

DOES LONGINO HAVE A NAZI PROBLEM?

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1. INTRODUCTION

The 1990 publication of Helen Longino's *Science as social knowledge*¹ was regarded as an unusually successful and productive encounter between feminist philosophy and mainstream philosophy of science.² However, not all feminists are happy with the account of objectivity Longino develops in this and her later *The fate of knowledge*³. I have encountered three feminist philosophers who have all offered one especially compelling feminist critique of Longino's view: far from vindicating or privileging the work of feminist scientists, Longino's account actually requires the inclusion of anti-feminist and misogynist scientists to balance out the possibility of feminist bias. I call this objection the *Nazi problem*, for its claim that her view requires even the inclusion of Nazi scientists in objective inquiry.

In this paper I will take up the Nazi problem. In the next two sections, I will present the basic features of Longino's account of objectivity and the Nazi problem. I will then present the response I wish to consider here, which I call the *good faith argument*. I will then turn to three objections to the good faith argument: first, it is textually inaccurate, and therefore incompatible with Longino's account of objectivity; second, and relatedly, it ignores the real problem, which lays behind the requirement that leads to the Nazi problem; and third, that the good faith argument is just as objectionable, on feminist grounds, as the Nazi problem it is meant to address.

While I believe my responses to the first two objections are sufficient, the third is a serious problem. In the conclusion, I go on to argue that Longino's account of objectivity shares this problem with John Rawls' account of reasonable persons

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²Cf. John Dupré's blurb on the back cover of the paperback edition.

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in *Political liberalism*. Dealing with this problem therefore requires a two-sided approach, incorporating both philosophy of science and political philosophy.

2. BACKGROUND: OBJECTIVITY

Longino lays out her account of objectivity in *Science as social knowledge*⁴, and later restates and refines the account in *The fate of knowledge*⁵. In this section, I recount the major relevant parts of the account – namely, her proposed definition of objectivity from *Science as social knowledge*, which corresponds to *epistemic acceptability* in the later book.

Longino’s account of objectivity is *social* and *procedural*. It is social in that it deals primarily with features of a society or community – in particular, that of scientists – rather than an individual epistemic agent.⁶ Hence, the adjective ‘objective’ applies primarily to communities, rather than individuals, so that one says, eg, Nazi science was not objective, North American science early in the twenty-first century is moderately objective (or, perhaps, more objective than Nazi science), and so on. The account is procedural in that its requirements and restrictions have to do with the procedures members of the community follow in their production of scientific knowledge, rather than the content or features of the resulting knowledge. For example, Longino does not directly include any explicit requirement that scientific knowledge must be empirically adequate, logically consistent, or exemplify any other theoretical virtue. Her account therefore deals with what used to be called the context of discovery rather than the context of justification.

More specifically, Longino gives four criteria intended to guarantee that scientific knowledge be ‘produced through a process of critical emendation and modification of those individual products by the rest of the scientific community.’⁷ She argues that such a process is necessary to ‘block the influence of subjective preference

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⁶Justin Biddle has recently argued that, because of its ties to John Stuart Mill’s *On liberty*, Longino’s account of objectivity is actually not ‘essentially social’, and her criteria could possibly be realised by a single individual. (?, ?) Even if this is theoretically possible, however, it seems to be a practical impossibility. For my purposes here, then, I consider her view to be social.

⁷?, ?, 68

at the level of background beliefs.’⁸ Such subjective preferences include mystical experiences, expressions of feeling or emotion and value judgements.⁹ Hence, a community which exemplifies the four criteria will produce knowledge that is not partial in the sense that it is closely tied to any particular set of of ethico-political values; presumably, whatever one’s conception of the good human life, one will find the knowledge produced by an objective community epistemically acceptable. We can therefore reasonably construe Longino’s account of objectivity as one attempt at an account of *value-free or value-neutral science*: science is objective insofar as it is not influenced by subjective factors (including value judgements).

In *Science as social knowledge*, the four criteria are:

- (1) Recognized avenues for criticism
- (2) Shared standards
- (3) Community response
- (4) Equality of intellectual authority

I find it most perspicuous to present these four criteria as they would function in an idealised narrative. Thus, suppose a research team write and submit an article discussing the findings of their most recent research, to either a journal or conference. The particular setting constitutes one of the many ‘recognized avenues for criticism’ (1) within the larger scientific community.¹⁰ The team do not expect to simply release their findings and expect their fellow scientists to nod along; rather, they expect all aspects of their research (at least in principle, but recall that this is an idealisation) to be subject to scrutiny – how was this variable controlled for, why was this statistical test used rather than that, do the data gathered support the team’s hypothesis better than a popular alternative, and so on.

