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The Noble Lie: How to Survive the Kulturkampf

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How to Survive the *Kulturkampf*

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Preface

> *I can only say that, while my own opinions as to ethics do*
> *not satisfy me, other people's satisfy me still less.*
> —Bertrand Russell[1]

The world is in turmoil. Threat of annihilation at our own hands is present on a scale that is unprecedented. Moral codes are now being challenged by the advent of new and powerful ideologies which use innovative modes of propaganda. The *idea* of money is becoming more important than the *idea* of love, and material objects are becoming more important than family connections. I believe that unless humanity changes its course, it will not endure. We must learn to adapt; we must become more sustainable.

This paper is an attempt to address these problems within ethics. It does offer any ultimate solution, but merely points conversation in a new direction. I believe that a failure within ethics today is its lack of active participation in culture. That is not to say that ethicists are not speaking out. One

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[1] *The Philosophy of Bertrand Russell*, Arthur Schilpp, ed. (Evanston, IL: NorthWestern University Press, 1944), 724.

only needs to glance at the works of Peter Singer to see that some are. What I am saying is that ethicists are not speaking loudly enough. One can hardly blame them. Ethics can be hard act to sell when you are competing with ideologies such as consumerism, commercialism, and capitalism. Part of this problem is due to the fact that ethical theories are usually an attempt to promote or envision a utopia. By doing so ethics has lost sight of the fact that the world is headed towards a dystopia. The only way to prevent this is to invigorate the people of the world towards moral ways of living. Only then will a utopian vision, any utopian vision, be possible.

I will not be promoting a specific moral theory in this paper, but will be discussing the promotion of moral theories in general. I believe the most effective way of doing this is to promote the use of a noble lie. I believe that any moral theory needs to envelope itself in a noble lie if it is going to gain any notice in the world today. In order to compete against the innumerable ideologies that are thrown in our direction on a daily basis, the moral theory needs this noble lie to survive.

I will start this paper in "The Goal," by laying out what I believe the goal of moral theories should be, namely adaptivism. In order for an adaptivist moral theory to reach its goal, it will need to compete against all of the other ideologies in the world, which I will discuss in "The Battleground." I believe that a good way of looking at the things I describe in "The Battleground" can be found in the study of memetics which I describe in "The Selfish Meme." "The Untruth of the Crowd" will show how we can use memetics to work on a population of people rather then just an individual. In the final section, "The Lie," I first discuss what a lie is, and then I see if my moral theory fits the requirements of a lie, as well as a noble lie.

The Goal

Adaptivism assumes that human beings are a social species

and require relatively stable social groups in order to thrive. In order to maintain requisite coherence and stability, social groups must have a robust moral order. A robust moral order cannot be sustained under the conditions of widespread nihilistic beliefs. Therefore, nihilism is incompatible with the social conditions conducive to human survival. It is mal-adaptive."
—*Loyal Rue*[2]

Loyal Rue is a professor of religion and philosophy at Luther College of Decoarah, Iowa. Rue is essentially a nihilist, but he does hold fast to adaptivism. Adaptivism at its core is the promotion of the survival of our species. It however comes with the assumption that since we are a social species, we need a robust moral order to remain cohesive and stable. In abandoning a robust moral order, we put the survival of our species is at risk. It is biologically (not ethically) imperative to be adaptive. This is an assumption, as Rue admits, but I believe it is a safe one to make. We are led by our biology to *want* to live, to survive, and to continue the survival of our species; in order to do this we need a robust moral order. In his book, *By the Grace of Guile: the Role of Deception in Natural History and Human Affairs,* he establishes nihilism as 'true'. However, as he says in this quote, widespread belief in nihilism would not sustain a robust moral order, thus making it a mal-adaptive 'truth'. Rue uses nihilism as an example of a mal-adaptive ideology, but I believe this quote would remain true if one were to replace nihilism with many of the prominent ideologies of today, religious fanaticism for example.

I believe adaptivism is the base upon which a moral code should be built. It is not a moral code in itself, nor is its goal derived from morality; it simply provides a strong

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[2] *By The Grace of Guile: The Role of Deception in Natural history and Human Affairs,* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 275.

foundation for a moral code. It agrees with pragmatism in that it places importance on what is practical, but goes a step further by adopting a specific goal. Adaptivism not only asserts that what is practical is what is important but also that what is truly practical is to promote survival of the species. Because we are social creatures this must be done by sustaining a robust moral order. Only then can stable social groups thrive.

