EVILS AND DISPOSITIONS

An Honors Fellow Thesis

by

TOBIAS LEE FLATTERY

Submitted to Honors and Undergraduate Research
Texas A&M University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the designation as

HONORS UNDERGRADUATE RESEARCH FELLOW

May 2012

Major: Philosophy

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Approved by:

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ABSTRACT

Evils and Dispositions. (May 2012)

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Privation theorists think that there are no evil entities, that is, that there are no entities which are positively and intrinsically evil. But then what is it that the privation theorist is talking about when citing an evil? If there are no evil entities, then what does she quantify over in statements such as, "There are many evils which people suffer from"? Or, since, after all, a privation is a certain kind of lack, what kinds of properties are such that lacking them would result in an evil? The privation theorist must ontologically account for evils in some way. As a provisional statement, on the account I propose, privative evils are understood in terms of dispositional properties, or powers, which a being that suffers the evil lacks but ought to have: a privative evil is the absence of such dispositions or the prevention of such dispositions from properly manifesting.

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NOMENCLATURE

CB	Causal Basis View of Dispositions
CBA	Causal Basis View of Dispositions – Armstrong
CBP	Causal Basis View of Dispositions – Prior *et al.*
DE	Dispositional View of Privative Evils
Onto-victim	Shorthand for "Ontological Victim of Evil"
Powerty	Shorthand for "Powerful Quality"
PQ	Powerful Qualities View of Dispositions
PT	Privation Theory

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Privation theorists think that there are no evil entities, that is, that there are no entities which are positively and intrinsically evil. But then what is it that the privation theorist is talking about when citing an evil? If there are no evil entities, then what does she quantify over in statements such as, "There are many evils which people suffer from"? Or, since, after all, a privation is a certain kind of lack, what kinds of properties are such that lacking them would result in an evil? The privation theorist must ontologically account for evils in some way. In this paper I propose a sketch of such an ontological accounting for privative evils, focused on (and limited to) physical evils. As a provisional statement, on the account I propose, privative evils are understood in terms of dispositional properties, or powers, which a being[1] that suffers the evil lacks but ought to have[2]: a privative evil is the absence of such dispositions or the prevention of such dispositions from properly manifesting.

First, in Part 1, in order to motivate bothering at all with a privative conception of evils, I briefly describe privation theory, clarifying what I take to be the questions it is intended

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This thesis follows the style of *Analysis*.

1   When generically referring to things that suffer evils, I will use the term "being" instead of a more generic term, since biological beings of one sort or another are typically the subjects of such discourse.
2   "Ought to be had" arguably implies a form of essentialism; that is, "*a* ought to have *P*" means it is essential to *a* to ought to have *P*, even if *a* does not in fact have *P*. Indeed on privation theory, evils arise precisely because something is missing which ought to be there. However, this "ought to" relation, and the essentialism it implies, will be left unargued in this paper.

to answer, as well as the questions that it isn't, as this is helpful for reducing the number

of what I think are common misconceptions about privation theory's scope in the debate

over the problem of evil. In Part 2 I sketch the dispositional view of privative evils (DE),

first on a naive or generic conception of dispositions (leaving the devil in the details, as

it were). Subsequently in Part 3, I consider (DE)'s prospects on two more specific

accounts of dispositions: the causal basis view defended by David Lewis (1997),

Elizabeth Prior, and others (Prior *et al.* 1982); and the powerful qualities view defended

by C.B. Martin (1994, 1996), John Heil (2003, 2005), and Jonathan Jacobs (2011).

CHAPTER II

PRIVATION THEORY

Why care about privation theory (PT)? Before briefly answering that question, let us first say what (PT) is. (PT) claims that any instance of evil is a privation, or lack, in a thing of some good where there ought to be that good. Put differently, (PT) claims that no entity is intrinsically evil; or alternatively again, that there is no real, or positively existing, intrinsic "evilness". All entities are fully "good" insofar as they retain what they have by nature; it is only when they are corrupted by the loss, to some degree or another, of what they ought to have by nature that they can be said to be afflicted with evil. So, the upshot is, in Augustine's words, "Nothing evil exists *in itself*" (Ch. 4) (although this is not to claim that evils in no meaningful sense exist).

