Religious Studies (2012) **48**, 221–237 © Cambridge University Press 2011
doi:10.1017/S0034412511000175

The power to make others worship

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Abstract: **Can any being worthy of worship make others worship it? I think not. By way of an analogy to love, I argue that it is perfectly coherent to think that one could be made to worship. However, forcing someone to worship violates their autonomy, not because worship must be freely given, but because forced worship would be inauthentic – much like love earned through potions. For this reason, I argue that one cannot be made to worship a fitting object; forced worship would be unfitting. My principal claim is that no being worthy of worship could exercise the power to make others worship it, since the act of making another worship would necessarily make one unworthy of worship.**

Introduction

Can an omnipotent being have the power to make others worship it fittingly? Another way to phrase the question is to ask: could any being worthy of worship have the power to make others worship it? This question is closely related to another that has recently received some attention by philosophers of religion, namely: can one coherently demand worship?

Campbell Brown and Yujin Nagasawa argue that one cannot justly, or even coherently, demand worship, since worship is something that must be voluntary.[1] Although it is coherent to demand supplication on threat of punishment, it is not clear that one can demand to be loved or worshipped. You can demand a tribute, but you cannot demand a gift. And, surely, worship must be freely given – a gift to God.[2]

I agree that it is difficult to see how one could successfully demand worship, but I take issue with the claim that worship must be given voluntarily. By way of an analogy to love potions, I argue that it is perfectly coherent to think that one could be made to worship, not out of obedience to an order, but through psychological

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034412511000175 Published online by Cambridge University Press

alteration. Although worship does not have to be voluntary, I argue that nothing worthy of worship could exercise the power to make others worship it, since the act of making another worship oneself would necessarily make one unworthy of worship.

Preliminary remarks on worship

Since my argument does not assume any particular claims about the nature of worship, it is unnecessary to provide a formal analysis of the concept. However, it is important to make a few general assumptions explicit before we begin. First, I assume that there is a difference between the attitude and the practice of worship. When one thinks about worship, images of chanting monks, prostrating practitioners, and incense-waving devotees immediately come to mind – that is, one thinks of people engaged in rituals. But by 'worship' I do not have in mind the act of paying tribute. One can pay tribute to fallen soldiers, elders, or benefactors without thereby worshipping them.

By 'worship' I mean a complex of feelings, beliefs, and desires directed towards something, not a devotional act. For ease of expression, I will refer to this complex as an emotion.[3] The act of expressing this emotion is an act of worship. Just as we can distinguish between a friendship and the feelings one has for a friend, we can distinguish between an act of worship and feelings of worship. An act of worship is different from a mere ritual; a genuine act of worship must be sincere. One may behave as if they worship something by engaging in ritual acts that are typically expressive of feelings of worship.[4] But it is not an act of worship unless one has worshipful feelings for the object.

To worship is, at least in part, to feel respect, gratitude, and love. It is, perhaps, best described as a complex of attitudes that includes intense reverence. One cannot worship that which one does not highly revere. Further, on most accounts, to worship is to venerate, to honour, and to love, perhaps unquestioningly – to feel unworthy in the presence of awe-inspiring greatness.[5] Most plausibly, worship is a species of love.[6] Since species inherit the properties of their genus, what applies to love in general applies to worship. Then again, even if worship is not a species of love, it at least involves love. Hence, following others in the literature, I will assume that the discussion of love can help illuminate aspects of worship.

At this point, it is worth noting that the concept of worship appears to be analysable without making reference to autonomy, authenticity, or freedom of the will. What makes an emotion one of worship is not a matter of its aetiology, but of its characterization. In contrast, the authenticity of the emotion will largely be a matter of its causal history.[7] I will defend this claim in greater detail later in the article.

For now, I should also acknowledge that the notion of worship under consideration is characteristic of the Christian ideal of the proper attitude that one should have towards God. It is a perfectly acceptable consequence of this

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rough analysis that if this is not the attitude that Hindus adopt towards gods such as Ganesh, then it would follow that they do not worship Ganesh, despite the fact that they may honour, revere, and pay tribute to him. However, there are clearly other Hindu gods, such as Krishna, that inspire the emotion of worship – this is certainly Arjuna's response to Krishna after the theophany in the eleventh teaching of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. Although a Christian paradigm, the notion of worship under consideration is common enough for this discussion to have general significance.