I have a problem however; I do not know how to institute adaptivism in a way that attains such a goal. How do I establish the proper amount of authority for adaptivism so that its goal may be attained? For a moral theory to do any work, it needs to extend beyond the individual. In fact, if it is to stay strictly within the standards of adaptivism, it needs to extend far enough to prevent the threat of the dystopic trends that I mentioned in the preface, or at least make an attempt to do so. To understand how we might go about making this work, we need to see what a moral theory based on adaptivism would have to contend with in the world of ideas.

The Battleground

> "Kulturkampf *is a chronic condition of ideological struggle within human social groups. It is a characteristic of the species….The condition is incurable. Nor is a cure even desirable, for it is the vigorous struggle of ideas that provides resources for adaptive change.*"
> —Loyal Rue[3]

I like to think of the *Kulturkampf* that Rue describes as a cacophony of social noise—ideologies from all around the world trying to compete with each other to be heard above the rest. They are by no means all moral ideologies: many

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[3] Rue, 261.

ideologies establish themselves by distinguishing a hated other, such as ideologies that lead to genocide. Many more seek to benefit a few on the backs of the many. In order for any moral ideology to sing a chorus above the chaos it must arm itself with the teeth and claws as sharp as those of all the other ideologies.

I should clarify that I do not agree with universal ideologies, which many ideologies seek to be. That is not to say that I don't want to see ideologies working in agreement, but that I want to specify that an ideology or moral theory that seeks to be a universal dictum is denying the benefits of the adaptive advantage that *Kulturkampf* offers. That being said, I believe moral theories are losing in the *Kulturkampf*, they simply do not speak 'loudly' enough. Ideologies like consumerism are winning because they are more adapted to the cultural environment of today, but they are less adapted to the promotion of life tomorrow. The cultural ecosystem is out of balance. It has fallen in the wake of ideologies that do not have the pragmatic results of the adaptivist goal.

Before we go about trying to establish a way to fight this problem of mal-adaptivism, I think it would be beneficial to understand a bit more about how this *Kulturkampf* works. To understand why there is such a thing as the *Kulturkampf*, and how an idea is to survive it, I have looked to Richard Dawkins.

The Selfish Meme

> *We have the power to defy the selfish genes of our birth and, if necessary, the selfish memes of our indoctrination. We can even discuss ways of deliberately cultivating and nurturing pure, disinterested altruism—something that has no place in nature, something that has never existed before in the whole history of the world. We are built as gene machines and cultured as meme machines, but we have the power to turn against our own creators. We, alone on earth, can rebel against the tyranny of the selfish replicators.*

—Richard Dawkins[4]

Richard Dawkins is a British evolutionary biologist and a militant atheist. In the final chapter of his book, *The Selfish Gene*, he sets up a scientific metaphor for the *Kulturkampf* (although he doesn't use this word) and how it propagates itself. He makes sure to clarify, however, that "the gene will enter my thesis as an analogy, nothing more."[5] The argument in the entirety of the book is that evolution acts mainly on genes. In other words, species survive first and foremost by successfully propagating their genes. In the last chapter he introduces the term 'meme' which is the cultural equivalent of the gene. It is the 'new replicator' that is unique to humans. "Culture transmission is analogous to genetic transmission in that, although basically conservative, it can give rise to a form of evolution."[6]

Dawkins uses the example of religion to develop his idea into real life situations. A religion, such as Christianity is not one single meme, but is made up of a "co-adapted stable set of mutually-assisting memes."[7] The religious hymns, the rituals, the laws, the art, the architecture, and the texts are all individual memes that form a sort of social organism that gains force through the power of its individual parts. Dawkins shows how the idea of *a god* is an extremely powerful and pervading meme in that it has great psychological appeal. It provides a "superficially plausible answer to deep and troubling questions about existence."[8] In the battleground of ideas most memes have no chance against the meme of a god, which has a longer history and a larger 'host population' than almost any other meme.

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[4] *The Selfish Gene*, (Oxford, New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 215.
[5] Dawkins, 205
[6] Dawkins, 203.
[7] Dawkins, 212.
[8] Dawkins, 207.

In *Thought Contagion*, Aaron Lynch develops this theory. He introduces the idea of the 'thought contagion', which is a meme that infects a society. Like a software virus, or a medical virus, thought contagions infect a host and spread, sometimes rapidly.

