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COERCIVE OFFERS

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Although there is little agreement about what coercion is, most writers agree that a necessary condition for a person P, to coerce another person Q is that P threaten Q. For example, H. J. McCloskey writes:

> . . . the core notion of coercion is that of power exercised by a determinate person, persons or organisation(s) by the use of *threats* backed up by sanctions in terms of evils to be imposed, benefits to be withdrawn or not conferred. (McCloskey 1980, p. 340, my emphasis)
>
> *Power exercised by inducements*, bribes rewards and other inducements is clearly distinct from coercion. (McCloskey 1980, p. 339)

In this paper I will argue that threats are not necessary for coercion. The following three sentences are an inconsistent triad:

(a) A necessary condition for P to coerce Q is that P threatens Q.
(b) Some offers are coercive.
(c) No proposal can be both a threat and an offer.

I will argue that sentences (b) and (c) are true, so (a) is false.

My argument for (c) rests on an account of the differences between threats and offers developed in section I and defended against alternative accounts in sections II and III. I argue for (b) in section IV.

I

We all know *how* to distinguish threats from offers except perhaps in difficult cases. But knowing how . . . is different from knowing that . . . Under what conditions is P's proposal to Q of the following form:

> If you do action A, I will be responsible for state of affairs S_1 obtaining,
> If you do not do action A (if you do $\bar{A}$) then I will be responsible for state of affairs S_2 obtaining,

a threat, and under what conditions is it an offer?

One answer to this question, proposed by Steiner (1975) involves comparing

a: the desirability to Q of Q doing A given P's proposal
b: the desirability to Q of Q doing $\bar{A}$ given P's proposal
n: the desirability to Q of the course of events that would have confronted Q if P had not made the proposal

According to Steiner's *P*'s proposal to Q is an offer if and only if

$a > b = n$

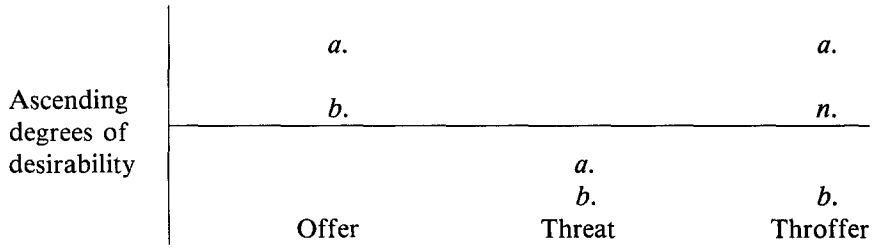
P's proposal to Q is a threat if and only if

$n > a > b$

and P's proposal is a throffer (a kind of mixture of a threat and offer) if and only if

$a > n > b$

Diagramatically:



However Steiner's criteria for distinguishing threats, offers and throffers are incorrect. A proposal may be an offer yet $b > a$. Suppose P offers Q a handful of beans for her cow. It is likely that P prefers her cow to a handful of beans (unless they are magic beans). If so, the desirability to Q of noncompliance with P's offer, b, is greater than the desirability to Q of compliance with P's offer a.

A proposal may be a threat yet $b > a$. Consider P's threat to Q, 'Give me your money or I will give you the rough edge of my tongue'. It is likely that Q prefers her money to having her ears secure from verbal assault. If so the desirability to Q of non-compliance with P's threat, b, is greater than the desirability to Q of compliance with P's threat a.

A proposal may be a throffer yet $n > a > b$. Suppose P makes the following throffer to Q, 'Either you will accept my handful of beans for your cow, or I will kill you'. Suppose Q prefers her cow to P's handful of beans, but prefers to exchange cow for beans to being killed. Then the desirability to Q of compliance with the throffer, a, will be greater than the desirability to Q of non-compliance with the throffer b. But Q would prefer that P had not made the proposal at all, to either compliance or non-compliance with it, thus $n > a > b$.

