

remain to be shown that non-theoretical reasoning processes play a part in such transitions.

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### INTENTIONALITY: SPONTANEOUS ASCRIPTION AND DEEP INTUITION

By KIM DAVIES

IN 'Killing People Intentionally, By Chance' (ANALYSIS 41.3, June 1981, p. 156), I offered a solution to Butler's problem which consisted of an explanation of why our immediate responses to the two cases differ, together with an account of how both responses can be, but are not always, correct. This solution made use of a difference in the scope of the intentions normally assumed to be present in the two cases. Thus, normally an intention to kill someone is not limited to killing them under the conditions of a game of chance. Assuming the presence of this more general intention, we spontaneously call the killing intentional; and where such an intention is in fact present, this is correct. In the case of throwing a six, such an intention is not normally present; our spontaneous response is guided rather by the fact that in a game of dice it is all important that what number turns up on the throw is not subject to the thrower's control, and hence is not intentional. Where no general intention concerning the throw of a six is present, this response is correct. Thus we have an explanation of our differing spontaneous ascriptions of intentionality, and an account of the conditions under which they are both correct. Eric Stiffler, however, in his 'Butler's Problem Again' (ANALYSIS 41.4, October 1981, p. 216), objects that this solution depends on the claim that throwing a six in an ordinary dice game cannot be instantiated intentionally, and that this claim is false. Brown can have the intention to throw a six in an ordinary dice game *at some time or other* (he may set up dice games until he does so). Here it would be intentional that he throw a six, without it being intentional that *on this particular occasion* he throw a six. This objection misunderstands the nature of the solution. In showing how it can be correct to call the killing of Smith intentional, and correct to call the throw of the six not intentional, we have answered precisely Butler's question (presented in ANALYSIS 37.3, March 1977, p. 97). But this does not imply that the normal conditions on which these ascriptions are founded always obtain. Where they do not — as where Brown lacks a general intention to kill Smith, or possesses a

general intention to throw a six in an ordinary dice game – these ascriptions are incorrect.<sup>1</sup>

This will not satisfy E. J. Lowe. In his 'Intentionality and Intuition: a reply to Davies' (ANALYSIS 42.2, March, 1982, p. 85),<sup>2</sup> he claims that Butler must have meant to talk of the intentionality that *on the particular occasion* Brown did something, or else the problem rests on an equivocation and is bogus from the start. This seems a bit hard-hearted. It is not clear that Butler had any precise thoughts at all in this respect. Yet even without such thoughts, there remains the problem of how our spontaneous ascriptions of intentionality can differ in the two cases, and yet both be correct: the problem I claim to have solved. Still, if the problem is cast in Lowe's light, then it is clear that our immediate response to Brown's killing Smith is incorrect. It is not intentional that, on that particular occasion, Brown kill Smith, since, having pulled the trigger, he has no control over whether the bullet is fired. Surely then, argues Lowe, there is no disagreement between us, since he also thinks that this ascription of intentionality is incorrect (see his 'Peacock and Kraemer on Butler's problem', ANALYSIS 40.3, June 1980, p. 113).

There is a disagreement between us. To clarify it, I want to distinguish between spontaneous ascriptions and deep intuitions. To grasp the distinction, let us see it at work elsewhere in philosophy. Consider the case of parents who secretly kill their new-born child. Let us assume that the child would have had a life in which, on utilitarian calculation, good would exactly have balanced harm, and that the parents will be far happier without the child than with it. Our immediate response to this may well be that it is morally impermissible to kill the child; a response based on the intuitively held principle that it is wrong to kill an innocent person. Now consider two possible rejections of this spontaneous ascription of moral impermissibility. The first, on the part of a certain kind of utilitarian, rejects *also* the intuitively held principle, and argues that since utility will be maximized by killing the child, it is at least permissible to do so. The second argues that the child is not a person in the morally relevant sense since, say, it does not possess the attribute of self-awareness. Here the spontaneous ascription is rejected, while the deep intuition concerning the wrongness of killing innocent people is retained. It is just that this situation departs from the normal conditions of application of that intuition, the conditions which explain the spontaneous ascription. In this more complex case, the spontaneous ascription is held not to be justified. It is clear that agreement regarding this particular

<sup>1</sup> With regard to Stiffler's view that I argue, in effect, that throwing a six in an ordinary dice game cannot be instantiated intentionally, I should mention that in an earlier draft of my paper, shortened on the Editor's advice, I had discussed precisely Stiffler's example. It was not, then, my intention that the argument have this effect.

<sup>2</sup> I am grateful to Jonathan Lowe for letting me see this paper prior to publication.

spontaneous ascription is consistent with disagreement on the deep intuition on which that ascription is based, and with disagreement on other ascriptions of moral permissibility in other cases.

The present situation is analogous. Lowe and I agree in rejecting the spontaneous ascription of intentionality in the case at issue (understood on Lowe's terms). I reject it whilst retaining what I take to be our deep intuition concerning intentionality, namely that doing something is intentional if it is done because of an intention on the agent's part to do it. It is just that in this unusual case, the conditions in which the intuition is normally applied do not obtain, so that the spontaneous ascription based on this intuition is not here justified. Lowe rejects the spontaneous ascription, but also the deep intuition. He holds an account of intentionality which makes no reference to the agent's intentions.<sup>3</sup> This account leads him to disagree with ascriptions of intentionality based on the deep intuition; for example, even with a general intention to kill Smith, Brown's killing is not intentional, but rather 'neither intentional nor unintentional'.<sup>4</sup> This is not the place to discuss Lowe's general analysis of intentionality. It is enough to have shown that our spontaneous ascriptions of intentionality in Butler's problem can coherently be justified. Even where these ascriptions are not tenable, no doubt is cast on the soundness of that deep intuition, whose reflective application itself justifies their revision.

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<sup>3</sup> See E. J. Lowe, 'An Analysis of Intentionality', *The Philosophical Quarterly*, vol. 31, October 1981.

<sup>4</sup> Since writing this, Jonathan Lowe has told me of his uncertainty as to the application of his analysis to cases which involve these general intentions.

## AGAINST A DEONTIC ARGUMENT FOR GOD'S EXISTENCE

By PATRICK GRIM

CARL R. KORDIG has recently presented the following two-part argument for the existence of God [4]:

- $$\begin{array}{l}
 \text{I} \quad \text{Og} \\
 \quad \text{Og} \supset \diamond g \\
 \quad \therefore \diamond g \\
 \text{II} \quad \diamond g \\
 \quad \diamond g \supset \square g \\
 \quad \therefore \square g
 \end{array}$$