Not only does the concept of worship under consideration exclude some religious practices, it carries important normative implications: not everything is worthy of worship. The emotion of worship is not fitting of just any object. Once again, it is far beyond the scope of this article to develop a theory of what makes worship appropriate, but I will assume that no significantly morally flawed being is worthy of worship. Hence, if the ancient Greeks worshipped the gods of their mythology, in the sense of worship under consideration here, they were wrong to do so. Given their all too human flaws, no deity in the Greek pantheon is worthy of worship.[8]

With these basic assumptions made explicit, we can proceed. The question I want to consider is whether something could have the power to make others *fittingly* worship it? Admittedly, this question is a bit cumbersome, but the 'fittingly' is important, since not everything is worthy of worship. By 'fittingly' I mean apt or appropriate. To understand the importance of the qualification, we will first need to explore an unqualified version of the same question: can something have the power to make others worship it?

The power to make others worship

Among philosophers of religion, there has recently been some discussion of whether God can coherently command our worship. Many, if not most, theists believe that we are obligated to worship God, precisely because he demands it. Depending on the demarcation scheme, the first, or the first two, of the Ten Commandments explicitly command worship:

> You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an idol, whether in the form of anything that is in heaven, or that is on the earth beneath or that is in the water under the earth. You shall not bow down to them or worship them, for I the Lord your God am a jealous God, punishing children for the iniquity of parents, to the third and fourth generation of those who reject me. (Exodus 20:3–5)

Similarly, from the second page until the page before the last, the Koran repeatedly warns of the dismal fate – 'grievous punishment' (2:5) of 'the Destroying Fire' (104:4) – in store for unbelievers who fail to worship Allah. The Koran could not be

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more emphatic: 'They have incurred God's most inexorable wrath. Ignominious punishment awaits the unbelievers' (2:90).[9]

In every major monotheistic religion, God demands worship.[10] Perhaps, one might argue, the kind of worship that God demands is mere belief, not the emotion complex that I have described as worship.[11] This minimal interpretation might save the traditions from absurdities, but I do not think that it is even slightly plausible. It does not make sense to think that God would be jealous if we merely believed in other gods. Although I might not be able to devote myself to multiple gods, I could certainly believe in hundreds without diminishing my affections for my favourite. Jealousy is only appropriate if the text is referring to something akin to the attitude of worship, roughly, as I describe it. Mere belief does not fit God's jealous response.

Nevertheless, I have no intention of engaging in a three-front exegetical battle, since the actual doctrines of any given religion are largely irrelevant to our more abstract question: can one be made to worship (in the sense of 'worship' described earlier)? Whether or not the God of the Jews, Christians, or Muslims commands this kind of attitude has no bearing on our issue. However, since it is highly plausible to think that the major monotheistic traditions hold that God demands worship, our question has significance for the world's major religious traditions.

Putting doctrine aside, we can address the question at hand: can one coherently command worship? Clearly, one can be intimidated into supplication by a bully, but it is not so clear that one can force the emotion of worship. It seems that the feelings, beliefs, and desires that compose worship can only arise voluntarily. At least, Campbell Brown and Yujin Nagasawa think so:

> Worship is, just like love or admiration, always voluntary. It is logically impossible for one reluctantly or unwillingly to worship anything. One might *pretend* to worship God by following certain religious rituals, but that does not mean that one actually worships God.[12]

Of course, one might have strong second-order desires not to worship, say, because the reigning political regime executes devotees of one's chosen god. With second-order desires not to worship, one may find persistent worshipful attitudes extremely troubling, but continue to worship nonetheless. In this way, one might worship reluctantly. But this is not the sense that Brown and Nagasawa have in mind. They are primarily concerned with whether one could sincerely worship something *because* it commands worship. And they are probably right to conclude that we cannot love or worship something out of mere compliance with a demand.[13] That would be akin to confusing a tax payment with a gift.

Although Brown and Nagasawa might be right that it is psychologically impossible to worship unwillingly, it is not so clear that it is logically impossible. Other than our lack of direct control over our feelings, is there any reason why we

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could not be responsive to such a demand? Is it genuinely incoherent? Must love or worship be voluntary? Must it be a gift? It seems not.

To see why, consider the last stanza of Sappho's poem 'Hymn to Aphrodite'. In this poem Sappho invokes the goddess Aphrodite to help her win the affections of a young woman. In a fantasy of optimism, Sappho imagines the arrival of the goddess, willing to grant her every wish. Aphrodite speaks: 'Who, O | Sappho, is wronging you? | For if she flees, soon she will pursue. | If she refuses gifts, rather she will give them. | If she does not love, soon she will love | even if unwilling'.[14] Perhaps not in the sense that Brown and Nagasawa have in mind, but it is perfectly coherent to think that one could be made to love unwillingly – that is, one could be made willing. It is not logically contradictory to think that one could be made to love romantically or to worship.

