

A Nozickian Quandary about the Equal Worth of Persons

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Abstract: In Chapter 8 of *Anarchy, State, and Utopia*, Robert Nozick argues against egalitarianism by claiming that people's sense of their own worth depends on comparative features that they possess unequally. In Chapter 3 of the same book he argues, along Kantian lines, in favour of the equal worth of moral persons. There is a tension between these two arguments. The tension cannot be resolved by distinguishing between subjective comparisons, on the one hand, and the objective worth of moral persons on the other. The tension might be resolved by saying that Chapter 3 contains an argument for equality of respect and Chapter 8 an argument for inequality of esteem. In this case, however, the argument of Chapter 8 is rendered impotent against the most convincing (respect-based) forms of egalitarianism.

Keywords: Nozick, Basic Equality, Equal worth, Respect, Recognition, Esteem.

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