Symposion

Theoretical and Applied Inquiries
in
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

RESEARCH ARTICLES

Aristotle and the Future

Alex Blum

Abstract: We intend to show that Aristotle's contention that future tense contingent statements are neither true nor false leads to inconsistency.

Keywords: Aristotle, future tense statements, Tarski, T-equivalence, truth.

We intend to show that Aristotle's contention that future tense contingent statements are neither true nor false[1] leads to inconsistency. Aristotle's account of truth[2] as expressed by Tarski's T-equivalence schema[3] implies that:

> (T1) A sea fight takes place tomorrow, if and only if, 'A sea fight takes place tomorrow' is true.

But given that for Aristotle the sentence 'A sea fight takes place tomorrow' is not true, it is not the case that a sea fight takes place tomorrow. In the same way, the T-equivalence:

> (T2) A sea fight does not take place tomorrow, if and only if, 'A sea fight does not take place tomorrow' is true,

implies that a sea fight does take place tomorrow. For 'A sea fight does not take place tomorrow' is not true as well. Hence, Aristotle's account of truth as

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[1] Aristotle writes:

"A sea-fight must either take place to-morrow or not, but it is not necessary that it should take place to-morrow, neither is it necessary that it should not take place, yet it is necessary that it either should or should not take place to-morrow….

… One of the two propositions in such instances must be true and the other false, but we cannot say determinately that this or that is false, but must leave the alternative undecided. One may indeed be more likely to be true than the other, but it cannot be either actually true or actually false." See Aristotle, *On Interpretation* 19a30-40, in McKeon (1941, 48).

"These awkward results and others of the same kind follow, if it is an irrefragable law that of every pair of contradictory propositions, … one must be true and the other false, …that all that is or takes place is the outcome of necessity." See Aristotle, *On Interpretation* 18b: 27-32 in McKeon (1941, 47).

[2] "To say of what is that it is not, or of what is not that it is, is false, while to say of what is that it is, and of what is not that it is not, is true." See Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 1011b25 in McKeon (1941, 749).

[3] Tarski writes:

"(T) X *Is true if, and only if*, p. We shall call any such equivalence (with 'p' replaced by any sentence of the language to which the word 'true' refers and 'X' replaced by a name of this sentence) an equivalence of the form (T)." (1944, 54-55).

Alex Blum

expressed by Tarski's T-equivalences, implies that a sea fight both will and will not take place tomorrow.

It may at first appear that the inconsistency is due to Tarski's T-equivalence schemata and not to Aristotle's thesis. But that cannot be, T-equivalence statements cannot coherently be denied.[4] For what could it mean to say that a sea fight takes place tomorrow, but it is not true that a sea fight takes place tomorrow?

To avoid being committed to fatalism, future tense statements would have to lack truth value, for what is true or false cannot be, respectively, false or true. But surely one can state this or that about the future without thereby being either inconsistent or a fatalist. Yes, but in that case, contingent statements about the future would have to contain a built in suppressed clause to the effect that this is how the future appears *at the present.*[5]

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[4] Michael Dummett rejects a similar argument for he contends that statements whose truth value cannot be determined are cogent but are neither true nor false. He adopts the Intuitionist position out of mathematics as well. For the same reason he maintains that 'p or not-p' is not logically necessary. We don't agree with the position that statements whose truth-value cannot be determined are neither true nor false. See Dummett (1958-9, 145, 157-60).
[5] I am deeply grateful to Yehuda Gellman, Peter Genco and David Widerker for their help.

8

Rescuing Responsibility – and Freedom.
A Compatibilist Treatment

Curran F. Douglass

Abstract: This paper confronts two questions: How is it possible to be free if causal determinism is true?; and relatedly, How then is the practice of holding persons responsible for their actions to be justified? On offer here is a compatibilist account of freedom, tying it to control; the relation – argued to be a necessary connection – is considered in some detail. Then the question of ability to 'do otherwise' is discussed, which has held a fascination for many in regard to free choice. Our ability to learn to choose rationally is key here, to becoming able to choose well and (hence) freely, freedom being understood realistically. A developed rationality is necessary for maximal free choice, and (as argued here) is also key to the justification of the practice of holding persons responsible for their actions – a practice which is both necessary (socially indispensable) and capable of being justified, on both moral and pragmatic grounds. There is nothing in determinism that threatens that justification, but rather enables it.

Key words: control, determinism, freedom, 'free will,'rationality, responsibility.

Causal determinism has sometimes been thought to threaten human freedom in choice, or our capability of bearing responsibility, or both; this paper offers a compatibilist solution and argues that there is really no such threat. In the literature, there have been many positions taken and arguments offered; I shall not deal with opposing views here.[1] Also, I make no use of the term 'free will,' which has become a term of art with no naturalistic basis, and has been used to designate notions which cannot be considered reasonable extensions of our ordinary concept of freedom. There is, I shall argue, no reason to believe that determinism renders us incapable of acting freely – which were it true would mean there is no proper example of such a thing as freedom in choice. Determinism, an aspect of causal theory, is not a thing capable of sabotaging our choices. It has to do with the regularities that occur in interactions of matter and so create the possibility for organization, which in turn supports our control system of voluntary motion – which is where our inquiry should focus.

In the first part of what follows, a characterization of human freedom is offered – for it is crucial to establish what is in dispute and what its nature. Then the question of whether one 'could have done otherwise' in making a choice is

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[1] For a sample of recent views, see "Recent Work on Free Will and Moral Responsibility" by Neil Levy and Michael McKenna. In my book (Douglass 2015) I discussed some alternative views, such as appeared the most worthy of attention.

considered, which has sometimes been taken as diagnostic of freedom in choice. In the last part, the possibility of responsibility is considered. I claim that when freedom is properly understood, the problems disappear.

I. Background: Characterizing Freedom

In the controversy over freedom in choice, there is a latent scenario that is inherently misleading. If one sees causal determinism as bringing about a world of necessary processes proceeding inexorably onward to fixed results, there can seem to be no room for freedom there. But this view leaves out the agent. And without an agent, there should be no question of freedom: for freedom is not to be sought among the basic causal processes. Freedom appears and is a concern only on the level of agency – it involves the agent's abilities to choose and act. These abilities – whose degradation involves a loss of freedom – derive from control. The concept of freedom must be developed on the level of and in relation to agency, and to do that one must see the agent as a controller, exercising control and making choices. This is key to seeing agents as potentially free, even in a deterministic world. Whereas, the concept 'freedom' cannot apply to mere processes, as these have no goals – they simply occur. In nature, it is living creatures that inherently have goals.

In characterizing freedom I adopt a naturalistic stance, appealing to a science-based understanding. The sort of freedom that we are to be concerned with is everyday freedom, and such extensions of that as can reasonably be thought to arise from it. Our everyday, familiar freedom is always concerned with and connected to our abilities; and it is when some ability of ours is compromised that we feel our freedom is interfered with. Our abilities are species-specific: we are not free to fly as birds do, nor are birds free (and able) to write. Freedom to choose also depends on an ability, or abilities; indeed, our ability to act presumes an ability to choose.

Our key to characterizing our freedom is the concept of control – the voluntary motor control that we, and creatures like us, exert over our bodies in action. That is not an entirely new claim; but here this control is to be understood naturalistically. Though some earlier writers[2] have also emphasized the tie to control, often these have not been concerned to adhere to naturalistic constraints. Here engineering control theory and biology provide the background for understanding the appropriate concept of control – a crucial consideration.

Freedom is tied to control – for neither is practicable or really intelligible without the other, at least implicitly as a background condition. It is controllers that can initiate and guide actions and create behaviors – whether in humans,

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[2] For example, Daniel Dennett in *Elbow Room* (1984), J. M. Fischer, *The Metaphysics of Free Will* (1994), and Robert Kane, *The Significance of Free Will* (1998). Of these, my treatment is most similar to Dennett's. Some arguments here are also prefigured in Hobart (1934).

10

other creatures, or in robots. Such a controller can drive its 'plant' (a name commonly used in engineering for that which is being controlled – in humans and other creatures, our bodies) dynamically from one state or position to another, or through a series of positions according to a 'plan' (thereby generating an action). It is controllers, then, that can be free to operate – and only controllers can be free, since only they have goals and exercise control to reach them (i.e., they act), and so can be interfered with in the pursuit of those goals. I have characterized the relation between freedom and control as one of complementarity, since each complements the other and since these two – freedom and control – must be understood together. One might say that the two imply each other, since controllers must be free in order to operate, and freedom must apply to, and only to controllers.[3]

In biological controllers as in man-made controllers (whose goals come from us), the obtaining of superior results is really the implicit, ultimate goal: for obviously some outcomes (which better serve the conditions of life) are better for creatures than are others, and the obtaining of superior (or at least acceptable) results is of the essence. (There would be no point to control were all outcomes or states equally valuable or indifferent to creatures.) One can say that obtaining superior or at least acceptable results is the supreme and implicit, ever-present goal of creatures in choosing and acting, that for which their control systems have evolved.

Hopefully, it is clear that choice belongs to control: to choose, to select an option from various possibilities and initiate an action based on that is a control function, as much as perseverance in a state or continuance through an action to its completion. Choice is the required first step to acting to attain a superior outcome or situation. Indeed, the ability to select from a set of feasible options and attain what was selected – an output or state – is roughly what is meant by 'controllability.'[4] Choice is required to initiate an action to shift from one situation to another as needed, in order to effect a change for one's benefit. Thus there is an inherent directionality to be discovered in all serious matters involving choice: a shift of situations in a favorable direction is what is wanted, and that begins with choice.

This characterization leads straightaway to an understanding of the oft-noted distinction between negative freedom and positive freedom. The negative

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[3] The general argument given here involving the tie between freedom and control derives from my book (Douglass 2015), where it is developed in greater depth. The basic argument there regarding complementarity occurs in Chapter 5.

[4] A more precise, formal definition of controllability is as follows: "a system is completely state controllable if it is possible to cause the state vector to move from any initial value to any other value, in a finite time." (Dutton, Thompson, and Barraclough1997, 311) (The definition of output controllability is analogous.) Note that it is possible that a system is only partially controllable, which means that only some elements of the state or output vector can be so manipulated.

aspect is generally characterized as an absence of coercion or impediment, in action or in choice, to an agent – or, we can also say, to a controller. The positive aspect of freedom then corresponds to the controller's 'power' to do and to choose. This 'power' or ability – really a synonym for control here – can be disrupted by a number of sorts of conditions, many or most having become well-known through human experience. Through these losses we have come to recognize the types of freedom that we enjoy (the negative aspect again). We are free in relation to the operation of abilities that we possess; and these are species-specific and have a range of normal functioning. And our freedom is always a matter of degree; unlimited freedom is a fantasy.

Types of freedom are typically recognized through their absences, as made out against a background of normal functioning; and this is how various sorts or aspects of freedom are differentiated.[5] Thus coercion and intimidation, perhaps the most widely recognized sorts of loss of freedom, are understood everywhere. Also, there are various sorts of internal failures, such as those due to injury or disease, which can compromise our abilities and hence our freedom.[6] Regarding specifically the ability to choose, it is clear that whatever interferes with this limits our freedom in choice, whether of external or internal origin. And in all these cases, degree of freedom appears as an indicator of the well-functioning of control.

The sort of control that we exhibit in relation to choice is 'targeting control' – which means the recognition, evaluation and selection of potential targets. We choose options as objectives or goals – as 'targets' for our actions, which are about obtaining or achieving them. First one must recognize (categorize) something as a potential target.[7] Then evaluation of the potential targets is of critical importance, since some will be more difficult than others (perhaps not being worth the risk or time required); and some may be too dangerous altogether. Since the same system would also be used defensively, things may be targeted for avoidance sometimes (threat recognition and also evaluation). The actual decision is then based on evaluational criteria, whether

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[5] The noted ethologist Konrad Lorenz said: "Far from being an insurmountable obstacle to the analysis of an organic system, a pathological disorder is often the key to understanding it. We know of many cases in the history of physiology where a scientist became aware of an important organic system only after a pathological disturbance had caused its disease." (1973, 5)

[6] The collection of the 'failure modes' for a type of controller – all the sorts of failures it is susceptible to – would be collectively specific to and so taxonomic for that type of controller, as its abilities would be. And being taxonomic for the sorts of control available, hence it is so also for the types of freedom that we are capable of.

[7] This, I suspect, is why our consciousness has the 'aboutness' of intentionality: it is the target-seeking mechanism continuously operating, focusing on objects of interest and also on inner objects or goals to be realized, and around this supporting functions serve to identify objects, recall what has been learned about them, generate evaluations, expectations and insights, and so on.

12

learned or not, and whether presented consciously or not. And, of course there may be further decisions, as of method of approach or attack, and perhaps a plan may be developed. (The control connection is discussed at greater length in my book – Douglass 2015.)

In a complex and changing world, there is a need for flexibility and improvability in the evaluation of targets – which for us occurs largely through learning. What is at stake is the ability to match our choices up well to things 'in the world,' for the sake of our success.[8] That is the primary function of our rationality: and it is our rationality which represents the full development of our natural abilities as sensitive learning controllers, able to discriminate between potential targets and to choose the best, or what is suitable or good enough ('satisficing'). If, as I maintain, rationality is a type of biological learning control[9] whose development and purpose in evolution has involved the detection, evaluation and choice of targets (and recognition of threats – targets for avoidance) – the most advanced such type found in nature – then we can readily understand its importance for sensitive evaluation of situations and choice of responses. A rational being is able to learn from experience and so to become a reliable recognizer and judicious evaluator of options, with sensitivity to detail and insightfulness, and with an emotional connection that empowers evaluation and choice. (One may also evaluate a type of option as of no interest, and even cease to recognize it.) This sort of learning controller continues to upgrade its performance possibilities through reconsideration and re-evaluation of what has occurred together with what has been learned through experience, of what has been chosen and what resulted from that (a type of recursion), as well as being open to other sources of learning, such as teaching and criticism, for the purpose of improving its performance. Indeed, we become rational through learning, in particular leaning what – and how – to choose in a variety of situations. In so doing, we also develop our latent ability for forethought, to serve which we make cognitive 'models' of the world and of ourselves which are revisable with experience. Foresight (derived from reconsidering past events and generating expectations) is crucial to choosing in advance and to making a series of such choices – which is what planning consists in.

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[8] Realistically, our freedom is always limited: when we must choose, we must try to "fit our actions to the world," to borrow John Searle's phrase, in order to promote our success and functioning well, and there are always constraints that must be observed thereto. Unlimited freedom, interpreted as total absence of constraint, is a fantasy. For Searle's development see *Rationality in Action*, especially pp. 36 – 47. My usage is intended to focus on the constraints imposed on choosers by situations they face: one has to take in what is the case and consider what sort of action would effect change in the best direction. This can be seen as a navigational problem of sorts.

[9] The character of rationality is further discussed in my book (Douglass 2015). Suffice it to say that we are target-seeking learning controllers who utilize learning to improve our target selection.

At some point in their evolution, our ancestors became able to have insights. That opened the way to a greater depth of understanding to aid choice and planning, thus increasing the creature's adaptability. With this development, our ancestors were no longer limited to inherited ('instinctive') goals or categorizations learned from experience, but could attain a penetration and discernment involving aspects of situations, with an attendant expansion of ability to understand their world. And surely one of the most basic insights is that some options are better for us than others. With this ability, what was formerly implicit (in control – the need to choose well) became explicit, as one chooses 'what is best' (or at least adequate) on recognizing it as such. Now one can thoughtfully develop an ability to choose – and understand what is involved in and required for choosing well – and to plan, as one can sort through expectations and choose a 'best' option. Forethought and insights are key to planning (a plan being a sequence of actions directed toward some goal) and also to solving problems (which can be seen as planning a solution path). These abilities are central aspects of our rationality.

Rationality characterizes our principal choices when we choose most freely. For the fundamental implicit goal of choice is to choose well; and it is our rationality which is the sensitive, improvable instrument for discovering and evaluating options and choosing among them that we rely on for that discrimination. Maximal freedom implies maximal control, and for us in all our important decisions, that implies rational choice, which involves sensitive evaluation and discrimination among a set of recognized options based on criteria derived from knowledge. There is an art of choosing well, which can be learned; it involves learning what to value and also of our own tendencies and biases. Rational self-discovery is a means to the enlargement of our control and freedom: when focusing on ourselves as choosers we can discover more completely the set of evaluational characteristics we employ, inasmuch as these can be learned about and then perhaps modified or compensated for. This makes for more complete use of the abilities of developed rationality, and facilitates our making our best possible choices, and so attaining our greatest possible freedom, avoiding the pitfalls to choosing well.[10] Put differently, through developing our

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[10] We can say that one is free when their choice is their own (i.e., not coerced or unduly influenced). But they can be more free if they are able to choose well. For the only realistic extension of our freedom in choice beyond what is basic (i.e., no coercion or interference nor internal breakdown or 'blockage') is through learning and self-improvement, and so becoming able to choose well, especially across a broad range of situations and circumstances. This follows from freedom's tie to control: for control is about functioning well – that is its inherent purpose. Choosing well (a learnable skill) indicates greater control – unless one were just lucky (inasmuch as we must sometimes choose in ignorance). Being able to recognize and choose the best available options in general indicates maximal control, and hence also maximal freedom. We maximize our achievable freedom by choosing well, from options available to us.

rationality, we can become sufficient for discerning and choosing well in a variety of situations.