Although one might not have the power to make oneself worship another out of mere compliance with a command, it is perfectly conceivable that, like fabled love potions or the will of Aphrodite, something could have the power to impart the feelings, beliefs, and desires that constitute worship in another. By having the ability to affect another's psychological states, something could have the power to make itself the object of another's worship. Certainly a deity with the power to create the universe could have the power to make mere mortals feel intense awe, admiration, respect, love, and most anything else. If it is coherent to think that Aphrodite could make her victims love, then surely God could make anyone worship through 'irresistible grace', or a 'holy rape of the soul'.[15] If so, genuine worship does not have to be voluntary.

W. S. Anglin disagrees. He argues that love, whether of persons or of God, must be freely given, or it is not genuine love:

> Sometimes we may wish we could just press a button and thereby make someone love us. Suppose we did. That person would then perhaps show us great signs of affection and admiration but would they really love us? There is a chance that they might have decided to love us even if we had not pressed the button but, as long as they behave as they do because we did press the button, they do not love us with a genuine love. We have not a lover but a sort of sophisticated appliance whose behavior resembles that of a lover. The love is not 'true love' if the lover is made to love the beloved.[16]

The problem with Anglin's claim is not simply that genuine worship does not have to be voluntary, but that worship cannot be voluntary. More generally, it is hard to see how any kind of love could be voluntary. Sure, one can decide to be kind or generous, but one cannot decide to feel love.[17] We can no more decide to love than we can decide to be hungry. The control we do have is limited and indirect. We can try to arouse our appetites, but we cannot decide to be hungry. Aphrodite is a personification of the source of desire, drawing attention to our pronounced lack of control over our feelings. Without direct control over our feelings, it is hard

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to see how they could ever be voluntary in any meaningful sense. Hence, the reason why it is incoherent to demand love is not because love must be voluntary; precisely the opposite is the case: it is incoherent to demand love, since no one has the ability to comply.[18] And it is precisely for this reason that love cannot be a gift. Thirst is no more a gift to water than love is a gift to the beloved, or worship is a gift to God.[19]

Although I think this conclusion is correct, it is stronger than what is needed to reply to Anglin. A more moderate claim will suffice. Regardless of whether or not we can sometimes love voluntarily, all that matters here is that we do indeed love non-voluntarily. And we do so often. Happily, parents do not have to decide to love their children. They simply do. Their love is non-voluntary, but it is genuine love. We should conclude that it is logically possible that something could have the power to make others love it. Imagine meeting Sappho's lover, who exhibits all the symptoms of being in love and, further, she frequently announces her feelings. We would rightly think that Sappho and her lover were very much in love. This is not mere love-behaviour, as Anglin suggests. If the two lovers attest that the feelings they share are profound, it is not clear why we would need to revise our assessment if we later came to find out that Aphrodite's intervention is what caused the girl to fall for the tenth muse. No, the way one falls in love does not change the fact that one is in love. Generations of readers have not been fundamentally confused by the effects of the love potion featured in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Hence, although a mere demand will not suffice, it is safe to say that one could have the power to make others love. If so, love does not have to be a gift.

But one might object that there is something perverse in this kind of love. In the third act of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, after Puck has misapplied love-in-idleness, Oberon exclaims:

> What have you done? Thou hast mistaken quite
> And laid the love juice on some true-love's sight.
> Of thy misprision must perforce ensue
> Some true-love turned, and not a false turned true.
>
> (3.ii.90–94)

Oberon does not dispute that Lysander now loves Helena and has all but forgotten Hermia; nevertheless, Oberon makes a distinction between true and false love. I will return to this distinction in the next section, but for now, it is important to note that, perverse or not, the way one comes to love another does not change the ultimate response.[20] True or false, it is love either way.

Love and authenticity

Although it is coherent to think that one could be made to love, it seems that something is not quite right about love gained through incantations or heavenly machinations. The difficulty is in saying just where the problem lies.

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Most of us share Oberon's intuition that there is something deficient about love earned through potions.[21] But what exactly is the deficiency?

Perhaps what seems suspect about love garnered from potions is that it is not freely chosen by the lover. Although this is probably close to the correct answer, it is not a completely satisfactory solution. Assuming that people have free will, we do not think that unwilled actions are freely chosen. As noted above, the problem is that love does not appear to be the product of will. Consider romantic love: we typically say that we 'fall' in love, and we do not choose to fall; typically, it just happens to us.[22] One symptom of this is that it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, to offer a clear account of how our love for another is justified.