⁸*Ibid.*, 73

⁹While I can find no evidence conclusively showing that she considers all value judgements to be mere expressions of subjective preference, Longino often uses language that suggests this view. See, for example, *ibid.*, 4, 70-1, and 102, where she appears to treat ‘values’ and ‘subjective preferences’ as synonymous.

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 76

These criticisms are not levelled at random. They are instead based on (2) ‘public standards or criteria to which members of the scientific community are or feel themselves bound.’¹¹ Thus, the team’s interlocutors ask whether or not the submitted article lives up to the standards, norms, and background assumptions of the discipline – this variable is important and hence should be controlled for, this statistical test is more appropriate for data gathered in this way than that, data standing in this relationship to a hypothesis support it, and so on. More general theoretical virtues – such as Kuhn’s five, accuracy, consistency, simplicity, breadth of scope, and fruitfulness – also make their appearance here. Longino points out that these standards can be quite heterogeneous, and thus calls her overall account (including, as a proper part, the account of objectivity) *contextual* empiricism: ‘Different subcommunities will subscribe to different but overlapping subsets of the standards associated with a given community.’¹² She adds that only empirical adequacy ‘constitutes a necessary condition that any research program must meet or aspire to meet’¹³, but nothing about this is crucial for our purposes here.

Once these criticisms are aired, it is important that the team not simply ignore them. They must respond (3), whether by defending their work as it stands (that is, arguing that it actually does live up to the discipline’s standards), modifying it to mollify criticism, or even rejecting it entirely. This process then repeats: the revised article is submitted, either as a new article or as a revision, and again subject to critical scrutiny.

This process, by itself, does not provide much of a guarantee of objectivity in the sense of a value-neutral product. The exclusion or marginalisation of certain individuals from the community might, indeed, have the opposite effect: a dogmatic consensus is imposed by excluding those who are or might be inclined to challenge the prevailing background assumptions and standards¹⁴. As Longino argues,

When ... background assumptions are shared by all members of a community, they acquire an invisibility that renders them unavailable

¹¹*Ibid.*, 77

¹²*Ibid.*, 77

¹³*Op. cit.*

¹⁴These assumptions and standards must themselves be subject to occasional criticism; see, for example, ?, ?, 154-5.

for criticism. They do not become visible until individuals who do not share the community's assumptions can provide alternative explanations of the phenomena without those assumptions¹⁵

Such individuals might include members of an oppressed racial, ethnic, religious, sexual, or economic group, or simply those who offer radical alternative theories.

To block this possibility, Longino requires (4) an 'equality of intellectual authority', which 'disqualif[ies] a community in which a set of assumptions dominates by virtue of the political power of its adherents'¹⁶ Longino clarifies this criterion as 'tempered equality' in *The fate of knowledge*: 'The social position or economic power of an individual or group in a community ought not determine who or what perspectives are taken seriously in that community.'¹⁷ In our idealised case, the team could not simply dismiss a criticism because it was made by a woman or an African-American man, for example.

It is unclear how far this fourth criterion reaches, and Longino recognises as much.¹⁸ It is at least clear that she does not mean to require equal authority be given to absolutely everyone; she gives one explicit sufficient condition for excluding an individual or group:

the advocates of a point of view, and through them the point of view itself, may lose or even forfeit intellectual authority if their discursive interactions do not satisfy the second condition of uptake. That is, reiterating the same old complaint no matter what response is offered eventually disqualifies one as a member of a discursive community of equals.¹⁹

With the important elements of Longino's account of objectivity laid out, I turn now to the criticism of it.

¹⁵?, ?, 80

¹⁶*Ibid.*, 78

¹⁷?, ?, 131

¹⁸*Ibid.*, 133

¹⁹*Op. cit.*

3. BACKGROUND: THE NAZI PROBLEM

Although it is not the first version of the Nazi problem I encountered²⁰, I will be taking the following version, due to Kristen Intemann, as canonical:

[On one reading of Longino,] contextual values are treated as non-rational causes in scientific reasoning. A consequence of this view seems to be that all contextual values are equally dangerous in their potential to negatively influence scientists. Similarly, all contextual values have a positive role to play in contributing to a diverse research community. A diverse community with different contextual values represented will have a greater chance of catching any contextual values influencing scientific theorizing. But, feminist political commitments will be no more important in contributing to this diversity than anti-feminist commitments. It is the diversity of the contextual values represented and not the content of any particular contextual value judgments that makes for good science. Thus, the causal interpretation undermines the claim that feminist political commitments (as opposed to anti-feminist ones) makes a uniquely positive contribution to science.²¹

While Intemann's reasons for reading Longino as claiming that contextual or ethico-political values are 'non-rational causes', rather than genuine and legitimate epistemic factors, in scientific reasoning are important, they are a topic for another section. The following two claims are central to the Nazi problem:

- (1) Longino's account of objectivity requires the inclusion of groups whose basic ethico-political values are radically at odds with those of feminism.
- (2) Hence it is inappropriate to call her account 'feminist'.