> The ways that memes transmit fit into seven general patterns called *modes*: the quantity parental, efficency parental, proselytic, preservational, adversative, cognitive, and motivational modes. Each one involves a thought contagion's 'carrier,' or *host*, serving to increase the idea's 'infected' group, or *host population*.[9]

It is important to understand that memes on a global scale are not under our control. There are certain ways that are more effective for propagating a meme, mentioned in the above quote by Lynch, but for the most part it is up to the whim of the masses. He mentions three ways that memes can spread that I think will be beneficial for us later on: motivational, cognitive, and proselytic. An example of motivational transmission would be a tax revolt: the people have a specific reason/motivation to be *infected* by a tax revolt meme, namely that they are being overtaxed. Cognitive transmission occurs when a meme is well founded, so as to better convince new hosts and retain old hosts. However these kinds of memes are not necessarily logical; that the earth moves around the sun was a widely held cognitive meme before Copernicus. Proselytic transmission is the fastest way to spread a meme; these memes have strong psychological appeal. An example would be "Our country is dangerously low on weapons!" This meme strikes fear into the hearts of the hosts, which drives them to infect more hosts quickly.[10]

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[9] Aaron Lynch, *Thought Contagion: How Belief Spreads Through Society*. (NewYork: Harper CollinsPublishers, 1996), 3.
[10] This explanation comes from Lynch, 3.

This view of culture transmission is highly contested. Maurice Bloch is Professor of Anthropology at the London School of Economics, where he writes on a variety of topics. In his book, *A Well-disposed Social Anthropologist's Problems with Memes,* Bloch discusses why memetics is a difficult theory to accept. His first problem is that an evolutionary biologist is doing the work that anthropologists have been doing for centuries. Anthropologists have made this same point in a variety of ways without any knowledge of memetics. Not only have they made this point, but many have come to reject it. Dawkins makes the claim that culture is made of distinguishable bits that have a life of their own, but many in the field of anthropology have come to the conclusion that bits of culture do not spread from one person to the next in a neat little pattern that retains the same structure in the new host as in the original host population.

This is not to say that memetics is not a useful theory for what we are doing here; the study of memetics is still a great way to look at the human species *in general,* which is all that we need. It gives us a vocabulary to work with, and I believe it is easier to see how an ideology can be maladaptive, or how it can survive and thrive in the *Kulturkampf,* if we look at it through the lens of memetics. By seeing how a moral theory would work with memetics, we can see *in general* how that theory might play out in the real world. Memetics then is the testing ground before the moral theory is let loose into the crowded world of the *Kulturkampf.*

The Untruth of the Crowd

> *J: Why the big secret? People are smart, they can handle it.*
> *K: A person is smart. People are dumb, panicky, dangerous animals and you know it.*
> —*Men in Black*[11]

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[11] Barry Sonnenfeld, *Men In Black,* 1997.

It is important to realize that memes work differently on an individual than on a mass of individuals. It is possible to describe the intellectual details of an ethical meme to an individual and, if you do a good enough job, to convince them of its truth. The parental modes that Lynch mentions are examples of this. Parents, in a one-on-one relationship with their children, often pass along memes in this way. To do this to a large 'host population', however, is another matter entirely. I chose the *Men in Black* quotation mainly for humor, but it does have an important message in it; the mentality of the masses has been a topic of discussion that has been emphasized by the advancements of sociology, anthropology, and psychology. More than a hundred years ago, Charles Mackay wrote a book called *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds*, which lays out multiple case studies showing large groups of people who choose to follow one ideology which in hindsight appears ridiculous.

> Every age his its peculiar folly; some scheme, project, or fantasy into which it plunges, spurred on either by the love of gain, the necessity of excitement, or the mere force of imagination. Failing in these, it has some madness, to which it is goaded by political or religious causes, or both combined.[12]

Mackey was writing before World War I, but this quotation is exemplary of that conflict and many of the other mistakes that mankind has made. Although this madness has brought about some of mankind's greatest follies, it is necessary for the *Kulturkampf*. In order for evolution to take place, even on a cultural level, mistakes must happen. Some memes will spread rapidly and then die just as rapidly. However, in the

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[12] Charles Mackay, *Extraordinary Popular Delusions and the Madness of Crowds*. (New York : Harmony Books, 1889), 354.

Kulturkampf of today, we have fallen into a very bloody battle indeed.