Although no one should ever ask this question, imagine that your lover – never one to avoid a horribly awkward situation – turns to you and asks, 'Why do you love me?' If you are willing to humour such requests, you might begin by listing a variety of attractive qualities, such as: great sense of humour, sparkling eyes, sharp wit, kind and forgiving nature, insightful, well read, and so on. The problem is that if these properties are what rationally justify your love, it seems that you should 'trade up' if given the chance. That is, if someone else comes along with an even better sense of humour, with an even brighter sparkle in their eyes, with an even sharper wit, etc., then you should trade in your lover for the new, improved model. But we do not think that the objects of our love are fungible; they simply cannot be exchanged like old shoes.[23]

Recognizing this, if one answers the question 'why do you love me?' by saying something along the lines of, 'there is just something special about you', then one has given up trying rationally to justify their love. Montaigne recognized the problem. About his love for La Boétie, he says: 'If you press me to tell why I loved him, I feel that this cannot be expressed, except by answering: Because it was he, because it was I'.[24] Similar considerations have led many philosophers to conclude that although we might be able to explain how we came to love some particular person, we cannot rationally justify our love.[25] Such a conclusion may make us uncomfortable at first, but it is not altogether intolerable.[26]

We might not be able to say that love should always be freely chosen, but we still might want to say that love should be authentic – a genuine outgrowth of oneself, one's major commitments, and goals. For one's values and commitments to be authentic, they must, in some important sense, be one's own. Given our immediate purposes, we do not need to decide on the correct theory of authenticity; our pre-reflective understanding of the concept will be adequate. Regardless of our precise notion of authenticity, it is clear that love earned through potions and spells would be inauthentic, or 'false' as Oberon calls it.[27] And we rightfully value authenticity in love.

Consider two worlds: the first world is much like our own. People fall in love and decide to pursue the objects of their love without divine intervention. The second world differs in one crucial way: rather than allowing people to fall in love with

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whomever they please, a panel of cupids makes the decision for them. Immediately following the verdict of the cupids, a love-laced arrow is fired, making the target fall in love with whomever the cupids decide. Overall, the amount of happiness in the two worlds is the same. Perhaps the second world is even more joyful, since the wise cupids might make better matchmakers than the normal mechanisms of our fallible human hearts. Nevertheless, my intuitions are clear: the first world is a far better place in which to live. It is a better world. Even if the cupids always make the same decision, deciding on the same object of love that their first-world counterparts would have selected, the second world is less desirable.

However, intuitions diverge when the amount of happiness in the two worlds becomes pronounced. If the cupids were perfect match-makers whose every decision leads to a 'match made in heaven', and if the normal mechanisms of our fallible human hearts were even worse than they appear to be, the cupidian world would be a far happier place. It would be so much happier that some would indeed welcome the pluck of Cupid's bow.[28]

I will return to this suggestion in the next section. But for now, it is important to note that we judge the first world, the world without paternalistic cupidian interference, as better than the second, at least when both are at roughly the same level of happiness. This shows that we value authenticity in love.[29] And the value of authenticity arises for worship just as it does for love.[30]

The power to make others worship fittingly

We can now return to the question I asked at the beginning of the article: can something have the power to make others fittingly worship it? There are two general ways in which worship could be problematic. First, it could have been caused by suspect means – that is, the way in which a person comes to worship could be problematic. Second, one might mean that worship would be unfitting if the object worshipped were not worthy of worship; it would be inapt or inappropriate. I have in mind the latter. I will argue that forced worship would necessarily be unfitting of its object. To see why, it is best to first make it clear that those made to worship are inauthentic.

Forced worship and authenticity

I suspect that there will be little disagreement around the claim that those who are made to worship by a powerful, mind-altering force, are inauthentic in their worship. But, at this point, it might be useful to explain why a bit more explicitly. Most plausibly, the feelings, desires, and beliefs that comprise worship are inauthentic if they are formed by autonomy-subverting mechanisms or imposed by manipulative outside forces. Any plausible theory of authenticity would exclude worship gained through hypnotism, potions, or the will of a deity.

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Both of the main types of theories of authenticity – end-state and process theories – concur. A brief consideration of each will be helpful.[31]

End-state theories claim that the authenticity of a desire, for instance, can be determined by the total state of one's desires at any given time. One popular style of end-state theory evaluates the authenticity of a desire in reference to some higher-order desires – the desire to desire. On this model, roughly, a desire is authentic only if one desires to have that desire. Harry Frankfurt's recent formulation of this view holds that a desire is authentic for a subject if and only if the subject endorses it wholeheartedly.[32] This theory suffers from a serious problem, namely, it seems that one's higher-order desires can also be inauthentic. Similarly, one can be relieved of conflicting desires and thereby become wholehearted in inauthentic ways. For our purposes, we need not go into any more detail. The important thing to note is that forced worship would be inauthentic on any plausible end-state theory.