It is also fairly obvious, but should be pointed out, that control requires causal determinism or something approximating it, to achieve the regularity of effect following cause and reliability in events and in our own responses on which control must depend. Were it not so, were there no such reliable connection between initiating cause and resulting effect on the controlled object, no efficacious control could be developed or achieved, either through learning or some other (presumably inherent) provenance, nor could this have occurred in evolution. (Thus, for example, the addition of noise to a control signal can be devastating.) Effective control needs underlying causal regularities, as determinism would assure, as a condition for successful operation.

II. The question of being able to 'do otherwise'

An often used criterion of freedom in choice is the question of whether persons in choosing 'could have done otherwise' than to choose as they did. The basic underlying idea is that if one 'could not do otherwise' then one is somehow forced into choosing a certain way, and so is not free.[11] (Whereas, being unforced, one might choose otherwise.) This is paradigmatically true of one who is coerced into doing something against his or her will. Similarly, one who is in the grip of a mental illness or addiction may be thought not free, for much the same reason: that in choosing badly they were not really capable of choosing otherwise. So it would seem that these unfortunates have in common a lack of ability to 'do otherwise.' Some have been led to claim that, by extension, since it may seem that persons are never able to 'do otherwise' than they actually do if causal determinism is true, then they are not ever truly free. But how seriously should this proposed extension of a 'could have done otherwise' concern be taken as a criterion of freedom? I shall argue, against this proposed radical extension, that the defeat of freedom by incapacity should be seen as restricted to certain sorts of special cases and situations, as it generally has been in practice.[12]

Thus, tieing freedom to control leads to the understanding that our freedom is tantamount to not having – or overcoming – restrictions or impediments of external, internal, or conceptual sorts.

[11] This is the basic claim of the well-known Consequence Argument, which has been used to undermine belief in free choice or 'free will.' This is discussed in some detail in my book (Douglass 2015). Basically, that argument misunderstands freedom, by styling it as something which is automatically defeated by causal necessitation and offering no understanding of how we really choose.

[12] Worries about our being bound by causal necessitation have led some philosophers to view alleged occasional occurrences of indeterminacy in our choices as being necessary for our freedom in choice. In my book (Douglass 2015) I characterized this as an 'escape' requirement put on freedom; I argued that such a requirement does not constitute part of, or a reasonable extension of, our normal concept of freedom. The fundamental goal of choice – from which there can be no escape – is our need to choose well. What we must try to 'escape' from are

15

How shall we understand the demand for an ability to 'do otherwise'? Clearly, 'doing otherwise' cannot be a strategy for choice, nor could it be an objective of choice: for it is by definition unattainable (and even, in a way, self-contradictory). Neither can it be a true ability, properly speaking – for the same sort of reason: that it would be directed toward the accomplishment of something that necessarily cannot be done. What we have is only an ability to choose, which is a target-selection ability – one which identifies and evaluates potential targets according to criteria for selection (which may also be chosen, and whose selection may be investigated). To repeat, choice is a basic control function and in choice situations of a serious nature there is an inherent directionality to be discovered: we must "fit our choices to the world," to borrow a phrase from John Searle. At least in all serious matters, choosers are properly impelled to seek superior (or at least satisfactory) results. We have to select from recognizable options which appear to be 'open' to our choice (or they are not really options[13] for us), seeking for what best suits our needs and values. In choosing, our proper concern is not 'doing otherwise' but discovering what would be best for us to do under the circumstances. If there is no failure or mistake in target recognition, evaluation or choice, then there is no reason to 'do otherwise,' nor should one wish to.

All our control involves abilities, and all our abilities are subject to failure. So also the ability to choose is subject to interference and breakdown. Our notion of freedom in choice derives from cases where it is absent or impaired; which become clearer by being understood against a background of normal functioning. Thus, our failures to choose well – which are the cases where we come to wish that we might have done otherwise – lead us to consider ways that choice can go wrong. What is implicated in the usual sorts of cases of true inability other than coercion are the failure modes of abilities associated with choice: due perhaps to some internal failure caused by disease or injury, one's ability to discern, evaluate and choose properly is compromised. Rationality comprises a set of abilities involving learning that must be developed; and like all true abilities it also has its failure modes: characteristic ways that rationality in choice can fail, that can also restrict our freedom. It is through the development of rationality that we become sufficient for making good choices across a broad range of circumstances and situations; through the loss or incapacitation of one's rationality – or its failure to develop normally – one can lose or fail to develop

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such tendencies as may cause us to choose badly. There is an underlying directionality to choice, as 'fitting our choices to the world' for the sake of our survival and success. The predictability of so choosing should not be taken as indicative of diminished freedom: indeed, to choose well is a sign of rational choice; and rational choices tend to be more predictable than irrational ones.

[13] As Aristotle observed, no one deliberates about that which is thought to be unattainable: we only deliberate about "things that are in our power and can be realized in action." (NE 1112a20-33)

that ability. That ignorance and inability to see into the future constitute limiting conditions on choice is well known; but such cases are the stuff of common experience, and are not those paradigmatic of inability, which are generally held to be exceptional – and not such as to be cured by more information. Such exceptional cases I shall call 'blockages,' wherein one is unable to choose to do something for a physical or psychological reason.[14]

Nor is a choice less free for being predictable: rational beings, well informed as to each other's character and interests, can often predict one another's choices; indeed, so doing is part of the way we understand each other. The proper (and implicit) objective of choice is choosing well. If so, then it is only when the phrase 'doing otherwise' signifies certain conditions – either external interferences with choice or certain internal interferences with the ability to choose well – that it properly betokens a condition of inability, such that there is a proportionately diminished freedom. The freedom-constraining internal conditions to choice or choosing well – call them 'blockages' – can indicate the sort of control involved; and we come to understand our freedom better by understanding what threatens or disrupts it. Freedom appears clearly to us when cases of its failure (really control failures) can be seen in contrast to the (more usual) cases of the well-functioning of our control. Our control, and hence freedom, is a composite in that it depends on an assemblage of abilities functioning well together.

There are other sorts of cases in which someone may claim to have been unable to choose otherwise: due to a certitude that one's choice is the right one, or perhaps to a commitment to some belief that can then become determinative of one's course of action. Such for example is indicated in the celebrated statement of Martin Luther.[15] A commitment to certain sorts of goals can become determinative of one's life-course in various ways (for example, in the case of religious commitment). That can result in some options for choice appearing to

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[14] By a 'blockage' of an option to choice, I mean that the individual is simply unable to choose an option that would be open to being selected were there not a malfunction in the ability of selection. This is not in general due to a failure to recognize the option as such, nor to a bias against it: those can of course occur; but they are such as to be cured by acquisition of relevant information or knowledge. Such a blockage could be due to conditioning, addiction, or to an irrational fear (were the fear rational, it would not count as such a blockage, the avoidance then being rational). Of course, it could also be due to a mental or neural disease. Such a 'blockage' represents a controllability deficiency – a failure of access to certain options. (Indeed, the question as to ability to 'do otherwise' is really just about the organism's controllability – whether it is normal or partial.) There is no such blockage of an option were it excluded because one rationally determined that it was not the best option available. To make such determinations is basic to rational choice; whereas 'blockages' tend to undermine rational choice.

[15] Martin Luther's famous statement to the Diet of Worms – "My conscience is captive to the word of God … Here I stand, I can do no other" – has been discussed in various writings; a discussion of it appears in my book (Douglass 2015). Luther's stance seems a paradigm case of prechoosing.

17

become, and perhaps really being, foreclosed to choice. Yet such 'prechoosing,' though a constraint on choice, is not necessarily an abrogation of freedom: if such prechoosings are one's own choices and based on values that one strongly holds, and arrived at after careful thought, then they only serve to further one's pursuit of one's major goals by making it more unlikely that one would choose amiss at a critical moment or under temptation.

Merely having more options to choose among is not always an advantage for choosers: for that can lead to an increase in the time and effort needed to make a choice, which can be costly or even disastrous if a rapid choice is needed or if temptation is to be avoided.[16] There is a time cost to sorting through numerous options; and if in every case a decision procedure must revert to foundational considerations, there is an increased chance of error. With development of ability for forethought, experience can be used to generate expectations and anticipate situations for evaluation; then one can in effect make some choices in advance, so as to use what has been learned to save time and avoid mistakes at the moment of decision. When such 'prechoosing' utilizes one's own preferences and values (choice criteria) it can be a means to save time and also to help insure that superior choices will be made, inasmuch as one has enough knowledge to classify in advance certain sorts of situations as being such that one would do X, say, as a best choice; or one may choose to avoid or not choose certain types of actions. Being able to do this requires both knowledge and forethought; but it is commonly done, and can lead to development of habits, which as Aristotle observed (NE 1152a33) can be formative of character. It is not a diminution of one's freedom inasmuch as it represents one's own choice and one's own values; rather it is both a self-construction and an extension of our power to achieve better outcomes through rational choice. Done carefully and thoughtfully, one may be 'giving rules to oneself,' to guide one's future conduct. Indeed, if we always knew just how to choose, we could save time, eliminate errors, and be maximally free. (In such a case, to do otherwise would be to make a mistake.) We would have 'escaped' errors and their consequences.

Consider a limit case: imagine an ideal chooser, a perfectly knowledgeable being who always knows how to choose – there is no reason to suppose that such a being would exhibit unpredictability in its choices. Its 'power' in choice would consist in its unfailing ability to choose well. Presumably such a being would have no interest in 'doing otherwise.' But, could it? Perhaps not consistently with its (ascribed) character. Yet it should have no such 'blockages' as we associate with certain diseases, say: lesser options are ignored just because they are lesser. So other options were in this sense 'open' to choice (they

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[16] There is a discussion of this in the book *The Art of Choosing*, by Sheena Iyengar; see Ch. 6 there. Indeed, our lives are replete with choices. Most of the time we hardly notice them, because we basically know what to do, based on our previous experience and learning. We choose most efficiently when we know what to do, and even perhaps hardly recognize it as choosing.

18

were 'reachable'). The choice of lesser options was prevented by rational evaluation and/or knowledge of what and how to choose; which is what is proper to and required for rational choice. Being a superb chooser in a way works against 'doing otherwise,' yet such choosers are the most free: they exercise maximal control in choice.

A control-based way to think of the attainability or 'openness' to choice of options is in terms of the concept of 'reachability': roughly, a reachable option is one that is in the feasible, attainable range for the controller (it can drive its 'plant' to that condition), is recognizable as an option, and not somehow 'blocked' from being chosen. One thing to note immediately is that such 'reachability' is linked to 'controllability,' the latter being understood as the ability of a controller to drive its plant through the full range of states that are within its capability.[17] A 'blockage' of many such states would correspond to a significant loss or restriction of control – and hence a likely decline in the functionality of the controller. Whereas, options that were not chosen can still be said to have been 'open' in the sense of reachability if they were not 'blocked': indeed, controllability requires it.

The sensitive discernment and evaluation of options available through rational consideration serves the reachability of multiple options, in multiple ways. Abilities to learn, to reconsider and to have insights should lead to a wider range of options presenting for choice. One who has learned what sorts of action work well in various situations is prompted by that recollection upon recognition of relevant similarities. One who has developed a set of values and/or rules to guide decisions toward better outcomes has that to draw on. One may have learned how to make inquiries, if there is time, to draw out crucial bits of information on aspects of choice situations. If one thinks of finding out what to do as problem-solving, rationality clearly aids and enables that. In multiple ways, rationality opens to us possibilities for investigation, to discover and discern what options are available and then to compare and evaluate them. Thus through learning and becoming more rational we become able to choose better and so more freely: we become the rational chooser who is also the most free.

Yet at the same time, rationality always serves the reachability of options in a discriminatory way: for what is really wanted is access to knowing what best serves the interests of the chooser. If one has attained the solution of a problem

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[17] Here is something by way of further definition of the control-theoretic concept of reachability of states and outputs. Reachability "requires that there is a [control input] u(t) that drives any given initial state to any desired final state." F. L. Lewis in Levine (1996, 765.) The close connection to controllability is obvious. Here is a definition of (output) reachability from robotics: "A reachable grasp configuration is one which is within the work envelope of the manipulator, and one for which a collision-free path to the grasp configuration is available." (Schilling 1990, 378) Thus, a reachable state or output is one which is obtainable or 'open' to choice, loosely speaking. The subject is discussed at greater length in Ch. 9 of my book (Douglass 2015).

of choice, one wants to act on that and not something else. Choosing according to valuations and rules can be a way of utilizing choice criteria based on (a theory of) external factors and of one's needs, directed toward choosing 'for the best.' To develop criteria for choice through values and rules, and an understanding of situations through experience and theory, makes for choosing well, which is the implicit overall goal of choice. Indeed, had one no criteria, how could one choose? And one who could not choose when choice is necessary would not be more free but less so.[18] So in multiple ways, rationality serves the reachability of options; but it is always a differential reachability, one that aims at choosing 'for the best' – which requires excluding other options.

To increase our freedom in choice to the fullest extent, subject to the constraints inherent in choice situations, would mean to become able to choose better – to choose well more often and/or across a still broader range of situations. For that indicates an enlargement of our control in choice, and hence also of our freedom, maximal freedom corresponding to maximal control in choice. Using various learned methods, one can become adept at the art of choosing well;[19] then better options become more available to us, and we can better 'escape' the consequences of choosing badly. The implicit supreme goal of choice, choosing well in all situations (or as many as possible) is thus served – not that of 'doing otherwise,' which cannot be a goal or strategy of choice for us.

One sees also that causal determinism is in no way implicated in a potential loss of freedom for us – it is in no sense a 'failure mode' of ability in choice. And there must be a stable basis for these abilities, and a basis for evaluation as well as an ability to evaluate, or one would not be more free but unable to really choose at all; and that basis should be keyed to things 'in the world.' Determinacy or something approximating it must obtain in order to provide the causal regularities which all our control – and hence, our freedom – are based on; it is really implicitly a condition for control. Nor could one learn through experience of determinacy as a cause of lack of freedom, or even from a theory of the function of any mechanism, inasmuch as causal regularities are required in every choice and action, and underlie our understanding of everything that occurs. Causal determinism is in no proper sense such a

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[18] This is the situation of persons with certain types of brain injuries, as discussed in Antonio Damasio's book, *Descartes' Error*. (See p. 193, for example.) Such persons may understand the choice situation they face, yet lack the ability to choose.

[19] For example, one can learn of one's own tendencies and possible biases, in order to compensate for those as needed in choosing. One can learn techniques of self-control, as useful in decision as in follow-through. One can make use of forethought to anticipate situations in which choices must be made, and make use of both experience and theory to come to better understand such situations. Techniques of how to compare and value options can be studied; and one can become more experienced in problem-solving. One can 'prechoose' in advance to do – or not do – certain sorts of acts (a sort of advance planning for choice). Strategies for obtaining additional information can be pursued, if there is time. This appears as a project of self-reconstruction; but if one really pursues it, one should become more rational.

20

'blockage' as noted here. Restrictions on our freedom of choice always derive from some particular condition of external or internal origin, which can come to be known – reflection on such failures is the basis of our understanding of our freedoms. Hence the usual conditions associated with freedom in choice, which are based on human experience and knowledge, point to particular sorts of failure modes of our control apparatus as the real limitations on our freedom of choice, which include those that reasonably and legitimately count as excusing conditions, and the discrimination of which serve to demarcate the bounds of our freedom.

III. The Possibility of Responsibility

In view of the likely truth of causal determinism, is it ever reasonable to hold people responsible? Some have claimed that responsibility cannot really hold where determinism holds.[20] Here I offer a compatibilist argument, denying that determinism is a threat to responsibility. What I consider and defend here is not specifically moral responsibility, but a capability of responsibility in general: the key question is of ability, not that which it is directed toward the achievement of or motivated by. We must consider what makes it possible for people to behave responsibly and so to be (reasonably) held responsible.

In order to address this question properly, we require to know the basis of responsibility in human abilities: that is, what enables persons to become responsible and to behave responsibly? What, then, are the particular abilities relied upon in its performance? Clearly, one who is to be responsible must be able to understand what it is that they must do; they should also be willing and able to accept that and in so doing, choose to do so, and be able to persevere in the choice made. Inasmuch as making responsible choices is choosing properly and well, one can say that the requirements are those that make for choosing well. What then enables persons to become and be able to make good decisions and then to abide by them? This is the crucial question; and the answer is surely through the development and possession of rationality.

