Tolstoy intends for a property to be ascribed. Tolstoy has the false belief that there is a pre-existent character he is writing about. Thus, NOTHING NEW does not predict that nothing new is made in this example. NOTHING NEW is perfectly consistent with Tolstoy (inadvertently) creating Anna.[7,8]

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1. Brock, however, misinterprets my principle NOTHING NEW, as I will explain in Section IV.
2. Van Inwagen (1990) defends this metaphysical view.
3. Evnine (2016, 144) independently makes this point.
4. Brock (2018, 93) labels these questions "Identity" and "Plenitude." Identity asks, "Under what conditions is a fictional object *x* identical to a fictional object *y*?" Plenitude asks, "How abundant is the domain of fictional objects? How many fictional objects are there?"
5. It is a controversial issue. Judith Jarvis Thomson might think my piano bench is, or constitutes, a table. She claims we may "make a desk out of a table" sim-ply by using it differently (1998, 164). Paul Bloom, on the other hand, might deny my piano bench is a table. He claims that sitting on a desk does not turn it into a chair (1996, 2).
6. The principle is inspired by a similar suggestion made by Amie Thomasson (1999, 67–69).
7. There is a further question about whether Anna in this example is a fictional character or a *mythical* fictional character, but that is beside the point; whatever she is, she is not a *preexistent* fictional character. See Salmon (2002) for discussion of mythical objects.
8. I would like to thank Stuart Brock and Elliot Paul for helpful comments and discussion.

Psychologism about Artistic Plans: A Response to Rohrbaugh

Whether a given artwork is complete or remains unfinished is a matter of central importance to the critical and appreciative aspects of our engagement with that artwork. Guy Rohrbaugh (2017) has raised a worry for what he takes to be the dominant view in debates about completion, which he calls *psychologism*. In light of this worry—which I here call *Rohrbaugh's Regress*—Rohrbaugh has offered a new account of what it takes for a work to be complete, according to which completion is a matter of fit with an *artistic plan*. I contend, however, that his account is, ultimately, another version of psychologism—and, furthermore, that it still faces Rohrbaugh's Regress to no less of an extent than its rivals.

The plan is as follows. First, I recap the essentials of Rohrbaugh's Regress. Second, I present the essentials of Rohrbaugh's new account. Third, I argue that Rohrbaugh's new account collapses into a version of psychologism, inheriting the very same worries. Finally, I offer some remarks on how the possible inevitability of these worries might inform future debates about completion.

I. ROHRBAUGH'S REGRESS

Rohrbaugh begins by pointing out that *psychologism* about (*genetic*, rather than *aesthetic*) artwork completion has become something of the received view in the literature on the topic.[1] He characterizes the view as follows:

Psychologism: "Whether an artwork is complete or unfinished is, at bottom, a question about the psychology of the artist or artists; it is not a quality of the work

itself, but a quality of the artist's regard for, or decisions concerning, his or her work." (131)[2]

Friends of psychologism have options in that this characterization is really more of a family of related views than a fully specified view in itself. On one way of filling in the details, we might understand psychologism in terms of artists' judgments (see, e.g., Livingston 1999 and Gover 2015). Even then, we might further divide into camps based on whether we take those judgments to be *cognitive* or *noncognitive*. On another way of handling things, we might understand psychologism in terms of artists' dispositions to refrain from working and the grounds of those dispositions, even in the absence of any explicit judgments made by those artists (see, e.g., Trogdon and Livingston 2014, 2015).

These differences prompt friends of psychologism to debate over the *best* version of the view, all the while working with a shared background assumption that the truth of psychologism itself, broadly construed, is a matter we can treat as more or less settled. By Rohrbaugh's lights, however, these further debates are unnecessary, because this shared background assumption is *not* a settled matter. Much to the contrary: psychologism, even construed broadly and despite initial intuitive appeal, quickly reveals itself to be a nonstarter.

Rohrbaugh contends that the acceptance of psychologism does violence to our understanding of the first-person perspective of artists. Consider a case in which I am a self-reflecting songwriter and I ask myself whether one of my songs is complete. According to the *cognitive judgment* version of psychologism, this amounts to me asking myself whether I have made a judgment that my song is complete. But this, in turn, amounts to me asking whether I have made a judgment that I have made a judgment that my song is complete—that is, whether I have made a judgment that I have made a judgment that I have made a judgment that my song is complete! And so on, leading us into a vicious regress—which we can call *Rohrbaugh's Regress*. So much, then, for the cognitive judgment version of psychologism.