To be effective, forced worship would probably have to rule out second-order desires not to desire to worship. The compelling force would have to eliminate conflict in order to achieve wholehearted endorsement. Hence, the person's higher-order evaluations would be as inauthentic as her first-order desires. Forced worship is different from mere prodding. Merely giving someone an impulse to worship, a religious feeling of sorts, is not enough to make that person worship. To make someone worship, a huge suite of first-order desires would have to be installed. For these desires to be effective, it would be necessary to rule out second-order conflicts that might quash first-order desires. If second-order doubts were not quashed, the person made to worship would probably cease to worship, or at least remain conflicted. And if a person continues to love a deity despite second-order desires to be rid of such feelings, her worship would be inauthentic according to most plausible end-state theories. She would have a higher-order desire not to desire to worship.

Alternatively, if a powerful, mind-altering force removed one's doubts, we would not want to call the resulting worship authentic. Wholehearted or not, one's higher-order assessment would be just as inauthentic as one's first-order desires. Either way, forced worship is inauthentic worship.[33] If end-state accounts of authenticity say otherwise, so much for end-state accounts.

Unlike end-state theories, process accounts of authenticity hold that what makes a desire authentic is not merely its relation to other desires, but the process through which one formed the desire. Desires formed through manipulative processes such as brainwashing, hypnotism, and indoctrination are suspect.[34] If someone comes to worship through manipulative processes, such as hypnotism, brainwashing, or the mind-altering will of a deity, we would be rightfully reluctant to call her worship authentic. Any plausible process-style account of authenticity would classify forced worship as inauthentic. Worship formed through autonomy-subverting, manipulative processes is not authentic worship.

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Although something could have the power to make others worship it, I hope it is clear that forced worship would be inauthentic. And, as with forced love, inauthentic worship is not as desirable as authentic worship. But this does not yet answer my principal question. Most plausibly, worship caused by the mind-altering abilities of a powerful agent might be less desirable than voluntary, authentic worship, but this does not show that such worship would be unfitting.[35]

Made to worship: two reasons why

In order to determine if something could ever make someone worship it fittingly, we need to consider the various reasons why one might force worship on another. Something with the power to do so might make others worship it for two different types of reasons. First, it might make others worship it primarily out of a desire to be worshipped. Alternatively, something might make someone worship it because worshipping benefits the person or others affected by that person. The options are roughly that a deity could make another person worship it either for its own benefit or for the benefit of person who is doing the worshipping.[36]

Case one: for the object of worship

The first case – where one is made to worship for the benefit of the object of worship – could never be fitting. It is never worth denying a person's autonomy for the sake of a deity. To see why, we merely need to ask, what kind of being would want to be worshipped by coercion? It is clear: if something acts on the desire to make others worship it, then its moral character is equivalent to a megalomaniac. But power-hungry tyrants are not worthy of worship, no matter how strong they might be. Necessarily, the mere desire to make someone worship you for *your* benefit, much less actually doing so, would make you unworthy of worship. Hence, nothing can have the power to make others worship it fittingly for its own sake.

One might object that an omnipotent, perfectly benevolent, creator of everything could indeed make others worship it fittingly for its own sake. A perfect creator god would rightly believe that it ought to be worshipped. Given its infallible knowledge, it ought to be able to clue others in to the fact that it should indeed be worshipped. Consider an analogy: imagine that you discovered the cure for cancer, but through either negligence or some simple mistake others do not properly attribute the discovery to you. Everyone in the world thinks that Quentin Tarantino developed the cure. Suppose a genie offers you a magic button which will correct this global epistemic defect. If you decide to press the button, everyone in the world will correctly come to believe that you cured cancer. Certainly, the objection continues, you would be justified in pressing the button. Even more so, a perfect creator god would be justified in making everyone believe

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that it ought to be worshipped. Hence, one could be made to worship fittingly for the sake of the object of worship.

In response, a few comments are in order. First, it is not altogether clear that it would be justified to press the genie's button. To see why, we should ask: why is it that the misattribution cannot be corrected through non-autonomy-subverting mechanisms, such as the proffering of evidence? And more important, even if the button is the only possible means, what precisely is the good that results from the correction that would justify the subversion of autonomy? It is not compelling to say that we should give credit where credit is due. Certainly credit is a prima facie good, but it does not clearly trump the value of autonomy. How could credit be so important?

The problem is even more pronounced when it comes to worship. Merely making someone believe that a deity ought to be worshipped is not the same thing as making a person worship, at least not in the robust sense that I described in the introduction. Making someone worship would be far more invasive than merely instilling a belief. Given the extent of the necessary psychological alteration, we need some clear account of the benefit. What precisely is the good achieved in the process? How could a deity worthy of worship benefit from worship through such means? More importantly, why would it even want to be worshipped by non-autonomous subjects? Such a desire is megalomaniacal. The defender of this approach has some explaining to do. In absence of a plausible reason, it is safe to assume that if one is to be made to worship fittingly, it cannot be for the benefit of the worshipped.