It is an observed fact that in human development, children and youths become able to assume responsibility and tend to behave more responsibly as they mature and become more rational. This ordinarily happens through a normal course of development, both biological and social. Conversely, it is also well known that it is through failures of such normal development of rationality when due to some biological cause (for example, certain mental illnesses) that persons may become incapable of behaving responsibly and so of bearing

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[20] For example, Saul Smilansky (2012) seems to regard it as a secret that must be kept from the public so as not to undermine the socially necessary practice of holding people responsible. One can of course say that determinism does not hold universally – quantum theory shows that. But it appears to largely if not entirely hold on the level of non-micro-scale phenomena.

responsibility. This is the source of the well-known excusing or 'defeasibility' conditions, such that persons may become excused from normal expectations of responsible behavior: such ascriptions of blame as would ordinarily be generated are defeated by proving a mental incapacity such as would render the person incapable of reliably rational choice and action. But real evidence of such a debilitating condition must be available: as rational acceptance of responsibility is basic to all human organization, and so is a necessity for a modern society, so such excusing conditions as are allowed must be carefully restricted.

To become and be responsible (and so to be recognized as such), persons must be able to understand the requirements or obligations which are to be put upon them, and to be able to commit to so doing, undertaking thereby certain obligations of performance in appropriate circumstances. It is rationality that enables this, inasmuch as it is rationality that provides the suite of (self-) control abilities that enable persons to understand, to evaluate options, to choose well and to perform accordingly. Responsibility in performance requires considerable agential control in order for persons to reliably act and behave as responsible persons should; and the full flower of that control comes for us in the development of our rationality, which is the basis for our ability to learn to understand situations and to identify and evaluate options properly and then to choose accordingly.

It is clear that rationality is a necessary basis for responsibility: for to become and behave responsibly one must be able to understand what is required and accordingly be able to commit to so doing. This often involves a 'prechoosing' (or a series of prechoosings) in which persons choose in advance to perform – or not – certain sorts of acts when circumstances are appropriate. What is required is that, as abilities for understanding, foresight, 'prechoosing' and choosing based on reasons and self-control develop, one becomes attracted toward behaving responsibly and comes to acquire the character of a responsible person. In this way, through choices and actions and also through 'prechoosings' one constructs in oneself the character of one who is responsible.[21]

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[21] However, rationality does not appear to be in itself a sufficient basis for the development and acceptance of responsibility; for example, certain behavioral tendencies may work against it in practice. Also needed in addition to a developed rationality is that persons (in general) possess certain instincts or tendencies that enable socialization; these include a capacity for sympathy and that persons not be inclined to be overly aggressive toward others. And persons should also find that their situations enable expectations of reciprocity, such that they can share in benefits as well as obligations. All this serves to create a social background for the choice of responsible behavior, such that choosers can feel that others are not enemies but are trustworthy and that they can benefit from acting responsibly. For people to rationally and willingly accept it, responsibility should be attractive to them (unless it is just brought about by compulsion – an unreliable and unstable means).

22

In all cases, the social requirements of responsible action should be such that most people can satisfy them.[22] 'Normal' persons should be able to understand what is expected, to evaluate well and to choose the responsible act, across a broad range of situations, understanding the benefits and costs in given cases and also that of upholding the practice as a whole. The normality of responsible action as well as the inherent normativity of human rationality should be our assurance of this. Indeed, enabling us to understand and accept reasonable conditions for responsibility is one of the things our ability for rationality does for us.

As rationality is crucial, so another sort of requirement is a society in which it is rational to be responsible. Thus, an expectation of reciprocation of benefits as well as obligations also belongs to the notion of responsibility: for otherwise one would not reasonably agree (to the aspects of obligation). For if benefits are not reciprocated, then the relationship is more like that of master to slave, which is based on coercion and fear. For voluntary compliance, conditions of acceptance should be such that members can reasonably agree to them.[23] One's responsibility as a group member should be understood, and understood to be fair (involving a mutuality of benefit), or one would not reasonably and fully accept it.[24] If all this is understood to hold, one should have something like a sense of citizenship, of belonging. Ideally, one should come to understand and accept one's role and what one is responsible for, and what one can expect in return. And in so doing, one 'prechooses' to do (or not do) certain sorts of acts, and thereby becomes a responsible citizen.

That responsibility, or responsible behavior, is subject to failures reminds us that it is based on underlying abilities of rational self-control, and such abilities can fail or be compromised in certain cases. Some of these distinctive failure types constitute the standard defeasibility conditions, which are the customary and allowable excusing conditions. Such failure types (usually due to injury, disease, developmental problems or addiction) tend to render it very

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[22] There is another implicit responsibility, which is the responsibility of the group or of its leaders to make sure that the standards of what is expected are not unreasonably high, so that all or at least most people can achieve them.

[23] Some might claim that persons do not really need to be rational in order to be made to become responsible – they can just be indoctrinated – conditioned to react in certain ways. But this overlooks the reciprocity which we should take a basic fairness of arrangements to require. And many persons will develop rationally anyway; these then may discover that it is rational for them to ignore such conditioning on occasion. Thus, being dependent on rationality and its development, codes of behavior which persons are taken to be responsible for should (ideally) also embody a reasonableness and reciprocity in order to hold stably. Another alternative is the use of fear – which has served rulers throughout history. But to go further into such political matters is beyond the scope of this paper.

[24] There is evidence that a feeling for fairness or reciprocity is more widespread than the human species – it appears to be instinctive in various social primates. For example, see de Waal *et al.* (2006, 42 – 49).

23

difficult or impossible for an afflicted individual to make rational decisions or abide by them. The failure types are specific to the real abilities that correspond to them. It is by coming to understand these abilities and their limits and modes of failure that we become able to discern which sorts of cases should be taken as excusing – i.e., in which it is not reasonable to believe that afflicted persons could have overcome them.[25] Of course there can be hard cases; but such difficulties are to be expected. And due to the importance of the practice of holding persons responsible, the group or authorities must err on the side of upholding standards of behavior when such standards are necessary to the welfare of the community.

There are multiple reasons for maintaining narrow conditions for excepting persons from responsibility: if there is any serious difficulty or risk involved, persons will not reasonably agree to perform if others are to be excused, unless that is under carefully circumscribed conditions. Indeed, it would be irrational to do so – to accept stringent dictates on responsibility for oneself when broad-brush excuses are being granted to others could put one at a disadvantage and even in danger. Granting overly broad excusing conditions would undermine the practice of holding persons responsible, which cooperation depends on. Further, those to be fully or generally excused cannot be considered as full citizens – for they can't be counted on to do their part or to follow the rules and uphold the standards of the society. It would be a betrayal of those who were full cooperators to treat non-cooperators as if they were cooperators. It would be collectively irrational as well as irresponsible for the group to excuse too much. For members of society are also responsible for upholding the basic concept of responsibility, and its attendant practices, on which human cooperation depends. Hence the usual defeasibility conditions, which require clear breakdowns in ability to behave responsibly, or similar narrow conditions, are a social necessity.

It is clear that determinism is not like the usual defeasibility conditions: it is not a 'failure mode' of rationality or of control. It is an aspect of the general theory of natural causes, proclaiming the universality and necessity of causal regularities. So it in no way belongs among the usual 'excusing conditions,' which

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[25] There are various sorts of problems that can interfere with one's ability to act responsibly, which can be characterized as failures of rationality. There are various mental illnesses that can interfere with ability to decide or to choose well, or which make for mental instability. Then there are cases of akrasia or 'weakness of will,' which is common (some such cases may be developmental failures on the way to becoming fully rational and self-controlled) and commonly thought to be avoidable and blameable. (One may be held to be responsible for becoming the sort of person who can be held responsible, as a requirement of citizenship.) There are cases of self-deception; and some may fail to adequately develop a rational mentality. (For a more thorough discussion, see Alfred Mele's book *Irrationality*.) Of course, borderline cases can occur; and to what degree such conditions can be excusing can sometimes be debated. The main point here is that rationality is a real ability – or a suite of abilities – that can fail in characteristic ways, and in so doing thwart establishment of a capability of responsibility in persons.

24

are failure modes of the capability of rational choice. To consider determinism as such a failure mode would be a category mistake. Accordingly, it is not reasonable to consider determinism as in any way requiring an extension of the defeasibility conditions.

We can further assert that determinism is no threat to responsibility because it is no threat to rationality. For rationality is a species of control, and control depends on reliable means of achieving its modes of performance. (Whereas irruptions of acausal randomness, the sort that is considered to be the opposite of deterministic phenomena, would undermine these abilities.) Rationality's abilities rely on the reliability of response made possible by causal regularities in order to function effectively. Causal regularities are essential to reliable performance and also to learning; and there is no reason to believe that rational controllers could operate without such causal regularities in nature. Nor are any other conditions necessary for responsibility threatened by determinism. Accordingly, we can conclude that there is no reason to think of determinism as an obstacle to persons' ability to become and to be responsible persons; rather, it is a necessity for that.[26]

Conclusion

To recapitulate the main points discussed here: control is ever the complement of freedom – that is key to understanding freedom's nature. We are controllers, of the sort that seek and choose targets. Choice is also a control function (an aspect of targeting control); and in choosing our goals, our implicit ultimate goal is our well-being – our survival and success. Our ability to achieve this implicit ultimate goal is greatly enhanced by the development of rationality. We develop our rationality and become rational through learning (rationality being a species of learning control). Being able and unhindered in choosing makes one free; but one is most free (subject to a situation's limitations) when one is also able to

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[26] Here is one more argument against the notion that morality – or moral concern – somehow requires the abandonment of responsibility. Morality cannot require the abrogation of responsibility, as that is a necessary grounding for social cooperation and hence for morality (all that which is constructed as opposed to being merely instinctive, such as an instinct of sympathy). There would be no point to the elaboration of moral codes were people not to be taken as being capable of being responsible to obey them – that is a necessary, if implicit, condition for any sort of agreement on cooperative action. The concept of responsibility and its practice in groups must have preceded, or at least been simultaneous with, any claims that there are moral 'oughts' or rules: for inasmuch as these are or imply rules for the group, they will require responsible compliance. So there is something close to circularity in the claim that something in morality repudiates responsibility. It can't be the case that we are responsible to not be responsible, nor to hold others not responsible. Responsibility being necessary to social cooperation and a necessary basis for morality, it could not be the case that morality requires us to dispense with it.

choose well, as becomes possible for us through the development of our capability of rationality. As with any sort of ability, our control is subject to occasional failures, which are characteristic. But determinism does not constitute such a 'failure mode' of control or of rationality; in fact, such causal regularities as it would assure are required for our ability to control ourselves and to learn.

There is no such ability as an ability to 'do otherwise.' Choice is a selection between options ('targets'), which are thought to be open to us. Rational choices are likely to be predictable by other rational beings – which in no way impugns their having been freely chosen. The required 'openness' of options to choice may be seen as 'reachability'; options that are feasible should be presumed reachable unless they are 'blocked.' (Such blockages – really controllability failures –are often due to disease, injury, or addiction, and are exceptions to normal functioning.) But rational choice is always discriminating, and options not chosen are in general valued less.

Responsibility is a necessary basis for social organization and cooperation. Rationality is a necessary basis for assuming responsibility. Persons are commonly expected to become responsible citizens as part of their normal development, which includes learning and becoming more rational. One means of so doing is through 'prechoosing' – choosing in advance to perform (or not) certain sorts of acts on appropriate occasions – which is a means of character development. As there are 'failure modes' of rationality and control, so there can be excusing conditions for noncompliance in regard to responsibility – the standard 'defeasibility conditions' which are well known. The importance of responsible behavior mandates that excusing conditions be restricted to the known and understood types of 'blockages.'

Determinism is not a 'failure mode' of rationality as it is not of control. (To think so would be a category mistake.) Again, determinism or something approximating it is necessary to assure the regularities of natural causation that are required for us to operate as learning controllers. Nor is any other aspect or requirement of responsibility threatened by determinism.

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Characterizing Moral Realism

Jude Edeh

Abstract: The challenge faced with the proliferation of various kinds of cognitivism is the difficulty of providing a straightforward characterization of moral realism and antirealism. In light of this tension, I identified a problem in Sayre-McCord's way of specifying the criteria of moral realism. Furthermore, I provided a framework that characterized the moral realism beyond the features of cognitivism. Finally, I argue that any successful characterization of moral realism must capture its ontology robustly in order to separate it from other realist-like positions that espouse the idea of truth-value and objectivity.

Keywords: moral realism, cognitivism, cognitivist expressivism, antirealism, Sayre-McCord.

1. Introduction

One of the striking characteristics of the recent development in metaethics is the burgeoning accounts of cognitivism, including positions straddling the divide between expressivism and cognitivism such as quasi-realism, cognitivist expressivism, etc. While the latter positions promised to explain the truth-value of moral claims without appealing to the metaphysics of moral realism (Blackburn 1984, Horgan and Timmons 2006), they are however generating conflicting accounts that threaten a straightforward classification of metaethical views (Asay 2013). As a result of this James Dreier notes that:

> Minimalism sucks the substance out of heavy-duty metaphysical concepts. If successful, it can help expressivism recapture the ordinary realist language of ethics. But in so doing it also threatens to make irrealism indistinguishable from realism. That is the problem of Creeping Minimalism. (Dreier 2004, 26).

The emergence of these realist-like positions highlights the need for characterizing moral realism. Precisely, it calls for a delineation that helps to clarify what is meant to be at stake between moral realism and irrealism (also known as antirealism). In this paper, I argue that moral realism is not just a semantic doctrine, but also an ontological thesis. Simply put, moral realism entails moral cognitivism but not vice versa. The plan of this paper is as follows: First, I argue that Sayre-McCord's model of characterizing moral realism is insufficient as it makes positions such as cognitivist expressivism appear as moral realism. In light of this failure, I provide a framework that characterizes moral realism beyond the features of cognitivism. Second, I argue that any successful characterization of moral realism must capture its metaphysics robust enough to separate it from other realist-like positions that espouse the idea of truth-value and objectivity.

Jude Edeh

2. Sayre-McCord's Requirements

Philosophical realism is characterized by its ontological, epistemological and semantic claims. Generally, it is the thesis, which claims that facts and properties exist independently of our minds, perceptions and linguistic practices (Hettinger 1985). However, any general characterization is likely to blur its various manifestations across a large number of subject matters. Consequently, it can obscure the debate between the realists and irrealists. For instance, the realist-claims in mathematics differ from the realist-claims in aesthetics or modality. One can therefore be a modal realist while rejecting mathematical or theological realism. This concern is even more complicated in ethics, as the majority of realists from other domains would largely disagree with the kind of entities proposed by the moral realists. Against this background, Geoffrey Sayre-McCord (1988, 5) offers a map that promises to delineate realism from antirealism; and consequently, to offer a better characterization of moral realism. According to him, realism maintains that:

> 1) The claims in question, when literally construed, are literally true or false.

> 2) Some of the claims in question are literally true.

Moral realists believe that moral beliefs are truth-apt (e.g. Boyd 1988; McNaughton 1988; Schaber 1997). Unlike the error theory (e.g. Mackie, 1977; Sinnott-Armstrong, 2006), moral realism holds that some of our moral beliefs are true (e.g. Brink 1989; Devitt 2002). Even though the (moral) claims in question are supported by the cognitive state, Sayre-McCord's model is silent about the nature of their truth-value. That is, it does not tell us the part of reality that makes such (moral) claims true. Besides, it is unclear whether we should understand the truth-values of the claims in question robustly or minimally (Smith, 1999; Enoch, 2011; Tropman, 2013). This distinction is important since the ontology of moral beliefs is at the core of moral realist and antirealist controversy (Miller 2009). In what follows, I shall show that fulfilling Sayre-McCord's criteria does not sufficiently make a moral theory a realist position. In essence, construing moral realism on these criteria can lead to qualifying some anti-realist positions as moral realism (Asay 2013).

2.1 Not Morally Realist Enough

What Sayre-McCord's model offers us is a tool for characterizing cognitivist positions and not moral realism. His model is insufficient as moral realism entails moral cognitivism but not vice versa. To illustrate this point, let us consider a moral theory, which holds that 'Peter ought not to shoplift'. This claim can be true or false, nevertheless it cannot be both true and false for the same action. Moreover, it would be false to claim that Peter can shoplift in shop B, but not in shop A. Assuming we consider this moral claim as true, notice that the first requirement of Sayre-McCord's model is fulfilled. Additionally, suppose we have

30

reason to believe that 'shoplifting is morally bad' is actually *true*. In so doing, we as well fulfil the second requirement of the model. Thus, going by Sayre-McCord's model, we can qualify any moral theory endorsing these views as moral realism. However, the truth-claim *alone* does not sufficiently make a position realist. If this were so, Terry Horgan and Mark Timmons' position would be classified as a form of moral realism because it satisfies Sayre-McCord's criteria.

