-practices in which social norms are immanent shift and change with person and situation.

If there are moral hinge-practices, that is normative and person-preserving activities, and their doppelgangers are expressed propositionally in empirical propositions, some true and some false, then it looks as if these examples run counter to Hume’s strictures on deducing an ‘ought’ from an ‘is’, or rather they evade it.

The empirical conditions, psychological, social, biological and so on, under which moral life would be possible, that is that we would be able to apply the distinctions that are constitutive of a moral life - like ‘sin’, ‘redemption’, ‘confession’ and so on, ties in with Wittgenstein’s arguments in the *Philosophical Investigations*, (Wittgenstein, 1953: §198 and § 201.)

Hinges are realised in hinge-practices though their doppelganger hinge-propositions are not rules - they mimic rules. ‘There are two sexes’ is not a rule – it purports to state a fact – in this context an expression of a hinge. But if the hinge-practices are going to be the core of certain kinds of moral behaviour - where does the *imperative* come from for hinge practices? It seems it cannot come from the hinge-propositions which are its doppelgangers.

The line of argument I have been pursuing suggests that there are no universal imperatives – only local customs. Since hinge-practices cluster into forms of life, there are quasi-imperatives – if you want to live a life like this, you must act in such and such a way. But you do not have to live like this. The existence of normative practices realising hinges are constitutive of an optional form of life directly. However, in so far as they are either person preserving or person destroying they are moral. Is it a matter of fact that certain practices are person preserving while some are person destroying? But then the Humean would ask – why should we prefer the former to the latter? That is following a regime that realised the ‘persons have intrinsic worth’ hinge? *1984* is a possible human world, and came close to reality

in the DDR. What was wrong with it? Nothing, if you wanted to live that way! Ask any member of the Stasi!

#### 4. Hinges and Grammars

Wittgenstein offers the reality of the past as a ubiquitous hinge expressed in the hinge-proposition ‘The earth has existed for many years’. This major hinge-proposition is the doppelganger of all sorts of hinge-practices. Compare this proposition with some temporal *grammatical* propositions – e.g. ‘One cannot visit the past bodily’. What we are to make of this declaration depends on the meanings of ‘visit’ [e.g. not a synonym for ‘remember’] and ‘past’ [e.g. a region that somehow co-exists with the present and future, but a fortiori not temporally!]. Given the meanings of the relevant words the proposition ‘One can visit the past bodily’ makes no sense. ‘The world has existed for many years’ certainly uses the time grammar but as a hinge-proposition it could be false. Let us test out the idea that it is an empirical proposition, expressing a temporal hinge which has morally significant hinge-practices as its doppelgangers. What might some of the doppelganger hinge-practices be?

Here is a suggestion for a hinge-practice that seems to moral. The hinge-proposition above is a doppelganger for the hinge-practice of applying the concept of moral responsibility. If one could seriously doubt that the world has existed for many years, that doubt might be brought forward by the defence in the trial of someone who is accused of war crimes in a long past war. Russell once surmised that the suggestion that the world came into existence a minute ago made sense - then the accusation that I took the last cake on the plate yesterday is vacuous, though grammatically well formed. I cannot be morally responsible for something which did not really happen no matter what illusions people are under. So the hinge-practice of insisting that I am morally responsible for such a dastardly act as draining the last of the claret at last week’s Guest Night depends on the hinge expressed in the propositional doppelganger ‘The world existed last week with me in it’. So shaping our lives under the influence of this hinge is at least a necessary condition for the possibility of a local moral order as we know it. Not every university has guest night rituals.

A slightly different example - ‘I am British’ is the hinge-proposition expressing the content of a pretty ubiquitous life hinge for me. There is a minor hinge-proposition something like this ‘British people support the British Lions in their tour of South Africa’ If I am found cheering for

the Springboks this is not, as a matter of fact, a way of being British. The practice might be frowned on morally while someone in a bar reminds of the facts my national identity. Cheering for the British Lions is one among other practices that express the nationality hinge.

Consider this variation – suppose I resent being called a citizen of the Little Satan? Why? Perhaps the nationality hinge grounds my life as a moral being? No, according to this line of argument I resent being falsely accused of plotting against Iran – Britishers don't do such things.

## **5. Hinge change and its realisation and expression in life activities**

We have looked at cases where the hinge was stable over change in everyday morally relevant practices (Wittgenstein certainly took his hinges to have that kind of stability – though even the rocky river bed wore away in time).