Case two: for the one who worships

The second case – where one is made to worship for one's own good – is more complicated. For the sake of argument, assume that some people might be better off if they worshipped. Perhaps they might be happier, less troubled by existential concerns, and have a greater sense of purpose. Accordingly, some consequentialists might argue that if forced worship increases the well-being of the one made to worship, then it would plausibly be morally permissible to make her worship. Hence, forcing another to worship would not morally compromise the object of worship. In such a case, the object of worship would not necessarily be unworthy of worship. Therefore, worship could be fitting of a deity who makes others worship it for their own good.

There are two general ways in which one might respond to the suggestion that forced worship, which involves a clear violation of autonomy, could be justified if it results in a compensatory increase in well-being. First, one might deny that inauthentic happiness contributes to well-being. Second, one might deny that the putative compensatory benefits justify the particular violation. I will consider both.

The suggestion that one could be made to worship for one's own good is problematic. One problem is that it is not clear that inauthentic happiness

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genuinely increases one's well-being. We do not want to say that the oppressed are living good lives, even if they have adopted the values of their oppressors. Self-assessment, or subjective happiness, is highly vulnerable to influence by social conditioning. Hence, subjective happiness appears to be too malleable to function as a reliable measure of well-being. Many reject a general theory of well-being called *mental statism* for just this reason. Mental statism holds that the sole bearers of intrinsic prudential value are mental states.[37] One of the principal problems for mental statism is that it mistakenly seems to count inauthentic happiness as prudentially valuable.[38]

In response to worries about the vulnerability of happiness to social conditioning, L. W. Sumner builds an autonomy condition into his theory of well-being. He argues that welfare is authentic happiness – an informed and autonomous self-assessment of one's life.[39] Any similar theory of well-being would probably not consider happiness brought via inauthentic worship as genuinely contributing to one's well-being. I do not mean to endorse Sumner's theory, but merely show that the claim that one could be made better off through forced worship is extremely controversial.

I do not want to rest my defence on a rejection of mental statism. In fact, I think that mental statism is a plausible theory of well-being. But I do not think that mental statism lends support to the claim that one could be forced to worship properly for one's own sake. If mental statism is the correct theory of well-being, then autonomy has little to do with welfare. However, this does not show that autonomy does not matter morally, even for consequentialists. Let me briefly explain why.

If we do accept mental statism about well-being, then we will probably have to acknowledge that other forms of value besides welfare are morally relevant.[40] For instance, it seems that deception is bad even if the deceived never find out. If so, then one must either reject mental statism or reject *welfarism*. Welfarism is the view that the only source of moral obligation is well-being.[41] If you accept welfarism, then a narrow theory of well-being, such as mental statism, becomes highly counterintuitive. This is because, if you accept welfarism and a narrow theory of well-being, you have to jump through hoops to explain why deception is bad. Accordingly, a narrow theory of well-being is far more plausible if we reject welfarism and acknowledge that more than welfare counts morally. Clearly, this is not the place to decide the issue. The important thing to note is that even if we accept a consequentialist moral framework, we have no clear reason to think that violations of autonomy are not morally significant.

Although consequentialists should consider autonomy as a morally relevant form of value, it is plausible that it might sometimes be permissible to deny people their autonomy in egregious ways, if the benefits are clear and compelling.[42] In order to see if one could be made to worship for one's benefit, we need to figure out exactly how one could benefit from worshipping. Again, perhaps one might be

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happier, less troubled by existential concerns, and have a greater sense of purpose if one felt genuine worship. The principal difficulty with this suggestion is that there is no clear reason why the putative benefits of worship could not be achieved by other means. If the same goods could be had without worship, then we have no reason to think that forced worship could be motivated by anything but a desire to be worshipped. Hence, unless the goods can only be achieved by worship, we have no reason to think that the situation is morally different from the first case, where someone is made to worship for the sake of the object of worship.

The underlying problem is that there is not a compelling reason why one would have to be made to worship to reap the putative benefits of worship. Certainly it could not be to prevent eternal damnation, since any god that would torture those whom it did not make worship and reward those that it did make worship would be a twisted sadist, no more worthy of worship than the most wicked devil imaginable. On the other hand, if mere happiness is the intended result, a god could simply administer a divine form of Prozac. If a god could make people worship it, then it could just as easily make them happy. Worship is not necessary for blind happiness, contentment, general life satisfaction, or even a pleasant disposition. Wider societal considerations fare no better as a possible justification: worship is not the quickest route to social cohesion or group harmony. Hence, I am simply at a loss for any plausible account of the benefits that could only be had by worship.