In *Morality without Moral Facts*, these authors propose a position that seems to capture the structure of ordinary discourse. For them, moral beliefs possess the phenomenology of an occurrent belief, namely *what-it-is-likeness typically*, which involves:

a) Psychologically 'coming down' on some issue, in a way that
b) Classifies (sometimes spontaneously) some 'object' of focus as falling under some category, where one's classificatory coming down is experienced
c) As involuntary,
d) As a cognitive response to some sort of consideration that is experienced (perhaps peripherally in consciousness) as being a sufficient reason for categorizing as one does, and
e) As a judgment that is apt for assertion and hence it is naturally expressible in public language by a sentence in the declarative mood. (Horgan and Timmons 2006, 263)

Even though moral beliefs share the generic phenomenological features of non-moral beliefs, Horgan and Timmons contend that they do not have the same overall descriptive content. For them, the mental states underlying moral beliefs and non-moral beliefs are distinct psychological *sui generis* contents. Therefore, the mental states of moral beliefs are irreducible to non-moral beliefs. In addition, the mental states supporting moral beliefs lack the fittingness that represents the world in a certain way or as it might be. For them, "to construe moral beliefs in this manner is to mistakenly assimilate them to descriptive beliefs, i.e. to is-commitments. Rather, an ought-commitment is a distinct kind of mental affirmation vis-à-vis a core descriptive content" (Horgan and Timmons 2006, 271). They strongly argue that the non-descriptive contents of moral beliefs are compatible with truth and assertoric features of non-moral beliefs. One of the implications of their claims is that we can assign truth-values to moral beliefs without appealing to any moral facts and their corresponding ontologies. Precisely, moral beliefs are genuine beliefs, which can be true or false. Nevertheless, for them, we do not need such things as in-the-world moral facts, namely, truth-makers (Horgan and Timmons 2009, 275). In summary, when we utter moral statements, which can be true or false assertions, we are only engaging in semantic appraisals and nothing more. This refers to, "appraisals in which semantic evaluation are 'fused' with moral evaluation. These truth ascriptions thus are not descriptive, because the overall content of the first-order judgments and utterances to which they are applied is not descriptive" (Horgan and Timmons 2006, 275).

Like Blackburn's construal of truth-value (Blackburn 1984), Horgan and Timmons believe that truth ascriptions function in a minimalist Schema T: *'S' is true if and only if S...*, where we can substitute 'S' for any (moral) declarative sentence. In their cognitivist expressivist model, 'X is wrong' is true 'if and only if X is wrong'. Thus, the moral claim: 'Peter ought not to shoplift' translates into Peter ought not to shoplift is true if and only if Peter ought not to shoplift. In their view, the 'is-commitment' belief and 'ought-commitment' belief express some possible state of affairs. However, unlike the former, the latter does not refer to any fact in the world because such moral facts do not exist anywhere in the world. In their example, both 'John gave back to Mary the money he owed her' and 'John ought to give back to Mary the money he owes her' fulfil the requirements of genuine beliefs;

> Both kinds of commitments state are beliefs since they exhibit certain generic features that are characteristic of beliefs...both sorts of commitment state have the grammatical and logical trappings of genuine beliefs: in thought and language the contents of such states are declarative, and they can figure as constituents in logically complex judgments as in 'Either John has paid what he owes to Mary or he ought to do so'. As such, ought-commitments can figure in logical inferences (Horgan and Timmons 2006, 232).

Notice that if statements such as 'Peter ought not to shoplift' or 'John ought to give back to Mary the money he owes her' are genuine beliefs, then they are accessible in terms of truth and falsity. Hence, based on Sayre-McCord's model, we can qualify Horgan and Mark Timmons' position as moral realism. Even though they construed their position as a form of moral cognitivism, it does meet the requirements of moral realism. Precisely, their position rejects the kind of ontological commitments that underlie the realist construal of moral beliefs. Thus, to characterize moral realism, we need a framework that accommodates the ontology that supports the truth-values of moral claims. On this basis, I reformulate Sayre-McCord's second requirement as follows:

> (2*) Some of the moral claims are literally true because of the moral facts underlying them.

Moreover, Sayre-McCord obscures the distinction between first-order and second-order moral claims. In the former, we can make moral claims, which can be true or false without necessarily appealing to any moral facts. The latter is the thesis that the truth-values of moral beliefs are determined by objective moral facts. This distinction is crucial because moral claims may be literally true or false, where their truth-value is understood on the first-order reading (Gibbard 2003; Horgan and Timmons 2010). On this view, "when one predicates the truth of a moral statement, one is engaged in an act of affirming "metalinguistically" the first-order moral claim in question (that is, affirming first-order moral judgment expressed by the statement one is calling true). Such an affirmation, done metalinguistically by employing the semantic concept of truth, is a morally engaged "fusion" of semantic and moral appraisal" (Horgan and Timmons 2006,

234). Alternatively, differentiating between first-order and second-order claims is important as it allows a better understanding of the metaphysics that makes a moral theory count as moral realism. Accordingly, I shall argue that it is a robust ontology of truth-value that is at the heart of moral realism. In other words, such a robust construal enables us to separate moral realism from irrealism, especially, the realist-like positions espousing the idea of moral objectivity and truth-value.

3. Reconsidering Moral Realism

As a form of philosophical realism, moral realism holds that there are objective moral facts out there. The idea of objectivity is tied to some sort of metaphysical claims about the existence and nature of entities, occurrences or relations. The objectivity-claim in a domain t touches on the idea of an external world, namely a world in which the agents who engage in objectivity discourse are part of.[1] Roughly, objectivity is a way of referring to objects or realities existing independently of what anybody thinks or feels about it. Consider, Beverly McLoughland saying:

> I usually write at the kitchen table, where I sit facing the living room window.
> When I look up from my writing, I can see the woods.

Suppose Beverly can also *see* squirrels jumping off the trees and a dog lying on a mat. This activity involves entities existing independently of Beverly implying, they are out there in the world. For example, by saying that the squirrels are jumping off the trees, Beverly is referring to things – squirrels and trees – in the world. Notice that there is a sort of relationship between Beverly and these things. From a realist perspective, the squirrels and trees will continue to exist irrespective of whether Beverly (or anybody else) *sees or thinks* of them. Thus, when we say that something is objective, we talk about our relationship with the external world. Specifically, we talk about these realities insofar as they are independent of our personal preferences, thoughts, opinions, and projections of attitudes.

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[1] The objectivity-talk spreads across various subject-matters of ordinary practices. Our thought and language operate in a way that presupposes the existence, or at least, the possible existence of objective entities. However, I think that our objectivity-talk would only make sense if there are beings that are capable of knowing and talking about the external world. This concern is also related to the issue of truth-value of statements: "If we imagine a world of mere matter, there would be no room for falsehood in such a world, and although it would contain what may be called 'facts,' it would not contain any truths, in the sense in which truths are things of the same kind as falsehood" (Russell 1912, 170). However, it does not mean that the *existence* of entities or truth-values of statements is not possible in the absence of such minds. Human beings appear to be the only beings capable of strictly engaging in talks about the objective status of realities. In a strict sense, stones, trees, mountains, water or lions do not engage in such talks in a way that is relevant to the domains of human inquiry.

33

First, notice that the idea of independence is crucial to the objectivity claim. In short, independency is the stance of standing back from personal attitudes, opinions, beliefs, etc. This fact points to a relationship between the agents and things in the world. In this analysis, entities are used in a loose sense to cover those sorts of things that *really* exist. By coming in contact with these entities, the agent enters into a kind of *relational encounter* with them. This encounter presupposes the existence as well as a link between the 'I' (subject) and the 'Other' (object), whereby the existence of the latter does not depend on the former and vice versa. For example, Beverly stands in a relational encounter with the objects – squirrels on the trees, dog, and woods. The existence of these objects is independent of her perception, conceptual practice, etc. Besides, they are not causally dependent on her thoughts or projections of feelings. Thus, one of the main features of objectivity is the independent existence of entities. This is fairly the ontological assumption underlying philosophical realism in general and moral realism in particular.

Moral realism construes moral facts as a part of the fabric of the world. Iris Murdoch argues that "they are stretched as it were between the truth-seeking mind and the world" (Murdoch 1970, 90). Consequently, the task of moral agents is not that of creating moral facts and properties, but discovering them. Thus, for the moral realist, these mind-independent facts make moral claims true. In this view, a moral claim is true if it aptly describes the property in question, otherwise, it is false. Thus far, we have two requirements of moral realism:

(1) Moral claims (such as judgments and statements) are capable of being true or false.

(2*) Some of the moral claims are literally true because of the moral facts underlying them.

We can add the third requirement as follows:

(3) There are objective moral facts whose existence is mind-independent.

However, there are various construal of mind-independency in moral realism. I shall begin by briefly tracing the notion of moral mind-independency back to Plato. At least, a passage comes to mind, namely the *Euthyphro*. In this dialogue, Plato's Socrates asks his interlocutor, Euthyphro:

– Is the pious loved by the gods because it is pious?

– Or is it pious because it is loved by the gods? (10a)

Apart from the classical dilemma he posits,[2] what Socrates asks, in other words: "Is something good because we favor it? Or, do we favor it because it's

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[2] On the one hand, if we claim that the pious is pious because the gods loved it, then it would seem that anything the gods say is pious would be so. On the other hand, if we say that the pious is loved by the gods because it is pious, then piousness would not only be independent of but also above and beyond the gods. Hence, the gods would not be almighty.

good?" (Railton 2006, 201; Miller 2013, 7). In other words, he raises the mind-independency versus mind-dependency issue. Moral realism maintains that goodness or badness exists independent of what we talk or think about them. However, irrealism holds that they depend on our feelings, attitudes, desires, etc. In what follows, I shall consider how the moral realists construe moral mind-independency. This exercise is crucial as it enables us to specify another important requirement of moral realism.

4. Moral Realism and Mind-Independency

4.1 Weak Construal of Moral Mind-Independency

Moral facts can be construed weakly, that is, when they are independent of any given individual agent's beliefs, perceptions, thoughts or evidence about them. Kramer writes:

> Sometimes when theorists affirm that mind-independence of a certain matter, they are simply indicating that the facts of those matters transcend the beliefs or attitudes of any given individual. They mean to allow that those facts are derivative of the beliefs or attitudes that are shared by individuals who interact as a group. These theorists contend that, although no individual's view is decisive in ordaining what is actually the case about the matters in question, the understandings which individuals share in their interactions as a group are indeed so decisive (Kramer 2009, 24).

The emphasis here is on any given agent. The theorists endorsing this form of mind-independence believe that truth-makers are independent of any agent's belief, perceptions, thoughts or evidence about them. However, group(s) of individuals can create such moral facts. Suppose we apply the three requirements outlined above to this position, notice that it fits the moral realist framework. Nonetheless, it fails the moral realist test because it understands moral facts as artifacts for solving moral problems. Suffice to say that, the moral facts in question are constructed by (through interactions of) individuals. For example, while chairs and tables are constructed by a carpenter, their 'continued' existence does not depend on the mind of its maker. Similarly, the proponents (e.g. moral constructivists) of weak mind-independence argue that such facts are constructed. Consequently, they are causally dependent on rational agents. However, once constructed, their 'continued' existence does not depend on any given mind or group's minds.[3] Kramer rightly notes that such

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[3] Korsgaard observes that what separates moral realism from moral constructivism is the role of the procedure in the construction of moral facts. She writes: "The procedural moral realist thinks that there are answers to moral questions *because* there are correct procedures for arriving at them. But the substantive moral realist thinks that there are correct procedures for answering moral questions *because* there are moral truths or facts that exist independently of those procedures and which those procedures track. Substantive realism conceives the

interactions must not necessarily involve the convergence or agreement of all the members of a given group. However, the "convergence among a preponderance of a group's members will be sufficient to group the existence or establish the nature of some weakly mind-independent phenomenon" (Kramer 2009, 25).

Suppose we rationally converge or agree that 'S' is a moral fact. On the weak mind-independent construal, the continued existence of 'S' transcends the minds or thoughts of the agents. Assuming the agents that constructed 'S' suddenly disappear, 'S' would continue to exist.[4] This implies that the continued existence of 'S' does not depend on its creators. Besides, 'S' would continue even if nobody observes or thinks of it. On this construal, moral facts are observationally mind-independent. Kramer notes that "Something is observationally mind-independent if and only if its nature (comprising its form and its substance and its sheer existence) does not hinge on what any observer takes the nature to be" (Kramer 2009, 25). Despite this position fulfilling the requirements listed above, it cannot be strictly regarded as moral realism. This is because it conceives moral facts as causally constructed by (a group of) individuals. Thus, we can submit that moral facts are to some extent mind-dependent entities.

Apart from not meeting the requirements of moral realism, these positions are problematic on several grounds. To begin with, imagine the cost of bringing all the members of a group to converge on what would count for and against moral facts. Given the nature and specificities of various groups, it appears difficult to bring them to a convergence point. With some groups, it may be more difficult to bring all the members to participate in the first place. On this ground, one falls back to the majority of the group to achieve such a convergence. Notice that the force of such moral facts would heavily rely on some sort of expectation. That is, an expectation that *all* members of the group (both the majority and minority groups respectively) would have to adhere to them. The ground for such an expectation might be rationality. It might be argued that since the moral facts are rationally based, they apply to all agents as such. However, given the possibility of various models of rationality, this argument fails. This is because the minority may have a legitimate reason not to adhere to the majority's reason. Besides, the majority camp may be in an error.

Secondly, to avoid biased or prejudiced outcomes, the moral constructivist argues that rational agents or participants of rational deliberations should

procedures for answering normative questions as ways of *finding out* about a certain part of the world, the normative part" (Korsgaard 1996, 38 see also 36).

[4] Such entities might continue to exist, but their existence is significantly tied to their utility. In other words, their continued existence would be lame just in case there will be no agent to utilize their usefulness. Consequently, the practical usefulness of the constructivist moral facts would only make sense if there are minds that construe them as practical solutions to moral problems.

become *ideal observers*. In other words, they have to enter the process of moral deliberation by taking what Rawls calls the original position:

> The parties in the original position do not agree on what the moral facts are if there already were such facts. It is not that, being situated impartially, they have a clear and undistorted view of a prior and independent moral order. Rather (for constructivism), there is no such order; and therefore, no such facts apart from the procedure of construction as a whole; the facts are identified by the principles that result [from the procedure]. (Rawls 1999, 354)

However, I doubt very much the possibility of such a posture since the process of moral deliberations relies on some idea of procedures. First, the moral constructivist shoulders the burden of justifying his 'chosen' position or procedure. Precisely, he has to explain away why a given procedure is preferred over others. Second, he has to specify why the original position is to be set up in a given way in the first place. Finally, he has to secure the legitimacy of the final justifications of his outcomes. Recall the moral fact 'S' - Let us suppose it resulted from an ideal procedure of moral deliberation. Notice that there are features, which 'S' must possess for it to be regarded as an impartial outcome of an ideal process of moral deliberation. However, in the absence of some kind of pre-fixed (e.g. logical or rational) standards for evaluating 'S', it would be difficult to determine whether 'S' fulfils the requirements of a genuine moral fact. This is problematic on two grounds. On the one hand, assuming the constructivist denies the existence of such standards, he would be begging the question against the rational requirements of determinacy. On the other hand, assuming the constructivist accepts such requirements, then he has to explain away how the ideal observers are supposed to mute their pre-fixed requirements while entering the ideal procedure of moral construction. Nevertheless, the constructivist can deny the existence of such prior or fixed requirements. If he does, he would be begging the question against the realist position. Besides, the clause 'apart from' in Rawl's position above seems to transform the procedure of construction to a form of fixed requirement for an ideal moral deliberation.[5] Similarly, Horgan and Timmons argue that the constructivist is caught up in a dilemma:

> That is, in characterizing the conditions of ideal deliberation, if the constructivist appeals to the relatively uncontroversial formal and substantive platitudes associated with the concept of being an ideal moral judge, the result

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[5] Rawls acknowledges this problem and tries to address it in terms of an underlying wide reflective equilibrium. That is, the notion of a hypothetical state of affairs arrived at by resolving the expected inconsistencies between our considered judgments and the principles yielded by a candidate's description of the initial situation. Although this technique is intended to serve as a justification for the design of the original position and procedure of construction, it is not without criticisms. For example, Kelly and McGrath (2010), and Arras (2007) contend that Rawls' reflective equilibrium does not secure the convergence claim. For other criticisms of the technique see, for example, Hare 1973; McMahan 2000.

> will be that there will not be enough constraints on what counts as 'ideal' deliberation to yield determinate moral norms. So, to narrow the field of competitors, the constructivist is going to have to build in some substantive moral assumptions. What will guide the constructivist here? It looks as if the constructivist will have to allow ideal deliberators to fall back on their own deepest moral convictions (Horgan and Timmons 2006, 228).