So, why care about (PT)? I will offer three reasons one might accept (PT), though I will not defend them. If one is a theist[3], one will be concerned to defend the claim that God is omnipotent. If God is omnipotent, then no entity (excepting God) could have come to exist but by God's creative power. The theist will also be concerned to defend the claim that God is wholly good. But if God is wholly good, whence came evils? If evils are created, positive entities, then it seems God is directly causally responsible for creating evils, which is incompatible with God's being wholly good. Note that this is not a question of God's *justification* for allowing evils; rather, it is a question of God's nature:

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3 Let "theist" here mean one who believes in God, understood as an all-powerful, all-knowing, and perfectly good being.

if something is positively evil—having an intrinsically evil nature—then God cannot be wholly good, for what is not in the source cannot be in the product. So one reason one might accept (PT) is to maintain that God is wholly good. Another reason is to maintain that God is omnipotent, or more specifically that God is the source of all that exists (other than himself). If God is wholly good and omnipotent, than there can be no positively evil entities. If what I have just said is true, then theists will find themselves, at least from these considerations, with a motive to accept (PT).

The third reason one might accept (PT) need not be motivated by theism. This reason is that on a privative view of evils, one's ontology is simplified: not just because there will be one less class of entities in one's ontological catalog, but also because making out what (positive, intrinsically) "evil" entities—or, as I prefer to call them, "bad bits"— would be is a difficult exercise. Consider: what is the *nature* of a bad bit? I suspect that most attempts at an answer would be privative. Other attempts might appeal to personal or collective dislike. The latter seem problematic as general characterizations, even if certain exceptions (e.g. pain) are recalcitrant.

Now that the notion of privative evils is, I hope, clear[4], two points ought to be made before moving on: one clarificatory, one concerning the scope of this paper. First, it has seemed to me that (PT) is sometimes dismissed on the grounds that it fails to accomplish a task which it isn't supposed to accomplish, namely, solving the entire problem of evil

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4   G. Stanley Kane, though critical of privation theory, provides excellent clarifications of some common misconceptions about privation theory in part I of Kane 1980. Also, see Patrick Lee 2000. And, of course, see Augustine, *Handbook on Faith, Hope, and Love*, Ch. 4.

as it is framed in contemporary discussions. I take (PT) to answer metaphysical questions which are conceptually prior to the contemporary debate over the problem of evil, those questions being about the nature of evil and the nature of God. (PT) may answer a metaphysical problem of evil, that is, the question of how evil-by-nature entities *can exist*, given a God who is *by nature* wholly good and omnipotent. But contemporary discussions center more around the question of whether God might be *justified* in permitting evil, questioning as an attribute of God either whole-goodness, on the grounds that a wholly good being would not desire to permit evils occurring; or omnipotence, on the grounds that an omnipotent God could prevent evils from occurring. But these are justificatory questions, not metaphysical questions; and the intended scope of (PT), as I understand it, applies only to the latter. But even if it is objected that answers to the justificatory questions *are* within the scope of (PT)'s claims, and that on *that* score (PT) fails, the baby need not be thrown out with the bathwater. (PT) may still be worth accepting for the reasons I mentioned above, even if (PT) fails to adequately refute contemporary arguments from evil.

I will limit the scope of this paper to discussion of a certain subset of evils. It has become customary to divide evils into two categories: natural evils (or sufferings) and moral evils. I will not here discuss moral evils. Natural evils may be further divided, roughly, into physical evils, and mental and emotional evils[5]. I will here only discuss physical evils.

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5   E.g. Sadness, anxiety, perhaps pain, and so on.