In what follows, I will refer to these as the first and second claims respectively.

²⁰That was during a seminar with Janet Kourany and Natalia Baeza during the Spring of 2006 at the University of Notre Dame. Kourany briefly states her version of the problem in a survey of feminist approaches to the philosophy of science, ?, ?, 253. I prefer Intemann's presentation to Kourany's only because Intemann's is slightly more transparent.

²¹?, ?, 1006

The first claim seems to come directly out of Longino's fourth criterion of objectivity. Straightforwardly, if '[t]he social position or economic power of an individual or group in a community ought not determine who or what perspectives are taken seriously in that community'²², then even holding the most vile misogynist (and racist, and homophobic, &c.) views cannot be grounds for excluding an individual or group from the community²³, and so Longino's account of objectivity requires the inclusion of such groups.

This itself might not be so bad. But it is a weak reading of the requirement in the first claim: if Nazis are around, we can't exclude them just because they're Nazis. There is, however, a stronger reading, that adds a second conditional: if Nazis *aren't* around, we have to *actively cultivate* Nazi scientists. Longino's use of the criterion of tempered equality of intellectual authority to condemn the 'exclusion of women and members of certain racial minorities from scientific education and the scientific professions'²⁴ is based in part on such a strong reading:

a community . . . must also take *active steps* to ensure that alternative points of view are developed enough to be a source of criticism and new perspectives. Not only must potentially dissenting voices not be discounted; they must be *cultivated*.²⁵

With this stronger reading of the first claim, the second claim seems to follow more or less immediately. Since Longino provides no basis for claiming that feminist values are less distortive than anti-feminist ones, if the community must actively cultivate feminist scientists, it must also actively cultivate anti-feminist scientists. There is something profoundly antifeminist about taking active steps to cultivate scientists who look at the world from such a misogynistic point of view. If Longino's account requires such active steps, then it cannot be called feminist.

²²*Op. cit.*

²³Strictly speaking, I could distinguish here between excluding from the community and denying intellectual authority. However, from the perspective of Longino's account, this would amount to a distinction without a difference.

²⁴?, ?, 132

²⁵*Op. cit.*, my emphasis

4. THE GOOD FAITH ARGUMENT

The defence of Longino's contextual empiricism that I consider in this paper attempts to respond to the Nazi problem by denying the first claim. Thus, it says that Longino's account of objectivity *does not* require the inclusion of groups whose basic ethico-political values are radically at odds with those of feminism.

It does this by first introducing the following *good faith condition*:

- (1) Good faith participation in a community governed by a certain set of norms and standards S requires a commitment to the ethico-political and epistemological values that underwrite and motivate S .

A community – whether scientific, more generally epistemic (perhaps it is a community of philosophers), or directed at completely different ends (perhaps it is a religious community) – is governed by certain norms and standards. These norms and standards may function as rules or commandments, or they may be certain values and virtues, or simply a set of exemplars and ideals. They may be stated explicitly, legally or otherwise codified, or may simply operate as the ‘intuitions’ or background assumptions to which members of the community appeal.

Whatever their form, structure, and content, these norms and standards are underwritten and motivated by the goals and constraints the community believes to be appropriate to their activities. For example, certain ‘best practices’ will be instrumentally valued for their efficacy in attaining the desired ends, while restrictions and requirements for informed consent from human test subjects will be put in place to prevent the formation of an attitude that the ends justify the means. Understanding these goals and constraints as values, they can be either epistemological (the community values, as an end, true belief) or ethico-political (the community values, as a constraint, human autonomy).

Of course, an individual or subcommunity does not need to share these values to respect the norms and standards they motivate and underwrite. At least, not on a very thin reading of ‘respect’. An egoist, for example, may ‘respect’ the requirement of obtaining informed consent not because she cares one single bit about the autonomy of her test subjects, but simply because she believes her funding will be

cut, or worse, if she consistently fails to obtain their signatures in the proper places on the proper forms.

We could also say that the egoist can ‘participate’ in the community of, say, psychologists, without respecting the ethico-political values underwriting and motivating the restrictions and regulations on using human test subjects. But she does not *participate in good faith* in the community and its activities. She respects these restrictions, in the thin sense of obeying them, but does not respect them in the thick sense of valuing them as an important or even essential part of the community’s activities.