By taking the first horn of the dilemma, moral deliberation would not result in any moral outcomes. Assuming the constructivist takes the second horn, he would have to accept the fact that ideal agents will converge differently on what counts as 'S'. "But…if a particular ideal deliberator happens to start the deliberative process with deep moral convictions" (Horgan and Timmons 2006, 228), then different outcomes that fulfil the requirements of 'S' would certainly emerge. Taken together, by construing moral facts weakly, moral constructivism fails to meet the requirement of moral realism.

4.2 Robust Construal of Moral Mind-Independency

On the moral realist construal, moral facts are conceived as robust entities. The moral realists largely think that moral facts are part of the world, hence independent of any mind or thought. Here mind-independency is closely tied to the existence and nature of moral facts. Kramer writes that "something is existentially mind-independent if and only if its occurrence or continued existence does not presuppose the existence of any mind(s) and the occurrence of mental activity" (Kramer 2009, 25). In this analysis, there are two forms of existence, namely what I refer to as the 'original existence' and 'continued existence'. The former implies that moral facts do not owe their existence, namely their *coming-to-being* to any individual mind or group's minds. The latter is the view that the *continued being* of moral facts does not depend on any individual mind or group's minds. It is the robust construal of original existence that separates moral realism from moral constructivism, minimalism, and other versions of realist-like positions.

Notice that both moral realism and moral constructivism agree that the continued existence of moral facts does not depend on any minds or thoughts. Recall the question implied in Socrates' concern, namely "Is something good because we favour it? Or, do we favour it because it's good?" Given the conception of robust mind-independence, moral realism believes that we favour something because it is good. However, this claim is not unique to moral realism because the defenders of weak mind-independence endorse it as well. In other words, moral realism is not to be strictly understood in terms of:

(3) There are objective moral facts whose existence is mind-independent.

Assuming we define moral realism based on (3), notice that the concept of existence therein can refer to original existence as well as continued existence. Ultimately, for moral realism, the kind of facts that support the truth-values of

moral claims are objective and mind-independent moral facts, where moral mind-independency is understood robustly. That is, the original existence and continued existence of such facts do not depend on our beliefs, perceptions, thoughts or evidence about them. Thus, we can modify (3) as follows:

> (3*) There are objective moral facts whose existence and continued existence aremind-independent.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, I have shown that Sayre-McCord's model is insufficient for characterizing moral realism. Second, I provided requirements for identifying and delineating moral realism from irrealism, especially the proliferation of realist-like positions that combine elements of cognitivism and antirealism. While the various construals of moral realism are beyond the scope of this paper, I hope that the requirements outlined in this paper will contribute to the definitions of naturalist and non-naturalist commitments. Finally, assuming this paper meets its goal, it will guide us in navigating the issue at stake between moral realism and antirealism.

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40

What Philosophical Aesthetics Can Learn from Applied Anthropology[1]

Anna Kawalec

Abstract: Through a detailed case study of investigations on beauty, I demonstrate that a thoughtful consideration of empirical evidence can lead to the disclosure of the fundamental assumptions entrenched in a philosophical discipline. I present a contrastive examination of two empirically oriented approaches to art and beauty, namely, the anthropology of art and the anthropology of aesthetics. To capture these two different ways of interpreting the available evidence, I draw upon a debate between Alfred Gell and Jeremy Coote on the understanding of beauty and art in the Dinka community. Following Gell, I reveal that the Western-centric predilection of Coote, who uses traditional aesthetic categories, leads to his failure to grasp the functional and causal roles of beauty in the social relations of the Dinka. In more general terms, my study reveals the inherent limitations of aesthetics as developed in the Western tradition and its Kantian legacy. Being steadily driven towards purely abstract and speculative concepts, such as 'work of art,' Western aesthetics has lost the ability to account for the causal role of beauty in social relations. By contrasting this approach with Gell's anthropological approach to art, I indicate those fundamental assumptions of aesthetics as a philosophical discipline that apparently confine it to a particular cultural context, compromising its ability to account for the universal human condition. As my study illustrates, this limitation could be overcome by a thoughtful and unprejudiced examination of empirical evidence.

Keywords: anthropology of art, anthropology of aesthetics, Alfred Gell, Dinka.

1. A Thought Experiment vs. Empirical Evidence

I begin by briefly contrasting the philosophical character of aesthetics with the empirical orientation of anthropology as instantiated by the case, most eminent in the 1980s and 1990s, of Alfred Gell's objections to the 'theoretical' approach to aesthetics that Arthur Danto propounded. The latter in 1988 prepared the catalog for a New York exhibition of African art (Danto 1988). There, he propounded the view that the status of a work of art depends on its interpretative context and symbolic meaning. For instance, if a hunting artifact from the Zande tribe, a "net," had been exhibited in a New York museum, it could no longer be considered an element of the Zande's setting. To substantiate his

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claim, Danto conceptually elaborated the contrast between the religious customs of two fictitious tribes: the Pot People and the Basket Folk. The former were assumed to worship the objects that the latter produced with the intention of ordinary usage. Gell argued that while this could be considered an interesting thought experiment, it failed to recognize actual tribal traditions. In particular, Danto was apparently ignorant of the importance of the hunting net in African customs. Consequently, Danto's sharp distinction between work of art and artifact – as Gell claimed – could not hold up against the ethnographic facts. (Gell 1996)

I am not going to explore this example any further, as it concerns a direct confrontation between the perspectives of philosophical aesthetics and social anthropology that is not highly relevant to the purpose at hand. Instead, let me focus on a more relevant case, the debate between Gell as an anthropologist of art and Jeremy Coote as an anthropologist of aesthetics. Below, I examine the debate in more detail, highlighting the key moments in the development of philosophy and anthropology, especially the anthropology of art, bringing out their Western-centric determinations and investigating how Gell's and Coote's interpretations of the empirical evidence project upon the human experience of the world and change its explanatory potential. I conclude by indicating how this debate reveals the fundamental assumptions of philosophical study, which limit its ability to form universal conclusions concerning the human condition.

The title of my paper may suggest that the narrative is primarily framed by the conceptual scheme of aesthetics. On the contrary, the ensuing argument, as well as the anthropological standpoints I examine, challenge the – characteristically Western-centric – primeness of aesthetics in other fields in art studies. Aesthetics stems from the Greek philosophy of beauty and art, and it continues to be framed by its Western heritage with the robust influence of philosophy, as evidenced by its Kantian legacy and the modern social "cult of art." Although anthropology as a discipline likewise arose in the Western world, it nonetheless attempts to cultivate universalist ambitions and hence aims to establish its inquiries as possibly independent of the accomplishments of this extremely rationalized and technicized region. An explicit and systematic rejection of the Western legacy in art studies was articulated by the British social anthropologist Alfred Gell, who is commonly recognized as the author of the widely debated monograph, published posthumously, *Art and Agency*, and who introduced the anthropological theory of art. By consistently advancing anthropology as a branch of the social sciences, he paved the way for new perspectives on – and, consequently, a new theory of – the realm of activity traditionally referred to in the West as 'artistic.' This resulted in a revision of the significance of aesthetics and of the aesthetic. Expanding on Gell's perspective, I claim that the empirical evidence from anthropological investigations on beauty that embraces the existential dimension of the human person and establishes the epistemic primeness of individual and social agency and the production of

42

artworks over the aesthetic is a precondition of any, including any philosophical, study with universalist ambitions.

2. Anthropological Traditions in Consideration of the Aesthetic

It was the region of the Mediterranean Basin that gave rise to philosophical ideas about the world, the human person and her endeavors.[2] Eventually, as these ideas unfolded, the pertinent scope of philosophy and the disciplines that steadily emerged from it and their investigative methods were established. Kant's much later approach, despite its 'revolutionary' orientation, remained within the confines of this traditional scope, which framed its problems and epistemological categories. Consequently, Kant conceived of aesthetics, its ideas and basic presumptions, according to the same philosophical orientation.

Anthropology, which emerged in the early 20th century, is a much more recent discipline than aesthetics and was intentionally created as a separate field of research within the domain of social sciences, biological, and cultural inquiries. It subsequently advanced, often counter to its philosophical provenance, as has been pointedly emphasized, especially by Marcel Mauss in his essay on the concept of the person. (Mauss 1985) It is problematic, however, to deny that the ideas and methodologies formed in the Mediterranean region did not contribute to anthropology, not only the ancient and philosophically minded variety but also the one born in the "année sociologique," in the tradition of Durkheim or Mauss.

Of course, the European philosophical legacy, which includes concepts, terms, post-Aristotelian rigors of definition, classification and deduction, will likely continue to affect how the West-centric perception of the world is framed. Nevertheless, anthropologists seek to evade the imperialistic tendencies of the Western world in order to appreciate other regions and primarily to sustain the claim that fundamental knowledge concerning persons can be obtained beyond the West. The empirical base is intended to not be limited by a network of concepts and inferential links specific to a particular tradition but rather to explore the potential of diversity in order to reveal existential truths about *Homo sapiens sapiens* (Ingold 1996). Admittedly, anthropologists vary both in their respect for this basic assumption and the extent to which they succeed in implementing it.

Despite their awareness of the Western inclination, anthropologists are also more or less willing to acknowledge the impossibility of overcoming this limitation. With regard to their aesthetic investigations, this attitude is manifested in the minimalist approach of relying upon the basic meanings of

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[2] A systematic exposition of the issues of anthropology and the anthropology of art, with a special emphasis on Alfred Gell's perspective, is presented in my monograph (Kawalec 2016).

concepts such as 'beauty,' 'aesthetic experience' or 'art.' Even the most recognized anthropological accomplishments in this respect reveal a thoroughgoing entanglement of anthropological tools with the Western aesthetic tradition. A pertinent illustration from the domain of the anthropology of art and aesthetics is Howard Morphy's "dualistic definition of art" (Morphy 1994), which accepts "the anthropological" approach as being on par with "the aesthetic" one. Morphy, like Gell, was a pupil of Anthony Forge. It was the latter who propounded the view that while Abelam artists consider the issues of form and proportion in their creations, the resulting efficiency of the tribal creator, interpreted by Western observers as beauty, is not achieved for the sake of beauty itself. The proper aim of the creator, as Forge argued, was to allow one to read in the work its relevant functional power.[3] (Forge 1967, 82-83) This point was fully appreciated by Morphy only much later when he wrote that the Yolngu artists focus on an effect that Europeans would interpret as aesthetic but for them simply manifested the power of their ancestors.

3. Alfred Gell's Grounds for the Anthropology of Art and Aesthetics

Alfred Gell, a British social anthropologist who died prematurely in 1997 at the age of 51, was an original researcher in the field of the anthropology of art. Inspired by Forge, the author of *Metamorphosis of the Cassowaries: Umeda Society, Language and Ritual* (Gell 1975) undertook fieldwork in the Western district of the Sepik catchment in Papua New Guinea. Gell's dissertation was concerned with the *ida* ritual of the Umeda tribe in the Sepik region. He did not analyze this ritual within the broader sociological context or within the context of other studies of tribal beliefs. Instead, he mainly focused on aspects of the social impact of the transformation of the individual and the tribe. Among the ritual's multitude of meanings, he ultimately identified the existential aspect of the function of *ida*, which consisted of the taming of death by the tribe, which felt itself vulnerable to annihilation by the arduous environmental conditions. In his dissertation, Gell described the main function of the Umeda ritual in existential and ontological terms. Gell's style of discourse was unique among anthropologists, inasmuch as it was inspirational for those seeking answers to the fundamental questions. In this sense, Gell's approach is genuinely and thoroughly philosophical, though – like Mauss's – it receded from the philosophical territory of advanced inferences and sophisticated speculations.

The paradigmatic illustration of Gell's dismissal of philosophical inspiration is related to his central concept for the anthropology of art, namely, the concept of 'agency.' (Gell 1998a, 16-23) With regard to this concept, Gell explicitly relied on the folk meaning rather than the philosophical meaning. In his studies, he used concepts taken from everyday practices and forms of

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[3] Much later, Morphy also wrote that the Yolngu artists focus on an effect that Europeans would interpret as aesthetic but for them simply manifested the power of their ancestors.

discourse, which – as he was well aware – were not substantiated philosophically. Philosophers take for granted that the folk notions of agency, intention and mind require systematic explication and elaborated accounts. Gell, instead, embraced the part of the meaning of agency that philosophers failed to appreciate, for example, that pertaining to the agency inherent in sculptures or images of gods.

This novel approach to the concept of 'agency' (originally in the anthropological sense of idolatry) earned him recognition as the precursor of "the material turn." (Gell 2013) Agency, according to Gell, can be attributed to human persons (*primary* agency) and to objects (*secondary* agency), including artworks, which in Gell's account acquire the status of an *index*, on a par with ("non-artistic") artifacts used in social interactions. The network of interactions between agent and recipient (patient), in its basic intentional dimension, was referred to by Gell as the 'nexus.' The nexus was the key concept of Gell's understanding of the role of works of art (acknowledged as such in the Western world) but also of all the other artifacts and elements of reality that stimulated the creation of social relationships – even if merely intentional ones.[4]

This novel conceptualization of the elements of the social (including 'aesthetic') situation led largely to the development of the original anthropological theory of art as an empirically grounded endeavor. Of course, it was also an attempt to disengage with Western concepts and complex inferences. For Gell, the proper method of inference from an evidential basis was conditional on the assumption of the cause-effect relationship and proceeded accordingly by abduction. For him, only the causal assumption and abductive inference could ensure that investigation adhered to concrete, empirical detail and the realistic attitude. All deductions and highly abstract concepts Gell treated as doubtful and considered legitimate only when they were useful in understanding ethnographic or anthropological facts.

A consequence of this epistemological approach was the exclusion of the concepts of 'culture' and 'aesthetics' from the set of terms used to render a direct description of the world. According to Gell, the most popular concepts in the Western world are merely conceptual and abstract constructs that are too far detached from the object of investigation. Moreover, they are tremendously 'muddy,' as further explained by Nick Zangwill (1986). The inaccuracy of the terms 'aesthetics' and 'culture,' and, above all, their highly abstract nature, are, according to Gell, a manifestation of a specifically Western idealistic way of

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[4] The category of 'social objects' – introduced in (Casetta and Torrengo 2014, 3-10) is different from Gell's 'social agents.' According to the anthropologist, a 'social agent' is anything that creates or develops dynamics of nexus: relations between persons, including things and animals. These relations could be intentional – this feature is realistic, similar to the material or 'social object.'

Anna Kawalec

thinking.[5] He recommended that they be used with caution and only when their meaning is precisely specified.

In Gell's view, aesthetics is primarily concerned with judgments of beauty. He rejected the idea of an autonomous function of art,[6] mainly because such was not recognized among many non-Western communities. Gell explained the autonomy of art and aesthetic pleasure as emergent properties of the idealistically inclined – fictionalizing or highly abstractive – Western world. Anthropological discourse, instead, while driven by empirical evidence, should seek the common core of what constitutes universal human nature, what applies to every person living at any given time or in any given place on the Earth. Gell identified this core with human activity – in particular, the production of objects – that stimulated the emergence of various social interactions.

Therefore, in anthropology, Gell focused on beauty and its functions rather than 'art' and 'works of art.' Taking into account empirical evidence, especially from non-Western cultures, beauty could be treated as a property confined to so-called 'works of art,' namely, products created solely for the sake of beauty alone. The production of such objects or performances in the Western world had led to a treacherous social phenomenon that Gell in one of his articles labeled the 'Art Cult.' (Gell 1992) This cult, he claimed, had largely replaced the realm of religion, while beauty had replaced deity, or the value of holiness. According to the British anthropologist, since the world of values of the Western *Homo sapiens sapiens* had shrunk and flattened, anthropology, in particular the anthropology of art, had ample reason to seek to identify the 'core' of human activities outside of the Western world.

While empirical evidence for Gell concerns only social phenomena, it embraces their purely intentional dimension. 'Beautiful' shields or 'ugly' malangan figures and other tribal artifacts were not perceived by their authors as specific aesthetic objects. Conceived of rather in their causal and social role, these objects provided a whole range of data on the social and emotional phenomena stimulated by the artifact. While these data are rooted in the patterns of social life, the latter cannot be reduced to or distorted as pertaining merely to "aesthetic" feelings. The reason for taking the wealth of socio-emotional data as inherently related to the artifacts is so that their actual causal effectiveness can be captured. In contrast, 'aestheticizing theories' impose a Western reading of the activities and reactions of all ethnic 'others' (Gell 1998b) and thereby disregard the genuine causal explanatory potential of the data constituting the available evidence.

4. Agency – Art – Aesthetics. Gell's Debate with Coote

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[5] On the idealistic presumptions of anthropological research, see especially (Gell 1995).
[6] Gell never ceased to apply the concept of 'art,' what caused many misunderstandings and drew much criticism from reviewers.