CHAPTER III

EVILS AND DISPOSITIONS I

A generic view of dispositions

What is it that goes missing when a being is afflicted by evil?[6] Properties of that being, it

would seem. But what kinds of properties are these ontological victims of privative evils

(henceforward, *onto-victims*)? Are they non-dispositional[7] properties, such as being red,

being six feet tall, having legs, and so on; or are they dispositional properties, or

powers[8], such as the power to see, to walk, to circulate blood through the veins? In what

follows I propose that powers are the best candidates for playing the role of onto-

victims. That is, I propose that it is the loss of a power, and perhaps the masking or

hindrance of the manifestation of a power, that is the principal source of trouble for a

being afflicted by evil. This is because—and this is a central claim for the sketch of a

dispositional view of privative evils (DE) I am proposing—I take it that a being's powers

are that which enable that being to realize a state of flourishing or well-being[9].

It is true that if certain non-dispositional properties of a being go missing, then some of

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6   Kane's paper usefully dispels some misunderstandings about this, one being that *any* good not had by
    something is an evil (1980).
7   Following Martin, I will opt not to use the term "categorical," in order to avoid implying that
    dispositional properties are non-actual by contrasting them against "categorical," or fully actual,
    properties. I will instead use "non-dispositional" (1996: 74).
8   The terms *disposition* and *power* are often used interchangeably in the literature. I follow this practice,
    though I try to use one term or the other as is most useful or appropriate based on the context of the
    discussion.
9   Indeed, one might take flourishing to be power-term: a being has the power to flourish when that all of
    that being's powers are present and uninhibited.

the being's powers will not manifest properly. Because of this it might be thought that the absences of such non-dispositional properties are the principle source of trouble. However, non-dispositional properties are for powers, and not the other way round. Humans have eyes in order to see; legs in order to walk; and veins with a certain luminal width in order to circulate blood. It is also true that some powers may be thought of as contributing to the maintenance of other non-dispositional properties, that is, some powers are for non-dispositional properties. The power to see, for example, may safeguard many non-dispositional properties of a being, since sight helps the being to avoid harm. Suppose a tragic incident befalls Magoo, a blind man, resulting in the loss of his legs. (Perhaps he unknowingly stumbles onto train tracks.) Certainly if Magoo had sight, he would have been less likely to lose his legs. But why should Magoo care that he has lost his legs? Mainly because, as a result, Magoo can't walk! So the loss of Magoo's legs—and the loss of his property of having legs—has brought about the loss of Magoo's power to walk. This is because, for humans, legs are for walking (among other powers). Thus Magoo's loss of the power to see has also contributed to his loss of the power to walk; and his legs matter insofar as they facilitated his power to walk (among other powers). So, again, it seems that non-dispositional properties are for powers, not the other way round.

There are two ways evils can arise on (DE). One is by the loss of a power, and the other is by the hinderance of a power. (These two ways roughly correspond to the kinds of cases presented by C.B. Martin, Mark Johnston, and Andrew Bird, in their

finkish/altering and masking/antidote counterexamples to conditional analyses of dispositional ascriptions (Bird 1998; Johnston 1992; Martin 1994).) The following case illustrates both kinds of dispositional evils.

A mad warlock-optometrist renders both Isaac and Blake unconscious and transports them to his laboratory. Each is placed in a separate observation room. While Isaac and Blake are still unconscious, the warlock-optometrist magically removes Isaac's eyes, ensuring that Isaac will feel no pain. In fact, Isaac will feel no different at all. The warlock-optometrist then blindfolds Blake's eyes such that Blake will not detect the blindfold. Both Isaac's and Blake's hands are bound behind their respective backs. Soon after, Isaac and Blake awaken. Both are completely blinded and neither knows why. Later, both Isaac and Blake are again rendered unconscious, Isaac's eyes are magically replaced, Blake is un-blindfolded, and both are unbound and returned to where they were kidnapped, where they awaken soon after. They walk home together, discussing their strange day, and their apparently similar experiences.

On (DE), both Isaac and Blake seem to suffer evils. This may seem counter-intuitive, since Isaac (temporarily) lost his eyes while Blake was only blindfolded. But at the time neither could see, and each, as far as he knew, was without functioning eyes. True, Isaac was deprived of what we may call a non-dispositional property, viz. his eyedness, while Blake had only the manifestation of his power to see masked (quite literally); but the effects were the same: neither could manifest the power of sight.