By contrast, consider a psychologist who sees the restrictions and paperwork surrounding the use of human test subjects, not as merely a hindrance he must tolerate in order to achieve her own ends, but as themselves an important part of his activities as a psychologist. He does so because she shares the valuing of human autonomy that motivates these restrictions. He, unlike the egoist, has a commitment to the ethico-political values that underwrite and motivate the norms and standards of the community of psychologist. And therefore, unlike the egoist, he can participate in good faith in that community.

This condition might be thought to be a bit strong. Consider a third psychologist, who is neither the enthusiastic advocate of the rights of human test subjects, nor cynically follows the proscribed motions simply because she sees no way to get around them. This third psychologist is neither committed to the value of human autonomy, nor would she prefer to reject it. She simply follows these procedures because that’s what the community requires, and without forming an opinion on them either way. It seems wrong to say that this third psychologist cannot participate in the psychological community in good faith; she’s not acting deceptively or furtively, like the egoist is. Fortunately for my purposes, I need only a weaker good faith condition:

- (1’) Good faith participation in a community governed by a certain set of norms and standards S requires *not rejecting* the ethico-political and epistemological values that underwrite and motivate S .

Both the second and third psychologist satisfy (1'), and the egoist fails to satisfy it: not only is she not committed to the value of human autonomy, but, as an egoist, she rejects the autonomy of others as in any way valuable.

With (1') in place as the first premiss of the good faith argument, we turn now to its particular application to Longino's account of objectivity. Longino's four criteria of objectivity amount to a set of norms and standards L governing a community of scientists. The set L is not 'complete' in any sense – each individual scientific community will have to flesh them out by specifying the appropriate shared standards for evidence and criticism, and so on. L will then be a subset of the full set of norms and standards governing that community.

To apply the good faith condition, we need to ask which ethico-political values underwrite and motivate L . The answer is given in the second premiss of the good faith argument.

- (2) If S includes L , the corresponding ethico-political values will include
- (a) legal egalitarianism, and
 - (b) liberal pluralism.

These will not be the *only* ethico-political values underwriting and motivating S , of course. But, by virtue of including L as a subset of the norms and standards, legal egalitarianism and liberal pluralism must be included among the ethico-political values underwriting and motivating S .

I define these two ethico-political values as follows:

legal egalitarianism: All members of the community enjoy the same formal or legal standing; no individual or subgroup is, as such, given greater privileges or advantages than others.

liberal pluralism: There is room for reasonable disagreement; two members of the community may disagree substantially without one or both being unreasonable or irrational.

Legal egalitarianism underwrites and motivates Longino's criterion of equality of intellectual authority. Everyone in the community has the same right to offer criticism and receive a response; this formal epistemological standing is not to be denied

anyone on the basis of social or political categories.²⁶ Liberal pluralism is implicit in the need for individuals who can challenge mainstream background assumptions – the diversity Longino requires presupposes axiological pluralism, reasonable disagreement over value judgements.

From (1') and (2), we have the third step in the good faith argument.

- (3) Hence, no group that rejects legal egalitarianism and liberal pluralism can participate in good faith in a community governed by any set of norms including Longino's four criteria of objectivity.

We turn our attention to Nazi and Neo-Nazi scientists. With the close link Nazi scientists recognised between political power, racial identity, and epistemic authority,²⁷ these scientists reject both legal egalitarianism and liberalism pluralism. This is the fourth step in the argument, and, combined with (3), it gives the desired conclusion:

- (4) Nazis and Neo-Nazis reject the ethico-political values of legal egalitarianism and liberal pluralism.
- (5) Hence, Nazis and Neo-Nazi scientists cannot participate in good faith in a scientific community governed by any set of norms that include *L*, Longino's criteria of objectivity.

Now, if we weaken the required inclusion of *all* groups, and require only the inclusion of all groups *that can participate in good faith*, then Longino's account of objectivity does not require the inclusion of Nazis or other groups whose basic ethico-political values are radically at odds with those of feminism. We therefore have an argument against the first claim of the Nazi problem.

This argument does not assume that legal egalitarianism and liberal pluralism are characteristic values of feminism of any sort. Nor does it assume that feminists are committed only to these values. It simply assumes – in responding to the broadest reading of the first claim – that any group whose basic ethico-political values are radically at odds with those of feminism also rejects at least one of legal egalitarianism and liberal pluralism.

²⁶Miranda Fricker's notion of 'epistemic injustice' can be understood as a failure of legal egalitarianism in epistemic contexts – that is, a failure to grant someone full and equal standing as an epistemic agent. See, for example, ?, ?.

²⁷See ?, ?, ch. 3.

5. THREE OBJECTIONS

I turn now to three objections to the use of the good faith argument to respond to the Nazi problem. The first two objections are textual, and question the fit between the good faith argument and Longino's full views. The third objection is more substantial, and I believe is the manifestation, in philosophy of science, of the tension between liberal and non-liberal feminisms.