Suppose that we instead opt for the *noncognitive judgment* or *disposition* version of psychologism. If we opt for the former, my question now amounts to me asking whether I have really made some kind of noncognitive judgment of completion instead of merely having made a decision to stop working. If we opt for the latter, my question now amounts to me asking whether I have really adopted a *completion* disposition, instead of having adopted a disposition to stop working. In either case, Rohrbaugh argues, settling these matters will end up requiring an appeal to a cognitive judgment of completeness. Such judgments are thereby inevitable for any friend of psychologism (compare Gover 2015, 458). But, as before, once we appeal to such cognitive judgments, we find ourselves faced with Rohrbaugh's Regress. So much, then, for psychologism—even broadly construed.

Based on these considerations, Rohrbaugh concludes that, if we want to avoid doing violence to our understanding of the first-person perspective of artists—and surely we should!—it would be best to explore genuine alternatives to psychologism.

II. ARTISTIC PLANS

This takes us to Rohrbaugh's positive proposal: we adopt the notion of an *artistic plan*, "a kind of intention, the content of which is a conception of what one is trying to make, do, or bring about, one which guides one's actions and by which one might judge whether one is finished" (137). The plan sets a set of standards and goals, and when and only when a work meets those standards and goals is it complete. And whether the work meets them is, ultimately, a fact about the *work*, rather than about the artist's psychology.

The picture is something like the following. Upon taking on a given songwriting project, I form an artistic plan. (I might not recognize that this is what I do, but this is, upon critical reflection, the best way to describe what I do.) This plan—a conception of mine—amounts to the goals I set for the songwriting project and the standards (perhaps idiosyncratic to me) for when those goals are met. Of course, the plan might be vague, indeterminate, tentative—but, really, we might expect that many or most artistic plans are. So, ultimately, this all amounts to me saying or thinking something along the lines of "*this* is where I want to go with this song," where the 'this' admits of a range of degrees of specificity. When and only when the song gets there—which is a matter that, indeed, pertains to facts about the song itself, not me—is it complete.

Even though the existence and content of artistic plans depends in large part upon artists'

psychologies, Rohrbaugh maintains that his view is *not* a psychologistic view. "[C]ompleteness," he claims, "is a matter of convergence between work and plan" (138). We chip away, maybe revising our plan as we go, and completeness is achieved when and only when the current state of the work satisfies the concurrent state of the plan. Since it is not a feature of this view that facts about completion are, at bottom, *just* facts about artists' psychologies, the view remains a nonpsychologistic view. And in offering a nonpsychologistic view, Rohrbaugh seems to be in a position to offer an account of artwork completion that avoids Rohrbaugh's Regress.

III. ROHRBAUGH'S PSYCHOLOGISM

In elucidating his notion of artistic plans, Rohrbaugh states that "[u]nlike more clearly directed endeavors, much of the struggle of making art is figuring out what one's goals actually are," and that "[a]t the early stages of the creative process, one's plans are often too underdeveloped for there to be any question of their satisfaction" (137). Plans can also undergo robust change: "[o]ur plans evolve, come into greater focus, gain new parts and specificity, and just as often go back the other way" (138). These remarks certainly seem to be among the right ones to make, but they also lead the account into trouble.

Suppose that, as before, I set out to write a song and, in doing so, form an artistic plan. On Rohrbaugh's account, my compositional activities could, and probably will, involve fine-tuning, revising, etc. *both* my song and my artistic plan. I find myself with a *complete* song on and only on the occasion that the song and the plan converge. What, though, is the mark of this convergence? The answer seems to be that the song and plan converge just in case a particular state of the song itself matches my concurrent take on what I plan to "do, make, or bring about." But that cannot be the whole story, because, as emphasized above, *plans can develop and change*.

Suppose the state of my song at a time *t* conforms (in whatever relevant way) to the content of my artistic plan at *t*, but upon encountering what the potentially complete song would look like were I to stick to that plan, I become dissatisfied and decide to revise my plan. In such a case, the song remains incomplete—with no change in song and with a change only in artistic plan.