What has gone wrong with Steiner's criteria for distinguishing threats, offers and throffers? Well surely to determine whether P's proposal to Q is a threat, offer or throffer, we must determine the effect of P's proposal to Q has on the desirability to Q of *Q doing A* and *Q doing* $\bar{A}$. But how are we to determine this just by comparing a, b and n? For n tells us nothing about the desirability to Q of *Q doing A* and *Q doing* $\bar{A}$, *if P had made no proposal.*

How might we amend Steiner's criteria to remedy this defect? To answer this question, let us consider another. What is the basis of the distinction we make between threats, offers and throffers? Well suppose P wants to get Q to do A. P might try to make a proposal to Q of the following form

If you do A I will be responsible for S_1 obtaining
If you do $\bar{A}$ I will be responsible for S_2 obtaining

in such a way as to increase the desirability to Q of Q doing A relative to the desirability to Q of Q doing Ā. But there are at least three ways in which P might do this, which reflect the distinction we make between threats, offers and throffers. P might:

(1) increase the desirability to Q of Q doing A relative to what it would have been if P made no proposal, and leave unchanged the desirability to Q of Q doing Ā relative to what it would have been if P made no proposal. That is, P might make Q an *offer*

(2) decrease the desirability to Q of Q doing Ā relative to what it would have been if P made no proposal, and leave unchanged the desirability to Q of Q doing A relative to what it would have been if P made no proposal. That is P might *threaten* Q

(3) increase the desirability to Q of Q doing A relative to what it would have been if P made no proposal and decrease the desirability to Q of Q doing Ā relative to what it would have been if P made no proposal. That is P might make Q a *throffer*.

These remarks suggest that to determine whether P's proposal to Q is a threat, offer or a throffer we should compare Steiner's *a* and *b* with

c: the desirability to Q of Q doing A independent of P's proposal (that is, if P made no proposal)

and *d*: the desirability to Q of Q doing A independent of P's proposal.

Diagramatically:

	given P's proposal	independent of P's proposal
the desirability to Q of Q doing A	*a*	*c*
the desirability to Q of Q doing Ā	*b*	*d*

P's proposal to Q is an offer if and only if

$$a > c \text{ and } b = d$$
or
$$b > d \text{ and } c = a$$

P's proposal to Q is a threat if and only if

$$c > a \text{ and } b = d$$
or
$$d > b \text{ and } c = a$$

P's proposal to Q is a throffer if and only if

$$c > a \text{ and } b > d$$
or
$$d > b \text{ and } a > c$$

My criteria can handle simple cases of threats, offers and throffers.

Case 1 P says to Q 'I will kill you if and only if you do A.'

The following matrix summarises the expected consequences to Q of Q doing A and Q doing Ā, given P's proposal and independent of P's proposal.

	given P's proposal	independent of P's proposal
Q does A	1. P kills Q	3. P does not kill Q
Q does Ā	2. P does not kill Q	4. P does not kill Q

Q prefers 3 to 1 so $c>a$. Q is different to 2 and 4 so $b=d$. So P's proposal to Q is a threat.

Case 2 P says to Q 'I will give you \$10 if and only if you do A'
The following matrix summarises the expected consequences to Q of Q doing A and Q doing $\bar{A}$, given P's proposal and independent of P's proposal.

	given P's proposal	independent of P's proposal
Q does A	1. P gives Q \$10	3. P gives Q nothing
Q does $\bar{A}$	2. P gives Q nothing	4. P gives Q nothing

Q prefers 1 to 3 so $a>c$. Q is indifferent to 2 and 4 so $b=d$. So P's proposal to Q is an offer.

Case 3 P says to Q 'If you do A I will give you \$10. If you do $\bar{A}$ I will kill you.
The following matrix summarises the expected consequences to Q of Q doing A and Q doing $\bar{A}$, given P's proposal and independent of P's proposal.

	given P's proposal	independent of P's proposal
Q does A	1. P gives Q \$10	3. P gives Q nothing and does not kill Q
Q does $\bar{A}$	2. P kills Q	4. P gives Q nothing and does not kill Q

Q prefers 1 to 3 so $a>c$. Q prefers 4 to 2 so $d>b$. Thus P's proposal is a throffer. These results are in accord with intuition.
How do my criteria fare with more difficult cases?