5.1. First objection. The first objection begins by pointing out a clear textual incompatibility between the final move of the good faith argument – weakening the required inclusion to all and only those groups that can participate in good faith – and Longino's requirement that all perspectives be included. The good faith argument cannot be used as a defence of her account of objectivity without discarding the reasoning that lead to the stronger reading of 'requires' at the end of §???. At best, the defender of Longino faces a dilemma: *either* her account of objectivity requires the cultivation of Nazi scientists, *or* it cannot condemn the failure of real-world science to cultivate feminist scientists.

I have two responses to this objection. First, in *The fate of knowledge*, Longino makes it clear that she is not requiring that absolutely all perspectives be included. She even gives a clear criterion for the exclusion of a perspective:

the advocates of a point of view, and through them the point of view itself, may lose or even forfeit intellectual authority if their discursive interactions do not satisfy the second condition of uptake. That is, reiterating the same old complaint no matter what response is offered eventually disqualifies one as a member of a discursive community of equals.²⁸

The important question is now whether Nazi scientists will engage in such behavior. It is perhaps even plausible to claim that, indeed, they will: due to their belief in racial and ideological aristocracy, Nazi scientists will discount criticisms of their work offered by members of racial and political groups that they consider (socially and epistemically) inferior. And if certain criticisms are much more likely to come

²⁸*Ibid.*, 133

from members of such groups, then Nazi scientists will fail to satisfy the second condition of uptake, and hence can be excluded.

This assumes, however, Nazi scientists *acting in good faith*. We can also consider another group of Nazi scientists who, acting in bad faith, do take these criticisms seriously (perhaps due to the threat of exclusion if they do not). They will not like it, but it is a price they are willing to pay for inclusion in the community of scientists. Since this group of Nazi scientists do not fail to satisfy the second condition of uptake, they cannot be excluded on these grounds – and, evidently, should be cultivated. The first response is therefore ultimately question-begging, as it assumes that only those scientists who can participate in good faith need be included.

A better response is to point out that something must give if Longino is to reconcile the tension between contextual empiricism and the feminist who objects to the required inclusion of misogynist and racist perspectives. If the requirement of including all possible perspectives, including the misogynist and racist ones, is built into contextual empiricism from the start, then the Nazi problem crops up immediately. Some sort of modification of the view is required, and the good faith argument indicates such a modification.

5.2. Second objection. The second objection is closely related to the first. It goes further than the first, by examining more closely Longino’s reasons for requiring the inclusion of all possible perspectives. Consider first these two passages, from the section of *Science as social knowledge* where Longino is arguing for the epistemic value of critical discussion:

Objectivity ... requires a way to block the influence of subjective preference at the level of background beliefs. While the possibility of criticism does not totally eliminate subjective preference either from an individual’s or from a community’s practice of science, it does provide a means for checking its influence in the formation of “science knowledge.”²⁹

²⁹*Ibid.*, 73

As long as background beliefs can be articulated and subjected to criticism from the scientific community, they can be defended, modified, or abandoned in response to such criticism. As long as this kind of response is possible, the incorporation of hypotheses into the canon of scientific knowledge can be independent of any individual's subjective preferences.³⁰

The line of thought here seems to be the following: If the effect of ethico-political values ('subjective preference') on the development of scientific theories cannot be identified by members of the scientific community, then the resulting theories will be held dogmatically, and the community will not be objective. Such identification requires the inclusion of individuals and groups in the scientific community who do not share these values. Any consensus on ethico-political values among all the members of a scientific community poses too great a risk of dogmatism to be epistemologically acceptable. In particular, the consensus on liberal values implied by step (3) of the good faith argument poses too great a risk of dogmatism to be epistemologically acceptable. The good faith argument has completely missed the epistemological significance of dissensus that drives Longino's account of objectivity.

This objection makes two (or three) important assumptions about ethico-political values: first, they are held irrationally, and are not subject to the sort of rational discussion and revision that makes objectivity possible for factual judgements; and second, they are therefore either epistemically neutral or epistemically harmful, and not epistemically beneficial. Indeed, Longino makes these assumptions explicit earlier in the discussion, arguing that objectivity is possible in the case of science, but not in the case of ethico-political values:

the logical publicity of science [articulated in the first and third criteria] make criticism of scientific hypotheses and theories possible in a way that is not possible, for instance, for descriptions of mystical experience or expressions of feeling or emotion There is no way ... to acquire the authority sufficient to criticize the description the

³⁰*Op. cit.*

description of a mystical experience or the expression of a particular feeling or emotion save by having the experience or emotion in question, and these are not had in the requisite sense by more than one person It is the possibility of intersubjective criticism ... that permits objectivity in spite of the context dependence of evidential reasoning.³¹

But these assumptions are highly controversial, especially within the community of feminist philosophers. Elizabeth Anderson, for one, has recently argued against both assumptions, in a paper that begins with an accusation that Longino and other feminist philosophers of science ‘have focused on analyzing science, while mostly taking value judgments for granted’³².