It might be objected that no real harm was done to Blake. But if "harm" means the loss of a property, then the response on (DE) is that the reason Isaac's property-loss did him harm was that it removed his power to see, since eyes are for sight. It might also be objected that Blake's plight was only temporary since the blindfold was removable. But suppose the story is modified slightly. The warlock-optometrist never undoes his deeds: Isaac and Blake are both blinded for the rest of their lives, each still assuming he is without functioning eyes. And Isaac's blindness is no less reversible than Blake's, for at any time the warlock-optometrist can replace Isaac's eyes. Surely each case would be an instance of evil. In the present paper, however, space permits me only to make a start in the investigation of (DE), and so only evils as losses of powers will be discussed.

CHAPTER IV

EVILS AND DISPOSITIONS II

Let us now turn from the generic view of dispositions considered above, to two more specific accounts of dispositions that have been recently defended, and let us see how (DE) fares on each of them.

Causal bases

On the causal basis view (CB), defended by Lewis, Prior, *et al.*, a disposition must have a causal basis; that is, the thing having the disposition must have a set of intrinsic properties which are, along with some attendant circumstances, causally sufficient to bring about the relevant manifestation. Generically, leaving out details about time, (CB) is represented by the following conditional analysis of dispositional ascriptions:

> (CB) Conditional analysis
> x is disposed to manifest M under circumstances C iff when x has some set of intrinsic properties B and C obtains, x M's because both x has B and C obtains.

So that analysis is, for (CB) defenders, how we ascribe, roughly, a disposition D to some object x. We say what x needs to be like and what has to happen to x. We ascribe the disposition fragility to a vase, for example, because the vase has, say, the property atomic-structure-irregularity, and because the vase breaks when rocks are thrown at it (or so we've always observed).

But what *is* a disposition? The above analysis helps us pick out an object that has a

disposition, and tells us what happens when the object has that disposition. But it leaves

unsaid[10] what it is that we are analyzing. (DE)'s claim is that a being suffers an evil when

one of its dispositions has been tampered with, so the "it" in "what it is" requires

consideration.

Lewis remains non-committal on what a disposition is, but mentions two of the options

for (CB): first, there is Armstrong's reductive solution (CBA) in which the disposition is

identified with the state of affairs (hereafter, just "state") of having the non-dispositional

intrinsic properties that are the causal basis (Armstrong 1996). Second, there is Prior *et

al.*'s (1982) solution (CBP) which keeps the dispositional property distinct from the set

of properties which are its causal basis, and claims that the disposition is a higher-level

property, had by the object ascribed with the disposition, but realized by the non-

dispositional properties that are its basis.

Let us make a start at examining how (DE) fares on each of these versions of (CB).

Recall the first of the two ways an evil can arise on (DE), *viz*., disposition loss. Here is a

rough-and-ready analysis of disposition loss on (CB):

> (CB) Disposition loss:
> > x loses disposition D iff x loses one or more b of B.

Joining (DE) with (CBA) would mean that the onto-victim is the state of having the

intrinsic base. This seems problematic for (DE), since it is hard to see how states can be

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10   Indeed, Lewis, in his 1997: 151, intends to leave unsaid what a disposition is.

the powers which ought to be had by a being. It seems wrong to think that token states are required for a being in the way that powers were thought to be. Perhaps one can say that a being ought to be, at any given time, in a state that at once qualifies as an occurrence of each type of state t in a set of state-types T, where these state-types are analogous to the having of the being's various powers. Perhaps. But this option needs further investigation to dispel some of its attendant *prima facie* strangeness.

Joining (DE) with (CBP) has the advantage of providing a clear candidate for the role of onto-victim, namely, the higher-level dispositional property. This disposition, if lost, seems a clear case of evil, since the being ought to have its dispositions or powers. However, as Lewis and Heil point out, if dispositions are higher-level properties, then worries arise about dispositions being either systematically overdetermining or epiphenomenal. In general one wants to say that dispositions play a causal role in their manifestations. But if we do say this, then both the causal basis and its higher-level disposition seem to causally contribute to the manifestation in the same way and to the same degree, and thus the manifestation is causally overdetermined. On the other hand, if we say that it is the causal basis and *not* the higher-level disposition that makes this causal contribution, the disposition is epiphenomenal. This is particularly problematic on (DE), since a guiding premise of (DE) is that non-dispositional properties serve to facilitate dispositions or powers; and so it would be odd for (DE) if powers were impotent. Thus both alternatives for what dispositions are on (CBP) seem problematic for playing the role of onto-victims.