There are cases where the hinge changes, as revealed in the changing content of some doppelganger hinge-propositions and the changing form of doppelganger hinge-practices. Until recently British law made no distinction between the criminality of children and adults. Ariès (1965) has tracked the history of the invention of 'childhood' as a distinct phase of the human life span. He records the gradual realisation that practices concerned with moral responsibility are different for adults and children. The doppelganger of this practice realisation of the hinge is declared to be a matter of fact – turning on such matters as ability to reason at a certain level of generality, the sort of developmental psychology findings of Piaget. So according to the account of 'hinge' above it is a hinge-practice, since its propositional doppelganger is empirical. However, the adoption of this hinge has had a profound effect on the practice of assignments of moral responsibility to various categories of human beings. The hinge-practice of hanging children for theft gives way to an intervention by the social services, a hinge-practice so different that the hinge it realises must surely be different from that expressed in the old criminal law. If a change of belief goes along with a change of morally relevant practice, perhaps we have an 'is' entailing an 'ought' here? Not if the argument above has force – what has happened is that a whole new society has come into being. 'Doppelgangerhood' is not a logical relation!

At least the 'is', expressing the fact the persons have reached or failed to reach cognitive or emotional maturity, is a necessary condition for the possibility of applying or refraining from applying certain moral concepts to children. If the hinge-proposition is false then the hinge-practices of juvenile criminal prosecutions and sentencing policy have no application

in this domain. In this case hinge-practices were abandoned through the influence of the adoption of new hinge-propositions.

Now I turn to the case of abandoning a hinge by abandoning certain hinge-practices and ceasing to insist on the truth of their propositional doppelgangers. In a moral context 'Women are as intelligent as men' is a hinge proposition since the hinge-practices that are doppelgangers of it are practices that determine local versions of the human form of life. These need not have been so, for example when the hinge proposition was believed to be false women were denied voting rights and education.

In the cases I want to look at now a hinge proposition, once held to be true, is later discarded as false. Associated practices are abandoned. A deep hinge expressed in a seemingly incontestable proposition (the bedrock of the river) over which sand banks come and go (local hinges expressed in transitory hinge-propositions) has been abandoned.

Here is a rather complex example.

#### 1. Propositions: Deep and Transitory:

Deep Hinge proposition: 'There are two sexes'.

Transitory Hinge Proposition: 'There are four natural sexual orientations: MM, MF, FF and FM. Some men prefer men, some prefer women; some women prefer women, some women prefer men as matter of their natures'.

#### 2. Practices and Propositions:

Hinge practices and propositions apropos of homosexuality.

##### 1. The Transitory Hinge Proposition that is now denied but once was held true.

Hinge proposition c. 1850, A 1: 'Homosexuality is unnatural'.

Hinge practices c 1890, 1950, A 2: Criminal prosecutions of Oscar Wilde, Alan Turing, etc.

##### 2. The Transitory Hinge Proposition that is now affirmed.

Hinge proposition c. 2000, B 1 'Homosexuality is natural'

Hinge practices c. 2000, B2: Gay and lesbian marriages and civil unions, adoption etc. are legalised.

Has there been a change in *moral* climate as a consequence of the change in the accepted truth-values of A1 and B1 while the deep hinge proposition remains unchallenged? The Transitory Hinge Proposition is treated as matter of fact, then false, now true? It seems hardly plausible to deny that the moral climate has changed in so far as the hinge-practices of praise and blame apropos of the life styles of certain people of have been abandoned, the homosexual way of life is now accepted as morally indifferent.

The case of the hermaphrodite runner goes deeper since it challenges the major or deep hinge-proposition 'There are two sexes'. The moral issue of whether he/she has the right to compete in women-only races depends on querying the major hinge-proposition correlative to the practices of international athletics. If we are witnessing a hinge change then the dop-pelganger hinge-practices realising the hinge should change with the change in hinge-propositions expressing the hinge. So we have proposals that there should be three categories in sport – female, male and hermaphrodite. Is there anyway that the question of which group of contests hermaphrodites may compete in could be settled? I think not – the issue is as Gallie (1964) argued for many issues of morality – essentially contestable. Whichever way you go creates a distinct athletics culture with its own norms.

A last ditch defender of Hume's Maxim might argue that the concept 'being unnatural' is an evaluative concept. The persecution of homosexuals is a reflection of a deeply ingrained human value, and no scientific work on the genetics of gender preferences can make the slightest difference to this value. We are not dealing with a hinge, and the pairs of practices and propositions in which it appears. The relevant proposition is not a hinge-proposition since it is not empirical. We could not find out if it is false.