Case 4 'P is Q's usual supplier of drugs, and today when he comes to Q he says he will not sell them to Q as he normally does for \$20 but rather will give them to Q if and only if Q beats up a certain person' [for short Q does A] Nozick 1969, p. 447.
The following table summarises the expected consequences to Q of Q doing A and Q doing $\bar{A}$, given P's proposal and independent of P's proposal

	given P's proposal	independent of P's proposal
Q does A	1. P gives Q drugs for free	3. P gives Q drugs for \$20
Q does $\bar{A}$	2. P gives Q no drugs	4. P gives Q drugs for \$20

(a) Suppose that Q is dependent on P for drugs, that is Q cannot readily obtain drugs from another source. Q prefers 1 to 3 so $a>c$. Q prefers 4 to 2 so $d>b$. Thus P's proposal is a throffer.
(b) Suppose that Q is not dependent on P for drugs, but can readily obtain drugs from R for \$20. Q prefers 1 to 3 so $a>c$. Q is indifferent to 2 and 4 (since Q can readily obtain drugs from R for \$20) so $b=d$. Thus P's proposal is an offer.

Case 5 P is a stranger who has been observing Q and knows that Q is a drug addict. Both know that Q's usual supplier of drugs was arrested this morning and that P had nothing to do with the arrest. P approaches Q and

says that he will give Q drugs if and only if Q beats up a certain person [i.e. Q does A] Nozick 1969, p. 447.

The following matrix summarises the expected consequences to Q of Q doing A and Q doing $\bar{A}$ given P's proposal and independent of P's proposal

	given P's proposal	independent of P's proposal
Q does A	1. P gives Q drugs for free	3. P gives Q no drugs
Q does $\bar{A}$	2. P gives Q no drugs	4. P gives Q no drugs

Q prefers 1 to 3 so $a > c$ and Q is indifferent to 2 and 4 so $b = d$. Thus P's proposal to Q is an offer.

II

H. Frankfurt (1973) gives a slightly different account of the distinction between threats, offers and throffers. In order to understand Frankfurt's criteria, we must note that threats and offers often have the following form.

> If you do action A I will intervene in such and such a way. If you do not do action A then I will not intervene.

For example P's proposal to Q in *Case 1* 'I will kill you if and only if you do A' and in *Case 2* 'I will give you \$10 if and only if you do A' are both of this form.

According to Frankfurt in order to determine whether P's proposal to Q of the above form is a threat, offer (or throffer?) we must compare the desirability to Q of Q doing A and Q doing $\bar{A}$ given P's proposal, with the desirability to Q of Q doing A and Q doing $\bar{A}$ *if P did not intervene* according to the terms of her proposal. In other words, we are to compare my a and b with

e the desirability to Q of Q doing A if P does not intervene,
and f the desirability to Q of Q doing $\bar{A}$ if P does not intervene.

Diagramatically:

	given P's proposal	if P does not intervene according to the terms of her proposal
the desirability to Q of Q doing A	a	e
the desirability to Q of Q doing $\bar{A}$	b	f

Frankfurt's criteria for distinguishing threats and offers would be the same as mine, substituting all occurrences of *'c'* and *'d'* with *'e'* and *'f'*. Frankfurt's evaluations of P's proposal to Q in Cases 1 and 2 will be the same as mine. But consider *Case 4* again. The following matrix summarises the expected consequences to Q of Q doing A and Q doing $\bar{A}$, given P's proposal, and if P does not intervene.

	given P's proposal	if P does not intervene
Q does A	1. P gives Q drugs	3. P gives Q no drugs
Q does $\bar{A}$	2. P gives Q no drugs	4. P gives Q no drugs

(A word of explanation about the entries in 3 and 4. P's proposal to Q can be read as follows.

> If you do A then I will intervene by giving you drugs. If you do A I will not intervene in this way.

So P's intervening = P giving Q drugs. P's not intervening = P giving Q no drugs.) Q prefers 1 to 3 so $a > e$. Q is indifferent to 2 and 4 so $b = f$. Thus P's proposal to Q is an offer, whereas according to my criteria, if P is dependent on Q for the supply of drugs, P's proposal to Q is a throffer. (see *Case 4(a).*)

Frankfurt's evaluation of P's proposal in *Case 4(a) seems* to be the correct one. For P has simply raised the price of the drug to Q. P has made Q a new *offer*, cancelling the terms of all previous offers. P's new offer to Q of drugs for beating someone up, is less favourable to Q than P's previous offer of drugs for $20. But, it seems, it *is* still an offer. On my criteria, though not on Frankfurt's, any proposal to raise the price of any commodity is a throffer (under monopolistic conditions).