Suppose instead that the state of my song at *t* does *not* conform to the content of my artistic plan at *t*, but upon considering what the potentially complete song would look like were I to revise my plan so as to make the song complete now, I go ahead and do just that. In this case, the song in progress graduates to become a full-fledged complete song—again, with no change in song and with a change only in artistic plan. In both cases, we see that the question of whether or not my song becomes complete crucially depends on my regard for, or decisions concerning, my artistic plan. That is, in both cases, the work can become complete (or be thwarted from reaching completeness) based on no change at all in the work itself, but instead based on my regard for, or decisions concerning, the current state of my artistic plan. And it is only when my artistic plan is itself complete that it can genuinely converge with the song in a manner necessary and sufficient for that song in progress receiving the promotion to the status of complete song.

Rohrbaugh (138) anticipates this worry, suggesting that the talk of convergence allows us to avoid having to give an account of *plan* completeness prior to giving an account of *work* completeness. But cases like the above suggest that, even if we help ourselves to the notion of work–plan convergence, we *still* very much need to give an account of plan completeness. The question of whether a work is complete is a question about the convergence of the features of the work with the content of the plan, but questions about that convergence crucially depend on questions of whether the plan itself is complete. And answers to those latter questions are, at bottom, determined by artists' regard for, or decisions concerning, their artistic plans. Rohrbaugh's account, then, is, or bottoms out into, a version of psychologism—if not directly about artwork completion, then at least about artistic plan completion. Thus, I submit that Rohrbaugh finds himself committed to the following view:

Artistic-Plan Psychologism: whether an artistic plan is complete or unfinished is, at bottom, a question about the psychology of the artist or artists; it is not a quality of the artistic plan itself, but a quality of the artist's regard for, or decisions concerning, his or her artistic plan.

Do friends of artistic-plan psychologism face Rohrbaugh's Regress? They do. Suppose we

adopt the version of artistic-plan psychologism according to which my plan is complete when and only when I have made a cognitive judgment that it is complete. When I ask whether the plan is complete, then, I ask whether I have judged that I have judged that I have judged … that the plan is complete. If we instead adopt the version of the view that makes use of noncognitive judgments or dispositions, we still need, for the reasons Rohrbaugh offers, to appeal to a cognitive judgment of plan completion to distinguish cases of genuine plan completion from cases in which I have merely stopped working on or thinking about the plan. Either way we go, Rohrbaugh's Regress returns. Those who adopt psychologism about artwork completion face the regress when pressed on matters of artwork completion; those who adopt psychologism about artistic plan completion face the regress when pressed on matters of artistic plan completion. Neither avoids doing violence to the first-person perspective of artists.

IV.   CONCLUSIONS

If what I have said here is correct, then, in attempting to avoid psychologism about artwork completion, Rohrbaugh has introduced psychologism about artistic plans. Both psychologisms face Rohrbaugh's Regress. We might wonder, then, whether this regress is inevitable.

One way to avoid Rohrbaugh's Regress is to further explore some options that Rohrbaugh mentions but does not seem to consider to be serious options. We might adopt an error theory about completion according to which all judgments of completeness are, strictly speaking, false (cf. Valéry 1971). Alternatively, we might adopt a noncognitivist view according to which our talk about completeness is expressive or projective, rather than truth evaluable. These would avoid Rohrbaugh's Regress but at the expense of nonetheless compromising the perspective of the artist. If our initial motivation was to avoid doing violence to such a perspective, we should look elsewhere.

Those who find psychologism about artwork completion appealing must find a way to block Rohrbaugh's Regress. If my claims are correct, then those who prefer a view that invokes work–plan convergence must do so as well. The task of finding a solution is, unfortunately, one that lies beyond the scope of this note. Given the

similarities in how the regress manifests in the two psychologisms, however, it is natural to suppose that whatever maneuver blocks it in one will also block it in the other—thereby undercutting the primary motivation for Rohrbaugh's work–plan convergence view over more standard psychologism. Friends of psychologism about artistic plan completion can work alongside friends of psychologism about artwork completion to block Rohrbaugh's Regress, but if the former succeed, they might as well simplify matters and just opt for the view held by the latter.[3]

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1. On *genetic* versus *aesthetic* completeness, see Livingston (1999, 15).

2. Rohrbaugh's phrasing suggests that he understands psychologism as taking certain facts about artists' psychologies to be necessary and sufficient for completion. His own view—discussed shortly—is couched in similar terms. For concerns about whether any such set of necessary and sufficient conditions can be given, see Hick (2008). For similar remarks, see Davies (2007).