Contra Longino’s first assumption, Anderson claims that ‘we hold our emotional experiences accountable to the way the world is. If we find that the representational content of an emotional experience is defective - erroneous, blinkered, confused – we rationally discount its import.’³³ This point is crucial for her argument that emotional experiences actually provide evidence for ethico-political value judgements – in much the same way ‘ordinary’ sensory experiences provide evidence for factual judgements. It is true that no-one else has exactly the same emotional or sensory experiences of the world as I do; but intersubjective comparisons of these experiences let us rationally work out epistemically acceptable judgements of both facts and values.

In short, Longino’s assumptions concerning ‘subjective preferences’ cannot be made as easily as she does. And, if Anderson is right and ethico-political values are subject to rational revision, and not held dogmatically, then they may not always be epistemically harmful, and hence need not always be filtered out to achieve epistemically acceptable judgements. A defender of the good faith argument, going still further, can then argue that the ethico-political values of legal egalitarianism and liberal pluralism are actually epistemically valuable, so that there are good

³¹*Ibid.*, 70-1

³²?, ?, 2

³³*Ibid.*, 10

epistemological grounds for excluding illiberal and non-liberal groups from the epistemological community.

5.3. Third objection. The third, final, and most important objection to the good faith argument that I will consider here builds off the conclusion of the last paragraph: according to the good faith argument, there are good grounds for excluding illiberal and non-liberal groups from the epistemological community. As articulated in (3), it provides the reason for the exclusion of Nazis and Neo-Nazis. However, as this objection points out, not all illiberal and non-liberal groups are politically or epistemologically undesirable from a feminist perspective. There are, I will argue here, at least two important families of feminist scholarship that would be excluded; and, the objection concludes, this makes Longino's contextual empiricism (as revised in light of the good faith argument) just as unacceptable on feminist grounds as when it required the inclusion and cultivation of Nazi scientists.

As suggested above, the first and second families of feminist scholarship excluded by (3) are non-liberal or illiberal feminisms. First we have various types of socialist, Marxist, and Neo-Marxist feminism. The development of the theory of ideology and class consciousness by such Marxists as György Lukács and Louis Althusser provided the theoretical basis for feminist standpoint theory in the work of Nancy Hartsock and others in the early 1980s.³⁴ Alison Jaggar's work, exemplified by her *Feminist politics and human nature*³⁵, represents a distinct but equally important line of socialist and feminist thought. Thinkers working in these two approaches are often explicit critics of liberalism in political philosophy, and argue that the ideological function of science within the political status quo means their critiques have epistemological and methodological implications. Standpoint theorists explicitly deny legal egalitarianism, arguing that women have epistemological advantages over men that should be methodologically recognized. They would therefore have to be excluded, by (3).

Also excluded would be those feminists who base their views on a particular comprehensive conception of the good, and use that same comprehensive conception of

³⁴See, for example, ?, ?.

³⁵?, ?. For a self-contained excerpt summarising Jaggar's epistemology, see ?, ?.

the good to level criticisms of liberalism. Most prominent here are Christian, Islamic, and post-colonial feminisms. Because of their emphasis on the rôle of cultural traditions and communities in constituting individual identity, and the consequent similarity to the work of such philosophers as Michael Sandel and Alasdair MacIntyre, we might call these ‘communitarian feminists’.³⁶

One classic example of communitarian feminism can be found in an article by Islamic feminist Lois Lamya al-Faruqi, who, for example, denies legal egalitarianism (as I have defined it above):

The rights and responsibilities of a woman are equal to those of a man, but they are not necessarily identical with them. Equality and identity are two different things, Islamic traditions maintain - the former desirable, the latter not. Men and women should therefore be complementary to each other in a multi-function organization rather than competitive with each other in a uni-function society.³⁷

In particular, al-Faruqi argues that differential treatment by men and women in inheritance laws are justified by being ‘one part of a comprehensive system in which women carry no legal responsibility to support other members of the family, but in which men are bound by law as well as custom to provide for all their female relatives’³⁸.