The problem with Frankfurt's criteria, as they stand, is that they do not enable us to deal satisfactorily with situations in which P proposes *not* to intervene in a certain way if and only if Q does A.

For consider any proposal by P to Q of the form:

> I will not intervene in such and such a way if and only if you do A.

Now suppose that P's proposal to Q is a *threat* not to intervene, a threat to withdraw a benefit (e.g. a parent says to her child 'I will *not* give you your pocket-money if (and only if) you continue to misbehave'). On Frankfurt's criteria P's proposal to Q would be an *offer*. The following matrix summarises the expected consequences to Q of Q doing A and Q doing $\bar{A}$, given P's proposal and if P does not intervene according to the terms of her proposal.

	given P's proposal	if P does not intervene
Q does A	1. P does not intervene	3. P does not intervene
Q does $\bar{A}$	2. P does intervene	4. P does not intervene

If P's proposal is a *threat* not to intervene, then Q prefers P's intervention, to P's non-intervention. So Q prefers 2 to 4 so $b > f$. Q is indifferent to 1 and 3 so $a = e$. So P's proposal is an *offer*.

Now suppose that P's proposal to Q is an *offer* not to intervene, an offer not to impose a penalty (e.g. a magistrate says to an offender 'I will not fine you if (and only if) you plead guilty'). On Frankfurt's criteria P's proposal to Q is a *threat*. For if we suppose P's proposal is an *offer* not to intervene, then Q prefers P's non-intervention to P's intervention. So Q prefers 4 to 2 so $f > b$. Q is indifferent to 1 and 3 so $a = e$. Thus P's proposal is a *threat*.

To avoid these problems, Frankfurt suggests the following conditions under which P's proposal to Q of the form

I will not intervene in such and such a way if and only if you do A is a threat to withdraw a benefit.

(1) Q is dependent on P for the benefit, i.e. Q cannot obtain the benefit from another source.

(2) Q needs the benefit, 'it is essential either for preventing what . . . [Q] . . . would regard as a significant deterioration of [her] welfare or for preventing the continuation of what [she] would regard as an undesirable condition'. (Frankfurt 1973, p. 71)

(3) P exploits Q's dependency and need for the benefit. P demands for it an unfair or improper price. (Frankfurt 1973, p. 781)

Frankfurt is correct about condition (1). As he explains

> It is hardly plausible to regard P's proposal to refuse Q a certain benefit as tantamount to a threat – even a weak and ineffective threat to penalise him unless Q cannot obtain an equivalent benefit elsewhere. For only in that case does Q have any reason to be interested in whether he gets the benefit from P or not, and a penalty to which it is reasonable to be entirely indifferent is not a penalty at all. (Frankfurt 1973, p. 72)

However Frankfurt is less convincing in his defence of condition (2). He writes

> suppose that P proposes to give Q a million dollars if and only if Q performs a certain action, that Q has no other chance of acquiring so much money and that P's offer is in some way unfair or improper. The proposal still does not include a threat because (let us presume) the maintenance of Q's welfare above a level he regards as undesirable is not contingent upon his having a million dollars. (Frankfurt 1973, p. 72)

But suppose P owes Q a million dollars, and P proposes to pay Q the million dollars P owes Q if and only if Q does A (thus making P's proposal improper). Surely P is threatening not pay Q the million dollars regardless of whether Q needs the mony in Frankfurt's sense. For even if Q does not need the million dollars, Q will not necessarily be indifferent as to whether P pays the money back or not. If Q does not need the money P's threat would be weaker than if Q did need it. But a weak threat *is* a threat.

Frankfurt's condition (3) seems implausible. Suppose Q is embezzling funds from P's firm and Q squanders the money in loose living. Suppose Q cannot readily obtain employment elsewhere and that Q would regard unemployment benefits as a significant deterioration of her welfare. P says to Q 'I will not continue to employ you if you continue to embezzle the firm's money.' P does not ask an unfair or improper price for Q's continued employment. Yet P threatens not to continue to employ Q, unless she stops the embezzlement.

Frankfurt's criteria for distinguishing threats from offers do not enable us to deal satisfactorily with situations in which P proposes not to intervene in a certain way if and only if Q does A. Frankfurt's attempt to deal with this objection seems unsuccessful.