Powerful qualities

C.B. Martin, John Heil, and Jonathan Jacobs have defended a view of dispositions that

puts the causal power in properties themselves, as opposed to defenders of (CB), for

whom properties are inert and causal power lies elsewhere. Jacobs has called the view

wherein properties are both qualitative and dispositional, or powerful, the "powerful

qualities" view (PQ) (2011). I prefer, for both terminological compactness (if at the

expense of adding another term) and ease of distinguishing the understanding of

properties between (CB) and (PQ), to call powerful qualities "powerties." A powerty is a

property both qualitative and powerful, but not a composite. Heil calls this the "identity

view," in which the qualitative and powerful in an intrinsic property are one and the

same: they *are* the property (2005). Jacobs suggests that on the identity view, in order to

avoid charges of compositeness, powerties be understood as *a posteriori* identities.

Jacobs further suggests that, in order to support such an identity claim while maintaining

that powerties are both qualitative and powerful, the powerful nature of powerties is to

be understood in terms of truth-making, where powerties *qua* powers are (at least partial)

truth-makers for the counterfactuals that describe power manifestations (2011). (I will

pass over discussion of the qualitative nature of powerties.) Here is what I take to be an

instance, using a stock example, of a power manifestation on Jacobs's powerties/truth-

maker view:

$$(\forall x)(\forall y)(Fx \wedge Hy \wedge R(x, y)) \;\Box\!\rightarrow\; (C((Fx \wedge Hy \wedge R(x, y)), Bx))$$

Suppose *x* is a vase; *y* is a rock; *F* is the property of being fragile (or, if you like, having

an irregular atomic structure); *H* is the property of being hard; *R* is the relation of collision; *B* is the property of being broken; □→ is the counterfactual conditional operator; and *C* is the causal relation. So, the vase's being fragile, the rock's being hard, and the two colliding, altogether form the antecedent of, or truth-maker for, the counterfactual claim that those things composing the antecedent *would* cause the vase to be broken. Further, this illustrates what on (PQ) has been called the reciprocal dispositionality of powerties, that is, that powers possessed by an object (e.g. the vase) bring about manifestations in partnership with other powerties (e.g. those in the rock), resulting in a causal handshake, as it were, between an object's powerties and other powerties. (Although, obviously, the more powerties that are involved, the more complicated this interaction becomes).

Again we must ask, what is a *power* on (PQ)? In one sense, the powerties are the powers. But, short of whatever singular powers are possessed by whatever particles the physicists tell us are the elementary ones, it seems that powers must be complexes of powerties. Indeed, it is these powerty complexes that, I take it, are the powers on (PQ). More specifically, the *Φ* in "*x*'s power to *Φ* in circumstance-set *C*" is the truth-making powerty complex that *x* contributes to the antecedent of the counterfactual expressing the manifestation of a power. So, in the above example of the vase, the power to be fragile, or to break, just *is F*, or *x*'s property of fragility, since that is all *x* contributes to the antecedent. Obviously, this is very simplified. Consider another, slightly more complicated example, one perhaps more germane to (DE):

$$(\forall x)(\forall y)((P_1 x \wedge P_2 x \wedge \ldots \wedge P_n x) \wedge Wy \wedge R(x, y)) \; \Box \rightarrow$$

$$(C((P_1 x \wedge P_2 x \wedge \ldots \wedge P_n x) \wedge Wy \wedge R(x, y)), Sx))$$

Suppose x is Bob, a human; y is a photon; in $(P_1, P_2, \ldots, P_n)$, P_1 is the property of eyedness, while the other P_i are other properties relevant to human vision; W is a particular wavelength in the range visible to humans; R is the relation of entering; and S is the property of seeing something. In this example, Bob's power to see is construed as his property complex $(P_1, P_2, \ldots, P_n)$, which is Bob's truth-making contribution to the antecedent of the manifestation of his power to see. This makes sense, since if it is Bob's power, it cannot include extrinsic powerties, though the instantiation of extrinsic powerties are required for his power of sight to do its work.