Communitarian feminists also emphasise the value of a close-knit community, in which all the members share the same comprehensive conception of the good.³⁹ This denies liberal pluralism, at least on the level of ordinary everyday interactions. Denying both legal egalitarianism and liberal pluralism, communitarian feminists would be excluded by the good faith argument. But, the objection goes, this required exclusion of communitarian feminist scientists is just as unacceptable from a broadly feminist perspective as the required inclusion of Nazi scientists.

³⁶Note that Sandel and MacIntyre both dislike being labelled communitarians. For Sandel’s reasons for rejecting the label, see ?, ?, §I.

³⁷?, ?, NP

³⁸*Op. cit.*

³⁹See, for example, ?, ?, chs. 3 and 10, and ?, ?.

Longino therefore faces a dilemma: it appears she must either include Nazi scientists, or exclude at least two large and flourishing branches of feminist theory. Both options make her account of objectivity unacceptable on feminist grounds.

Unlike the first two objections, I have no easy response to this dilemma. This should not be a surprise, as it is closely related to a controversial and difficult concept in contemporary political philosophy: John Rawls' concept of a reasonable person. I turn to this concept in the next section.

6. REASONABLE PERSONS AND TOLERANCE

Rawls' concept of a reasonable person is the basis of his account of pluralism and toleration in *Political liberalism*⁴⁰. In *Political liberalism*, Rawls' primary aim is to explain how a tolerant, pluralist liberal democracy can continue to exist indefinitely into the future, given what he calls the *fact of reasonable pluralism*. This last is the fact that, in a democratic society, a wide variety of ethical and religious doctrines, with their various conceptions of the good human life – in his jargon, various *comprehensive conceptions* – all flourish and find adherents. Contemporary American society, for example, contains a wide array of Christian denominations and sects, and interspersed smaller Jewish, Hindu, Muslim, Buddhist, neo-pagan, Native religious and nontheist communities. How, Rawls asks, can such a society remain stable, and not fall into civil war and factional infighting?

In broad strokes, Rawls' answer to this question is a *political conception*, an account of basic principles of justice and governance on which all citizens can agree, whatever their comprehensive conception. Stated in this way, however, the idea of a political conception is vulnerable to an obvious objection: if society contains two groups whose respective comprehensive conceptions regard each other as a dire existential threat (for example, Nazis and Jews, or Black nationalists and the KKK), then a political conception is impossible, as neither group can accept political principles which permit the continued existence of the other. Note that *this is a variation of the Nazi problem*. To address this problem, Rawls limits the comprehensive conceptions citizens hold in his hypothetical, stable pluralist democracy.

⁴⁰?, ?

This is done explicitly in the following series of steps. First, citizens are assumed to have two moral powers: they are *rational*, meaning they are capable of having and acting upon a comprehensive conception; and they are *reasonable*, meaning they are capable of having and respecting a conception of justice.⁴¹ Second is the introduction of reasonable comprehensive conceptions. Rawls, recognizing the need for a definition of such comprehensive conceptions, identifies three ‘main features’ of them: a reasonable comprehensive conception

- (1) is an exercise in both theoretical and
- (2) practical reason that
- (3) ‘normally belongs to, or draws upon, a tradition of thought and doctrine’⁴²

At this point in my reconstruction, there is no reason to believe that reasonable persons hold only reasonable comprehensive conceptions. So, third, Rawls stipulates exactly that⁴³.

However, this has in no way solved the problem I identified above. This definition is so open-ended that *any* comprehensive conception whatsoever is going to satisfy it. Nazism and Judaism are both exercises in theoretical and practical reason that are informed by certain traditions of thought and doctrine. This limitation on comprehensive conceptions is no limitation at all. By drawing the boundaries of tolerance and pluralism too widely, at this stage of the argument, Rawls has permitted intolerant and disruptive perspectives into his purportedly tolerant and stable society.

Rawls therefore makes two further moves that, I claim, *parallel the solution to the Nazi problem proposed by the good faith argument*. More specifically, Rawls limits the comprehensive conceptions permitted in his well-ordered pluralist democracy to those that accept liberal pluralism, at least with respect to comprehensive conceptions. First, Rawls introduces the *burdens of judgment*. These are epistemological and practical limitations on human practical and theoretical reason⁴⁴ that explain the fact of reasonable pluralism: ‘many of our most important judgments are made

⁴¹See, for example, *ibid.*, 19.

⁴²*Ibid.*, 59

⁴³*Ibid.*, 81

⁴⁴*Ibid.*, 57

under conditions where it is not to be expected that conscientious persons with full powers of reason, even after free discussion, will all arrive at the same conclusion'⁴⁵. Since, even in ideal circumstances, open-minded and charitable individuals can disagree, even more profound disagreement is to be expected in the less-than-ideal circumstances of an actual democratic society.