In response the advocate of hinge philosophy would insist that the efforts to prove that homosexuality is of genetic origin and is seen among animals suggests that 'being unnatural' is not an ad hoc local moral principle. However, since the possible relations between the sexes is the subject of a huge amount of moral discourse and judgements, 'homosexuality is natural', one might be tempted to think that it is a kind of hybrid – part empirical, the status of hinge-propositions, and part moral, the status of hinge-practices. According to the principle I suggested at the beginning of this paper, the key to this apparent paradox is to see that doppelegangerhood is not a logical relation.

## 6. Prudential Hinges, their Practices and their Maxims

Here is another practice-proposition pair that might be a candidate for moral

hinge status, though with an interesting possible shift in the boundaries of 'the moral'.

Suppose I take up the practice of drinking red wine (in moderation) and when challenged produce a pair of hinge-propositions doppelgangers of my hinge-practice. They might be 'Red wine combats the ill effects of free radicals' 'Free radicals in the body increase the chance of heart disease' – and tie this into hinge-practices with some such belief as that only a madman would welcome heart disease as something good. But this way of satisfying the conditions for good practices and virtuous behaviour is apparently prudential, not moral. Is it morally wrong to have developed a 'dicky' heart as a result of ignoring medical advice or just folly?

The wisdom of adopting the practice of drinking red wine as a matter of course – couples with 'Red wine is good for your health' – its doppelganger. And this proposition is empirical and supported by studies such as those of Richard Doll. Note the 'Doll transition' from practice to medicine: Red wine/enjoyable/customary → empirical research results → prudential behaviour. But is the obligation to behave prudently *moral*?

The Jane Fonda argument: according to Jane in her *Work Book*, we owe a basic duty of care to our bodies, an out-of-shape, smoking, beer-bellied couch potato is not just foolish and disgusting to behold but an immoral person to boot. This line of thought can be found in the Ancient World - 'mens sana in corpore sano' – much practised among Athenian fitness fanatics such as amateur boxers like Plato. Sometimes this duty of self-care is folded back on to traditional morality by reference to the cost to others of treatments like liver transplants. For example moral qualms have been expressed about giving George Best a sequence of livers which he proceeded to ruin, when others more prudent might have benefited. But this is not the moral line that Jane Fonda is taking. Her argument is presented in terms of a personification of the body, as a kind of pet or associate with needs of its own. She advises us to 'Listen to our bodies'. Since persons are morally protected so quasi- or honorary-persons are morally protected too.

These discussions throw up the question of whether there is a principled distinction between prudence and morality. Is Jane Fonda's line merely mimicking morality, or is it a previously neglected dimension of ethics unstudied until recently, despite the fact that the moral foundations of the British bourgeoisie was expressed in the game-playing practices of the 'public', i.e. private schools? A possible criterion that would absorb some prudential practices into moral obligations would be whether the hinge-practice served to protect persons from various kinds of threats to their moral standing as autonomous beings with the capacity to suffer. Does the body suffer? Is it

autonomous? Affirmative answers to either question would commit the homunculus fallacy I believe. But that discussion must wait another time.

## 6. Conclusions

I have considered examples of two kinds of normative practices and their doppelganger propositions – those that close or open life opportunities to different categories of persons; and prudential maxims relevant to the maintenance of a healthy body. These concern how a moral or at least a well chosen life is to be lived, and what practices constitute it.

It seems that some hinges are moral because when we consider the doppelganger pair – practice and proposition – the proposition is empirical because it describes a form of life which we do not need to adopt, but the practice protects persons. If we allow for local moralities then the fact that a certain community favours a certain practice is properly part of their morality. I considered a third example – the time hinge – on the practices in which this hinge is realised depend the very possibility of moral life at all. If there was no past there can be no application for the notion of moral responsibility and all the minor hinges that go with it. Hinge propositions express the empirical conditions for there to be any moral order at all.

However, it also seems to be plausible to claim that some hinges are moral because, though the doppelganger hinge-proposition is plainly empirical, its being otherwise would be the mark of an alternative tribal morality. Anthropologists' descriptions of tribal practices are expressions of local hinges and so are empirical hinge-propositions. The locals may agree with these descriptions as matters of fact. But they are doppelgangers of locally normative hinge-practices – Shweder's 'contingent universals'. The locals attitudes to them would surely be different. We cannot give up these truths in our own case because that would be to enter into a different way of life.

Whatever are the details of the case, accepting Hume's principle that one cannot *deduce* an 'ought' from an 'is' does not upset the general idea of hinges that are realised in person preserving practices and expressed in empirical propositions. Doppelgangerhood is not a logical relation. Nor is it the relation of a genus to two subordinate species, one practical and one discursive. It is what it is.



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