Within the greatest follies of humankind, we see the capacity for great evil. During the Second World War, an entire country's mob mentality allowed for the slaughter of over millions of people. This is only one example of the ways in which madness can affect the minds and actions of seemingly good people. Phillip Zimbardo is an American psychologist and a professor emeritus at Stanford University. In his book, *The Lucifer Effect*, he examines the ways in which Situations and Systems can affect the mind so that the disposition of any individual can be changed entirely.

Most of Zimbardo's thought comes from his famous Stanford Prison Experiment, in which twenty-four students where randomly assigned to be guards or prisoners in a mock prison. After only six days, the experiment had to be ended prematurely do to the physiological damage it was having on the students. The guards became sadistic, and the prisoners showed extreme passivity and depression. They had fulfilled their roles so thoroughly that all involved talked of how it no longer felt like an experiment: to them it was a prison. "Systems are the engines that run Situations that create behavioral contexts that influence the human action of those under their control."[13]

The Situation is the prison, but the System "…is more enduring, more widespread, involving extensive networks of people, their expectations, norms, policies, and perhaps, laws."[14] In the case of the Stanford Prison Experiment, the System was the prison system and all the expectations and policies that come with it. The System in general involves the champion memes of the *Kulturkampf*: those voices that ring out the loudest and that have the most

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[13] Philip Zimbardo, *The Lucifer Effect: Understanding How Good People Turn Evil*, (New York: Random House, 2007), 179.
[14] Zimbardo, 179.

control. So if we truly want to promote our adaptivist goal, it is the System that we need to change. Only then will the Situations of the day to day activities of any society coincide with the adaptivist advantage we are trying to promote. The Situations are merely the enactment of those values propagated by the System. "It is the *meaning* that people assign to various components of the Situation that creates its social reality."[15] This meaning is established in the minds of the many by the System in which the Situation is being played out. "A person in the claws of the System just goes along, doing what emerges as the natural way to respond at that time in that place."[16]

The madness of the masses can then be understood through a Situational analysis, and more thoroughly through a look at the Systems which established the authority and meanings of each Situation. Before, I mentioned that memes on a global scale are not under our control. This is due in part to the fact that, "At some point, the System may become an autonomous entity, independent of those who initially started it or even of those in apparent authority within its power structure."[17] So although we have established a few effective ways of propagating a meme within a 'host population,' we must also seek to establish the meme in the System, thus changing the Situations. Only then will our adaptivist moral theory be able to survive and thrive in the *Kulturkampf.*

There are many memes today that are mal-adaptive to the survival of our species but very well adapted for survival in the *Kulturkampf.* These memes have already established themselves within the System, and thus establish the meanings and authority within day to day situations. In order for our adaptive moral theory to survive onslaught of these memes they need something more.

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[15] Zimbardo, 221.
[16] Zimbardo, 180.
[17] Zimbardo, 180.

The Lie

> *The aim of the liar is simply to charm, to delight, to give pleasure. He is the very basis of civilized society.*
> —*Oscar Wilde*[18]

What we need is a lie. We need to construct some kind of moral theory that uses the memes of the most successful social organisms for our own pragmatic ends of adaptivism. We successfully propagate this theory through the use of the modes of thought contagion. The motivation is adaptivism, survival, and elimination of threats of annihilation. The cognitive power comes from the memes that the moral theory chooses to take from other successful social organisms. The proselytic power is the lie that envelopes the moral theory: something that appeals to objective moral truths and convinces people to spread the theory fast and far. This is done by aiming the moral theory at the System which establishes the Situations in people's day to day lives, thus putting the moral theory in action.

This idea might give one pause, and it should. At first it is rather unsettling. The fact that a moral theory should be guised in a lie gives a chill down the spine. This is because we hold the belief that lies are not conducive to a robust moral order. This is wrong. Not only are lies and deception conducive to life and society, they are, in fact, necessary. A shared myth benefits society, as history has shown many times in the evolution of cultures. These memes, which were essentially lies, were successful because they appealed to objective truths. One lies to oneself in a number of ways all the time. A healthy self-esteem is usually motivated by a sense of fantasy—imagining oneself as different than one really is. Within our imaginary lives, which are essentially non-truths,

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[18] *The Decay Of Lying*, (New York: Brentano's, 1905), 27.

we are able to play out realities in which we come out on top. Who hasn't thought of a previous conversation and invented a clever retort to someone's statement after the fact? These fantasies play an important part in having a healthy self-worth, and yet they are intrinsically deceptive.[19]