I think that the very root of the problems Frankfurt encounters is his construal of threats and offers (throffers?) as being of the form:

I will intervene in such and such a way if and only if you do action A.

The problem with this formulation is that I cannot intervene unless I *do* something; I cannot intervene by not intervening.

If we construe threats, offers and throffers as being of the form

If you do A then I will be responsible for state of affairs S_1 obtaining
If you do $\bar{A}$ then I will be responsible for state of affairs S_2 obtaining

we avoid these problems. For I can be responsible for a state of affairs obtaining because of what I do not do, just as much as because of what I do. If I do *not* water my pot plant, I may be responsible for its death.

III

Consider the following case:

Case 7 Suppose that usually a slave owner [P] beats his slave [Q] each morning for no reason connected with the slave's behaviour. Today he says to his slave 'Tomorrow I will not beat you if and only if you now do A (Nozick 1969, p. 450)

According to my criteria, P's proposal to Q is an offer. The following matrix summarises the expected consequences to Q of Q doing A and Q doing $\bar{A}$ given P's proposal and independent of P's proposal.

	given P's proposal	independent of P's proposal
Q does A	1. P does not beat Q	3. P does beat Q
Q does $\bar{A}$	2. P does beat Q	4. P does beat Q

Q prefers 1 to 3 so $a > c$. Q is indifferent to 2 and 4 so $b = d$. Thus P's proposal to Q is an offer.

Nozick thinks that this analysis is right so far as it goes but that it does not go far enough. Nozick believes that P's proposal to Q is also a threat. Relative to the desirability to Q of Q doing A and Q doing $\bar{A}$ independent of P's proposal, P's proposal is an offer. Relative to the desirability to Q of Q doing A and Q doing $\bar{A}$ if P were to do what she morally ought to do, it is a threat. Nozick would claim that to determine whether P's proposal to Q of the form.

If you do A then I will be responsible for S_1 obtaining, if you do $\bar{A}$ then I will be responsible for S_2 obtaining

is an offer *and* a threat we must compare my *a b c* and *d* with

g: the desirability to Q of Q doing A if P does what she morally ought to do

and *h:* the desirability to Q of Q doing $\bar{A}$ if P does what she morally ought to do.

Diagramatically:

	given P's proposal	independent of P's proposal	If P does what she ought to do
the desirability to Q of Q doing A	*a*	*c*	*g*

the desirability to Q of Q doing			
A	b	d	h
$\bar{A}$	a	c	g

P's proposal to Q is both a threat and an offer if

$a > c$ *and* $b = d$ *and* $h > b$ *and* $g = a$ *and* $g > c$

or $b > d$ *and* $c = a$ *and* $g > a$ *and* $h = b$ *and* $g > c$

Applying these criteria to *Case 7* the following matrix summarises the expected consequences to Q of Q doing A and Q doing $\bar{A}$ given P's proposal, independent of P's proposal and if P does what she ought to do.

	given P's proposal	independent of P's proposal	if P does what she ought to do
Q does A	1. P does not beat Q	3. P does beat Q	5. P does not beat Q
Q does $\bar{A}$	2. P does beat Q	4. P does beat Q	6. P does not beat Q

Q prefers 1 to 3 so $a > c$. Q is indifferent to 2 and 4 so $B = d$
Q prefers 6 to 2 so $h > b$. Q is indifferent to 1 and 5 so $a = g$
Q prefers 5 to 3 so $g > c$. Thus P's proposal is both an offer (relative to c and d) and a threat (relative to g and h).

Contrary to Nozick, I do not think that we do consider g and h in determining whether P's proposal to Q of the form

If you do A I will be responsible for S_1 obtaining
If you do $\bar{A}$ I will be responsible for S_2 obtaining

is a threat, offer or throffer.

For example we judged the blackmailer's proposal to her victim as a threat, and not an offer, whether she threatens to reveal an adulterous relationship to the press, or an attempt to pervert the course of justice to the police. It therefore makes no difference to our evaluation of the blackmailer's proposal as a threat and not an offer that the blackmailer should not reveal the adulterous relationship to the press (let us suppose) but should reveal the attempt to pervert the course of justice to the police (this being one's duty as an honest citizen).