Finally, Rawls stipulates that reasonable persons *qua* reasonable recognise the burdens of judgment: 'reasonable persons see that the burdens of judgment set limits on what can be reasonably justified to others, and so they endorse some form of liberty of conscience and freedom of thought'⁴⁶. Similarly, the only comprehensive conceptions permitted in a stable pluralist democracy are those that recognize that they are only one account of the good human life among many legitimate ones. Any perspective – comprehensive conception – that denies that two members of the community may disagree substantially without one or both being unreasonable or irrational is thereby excluded. Further, any comprehensive conception that demands greater legal privileges than are given to others is also unreasonable, and so any perspective that rejects legal egalitarianism, at least between comprehensive conceptions or the subgroups that hold them, must also be excluded. Hence Nazis and the KKK are to be excluded from Rawls' well-ordered society. (Presumably, as Black nationalism and Zionism are rooted in ideals of Black and Jewish self-determination rather than domination, they would not be excluded.)

I have already identified several respects in which this series of moves parallels the Nazi problem and the good faith argument:

- (1) Both Longino and Rawls start with an ideal of a pluralist, tolerant community.
- (2) The Nazi problem rears its head, showing that their respective accounts of toleration are too broad, and either require or permit the inclusion of intolerant and disruptive views.

⁴⁵*Ibid.*, 58

⁴⁶*Ibid.*, 61

- (3) The good faith argument and the recognition of the burdens of judgment both serve to restrict community membership to those who can accept the political values of legal egalitarianism and liberal pluralism.

There is one more item to add this list.

- (4) Where the good faith argument would exclude certain non-liberal feminist theoretical views from Longino's community of scientists, the requirement of recognition of the burdens of judgment and its egalitarian and pluralist implications would exclude the practical and political analogues of these non-liberal views from Rawls' well-ordered society.

To make this objection against Rawls, it is helpful to bring in his notion of *reflective equilibrium*. In *Political liberalism*, Rawls articulates reflective equilibrium as a restriction or test of any conception of justice: 'to be acceptable, [it] must accord with our considered convictions, at all levels of generality, on due reflection'⁴⁷. The *considered convictions* are ethical and political judgments that are taken as 'provisional fixed points that it seems any reasonable conception must account for'⁴⁸. Rawls gives, as examples, 'the belief in religious toleration and the rejection of slavery'^{49,50}. Hence, reflective equilibrium requires that a proposed theory of justice at least not deny any of the elements of a particular set of ethical and political judgments.

The objection can now be stated as follows: Among our considered judgements is the judgment that many non-liberal feminist comprehensive conceptions are reasonable. However, Rawls' account of the reasonable implies that these views are unreasonable, as they reject legal egalitarianism and liberal pluralism. Hence, Rawls' account of the reasonable fails the test of reflective equilibrium, and, finally, is therefore unacceptable as a theory of justice.

⁴⁷*Ibid.*, 8

⁴⁸*Op. cit.*

⁴⁹*Op. cit.*

⁵⁰The example of religious toleration is problematic, both in the context of the current discussion and in *Political liberalism* itself, as it is precisely what is at issue: how far must religious toleration go? However, as I have reconstructed Rawls' defence of liberal pluralism, it does not show up as an assumption, and so I do not believe there is any danger of circularity here.

Observe that the third objection to the good faith argument can be given the same form: Among our considered judgments is the judgment that many non-liberal feminist theories should be included in an intersubjectively critical epistemic community. However, the good faith argument implies that these views should not be included, as they reject legal egalitarianism and liberal pluralism. Hence, the good faith argument's account of a diverse epistemological community fails (an appropriately modified version of) the test of reflective equilibrium, and, finally, is therefore unacceptable as an account of intersubjectively critical epistemic communities. This common form is the fourth item to be included on the list of respects in which there is a parallel problem for both Rawls and Longino.

The parallel between Longino and Rawls that I have shown in this paper is not accidental. It is due to a common failing: an inadequate theoretical account of tolerance, inclusion, and the proper extent of pluralism. This failing is more egregious for Longino, as it is completely missing – other than the two sentences cited in §5.1, she never (to my knowledge) gives any account of how much toleration and pluralism is required. Rawls does a better job and, by the final move in my reconstruction, has given clear criteria for the limits of toleration. But this final move restricts tolerance to only liberal comprehensive conceptions, and thereby arguably conflicts with our considered judgments. At the very least, Rawls owes an explanation of why only liberal comprehensive conceptions can be permitted in a stable democratic society, and so why this considered judgment must be amended. More likely, his account must be reworked, so that at least some non-liberal comprehensive conceptions are accommodated. Furthermore, I am optimistic that a solution to this problem of political philosophy could be applied, due to the parallels I have identified here, to the analogous problem with Longino's philosophy of science.

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