So far, however, we have no clear definition of what a lie is. When looking at what makes up a lie you soon realize that it is an exceedingly vague term. The term not only relies on some conception of truth, whether objective or subjective, but it also relies on an interpretation of intended meaning. To answer this problem would be to establish what 'to lie' *means* in a given language. However, this looks awfully problematic once you start listing off the synonyms of lies. The synonyms include, but are not limited to:

> evasion, hoax, bias, disingenuousness, misstatement, double-talk, terminological inexactitude, dissimulations, confabulation, dissembled, spin, misrepresentation, manipulation, being hypocritical, distorting, propagandizing, whitewashing, fabricating, faking, being selective with facts, not quite candid, and even reduplicative paramecia.[20]

We can see that even within normal language, 'to lie' is so ambiguous that it looks impossible to define.

Thomas L. Carlson offers the following requirements on lies.

> L5. A person S tells a lie to another person S1 iff: 1. S makes a false statement x to S1, 2. S believes that x is a false or probably false (or, alternatively, S doesn't believe that x is true), 3. S states x in a context in which S thereby warrants the truth of x to S1,

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[19] These examples as well as hundreds of pages worth of others can be found in *By The Grace of Guile*.

[20] All of the above examples are taken from Robert Weissberg, "Mr. Pinocchio Goes to Washington: Lies in Politics," *Social Philosophy & Policy*, 21 no. 1 (2004), 167-201.

and 4. S does not take herself to be not warranting to the truth of what she says to S1.[21]

Put in more basic terms, there are three necessary conditions for being a lie: firstly, the liar cannot believe that the statement in question is true; secondly, lying *does not* require the liar intends to deceive others; lastly, the liar must make a statement that they warrant to be true. I believe that this gives us a fairly clear picture of what lying means. Although the term is still rather vague, we now have something to work with.

So, are we still telling a lie? The first requirement is fulfilled because our goal is to propagate the pragmatic ends of an adaptivist moral theory by taking the popular and pervasive memes from the winners of the *Kulturkampf,* which I have already established are mainly mal-adaptive. Thus, we will be asserting memes that are understood to be in opposition to our hidden goal. In this way we are saying something that we do not believe is true.

The second requirement is just as tricky. Carlson makes the case for his requirement by using an example of a witness who lies in court to protect herself from the defendant (in this case let us say that he is a murderer), but by no means wants the jury to be deceived. Far from it, she would probably be glad to have them see through her lie so that the defendant goes to jail. She goes on record to claim something that she hopes no one will believe. Although she might not intend to deceive anyone in the court, by going on record she does intend to deceive the record. The defendant would have a hard time blaming witness because according to the 'record', she did not state his guilt. This is a similar situation in the case of my moral theory. It is aimed at the

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[21] Thomas L. Carlson, "The Definition of Lying," *Nous* 40, no. 2 (June 2006), 298.

System (instead of the record), which I have clear intent to deceive.

As of right now it is not clear *how much* I intend to deceive. I will discuss this further later in this section. This brings us to the third requirement which I believe is met. I do not want to simply tell a story or a myth. I want people to be convinced of its 'truth' so much so that it affects the System and changes the way in which the Situations in day to day life are played out.

I now have a lie, but I want to go further than that; I want a noble lie. Loyal Rue sets up a standard for this: a noble lie must be political, therapeutic, and aesthetic. I believe the lie I am promoting is intrinsically political in that I am trying to make it as pervasive of a social organism as possible. I believe that the memes out of which this social organism is made fulfill the therapeutic requirement because I will be choosing the most psychologically appealing ones. The last requirement is also met by this last statement, but I believe more needs to be said about how to make a lie aesthetic. To understand how to do this, I have looked to the writings of Leo Strauss.

In *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, Strauss discusses how writers, living in a time of persecution, wrote in a way that on the surface argued for the status quo, but between the lines offered a dissenting ideology that could only be read by careful readers.

> An exoteric book contains than two teachings: a popular teaching of an edifying character, which is in the foreground; and a philosophic teaching concerning the most important subject, which is indicated only between the lines.[22]

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[22] Leo Strauss, *Persecution and the Art of Writing*, (Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1952), 36.