But don't we judge P's proposal to Q in *Case 7* to be a threat as well as an offer? Again I do not think so. Certainly we judge P's proposal to Q in *Case 7* as a *coercive* offer. But it would beg the question at issue to say that we therefore judge P's proposal to Q to be a threat as well as an offer.

There is reason to doubt that any one proposal could be both a threat and an offer. For all offers increase the desirability to the recipient of doing an action, relative to what it would have been if no offer had been made. Threats never do. Threats decrease the desirability to the recipient of doing an action, relative to what it would have been if no threat had been made. Offers never do. If so, then no proposal can be both a threat and an offer.

Nozick (1969, p.450) claims that offers are welcomed by their recipients and threats are shunned. Call the state of affairs that obtains just before P's proposal to Q the *preproposal situation*, and the state of affairs that obtains given P's proposal to Q the *proposal situation*. Q *welcomes* P's

proposal if and only if Q prefers the proposal situation to the pre-proposal situation. Q *shuns* P's proposal if and only if Q prefers the preproposal situation to the proposal situation. (In *Case 7*, Q would not shun P's proposal but welcome it). If offers are welcomed and threats are shunned by their recipients, then no proposal can be both a threat and an offer, since no proposal can be both welcomed and shunned.

It is sometimes plausibly claimed that offers always increase the number of options the recipient believes to be available to her, while threats never do. Threats always decrease the number of options the recipient believes to be available to her, while offers never do. If so, then no proposal can be both a threat and an offer.

Note that a proposal may be *intended* as a threat yet actually be an offer. Suppose P says to Q 'I will kill you if and only if you do A.' In saying this P may intend that (1) the expected consequences to Q of Q doing A and Q doing $\bar{A}$ given P's proposal and independent of P's proposal, to be as summarised in the following matrix

	given P's proposal	independent of P's proposal
Q does A	1. P kills Q	3. P does not kill Q
Q does $\bar{A}$	2. P does not kill Q	4. P does not kill Q

and (2) Q prefer 3 to 1 so $c>a$, and Q be indifferent to 2 and 4 so $b=d$. In other words, P may intend her proposal to be a threat.

However, unknown to P it may be the case that independent of P's proposal to Q, Q believes that P will kill her, in which case the expected consequences to Q of Q doing A and Q doing $\bar{A}$ may be summarised in the following matrix.

	given P's proposal	independent of P's proposal
Q does A	1. P kills Q	3. P kills Q
Q does $\bar{A}$	2. P does not kill Q	4. P kills Q

If Q prefers 2 to 4, so $b>d$ and Q is indifferent to 1 and 3 so $a = c$, then P's proposal to Q is a very welcome offer, despite P's intention that her proposal be a threat.

Or, again, unknown to P, Q might want P to kill her in which case Q will prefer 1 to 3 so $a>c$, and Q will be indifferent to 2 and 4 so $b = d$, in which case P's proposal to Q would be a welcome offer, again, despite P's intentions.

In such cases, P's proposal to Q is of both a threat and an offer. Rather it is an offer which is intended by its author to be a threat. Similarly a proposal which is intended to be an offer may actually be a threat.

If, as I have been arguing, my criteria for distinguishing threats, offers and throffers are correct, then no proposal can be both a threat and an offer to its recipient in a particular world at a particular time. (Throffers, by the way, are neither threats nor offers, but a third distinct category of proposal on my criteria).

IV

In this section I will argue for the claim that some offers are coercive (claim (b)). I will assume that some threats are coercive, and argue that threats are

coercive if and only if offers are. My argument for this claim is as follows.

(1) If it is *not* the case that threats are coercive if and only if offers are, then there would be a morally relevant difference between two proposals which are exactly alike in all respects except that one is a threat and the other is an offer.

(2) There is no morally relevant difference between two proposals which are exactly alike in all respects except that one is a threat and the other is an offer.

Therefore

(3) Threats are coercive if and only if offers are.

The almost universally held assumption that some threats are coercive, plus (3), entail (b) that some offers are coercive. The argument for (3) is valid. But is it sound? Let us consider first whether (2) is true. Compare the following cases.

Case 8 Highwayman P wants money. So P points a gun at traveller Q's head and says to Q 'Your money or your life'. Preferring to keep her life to keeping her money, Q gives P her money.