46

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In 1993, during a session of the Oxford Association of Social Anthropologists attended by Gell, a paper was presented by Jeremy Coote, then the acting manager of the anthropological collections at Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford[7] (Coote 1992). Gell later responded to this presentation in 1995. Although Coote announced a departure from the principles of old-style aesthetics, in fact, as argued by Gell, he still adhered to the well-known Kantian presumption that aesthetics constituted a part of gnoseology.[8] Gell's own paper, *On Coote's "Marvels of everyday vision*," (Gell 1995) discussed the principal issues related to art and aesthetic experience in order to systematize anthropological knowledge as independent from the influences of the Western world. Coote posed a problem – heavily exploited now in the anthropological literature – concerning the relationship between art, aesthetics and anthropology. The resolution of this problem by means of empirical evidence from the Dinka tribe may bring us closer to understanding what bearing anthropological empirical evidence has on a philosophical understanding of the human being.

The starting point of the article is Coote's thesis, stressed by citing Gombrich's motto that all people, everywhere, have an aesthetic foundation that is part of their culture. According to Coote, each participant in the community has a certain set of objects seen every day that are positively evaluated. While Coote therewith recognizes the incompatibility of Western conceptions of art with the anthropological perspective and the necessity of modifying it, he nevertheless fails to draw from this observation the correct conclusion regarding aesthetic experience. Coote – like Gell – advocated the reformulation of the anthropology of art by rejecting the aesthetic concept of art. However, he committed a mistake: he adopted the wrong assumption that the Nuer community he had investigated failed to develop art. By adopting such a starting point he was misled, Gell argued, to erroneous conclusions about the status of aesthetic experience.

For Coote, the characteristic feature of the Sudanese community is that it does not create any type of artwork. However, he would presumably reject the claim that this society lacks any aesthetic sensibility whatsoever, as he considered it a universal characteristic independent of a particular cultural context, though some communities produce many artworks while others have no museums or art galleries (such as the Nuer in Southern Sudan). Apparently, then, Coote acknowledges the disparity between aesthetics and the art world. However, Gell criticizes Coote for not taking the next step to producing a full-blooded anthropological theory of art and failing to recognize that the concepts of 'work of art' and 'aesthetics' both limit the description of empirical evidence, as they presume a Western outlook. To identify errors in Coote's way of thinking

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[7] A systematic exposition of Gell's standpoint is presented in Kawalec (2016, 178-185).
[8] More precisely, as the subjective aspect of imagination about the object (Kant 2000).

and to more adequately describe the activities undertaken by the Sudanese Dinka community, Gell undertakes a more detailed examination of this case.

The Dinka form a small community in Southern Sudan that focuses on breeding cattle (steers). The cattle are usually of a uniform grayish color, but there are outstanding specimens. Such specimens are allocated to young men from the community. The young man takes care of it, leads it to pasture, feeds and waters it, cleans and decorates it with white ash rubbed on its head, and praises it with his own songs. The boy's involvement with the ox, observing it, admiring it and arranging songs, was thought by Coote to be a manifestation of aesthetic sensitivity to the beauty of natural objects. In this way, Coote sought to disrupt the traditional, received view of the aesthetic object as an artifact displayed in an art gallery.

Though for Coote aesthetics was not associated with art and creative activity, it was still interconnected with the perception of aesthetic quality. Communities have aesthetic predispositions, even without the presence of artworks, and each culture selects aesthetically distinctive visual features of the world; moreover, aesthetic sensibility precedes the production of artworks and their consumption.[9] Coote claimed that non-Western aesthetics took artifacts as the starting point, artifacts that were most often recognized in the Western world as archaeological artworks or tribal originals. The inference concerning aesthetics (and community) occurred only subsequently on the basis of the reception of these items.

Gell appreciated Coote's revolt, even though assumptions derived from the Western aesthetics of Kant informed Coote's criticism of the old-style anthropology of art, which prioritized art-rich cultures with museums, galleries, and masterpieces over art-poor ones. He also conceded with Coote that the category of work of art was inadequate with respect to 'genuinely' artistic activities, even in the West and especially with respect to 'the artistic' daily activities, such as the maintenance of gardens or sculpting of magical figures. However, Gell contested the concept of 'aesthetics' used by Coote, which was based not on human abilities to act and produce artifacts but on the ability to explore natural beauty or the sublime. This conception originated with Kant (2000).[10] Kant – according to Gell – inherited the Greek tradition, but he espoused it for the Enlightenment, which treated aesthetics as the part of philosophy focused on judgments of beauty or sublimity. Potentially universal judgments of beauty have as their reference objects with certain formal characteristics, recognizable as an aesthetic tendency for tracing the 'end,' the 'final purpose.' Coote followed Kant's footsteps. He treated aesthetics as a critique of taste that was dominated by the domain of object evaluation or a method of representation as a source of delight, detached from practical

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[9] I follow here Gell (1995).
[10] Coote refers to the thesis of Nick Zangwill (1986), who defends aesthetics and the metaphysics of beauty as prime with respect to esthetic experiences.

48

interests. According to Gell, Coote was an anti-functionalist, believing that the perception of beauty was disinterested, independent of human desires, and that beauty was contemplative.

5. 'Chicken-and-Egg?' The Anthropological Underpinnings of Aesthetics

Coote, in his paper *"Marvels of Everyday Vision": The Anthropology of Aesthetics and the Cattle-Keeping Nilotes*, followed Franz Boas,[11] who had observed that every culture selected certain features of the natural environment to confirm the values against which we measure our existence. Thus, we verify our own environment in terms of artworks. Consistently following Kant and drawing from the cultural assumptions of the American anthropologist, Coote attributed to the Dinka an aesthetic attitude, and consequently, this implied that the Dinka also conceived of steers as a source of moral enlightenment. Coote claimed that the Dinka, who did not produce artworks, had clear aesthetic assumptions that were culturally coded and transmitted to other layers of culture, such as relations in the tribe between relatives, religious beliefs or morality. The community was characterized by predispositions, including toward visual elements such as color, pattern or shape. These determined the people's aesthetic tastes and their hierarchy of values, which then guided the Dinkas' behavior.

For Coote, the admiration of the young men for the animals was a manifestation of their aesthetic preferences; for Gell, it expressed their rivalry, which was mediated by the care of the ox and the singing of ox-songs. It did not necessarily mean, however, that the boys conceived of the cattle as beautiful and that this was the reason that they composed songs. Gell claimed that they composed the songs precisely because they competed with each other. To the ethnographer, it was obvious that a 19-year-old Nuer was concerned with outperforming his peers. Beauty was thus created on the foundation of the social rivalry, and poems or songs were just the means of its implementation.

Gell claimed that for the Dinka, their care of the cattle was not a disinterested activity. Their hope was likely that victory – recognition by the tribal society – would help them gain coveted partner-wives. The aim of the young men was to form "an ox-personality." If, however, this attitude was in fact not disinterested, one of the fundamental Kantian pillars of Coote's theory would be threatened. The problem of the primacy of aesthetics and art can be considered in terms of the Dinka situation as follows: What came first, the adored mottled oxen, or the attempts to satisfy individual and social desires and needs?

First, Gell advanced Coote's initial argument acknowledging that the Dinka indeed developed art, and this art was relatively advanced. It was the art of decorating the oxen, but above all of creating and performing ox-songs. These

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[11] See, for example, chapter 10 of Boas (1955).

songs did not refer to the appearance of the oxen, and even if they mentioned it, it mostly served a metaphorical function.

The thesis on the independence of the anthropology of aesthetics from the anthropology of art, according to Gell, thus failed. He claimed that the Dinka had aesthetics only insofar as they had art, as they in fact did, and a splendid one. This art emerged from everyday artistic practices, inseparable from everyday forms of social relations. "Daily, unguided aesthetic vision is a myth," wrote Gell (1995, 225). The problem was that the aesthetic conception of art did not fit the art cultivated by the Dinka. Gell proposed a simplification in accounting for the Nuer's conception of art, and he used the Western conceptual framework. He drew parallels between this conception, as an institutional conception with interpretative elements, and the popular ideas of Arthur Danto and George Dickie. The whole Dinka society took part (in the form of the local 'artworld') in the competition among the young men by listening to the songs, observing the ox taken care of by the boy, and deciding who was winning 'the competition,' i.e., whose art was better. The result of the song was the aestheticization of the ox and its establishment as the artwork exhibited for the audience.

The ox was not an artifactual work, but a living and natural element of reality. While the songs were potential rather than actual artworks, they were primarily a form of the public nexus between the owner and his animal, between the young man and the Dinka community. It is this relationship that made the ox, and especially the ox-song, artwork. These songs were a testimony not of the existence of 'everyday' aesthetics but of the primeness of agentive activities and artistic practice, which was part of Dinka life, expressing the spirit of rivalry.

The spirit of rivalry in community life is a universal condition. Even in the Western world, as we look at works of art or listen to them, we, as recipients, tend to compare them – the power they have to impact mood, intellect, or individual or social life, the efficiency of the artists' performance – while creators compare the techniques and resources used for production. The Western world has created a sophisticated mercantile form of 'the artworld,' which determines membership in the most valued artistic elite and those whose artwork fails to receive (financial) recognition. The anthropological perspective of the art/artifact as autonomous with regard to the prioritization of the meaning of beauty and money, artistry and aesthetics, provides a truly universal approach that encompasses every person and community, whenever and wherever they existed or exist. Moreover, it concerns intrinsic human reality, since it is not determined by the cultural preferences of social regions but concerns the fundamental condition of human actions in society (as the creation of a nexus).

Works of art, or any other kinds of artifacts, within the intentional social network fulfill a very important role: they inspire action and orient it (by means of abduction), while aesthetics as perception and judgment is formed by means of social impact – through the mediation of artifacts or the performer's body (e.g., a function of the dancer) – as social agency.

50

6. Concluding Remarks on the Ontological and Gnoseological Dimensions

The anthropological perspective on aesthetics, as argued, undermines the fundamental assumptions of aesthetics and leads us to broaden the scope of art studies beyond the influence of the Western world and the commonly delineated historical period. Of course, similar attempts can also be found within aesthetics, broadly continuing its Kantian legacy, such as the conceptions proposed by Jerome Stolnitz, Ernst Gombrich, or Nick Zangwill. However, the ambitions of anthropology – especially in Gell's approach – are more thoroughgoing. The author of *Art and Agency*, for the reasons discussed earlier in this paper, claimed that it is not possible to form a proper object of inquiry with respect to art within the domain of culture studies. Hence, the anthropology of aesthetics and philosophical aesthetics, which aims to form (supra-cultural) criteria of beauty (aesthetic values) or to identify determinants of aesthetic experience, are doomed to failure, or at least to the confining of their respective conceptual and inferential frameworks to the regions of the West.

As claimed by Gell, if people perceive some objects in one way rather than another, it is not because it reflects their aesthetic preferences but is because people everywhere always think and act according to fundamental logical principles.[12] These principles helped them to survive and develop as a society. Detachment from the underlying social-ontological assumptions in explaining the motives of artistic activities or aesthetic preferences would turn investigations away from a specific person in a specific community, resulting in highly sophisticated and unverifiable deductive processes. This is what happened in Western society when its mode of functioning became determined by theoretical speculation and technological innovation. Therefore, according to Gell, any formula of 'cultural' aesthetics is doomed to failure. Likewise, philosophical aesthetics has ended up in a deadlock in its search for universal definitions of beauty. (Gell 1995)

Gombrich's motto from Coote's article *Art and Illusion* on the need to do justice to the mysteries of daily perceived images became for the manager of the Oxford museum a prerequisite for the analysis of aesthetic evaluation by Africans of the physical qualities of elements of their natural environment. In contrast, by consistently advancing the perspective of social anthropology, Gell claimed that the admiration for cattle resulted from the more basic experiences of youth in Africa and in other parts of the world – from the condition of their social relations, dependent upon youth rivalry. This competition raised the need for expression in terms of a certain (determined by the group's traditions) set of means and methods. In the case of the Dinka, it was the care and embellishment of cattle as well as the creation of songs. In the case of other social groups, it may well derive from other forms of social competition.

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[12] In numerous writings, Gell tended to show the universality of human nature, which stems from cognitive capacity. See, for example Gell (1985).

Anna Kawalec

Anthropology and aesthetics have been treated as closely related disciplines, especially with regard to their supposedly overlapping scope of research topics. This tendency is evidenced by numerous attempts at boundary crossing, as illustrated in my paper on Coote's proposal, but also by the aforementioned works of Forge or Morphy and Sally Price and by various recent accomplishments in the theory of art and aesthetics and Arnd Schneider's ethnography (Schneider 2008). While against the background of these endeavors Gell's conception appears novel, its consistently social character may be taken as a proposition of how to constitute universal aesthetic ideas. The latter, of course, also include the idea of aesthetics, not as prime, but as derived from inquiries on the existential dimension of human agency, which generates social relations and actions and the ensuing artworks.

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52

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Inhabiting (CC.) 'Religion' in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit* to Develop an Ambedkarite Critique of the Blasphemous Nucleus of Upanishadic Wisdom

Rajesh Sampath

Abstract: This paper begins with several opening passages from the most esoteric writings in Hinduism's vast, ancient religious-philosophical heritage, namely the Upanishads. The aim is to reveal certain essential connections between the primordial relation between self and sacrifice while exploring uncanny paradoxes of eternity and time, immortals and mortals and their secret linkages. The work is entirely philosophical in its intent and does not aspire to defend a faith-perspective. The horizon for this exposition follows the spirit of Ambedkar's critique of Brahmanic superiority inherent in this entire system of religious thought: we must expose what lies in the heart of modern Hinduism to reveal its inner-contradictory entanglements, which are not exactly innocuous. A phenomenological-deconstructive inspiration motivates our own critical theoretical-philosophical conceptualizations beyond Ambedkar's basic attestation to liberate India from Hinduism. The enterprise derives from a speculative appropriation and extension of the depths of (CC.) 'Religion,' the penultimate chapter of Hegel's indomitable *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807). The aim of the paper is to advance new philosophical theses in an unrelenting metaphysical critique of Hinduism– beyond Ambedkar's writings– but also in a manner that is irreducible to the Western philosophical cosmos within which the nineteenth-century Hegel inhabited. The paper argues that the internal contradictions and aporias of mortality, immortality, self, body-hood, time, and eternity in the Hindu Upanishads can be contrasted with Hegel's speculative Western-Christological propositions to expose a greater metaphysical complexity that escapes Eastern and Western religious and philosophical traditions alike. Therefore, the paper falls within the scope of comparative philosophies of religion.

Keywords: Hegel, Ambedkar, Heidegger, Hinduism, philosophy of religion.

'I want to attain greatness' – when a man entertains such a wish, he should do the following. To begin with he should perform the preparatory rites for twelve days. Then, on an auspicious day falling within a fortnight of the waxing moon during the northern movement of the sun, he should collect every type of herb and fruit in a fig-wood dish or metal bowl. After sweeping around the place of the sacred fire and smearing it with cow dung, he should kindle the fire, spread the sacrificial grass, prepare the ghee according to the usual procedure, make the

mixture under a male constellation, and pour an offering of ghee into the fire… (Upanishads 1996, 84; Brhadāranyaka Upanishad 6.3.1)

> 'That does not age
>
>> as this body grows old
>
> That is not killed
>
>> when this body is slain –
>
> That is the real fort of *brahman*,
>
>> In it are contained all desires' (Upanishads 1996, 167; Chāndogya Upanishad 8.1.4)

'So, those here in this world who depart without having discovered the self and these real desires do not obtain complete freedom of movement in any of these worlds, whereas those here in this world who depart after discovering the self and these real desires obtain complete freedom in all the worlds.' (Upanishads 1996, 167; Chāndogya Upanishad 8.1.4)

> 'This deeply serene one who, after he rises up from this body and reaches the highest light, emerges in his own true appearance – that is the self,' he said, 'that is the immortal; that is the one free from fear; that is *brahman*.' (Upanishads 1996, 169; Chāndogya Upanishad 8.3.4)

Now, the name of this *brahman* is 'Real' (*satyam*). This word has three syllables – *sa, ti, and yam*. Of these, *sat* is the immortal, and *ti* is the mortal, while the syllable *yam* is what joins those two together. Because these two are joined together (yam) by it, it is called *yam*. Anyone who knows this goes to the heavenly world every single day. (Upanishads 1996, 169; Chāndogya Upanishad 8.3.4-5)

> all that Vedanta teaches is that self is different from the body and outlive the body. Such a knowledge is not enough. The self must have the aspiration to go to heaven. But it can't go to heaven unless it performs Vedic sacrifices. (Moon 2014, 67)[1]

But the time has come when the Hindu mind must be freed from the hold* which the silly ideas propagated by the Brahmins have on them. Without this liberation India has no future. I have undertaken this task knowing full well what risk* it involves. I am not afraid of the consequences. I shall be happy if I succeed in stirring the masses. (Moon 2014, 9)[2]

Introduction

We must begin with great caution and proceed slowly in trying to encounter these opening quotes from the *Upanishads*. On the surface, Ambedkar's brief

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[1] Riddle No. 9 in *Riddles of Hinduism: An Exposition to Enlighten the Masses*.
[2] *Introduction to Riddles of Hinduism: An Exposition to Enlighten the Masses*.