I believe that the persecution that he discusses could be easily equated to the madness of the masses, and the competing voices in the cacophony of the *Kulturkampf*. So a writer creating a moral theory which is guised in the memes necessary for its survival needs to write in a manner that escapes the scrutiny of the society or culture at large; it needs to follow the norms and rules of the System to be a contender against the competing ideologies. The trick is to have the average reader grasp the general reasoning of the argument enough to have them act accordingly, yet allow for a closer reading that gives access to underlying truth of the argument, it's adaptive ends. This kind of writing meets the aesthetic standard of the noble lie. This also gets rid of some of the stigma against lying. The truth can be found, just with great difficulty. This is where the second requirement of a lie, or how much I intend to deceive, comes into play. I allow for a closer reading to reveal the lie. As Sisella Bok says about noble lies in her book *Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life*, "The lies [noble ones] are often seen as necessary merely at one *stage* in the education of the public."[23]

Two problems remain, however, that I feel I need to address, both of which could be lumped under the general heading, "ivory tower." This concept of the noble lie in essence allows for a few to manipulate the thoughts of the many. The first reason this is troubling is that it means that there are a few people out there not fooled by the noble lie. Loyal Rue has this worry, but he believes that if the lie is sufficiently aesthetic that it can fool even those who invented it. "If we can manage to tell a lie that appears to be objectively true, good, and beautiful, then we may be able to hide our nihilistic designs where we cannot find them."[24] Although we, meaning the people putting forth the moral

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[23] Sisella Bok, *Lying: Moral Choice in Public and Private Life*, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), 46.
[24] Rue, 284.

theory, are not completely convinced by the noble lie, our goals are the same as those of the people who are. I believe this would work in a similar way to the day dream; we know it's not true, but it makes us feel better anyways.

This is a danger for our lie though, one that warrants some attention. If we ever successfully convince ourselves of the lie, it breaks the first requirement of the lie. This is an interesting paradox. By convincing ourselves of the lie, it is no longer a lie, and *ipso facto*, we are telling the truth, or at least not telling a lie. This has genuinely intriguing aspects (in that through self-deception one can create a truth). However I do not believe that a person can ever fully convince themselves of their own lie (in the same way that we never fully convince ourselves of our daydreams).

The second worry is a genuine one: how does one justify the few controlling the many? The original adjective that Plato used for describing his noble lie was *"gennaion,"* which means noble in the sense of high-minded or well-bred. In other words, the well-bred intelligent people should lie to the masses in order to control them. I do not wish to justify my lie in this way, however. I believe that within the cacophony of the *Kulturkampf* some voices stick out more than others, but everyone who stands up and says what they believe adds to the noise. It is simply the ones who have enough 'lung power', or those whose ideology is more tempting, that are heard. By telling a noble lie, you are making your moral theory more applicable to the world in which we live. I admit that at times this will result in an egocentric leader abusing the many for his own benefit, but I contend that this is exactly the sort of thing that I am working against because it is essentially mal-adaptive. The goal is not control; the goal is survival.

Conclusion

It remains for the artists, the poets, the novelists, the musicians, the filmmakers, the tricksters, and the masters of illusion to

*winch us toward our salvation by seducing us into an embrace
with a noble lie.*
—Loyal Rue[25]

In the preface, I laid out my reasons for writing this paper. I believe that the human species and the world at large are in trouble and that moral theories, especially those that promote the goals of adaptivism, are losing the *Kulturkampf.* In order to help an adaptivist moral theory survive the *Kulturkampf,* I looked to memetics, a study that I believe can help a moral theory gain the teeth and claws of other successful ideologies. From there I looked at how this moral theory, armed with the concepts provided by memetics can establish itself within the mindset of the masses. I believe it must look at the System in which authority and norms are established in order to have any kind of practical effect on the world. However, to be truly effective I believe that an adaptivist moral theory needs to encase itself within a lie. In the final section I examined what it meant to be a lie and if my concept of an adaptive moral theory, armed with the successful memes of the champions of the *Kulturkampf,* trying to change the System which creates the expectations of the masses, met those requirements. I concluded that it does meet the requirements of a lie, and those of a noble lie as well. By doing all these things I hope to help ethical frameworks, especially those that agree with the adaptivist goal, establish themselves as more than theories to be discussed, but as actual codes for the people of the world to live their lives by, in sustainable ways, in ways that don't result in a dystopia.

If I didn't succeed in convincing you of this argument, I hope that I at least brought to your attention the benefits that noble lies have in contemporary philosophical discussions. I hope that you see that even if you don't believe

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[25] Rue, 279.

in using a noble lie, it is important to realize how successful they might make different ideologies in the *Kulturkampf*. I feel that if I did one thing wrong in this paper, it was that I told you what I was doing; I should have made you read between the lines.

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