So far, then, a power on (PQ) seems to be the object's truth-making contribution to a counterfactual's antecedent, in the form of some intrinsic powerty complex. This is a virtue of (PQ) with respect to masking/antidote objections generally, since the (PQ) defender may say that a certain power did what it was supposed to do, since the power's partnering with unexpected powerties would be expected to reciprocally manifest some unexpected manifestation. For similar reasons, powers as powerty complexes may also be helpful for (DE) in understanding evils that arise by masking, although that is beyond the scope of the present paper.

However, powers as powerty complexes also seem problematic for (DE), since, although the causal power has clearly been relocated into the natures of the disposition properties

(i.e. the powerties) which are had by beings, it is still unclear how powerty complexes

can be powers suitable for the role of onto-victims. Recall the first of the two ways an

evil can arise on (DE)--disposition loss—and consider the following (PQ)-adjusted

analysis:

(PQ) Disposition loss:
x loses disposition D iff x loses one or more p of P, where P is an intrinsic
powerty-complex of x, and P is x's complete truth-making contribution to
the antecedent of the counterfactual expressing a manifestation of D.

So (DE) needs a D, a power, as an onto-victim, as the thing which when lost brings

about an evil (i.e. for disposition-loss evils). But what makes a powerty complex a

power? More specifically, what individuates the complex, and what unifies it? With

respect to the individuation question, consider: suppose x's power P = powerty complex

$PC_1 = (P_1, P_2, P_3)$ which is causally sufficient, on x's part, to bring about some

manifestation M. But suppose adding P_4 to the complex still results in M. Why isn't $P =$

$PC_2 = (P_1, P_2, P_3, P_4)$? Any answer would seem to appeal to manifestations (i.e. that P_4

isn't required for the desired manifestation). But perhaps this works: if, in all worlds

which agree with respect to the powers endowed to all powerties, any things having

either powerty complex (P_1, P_2, P_3) or (P_1, P_2, P_3, P_4) bring about M, then perhaps P_4

does not belong in P.

With respect to the unification question, the only answers that come to mind are that

either (i) the manifestations or (ii) the power *concept* unifies the powerties in the

complex. (i) seems problematic for the same reasons non-(PQ) views struggle with

dispositional ascriptions by conditional analysis, namely, that circumstances can be

thought of wherein the desired manifestation does not occur, making false those analyses. Adding *ceteris paribus* clauses wherein the circumstances (i.e. the truth-making contributions by entities other than the being said to possess the power) specified are such that M_1 arises and not M_2, seem to fall prey to triviality objections (Martin 1994: 5). Jacobs admits (PQ) could be vulnerable to such a triviality objection if (PQ) was intended as an analysis of power *concepts*; but, he says, (PQ) isn't so intended (2011: 18). This then makes (ii) irrelevant.

This all leaves (DE) in a difficult spot, since it now seems that power *concepts* are what (DE) needs as onto-victims, not simply powerties. (One might suggest that it is enough to say that Bob, say, ought to have properties P_1, P_2, and P_3, since those true-make the desired counterfactuals; and so the loss of one of those properties is a suitable onto-victim. However, one might ask *why* it matters that one of those properties has gone missing? The response is likely to make reference to a power, which brings us back to powers, or power concepts, as the principal onto-victims.)