56

crystallization of the core of Hindu wisdom and his intention to liberate the Indian masses from Brahmanic deception in the heart of Hinduism seems easy to comprehend. But before one engages his critical spirit, we must remain for awhile, just tarry along, temporalize this in-between, a delay from what is supposed to arrive in terms of meaning, signification, or representation of objects in the Upanishadic passages, and what fails to appear at first glance when trying to inhabit those passages: being-there (Dasein) requires a phenomenological reduction of the most strenuous and strangest kind.

But this is no ordinary reduction or bracketing that evacuates all initial intuitions and impressions (sensory, conceptual, perceptive, or imaginative) when one reads the passages for the first time. The text itself as an author-less phenomenon is quite frightening and uncanny. Rather than superficial mastery, we must/will postpone, defer, and delay any manifestation of an 'object' that should appear in an intending set of actional reflections on the essential nature of what consciousness experiences when encountering the passages.[3] Long story

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[3] As Husserl states in Section 3 of the Introduction to Volume 2 of the *Logical Investigations*: "The difficulties of clearing up the basic concepts of logic are a natural consequence of the extraordinary difficulties of strict phenomenological analysis. These are in the main the same whether our immanent analysis aims at the pure essence of experiences (all empirical facticity and individuation being excluded) or treats experiences from an empirical, psychological standpoint. Psychologists usually discuss such difficulties when they consider introspection as a source of our detailed psychological knowledge, not properly however, but in order to draw a false antithesis between introspection and 'outer' perception. The source of all such difficulties lies in the unnatural direction of intuition and thought which phenomenological analysis requires. Instead of becoming lost in the performance of acts built intricately on one another, and instead of (as it were) naively positing the existence of the objects intended in their sense and then going on to characterize them, or of assuming such objects hypothetically, of drawing conclusions from all this etc., we must rather practise 'reflection,' i.e. make these acts themselves, and their immanent meaning-content, our objects. When objects are intuited, thought of, theoretically pondered on, and thereby given to us as actualities in certain ontic modalities, we must direct our theoretical interest away from such objects, not posit them as realities as they appear or hold in the intentions of our acts. These acts, contrariwise, though hitherto not objective, must now be made objects of apprehension and of theoretical assertion. We must deal with them in new acts of intuition and thinking, we must analyse and describe them in their essence…" (2001, 170) The section from which this long passage is taken is titled – 'The difficulties of pure phenomenological analysis.' For us, the 'difficulty' so to speak is not simply the 'unnatural direction of intuition and thought which phenomenological analysis requires' or avoidance of 'naively positing the existence of objects intended in their sense' in order to 'practice reflection.' In addition to converting the 'acts of reflection' and their 'immanent meaning-content' into 'objects,' we must, in a counter-movement, desist in this tendency of object-making due to what we see as an intrinsic horror built into these passages. But this is not a psychological horror based on past, real, trauma. Behind the passages is an omni-temporal complexity that presupposes a grotesque social system, namely hierarchical differences of purity and impurity, which makes the passages seem a-contextual, transcendent, and rich in esoteric or mystical wisdom. The passages seem morally innocent as if they do not intend evil. In other words, we must guard against any kind of excitability that may ensue when trying to phenomenologically encounter the passages.

57

short, we will not assume any 'thing' in terms of the final meaning or conceptualization of what these passages contain as if it were merely a secret that must be revealed. There is no internal, apperceptive faith at work in the encounter; nor an outward-bound explicative power that can conceptualize an actual external reality even when something as natural as 'fire' is being described. The fire may well turn out to be entirely unnatural and not the natural passing itself off as the supernatural. But even this could be an overhasty move of false exegesis. We will not even entertain the infinite regression of a secret within the secret to the point of an impossible singularity where even a secret cannot be maintained, and not because a final revelation has been achieved. The secret does not dissolve as the revelation. Even the erasure of the secret that fails to reveal a hidden content in the secret is not equivalent to the idea of a trace of the secret that remains after the secret itself fails to take hold of us as a mystery. When the secret cannibalizes itself, it does not even reveal its remains.

The caution-likened to Heidegger's Sorge (Dread, Concern, Alarm) in *Being and Time*[4] (1963, 225) – come from a different realm. This exercise is neither from the human sciences (sociology, anthropology, history, secular religious studies), philosophical existentialisms of modern human beings in their anxiety and hopelessness or sense of meaninglessness, nor revelatory theology as an antidote to that existential malaise of finite human beings who never know why they have to die and why death even came about. The origin of death may be worse than death itself. Even asking the question – innocently or not – 'what is death?' is shown to be irrelevant.

We do not presuppose *the question of the meaning of existence* and whether the question is answerable or not. Whether 'care' or 'concernfulness,' needless to say, we are concerned with the bracketed sense of 'caution': one that is distinct from any simple human registers, such as being 'cautious' and looking both ways before crossing a street so one can avoid being hit by a car and risking physical-biological death. Rather, the caution involved in encountering the Other is not a fear of misunderstanding or misrepresentation, but the real threat of being swallowed whole into a realm that is boundless; hence psychoanalytic fears of castration do not hold here either. The seemingly infinite expanse of the ritual sacrifice's duration is not a matter of negation or deprivation but rather an instantiation of excessive difference and superiority bordering on the sociopathic.

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[4] The English translation turns Sorge into 'Care' but the main point is that we are not talking about any psychological examination of anxiety that humans have about being finite or sick because Heidegger's project is entirely 'ontological.' For how Heidegger separates his project of fundamental ontology through the Dasein – analytic from all human sciences and theology (as irreducible to purely human-founded forms of knowledge), see the Introduction to *Being and Time*. To this we shall return over and over again.

Returning to the initial passages quoted at the beginning, at first glance, we see an aggrandizement of 'self' through the performance of a ritualistic sequence of acts, 'preparatory rites' as the Upanishad text states, which will then anticipate in awaiting an 'auspicious day': this will then commence the actual gathering of elements 'herbs, fruits' in a container ('dish' or 'bowl') whose surrounding space must be cleansed with 'smeared cow dung' before the sacrifice begins. Animal excretion exceeds the fetishization of every single commodity-material like the natural resource of fertilizer or spiritual like the Eucharistic consecration of the host.[5] Once the 'sacred fire' is kindled, the 'sacrificial grass is spread' and then the Hindu 'ghee' is prepared through a habitual 'mixture.' The threshold of the sacrifice-event is then the 'offering of the ghee into the fire' with a simultaneous chant. How the 'self' fills itself up, aggrandizes itself, in the totality of this experience is unfathomable for all those who do not engage in this sacrificial event. The event englobes and esnares the self so that no simple predicate of what is actually happening as self or to the self can be articulated in human terminology.

One can hypothesize at the moment that the sacrifice is underway, a type of event-duration, which is not exactly linear, by which the 'pouring of the offering (ghee) into fire' is co-present with the speech act of the chant. As we shall see, perhaps even the notion of co-presence, simultaneity, or monistic oneness becomes problematic. An ecstatic occurrence begins to encase any intuitive idea of simultaneity or succession when we take a look at the fire-sacrifice-chant passage. Any simple narrative of a sequence of events, even as the one just mentioned in this paragraph comes under question. Furthermore, the status of the brahman priest undertaking such a fire sacrifice is by no means

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[5] This is not meant to be an overhasty comparison of how different world religions apperceive the 'holy' within the material and how they construct theologies of transubstantiation and consubstantiation that somehow unify matter and spiritual substance. For example, in a caustic and sarcastic moment in his younger years in southern Germany, Hegel wanted to explore what Catholicism was all about. Allegedly he questioned the divine substance of the Eucharist and asked irreverently what would happen in the following hypothetical scenario: say if a rat happened to leap out of nowhere right when the priest just finished consecrating the bread for communion, eats it, runs away, and then later excretes it. How does that affect the Catholic believer who considers consumption of the same material, namely the consecrated bread, as the apex of Catholic mass in terms of spiritual renewal? In Catholic faith, consuming the bread (and wine) is not simply an historical memorialization of consuming Jesus's body and drinking his blood as he asked during the Last Supper when he was alive: it is the literal divine mystery of making present Christ's body and blood in which Jesus the man (who died and was resurrected) as alive in and for the believer and wholly present every time communion is had. Hegel of course upends any sense of reverence for Catholic faith in this mystery by equating the bread with the rat's excreta and then asking us to consider whether the supernatural occurs therein. For this brief anecdote, see Stepelevich (1992, 679). For a general philosophical biography of Hegel, see Pinkard (2000).

detached from questions of power and sovereignty as great comparative mythologists of the twentieth century have noted.[6]

Despite all outward appearances of an ascetic life, there is something embryonic in this structural occurrence which has an elemental, ineradicable quality as to why such sacrifices and rites persist in their raw materiality. The sacrifice grows in its own cathartic self-conception by obliterating any ordinary human conception of selfhood. The self becomes the sacrifice, matter, it dissipates in gaining recognition in a transcendental sphere that would defy all distinctions between self, 'soul,' or matter. The 'self' arises in the burning of matter and hence a type of trans-matter but definitely not of the order of any binary like self or matter: self-immolation or actual burning of a body in an act of self-sacrifice or martyrdom will not help us in our thinking.[7] Neither can the Western philosophical record beginning with the Pre-Socratics, Plato, and

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[6] We can pay homage to the great twentieth century French comparative mythologist, Georges Dumézil. His works from the first half of the twentieth century would have an enormous influence on future generations of thinkers in France across many fields. In his classic *Mitra-Varuna: An Essay on Two Indo-European Representations of Sovereignty* (1948), Dumézil draws an interesting set of correspondences not only between ancient civilizations, in this case Rome and India, but between sovereignty and ritual priesthood. He states: "I attempted to establish what the structure of this interdependence was during those very early times, why the raj wished to maintain within his household a personage to whom he yielded precedence. Evidence from ritual and legend led me to believe that this brahman 'joined' to the king was originally his substitute in human sacrifices of purification or expiation in which royal blood itself had once flowed. The simulated human sacrifices still performed in the purificatory ceremony of the Argei in Rome, and the major role played in that ceremony by the flaminica, with her display of mourning and grief, seemed to me to confirm this interpretation of the Indian evidence. However, all that is distant prehistory. By the time Indian society becomes observable, the brahman is already far from that probable starting point. It is not with his sacrificial death that he serves the rajan but with his life, each moment of which is devoted to the administration and 'readjustment' of magic forces." See Dumézil (1988, 23). In other words, separating questions of power, authority, and sovereignty from ritual sacrifice is not just pertinent for understanding ancient civilizations and how they drew sustenance from their mythic structures; they have everything to do with our genealogical possibilities today for how we understand ourselves. But this deep understanding is not based on the obvious and visible nature of our modern subjectivities and political-economic structures of democracy, capitalism, the secular state, and the privatization of religion. We have to uncover a deeper reality beneath our historical present. Needless to say, we will foreground this context because they will be absolutely essential in order to understand the relation between the Hindu metaphysics of the Brahman as 'Real' and the incorrigible nature of the social system of caste and its intrinsic inhumanity. This means new constructions and deductions that Dumézil did not excavate. His brilliance was in comparative mythologies and linguistics. We wish to remain strictly within the realm of comparative phenomenology, deconstruction, and metaphysics.
[7] Think of Buddhist monks engaging in self-immolation in protest of Chinese dominion over Tibet and foreclosing their chances for true autonomy and free religious expression.

60

Aristotle rescue us here.[8] We are stuck between *neither* the either-or *nor* the neither-nor. And the in-between is a stretching event that is not reducible to a point in space or time.

Our concern is not what all of this ritualistic preparation means in terms of the actual contexts of Hindu faith and the lived experiences of believers and practitioners. That is for the most religious adherents of Hinduism to describe or explain. But, rather, this phenomenological explication involves a prior clearing so to speak, a clearing of the ground of space so that a proper philosophical reflection can arise when considering an appropriative event: a self-aggrandizement, sequence of ritualistic acts that constitutes an awaiting for an 'auspicious moment,' a strange temporalization, which only when it occurs can everything else follow, namely a gathering, cleansing, kindling, mixture, pouring, and chant. This requires a phenomenological 'bracketing' and 'reduction' and the work of continual excavation and carving so no simple sense descends upon the analytic subject engaged in the inquiry. There is no 'subject' here period, one can venture. Hence the meaning of the suspension of the notion of an existent subject becomes an urgent priority for reflection.

But then all these moments can be reversed too; the totality of the representation of the whole cannot be generated by the imagination within any one moment, let alone some kind of super-synthesis of all the moments. Taken together, a whole Event awaits to be described in its seemingly infinitesimal complexity. In deference to those who claim actual Hindu Brahmanic wisdom of what all this means we will respectfully abjure any scriptural authority. We are not capable nor interested in expositing Hindu faith from the standpoint of a life-long practitioner or someone whose entire life-world has been enmeshed in the context of everyday Hindu life down to the minutest details that permeates the waking and unconscious states.[9]

Rather we move within the event of a movement that is strange and irreproducible. Our own strictly metaphysical assumption is that a non-linear temporal horizon needs to be articulated, perhaps an ecstatic-movement event that constitutes a set of interrelations between the self-consciousness of a self-aggrandizement, the preparatory rites, the awaiting of the auspicious moment, and the launch of the sequence of events so the fire-offering-chant phenomenon comes into being. The rite is a repetition with an origin or end; it materializes consciousness as an expectation or waiting but there is no thing or object that is intended in the awaiting. This has everything to with a metaphysical conceptualization of time, but not consisting simply of past, present, or future as understood in various philosophical and religious traditions. Therefore, to

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[8] Of course a contrast with the genius of ancient Greek philosophical thinking is always welcomed.

[9] For one, as stated in previous published articles, the author makes no claim to being an expert in Hinduism, South Asian studies, and most certainly no familiarity with Sanskrit or Sanskrit studies.

reiterate, so our purpose is eminently clear, explicating the intricate religious, philosophical, or anthropological complexity of this moment in the Upanishads is not our objective. To illuminate and foster tenets of Hinduism for potential believers and adherents is the vocation of others.[10]

Our own phenomenological explication of a primordial self-sacrifice relation will come into play when we enter into the other passages from the Upanishads that reflect on the nature of the 'Brahman' and the 'Real.'[11] There we

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[10] A separate endeavor could utilize complex speculative meditative constructions in German Idealism to try to enter into this non-Western, non-Judeo-Christian, Eastern space of the Upanishads, but with Western philosophical tools. For the latter are irreducibly distinct. Schelling's *Philosophical Investigations into the Essence of Human Freedom* offers tantalizingly interesting possibilities for criteria to establish modalities of exegetical interpretation of these moments/criteria to establish various modalities of hermeneutically creative interpretations of the Upanishads. However, here, too, we must take some precautions because in this 1809 work by Schelling, although the title suggests that 'human freedom' is being discussed, this is by no means a simple view of an empirical human existence, i.e. an individual or real living human being. Rather, the mystery of finitude in relation to the Godhead (not necessarily defined as dogmatically Christian) requires a prior series of non-dialectical reflections on the relations of ground and freedom, which reaches a peak of speculative philosophical frenzy. No simple dichotomy between human and God exists, but neither can a Christological substance of the human-God incarnation called Jesus Christ of Christianity be named. For example, Schelling states right within the first few pages that opens his treatise: "This entails the dependence of all beings in the world on God, and that even their continued existence is only an ever-renewed creation in which the finite being is produced not as an undefined generality but rather as this definite, individual being with such and such thoughts, strivings, actions and no others. It explains nothing to say that God holds his omnipotence in reserve so that man can act or that he permits freedom: if God were to withhold his omnipotence for a moment, man would cease to be. Is there any other way out of this argument than to save personal freedom within the divine being itself, since it is unthinkable in opposition to omnipotence; to say that man is not outside of, but rather in, God and that his activity itself belongs to the life of God?" See Schelling (2006, 12). All of this is compounded by the fact that this last published work by Schelling (i.e. published in his life-time) followed on the heels and in direct contrast to the appearance of Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, which appeared just two years before in 1807. As we shall Hegel's 'absolute knowing' attempts to 'aufheben' the section before in 'revealed religion.' The latter is Hegel's own unique speculative metaphysical construction of the Christian Trinitarian God, which in many respects utterly dismantles the dogmatic theological conception by exposing a complex set of interrelations that threatens the stability of a simple notion of faith. In other words, for Hegel, the awesome phenomenological movement of Spirit becoming conscious of itself cannot stop with the Trinity and the earthly Church's continued repetition through memory of the God-man's death and resurrection from 2000 years ago. Spirit has to take on yet another shape, which Hegel attempts to articulate in the last and most mysterious section of the *Phenomenology*, namely 'absolute knowing.' Let us foreground a direct reading of this text with resources such as Martin Heidegger's 1936 lecture, *Schelling's Treatise on Human Freedom*. This can be yet another endeavor at philosophically-motivated phenomenological deconstruction of the Upanishads with a view to an ultimate critique of Hindu metaphysical theology.