Without a clear benefit that would justify coerced worship, I am forced to conclude that any act of imposing worship on another would make the object unworthy of worship.[43] If this is right, then it is logically impossible to make someone appropriately worship you. This is simply not a power the worshippable can possess. Something could have the power to make others worship it, but by exercising that power it would prove itself unworthy of worship. Hence, any such worship would be mistaken or unfitting. Since one cannot have a power that logically cannot be exercised, it is safe to say that one cannot have the power to make others fittingly worship it.[44]

Conclusion

In this article, I ask a new question about worship: can any being worthy of worship make others worship it? By way of an analogy to love, I argue that it is perfectly coherent to think that one could be made to worship. However, forced worship would be undesirable in the same way that love caused by a potion is undesirable – both would be inauthentic. Forced worship would require a subversion of autonomy. For this reason, I argue that one cannot be made to worship fittingly. My principal claim is that no being worthy of worship could exercise the power to make others worship it, since forcing worship would necessarily make it unworthy of worship.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034412511000175 Published online by Cambridge University Press

I argue that forced worship cannot be justified, neither for the sake of the object of worship nor for the sake of the one worshipping. Making someone worship violates that person's autonomy. And we lack a compelling justification for the violation of autonomy, especially since worship could be elicited through non-autonomy-subverting means. More importantly, any being desirous of non-autonomous worship is a megalomaniac unworthy of respect, much less worship. Alternatively, there is no clear reason why someone would need to be made to worship for her own sake. Any of the relevant, putative prudential goods to be had from worshipping could be achieved through more direct means, such as divine Prozac. Hence, although one can be made to worship, one cannot be made to worship fittingly.[45]

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Notes

1. Brown and Nagasawa (2005).
2. This depends on whether we have libertarian free will and, if so, whether love or worship is ever freely given. Anglin (1991, 23), Ekstrom (2000, 12), Kaye (2004), Kane (1998, 88), Strawson (2010, 270–272), and Wolf (1993) argue that without free will, love would be deficient. For counter-arguments, see Pereboom (1997, 271) and (2001, 202–204), Sommers (2007, 331–333), and, with some qualification, Arpaly (2006, ch. 2).
3. Oakley (1992) defends a theory of the emotions that incorporates belief, desire, and affect.
4. I do not mean to imply that the emotion of worship is exhaustively described by its felt qualities. Following others in the literature, I say 'feeling' to draw a contrast with ritual practices, but it is important to note that this is in some ways misleading. Certainly worship is more than a mere sensation. Worship is not merely occasional, as are many other emotions.
5. Bayne and Nagasawa (2006) provide a more elaborate description of the kind of worship that I have briefly characterized. Rudolph Otto's description of the experience of the 'numinous' is similar, but not identical to what I am calling worship. Otto describes an encounter with a *mysterium tremendum* (tremendous mystery). The experience is one of fascination and awe directed at an overpowering, otherness with tremendous energy. It involves feelings of unease, humility, and fascination. The experience Otto describes is what it might be like to think that you are in the presence of a being worthy of worship. But one can worship something without having such an experience.