Case 9 Highwayman P wants money. So P points a gun at traveller Q's head and says to Q 'I am going to kill you.' Some time later P still holding the gun at Q's head, says to Q 'Your money or your life'. Preferring to keep her life to keeping her money Q gives P her money.

Assume that in all other respects *Cases 8* and *9* are alike. Then *Case 8* and *Case 9* are exactly alike except that in *Case 8* P's proposal to Q 'Your money or your life' is a threat, whereas in *Case 9* P's proposal to Q 'Your money or your life' is an offer. The following table summarises the expected consequences to Q of Q doing A [keeping her money] and of doing $\bar{A}$ [not keeping her money] given P's proposal and independent of P's proposal in *Case 8.*

	given P's proposal	independent of P's proposal
Q does A	1. P kills Q	3. P does not kill Q
Q does $\bar{A}$	2. P does not kill Q	4. P does not kill Q

Q prefers 3 to 1 so $c > a$ Q is indifferent to 2 and 4 so $b = d$. Thus P's proposal to Q is a threat.

The following table summarises the expected consequences to Q of Q doing A and Q doing $\bar{A}$ given P's proposal ('Your money or your life') and independent of P's proposal, in *Case 9.*

	Given P's proposal	Independent of P's proposal
Q does A	1. P kills Q	3. P kills Q
Q does $\bar{A}$	2. P does not kill Q	4. P kills Q

Q prefers 2 to 4 so $b > d$. Q is indifferent to 1 and 3, so $a = c$. Thus P's proposal to Q is an offer. Note also in *Case 9* (by contrast with *Case 8*) that P's proposal to Q 'Your money or your life' would be welcomed by Q and the proposal increases the number of options which Q believes to be available to her, from one: being killed by P, to two: being killed by P or giving all of her money to P and being spared her life. This also suggests that P's

proposal to Q in *Case 9* is an offer and not a threat.

However, despite the fact that P's proposal to Q 'Your money or your life' is a threat in *Case 8* and an offer in *Case 9*, there is no morally relevant difference between them. In both cases P acted from the same motive—both acted because they wanted money.

Suppose P in *Case 9* pleaded in her defence.

> But I was only making Q an offer. I increased the number of alternatives available to Q from one (being killed by me) to two (being killed by me or giving me all of her money). So my proposal calls for no justification.

Now if there were a morally relevant difference between making a threat and making an offer, P's defence in *Case 9* would have some moral weight. But it clearly does not. The fact that in *Case 9* P's proposal to Q 'Your money or your life' cancels a previous, morally worse proposal 'I will kill you whatever you do' does nothing to justify, excuse, or mitigate making that proposal. So it seems to me that there is no morally relevant difference between two proposals which are exactly alike in all respects except that one is a threat and the other is an offer.

But what is one to say about the feeling that there is a morally significent difference between making a threat and making an offer? To answer this question we should distinguish two questions:

1. Is the distinction between making a threat and making an offer morally significant in itself?
2. Are there other factors which make it generally the case that threatening someone is morally wrong whereas making an offer is not?

The answer to question (2) is 'Yes'. Generally the 'bringing about' of the non-compliance consequence of an offer is not prima facie morally wrong whereas the 'bringing about' of the non-compliance consequence of a threat is, in general, prima facie morally wrong. So the answer to the second question is 'Yes'. But, as I have argued, the answer to the first question is 'No'.

I have argued that premise (2) of my argument for the claim that threats are coercive if and only if offers are (at the beginning of section 4) is true. How about premise (1)? Well it is almost universally agreed that to coerce a person is prima facie morally wrong—it calls for justification. So we would expect that if threats are coercive and offers are not (or vice versa) that two proposals which are exactly alike in all respects except that one is a threat and the other is an offer would be morally different. So premise (1) seems to be true. I conclude, therefore, that threats are coercive if and only if offers are. Now together with the uncontroversial assumption that some threats are coercive we can conclude that some offers are coercive.

I have argued in sections I to III that, no proposal can be both a threat and an offer. In section IV I argued that at least some offers are coercive. I conclude, therefore, that the widespread view that a necessary condition for P to coerce Q is that P threaten Q, is false.

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NOTES

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