One might try taking powers as higher-level properties of powerty complexes, similar to (CBP). However, (PQ) defenders will reject this for various reasons, some of which were mentioned in the discussion of (CBP) above. Additionally, Heil thinks that the primary motive for the desire to make dispositions into higher-level properties is the belief that dispositions are "multiply realizable," that is, that a disposition can be a higher-level property of differing sets of lower-level properties. But Heil says this is based on a

confusion: drinking glasses and clay pots are both "fragile," but they break differently. Dispositional predicates like "is fragile" are convenient simplifications, but to allow using them to commit us to higher-level entities lets the "linguistic tale (*sic*) wag the ontological dog" (2005: 347). Rather, Heil suggests, we should understand such predicates to be satisfied by various poverty complexes, so long as we take these predicates to be somewhat loose or flexible, since different poverty complexes will not cause precisely the same manifestations (2003: 89).

Heil's point is a good one, but I am not convinced it need be accepted wholesale. To see why his point may be doubted, consider another (again, somewhat fantastic) case: Bob is walking to the philosophy department, his power to walk manifesting admirably. But trouble befalls Bob: he falls into an open pit left by construction crews, and his legs are damaged so severely that they are amputated later at the hospital. Clearly, Bob has suffered an evil. He has lost his legs, and thus has lost his power to walk. But, thankfully, medical technology has become greatly advanced and techno-surgeons equip Bob with a pair of robo-legs so advanced that all of Bob's leg-relevant powers are restored fully. Now, is Bob, post-accident, suffering an evil? He still has no (human) legs, but his power to walk is restored completely. So it seems like he does have the power to walk, but brought about by different different powerties (i.e. the ones composing his robo-legs). It might be replied that he *does* have the property of leggedness, regardless of the composition of his legs, so his restored power to walk is not a problem. But according to Heil, different poverty complexes PC_1 and PC_2 cannot both give rise to power W

(passing over the question of universals or tropes). I assume that Heil's argument against higher-level properties which are said to be powers (e.g. being fragile, able to walk) would apply similarly to higher-level properties not normally thought of as powers (e.g. leggedness). So, if Bob's old human leg was composed of powerties, say, $P_1, P_2, \ldots, P_n$, where P_1 is having a bone, P_2 is having a muscle, and so on; and if his new robo-leg is composed of powerties $P_{n+1}, P_{n+2}, \ldots, P_{n+o}$, where P_{n+1} is having a titanium exoskeletal shin, P_{n+2} is having a motor, and so on; then it seems that Bob's pre-accident leggedness is not, for Heil, the same as Bob's post-accident leggedness, since leggedness seems to be a higher-level property. And given that the qualitative and powerful in a powerty are identical on (PQ), it seems one can't say that supposed power concepts are disallowed as higher-level properties, while other higher-level properties are allowed (or at least it would need to be argued). Thus it still seems that Bob, both as a legged man before and a robo-legged man afterward, has the power to walk, and is not suffering that evil any longer.[11] But if so, then (DE) seems to require that there exist, in some sense, a power to walk. If the power to walk is, as Heil and Jacobs suggest (and object to), a power concept, then (DE) seems to press one to accept power concepts as real entities.

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11 More can be said here. To only gesture at such a course, one may press the objections against post-accident Bob having W (the power to walk); maybe one can accept power concepts, but say that pre-accident, Bob had W_1, while post-accident, he has W_2, as indiscernible as the powers may appear; and one may further accept that Bob is no longer suffering an evil. But then one may be pressed into explaining the similarity between W_1 and W_2, and postulating higher-order power concepts.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

Theists who find themselves pressed to accept privation theory (on grounds mentioned but not argued in this paper) have reason to think that dispositions, or powers, are the principal entities that, if missing, bring about a physical evils. To support this view, I have sketched a dispositional privation theory of evil (DE) which requires that there be entities, powers, which are suitable for the role I have dubbed as ontological victim of evil (or onto-victim). However, when joining (DE) with both causal basis and powerful qualities views of dispositions or powers, problems arise. This is chiefly because it is difficult to see what any (DE)-suitable power can be on these views, above the level of elementary particles. Such higher-level powers, or power concepts, are looked on with suspicion with respect to the ontological commitments they may incur (even though these are the power concepts deployed in most discussion of dispositions or powers). But (DE) seems to require such powers as real entities. Thus it is worthwhile that more work be done to explore the merits of both (DE) and real powers or power concepts.

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