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6. This is not a simple matter. If love requires that we care about the beloved, it is hard to see how we could love God. The difficulty is describing how one can care about a perfect being, if perfection implies invulnerability and immutability. Wolterstorff (1988) addresses the inverse problem.
7. I will discuss both historical and structural theories of authenticity later in the paper.
8. Swinburne (1993, ch. 15) presents a fairly standard Christian view of what would make something worthy of worship. He argues that it requires perfection. Only an omniscient, omnipotent, morally perfect, holy, supreme benefactor would be worthy of worship.
9. The Koran (2003).
10. We also find the command to worship in the New Testament: Matthew 4:10 and Revelation 19:10, 22:9.
11. I am making reference to the theory that love is an emotion complex, a view proposed by Baier (1991) and Roberts (1988). I do not want to endorse this view of love, since I think that love is likely to be more than a complex of emotions. It also involves a suite of desires and beliefs that cannot be reduced to the cause or consequence of emotions.
12. Brown and Nagasawa (2005, 142).
13. Blaauw (2005) takes issue with Brown and Nagasawa's claim that one could not come to worship something out of compliance with a demand. He argues that one could put oneself in situations conducive to worship, and, perhaps, eventually come to worship. Although we lack direct control, we might have sufficient indirect control of our attitudes purposely to induce worship. Matthews (1980) makes a similar suggestion regarding the role ritual can play in enhancing religious feeling.
14. Sappho (2006).
15. I do not want to make any claims about the proper interpretation of Calvinist doctrine. I have seen the phrase attributed to Jonathan Edwards, but it appears to be the coinage of R. C. Sproul.
16. Anglin (1991, 20).
17. For instance, Murdoch (2010, 26) gives an example of a person who decides to try to change her evaluative stance toward her daughter-in-law.
18. Kant (1958, 67; sec. 13) agrees: 'Love out of inclination cannot be commanded'. Taylor (2000, 314), concurs: 'Love, as a feeling, cannot be commanded, even by God, simply because it is not up to anyone at any given moment how he feels about a neighbor or anything else'. Sankowski (1978) emphasizes our limited, indirect control. As does Liao (2007).
19. There is a sense in which one can give love, just as one can give away something that one finds by chance. However, the claim here is that loving, in the sense of feeling love, cannot be a gift. With the button-pressing example, Anglin focuses on the genesis of love. This is what cannot be a gift.
20. *The Romance of Tristan and Iseult*, as retold by Joseph Bedier, provides an equally wonderful example of love caused by potions.
21. It is likely that Oberon is drawing a contrast between reciprocated and non-reciprocated love. But his response gives us pause to consider the other ways in which love caused by potions might be deficient.
22. Solomon (2001) disputes this claim. He argues that falling in love is a process, in which, at each step, or at least the early ones, lovers can decide whether or not to continue the descent. For two recent defences of the view that there are normative reasons for love, see Keller (2000) and Kolodny (2003).
23. Kraut (1986) argues that love is historical, directed at a particular individual. Grau (2006) further develops the notion of irreplaceable value. For an additional consideration of irreplaceability, see Badhwar (1989).
24. Montaigne (1991).
25. Worship is different from love in this respect. We do not fall in love with God. And many think that worship can be rationally justified. The attributes of God warrant worship.
26. For an excellent discussion of the problem, see Thomas (1991). Helm (2005) also provides a good summary. For an influential presentation of the problem, see Gregory Vlastos (1989).
27. It exceeds the scope of the current discussion to say more about autonomy and authenticity. Frankfurt's work on authenticity and love is particularly insightful. See Frankfurt (1999) and (2004).
28. The same issue arises for free-will theodicies: the value of freedom must outweigh the evils that it makes possible.
29. My argument assumes that we can develop a satisfactory notion of authenticity in love. Schopenhauer, for instance, thinks that love is nature's way of tricking us into mating. It is never authentic. Of course, the sceptics may prevail, but I cannot take up their challenge here.

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30. Rachels (1997) makes a far different argument against worship based on the value of autonomy. He argues that to worship something would be to acknowledge its absolute authority. This would require giving up one's moral autonomy, which is something we should never do. Hence, we should never worship anything.
31. Christman (1991) makes this distinction in regard to theories of autonomy.
32. Frankfurt (1998).
33. This problem is closely related to Wolf's objection to 'deep self' theories of free will.
34. See Christman (1991) for an important development of the process view.
35. If worship can be freely given, then forced worship would lack the additional value of a gift. Nevertheless, this does not give us reason to think that forced worship would not be genuine, in the sense of real, worship.
36. I am ignoring the possibility that some powerful creature might make some people worship some other god, since allowing this to happen – not reversing the results – seems identical in all morally relevant ways.
37. Hedonism, for instance, is a specific type of mental statism that counts only the mental states of pleasure and pain. Parfit (1984) and Wolf (1997) reverse this distinction. They seem to hold that all forms of mental statism are forms of hedonism.
38. Nozick's (1974, 42-45) 'Experience Machine', Nagel's (1979) 'Deceived Businessman', Nagel's (1979) 'Contented Infant', Mill's (2002) 'Pig', and Nozick's (1997) 'Mongolian Pornographer' are the most pressing thought experiments presented in opposition to mental statism.
39. Sumner (1996, 167-171).
40. Kagan (1992) draws a similar conclusion.
41. For an excellent overview of the arguments for and against welfarism, see Sumner (1996, ch. 7). See also Keller (2008).
42. On Kantian grounds it would probably never be justified, since it is not clear that anyone could consent to being made to worship.
43. At least the burden of proof does not rest with me.
44. To put it in other terms: although some being may be powerful enough to make others worship it, if it is worthy of worship it could not be capable of doing so. Morris (2000, 66-73) develops a distinction between powers and capabilities.
45. I thank Heidi Bollich, Noël Carroll, Lester Hunt, and Christy Mag Uidhir for commenting on an earlier draft of this article. I also thank an anonymous reviewer and Robin Le Poidevin for helpful feedback.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S0034412511000175 Published online by Cambridge University Press