[11] At some point, we may have to take a detour in to the Lacanian psychoanalytic framework that describes the tripartite structure of the 'imaginary,' 'symbolic,' and the 'real' but with

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encounter some crucial distinctions between self, body-hood, immortality, mortality, time, eternity and the linkage at the heart of the Real: this is in which Brahmanic superiority asserts its transcendental will to a realm accessible only

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some qualifications. The idea is not to theorize about these novel conceptual structures that explain the unconscious in terms analogous to the structures of language. That is part of Lacan's midway point between twentieth century French structuralism and poststructuralism given the legacy of turn of the century Sassurean linguistics. For more on this historical context, see Alan D. Schrift, *Twentieth-Century French Philosophy*. The entire legacy of Freudian psychoanalysis on infantile sexuality, neurosis, castration, psychopathology, the figures of 'mother' and 'father' has to be bracketed and evacuated. We are not interested in linking these to eminently metaphysical questions of self, sacrifice, Brahman, 'Real' with psychoanalytic issues of repression, the unconscious, the id, ego, superego of instinctual drives, the pleasure principle, libido, and the death-drive even when transferred beyond the individual to macro-levels of society and culture. Instead, we have an appropriation in mind. Rather than the psychology of human mind or behavior per say, we are intrigued by the interpenetrating relationships between the 'imaginary, symbolic, and real' when taken out of their psychoanalytic context and applied to large-scale mythic, religious, philosophical, and metaphysical phenomena such as those encountered in the Upanishads. In responding to the great twentieth century French Benedictine philosophical interpreter of Hegel, namely Hyppolite, Lacan states in his "Response to Jean Hyppolite's Commentary on Freud's Verneinung": "For that is how we must understand 'Einbeziehung ins Ich,' taking into the subject, and 'Ausstossungaus dem Ich,' expelling from the subject. The latter constitutes the real insofar as it is the domain of that which subsists outside of symbolization. This is why castration – which is excised by the subject here from the very limits of what is possible, but which is also thereby withdrawn from the possibilities of speech – appears in the real, erratically. In other words, it appears in relations of resistance without transference – to extend the metaphor I used earlier, I would say, like a punctuation without a text. For the real does not wait [attend], especially not for the subject, since it expects [attend] nothing from speech. But it is there, identical to his existence, a noise in which one can hear anything and everything, ready to submerge with its roar what the 'reality principle' constructs there that goes by the name of the 'outside world.' For if the judgment of existence truly functions as we have understood it in Freud's myth, it is clearly at the expense of a world from which the cunning [ruse] of reason has twice collected its share [part]." See Lacan (2007, 324). Obviously there is a lot more to say about how in Lacan the 'real as that which subsists outside of symbolization' and lived speech/presence goes beyond the subject itself precisely when trying to interpret through Hyppolite's Hegelian lens the difficult terms of 'Bejahung,' 'Verneinung,' and 'Ausstossung' in Freud. For now, we keep these terms untranslated because we have our own views independent of Lacan and Hyppolite. We are not trying to be evasive here but wish to pre-contextualize these massive issues before engaging in our phenomenological deconstruction of the Upanishad texts. For sure, this 'Real' in the Upanishad passages has nothing to do with ordinary empirical human subjectivity and psychology, even in the self-delusion of going beyond oneself into some Godly, ethereal realm where no human beings exist. This is not about mysticism or negative theology either- whether in relation to the legacy of Hegel or Freud or not. And our intention is not to smuggle in psychoanalytic theory, whether of the Freudian or Lacanian kind, into our analysis. The French poststructuralist proclamation of the 'death of the subject' or 'author as fiction' no longer fascinates us. There is much to develop through phenomenology, deconstruction, and metaphysics in the buried dialectical and non-dialectical relations of terms hidden in the signifier 'Real.' Hegel will be our inspiration but Hegelian scholarship is not our end goal.

to those born with Brahmanical status. Yet this caste status accorded at birth and its seemingly eternal truth is what is being obliterated in the Ambedkarite spirit. Birth and death (as end points or the negation of end points in an idea of motion that befuddled Plato and Aristotle alike) have to be rethought in that regard. But we shall return to this.

Reading the Upanishad Passages from a Phenomenological-Deconstructive Orientation

The Upanishad passages we offered – from the Brhadāranyaka and Chāndogya – speak of a self-aggrandizement ('I want to attain greatness'), sacrifice-offering-chant, the mortals and immortals, the self, the brahman, and the Real ('satyam'). At an initial glance, we can assume that some kind of primordial distinction is being established even if we do not detect the actual four varnas of the caste-Brahman, Kshatriya, Vaishya, Shudra – let alone the Dalit/Untouchables or outsider caste to the four-fold.[12] One does not have to speak of a 'caste system' in these passages.[13] The eventual socially stratified system that would emerge has persisted to this day, even after ancient Buddhist rule (third century BCE), Muslim-Mughal rule of the pre-modern era (1526-1720), British colonialism (eighteenth century to 1947), and post-colonial independent India, i.e. from 1948 to the present.[14] Initially, in this analysis, we are not going to analyze this fourfold and the outsider/Dalit caste relation. In fact the much deeper problem of a cosmo-metaphysical body of a fourfold in relation to a fifth outside that is wholly irreducible to it must be bracketed. Rather, we want to stay with the letter of these Upanishad texts, which are among the earliest in all of Hinduism's vastly, sprawled out literature.[15]

By focusing on the historical present, from where India's present may derive, rather than the actual historical, empirical time period of antiquity when the Upanishads were conceived orally or in writing, we can make explicit some assumptions. We are unabashed in our assertion that we are working out a speculative philosophy of history. In the spirit of Ambedkarite critique, this philosophy is not intended to win acceptance or be consecrated by Hindu faith

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[12] Ambedkar argues in his posthumous, incomplete manuscript, *Philosophy of Hinduism*, that after the Vedas and Upanishads, the four-fold caste hierarchical system makes its real appearance and permanent justification in the much later Manusmirithi or Manu's law codes, which are millennia after the Vedas and centuries after the Upanishad. They appear roughly anywhere between the second century BCE to third century CE. For the manuscript, *Philosophy of Hinduism*, see Moon (2014).

[13] For a theoretical exposition of caste, see Louis Dummont's classic, *Homo Hierarchicus: The Caste System and its Implications*.

[14] This historical periodization is to orient readers unfamiliar with the long historical trajectory of various forms of imperial rule in South Asia. It is not essential for this philosophical work. For the historical survey, see Diana L Eck, *India: A Sacred Geography*.

[15] The Brhadāranyaka and Chāndogya are among the earliest, which are pre-Buddhist or pre-sixth century CE. See Wendy Doniger, *The Hindus: An Alternative History*.

64

and those who live and practice it. There seems to be a difference between Brahmans and the lower castes but a difference or differences that are not easily discernable. Again, this is not the social category of caste assigned at birth, say someone who is born to a Brahmanic heritage today. Rather, we should say there is a difference (which we still have to articulate in phenomenological-deconstructive terms) between the state of Brahman and that of the non-Brahman. The states are what are in question, and not the objects known as 'Brahman' and 'non-Brahman.' The states conceal a deeper set of relations by which human existence conceals a mystery. As we shall see later in our appropriation and expansion of propositions in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, against Hegel's Western Judeo-Christian philosophical intentions, there is an internal difference between Brahman's self-consciousness in relation to another; it must attempt to negate and occlude the threshold of its own constant incoherence as an isolated unity. The relation inside that proposition is what must be expanded in speculative philosophical terms. The difference has its own temporalization-movement-event like quality. To repeat the first Upanishadic passage we analyzed:

> 'That does not age
>
>> as this body grows old
>
> That is not killed
>
>> when this body is slain –
>
> That is the real fort of *brahman*,
>
>> In it are contained all desires' (Upanishads 1996, 167; Chāndogya Upanishad 8.1.4)

> 'So, those here in this world who depart without having discovered the self and these real desires do not obtain complete freedom of movement in any of these worlds, whereas those here in this world who depart after discovering the self and these real desires obtain complete freedom in all the worlds.' (Upanishads 1996, 167; Chāndogya Upanishad 8.1.4)

We shudder in front of these passages, not so much from fear and trembling of a faith limit we cannot cross: for example, the forbidden or transgression whereby non-brahmans attempt to speak as or on behalf of brahmans, as in taking the place of brahmanic speech. Or a non-Brahman trying to pass himself off as Brahman to occlude public shame of being outed as a non-Brahman, and therefore suffer the indignity of public segregation and chastisement. Such a deracination of the lived speech by speaking as its interior, one that does not show up in the vocalized speech or the text, would be a sleight-of-hand, at least for the Brahman. Speech's priority remains unassailable, it would seem. For Hindus, these texts are holy; to speak on their behalf with the attempt to subvert them would be sacrilegious. Yet this is not what makes us cringe in horror in the encounter with the text, which has a Frankenstein-quality

to it. Rather, an anxious accretion builds, an intense gravitational force of something bulging from within, attempting to give birth in a seemingly ceaseless 'labor of negation,' and all for the singular and unrepeatable purpose of articulating a monstrous philosophical complexity. The question of time is what is at issue, but not linear, circular, or rectilinear time. Even the three known axises of 'past, present, and future' will not suffice in this endeavor.

The excess that comes from nowhere, and certainly not the text, haunts. A horizon tries to enrapture and ensnare consciousness on the self-reflection of its temporalization, the self-consciousness of temporalization itself, but it remains elusive. The passages promise great depth in terms of an incalculable, infinitely rich wisdom for which Western philosophical categories of analysis, say from the Pre-Socratics (Heraclitus) to Heidegger to Derrida simply evaporate. But we must venture the phenomenological deconstruction in light of the critique of caste in the historical present. This is something Ambedkar himself did not venture, for this paper presupposes philosophical developments that took place in the continental European context after the 1950s, therefore after Ambedkar. The great figure of twentieth century Indian history died in 1956.[16] We are trying to develop new critical theoretical tools to carry on his task of 'annihilating caste' by destroying the philosophical and religious basis for its perpetuation, namely the 'philosophy of Hinduism.'

We do not want to jump to any immediate distinctions between self and body, as in the self 'that does not age' and the 'body that grows old and dies.' Aging and growth-movement-decay-death are overdetermined with too many philosophical, religious, and cultural signifiers across traditions that we must

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[16] Our project presupposes knowledge of French and German philosophers and philosophically-motivated original thinkers throughout the twentieth century with whom Ambedkar most likely did not read. In the first half of the twentieth century, we are thinking primarily of Bergson, Durkheim, Dumézil, Bataille, Klossowski, Levinas, Merleau-Ponty, Sartre, Lévi-Strauss and Hyppolite. In the second half of the twentieth century, which Ambedkar could not read especially after 1956, we are thinking of Lacan, Dumont, Althusser, Ricoeur, Foucault, Derrida, Blanchot, Deleuze, Clastres, and Lyotard. In Germany, we are thinking of Husserl and Heidegger, and outside of philosophy proper, Freud and Weber. In the second half of the century, we are thinking of Habermas, Blumenberg, and Koselleck. The point is not to prove what Ambedkar may have or may not have read, as that belongs to the domain of intellectual history. In this piece we will not reflect on Ambedkar's educational roots in the U.S., particularly the influence of John Dewey, or those he may have been exposed to in England when he studied economics and law. We will not be turning to his works in sociology, anthropology, law, and economics even though they interpenetrate all of his writings one can say, even his explicitly stated works on the philosophy of Hinduism and the philosophy of religion in general, such as the *Philosophy of Hinduism*. Again, this is not a work on Ambedkar scholarship but an attempt to continue his critique by other means: *our* direct engagement with the ancient Hindu texts of the *Upanishads* while leveraging resources from twentieth century continental European philosophy. For more on twentieth century continental European philosophy, see Kearney (2003). For secondary works on Ambedkar and his intellectual genealogy, see Teltumbde and Yengde (2018).

suspend any intuitive descent that tries to crash this scene. Perhaps aging has nothing do with lived experience of passing time and the body and whatever one feels in inhabiting a body has nothing to do with physical matter at all, like feeling pain when one touches a hot stove. Furthermore, we do not want to assume that the self accumulates time, is stretched between in the internal accumulation of time and the unfolding of chronological time, as the whole experience as time itself gets stretched: one pole is transcending the body while the body is again within itself and through the course of chronological, linear time flowing. Internal time in relation to flowing time has a deeper ground, by which any relation between self and internal or external time intuited or perceived becomes possible. One is reminded of the novel distinctions Heidegger makes in Division Two of *Being and Time* between 'toden' (to die) and 'sterben' (to perish).[17]

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[17] If space permitted, we would read Division Two of *Being and Time* because for Dasein, death is not an 'event' (like any other in perceptible, visible, noticeable flowing time) whether one's own death or one's death witnessed by others who 'survive' or live on in chronological time. This is not about the witness who survives and attests to the death of the other. In its primordial temporalization ['ecstatic temporalizing of time as coming towards-having been-making present' in section 65 of Division Two as the ground of the very Being of Dasein – as 'Care, Concern, Dread and Alarm' – and Dasein's resolute drive (running ahead of itself in eager anticipation of what it will be in terms of its meaning as wholly complete in relation to Being since Dasein 'is' its *relation* of Being – from the Introduction) while coming back to drag itself along ('stretchedness' and 'self-stretching' in section 72 of Division Two)], we no doubt have a complex event: that is in a nutshell the whole of *Being and Time*. The problem is that this can never be reduced to anything spatially present – either as internal apperception by self and its relation to time – or externalized physical, social, psychological, or anthropological time and definitely not the chronological time of calendars (seconds, minutes, hours, days, months, years) in recorded world history. Neither time, anything within-in-it, as in death in time, or the temporalization of death, or the relation between death and time can be spatialized as an object of sense, intuition, imagination, or philosophical reason. Leaving it up to theology in terms of the complexity of the world's faiths, for example Christianity, will not help either. Belief is not disclosed truth. This whole entity – Dasein – is never present like any other being (be it empirical, noumenal, or phenomenological). Leaving aside questions of authenticity or inauthenticity in terms of Dasein's thrownness as being-in-the-world, the 'basic state' of Dasein (section 52 in Division One), it is hard enough to understand primordial ecstatic-temporalizing of time, being-towards-death, motion/motility in Division Two without relapsing back into everything that has ever been said in the Western philosophical tradition from the Pre-Socratics to Hegel up to Heidegger's present when *Being and Time* was composed right before 1927. To proliferate possibilities in Division Two is indeed a joyous task but one that cannot be accomplished here. It does serve as a horizon, however, as we multiply our distinctions in the phenomenological encounter with the *Upanishads* where we fructify differences between the temporalization of a motion event and aging/dying whereby passage and transition is not simply one of negation or absence of physical, mental, or existential life. As for Heidegger in isolation, we respect various attempts to think through the depths on time and death in Heidegger's thought, such as Derrida's *Aporias* (1993) and Iain Thomson, "Death and Demise in *Being and Time*" in Wrathall (2013, 260-290).

We must try to understand these fine distinctions as we think about the ground that 'contains all desires' and therefore the ontological constitution of that entity– Brahman – before any sense-meaning content fills up in these distinctions that jump at us, for example 'that does not age' and the 'body that grows old and dies/is slain.' Inhabiting the world itself and what that means in terms of raw possibilities to be as a stretched out projection of past, present, and future, even the relation between being, world, and time (in terms of any relation of past, present, future), should not be taken for granted in terms of any pre-given sense. And we should not jump too fastidiously with Western philosophers like Heidegger and Derrida (and before them Kierkegaard and Nietzsche) to rescue us from this encounter with an-Other tradition, namely the *Upanishads*. For example, age contains the time of a period but the aging of that period, the aging of an epoch itself is not the transpiration of time in an epoch or the shift of epochs in time.[18] The twentieth century philosophical critiques of the history of metaphysics on the how the non-spatialized *relations* between time and being and being and time have been configured are telling: they have been very effective in destroying our natural intuition of time as a spatialized flow of now-points, and in different ways.[19]

Beyond the relation – within the difference between the two single-quote phrases in the Chāndogya Upanishad – is not just a multiplicity of playful differences waiting to be articulated and hence delayed, if one thinks of the Derridean différance, trace, or supplement.[20] But rather, perhaps, we should think of the temporalization of being and the being of temporalization in the differences that escape Western metaphysical dichotomies of time and eternity/timelessness, living/dying and what is beyond them with respect to bodies that are imagined to be bounded and self-enclosed. For example, imagine four or more terms hiding beneath these distinctions and the so-called unities of the terms that are presumably opposed. This does not mean ignoring Hegel, Heidegger, and Derrida but facing them head-on, all of them in isolation and in terms of an impossible simultaneity.[21]

We are not concerned with the speculative-metaphysical conceptualization of that which appears on one side of the dichotomy – 'that which does not age or is killed,' which in the Upanishad is asserted as the brahman – the 'container of all desires.' We cannot ascribe a complex subjectivity

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[18] Philosophers of history such as Blumenberg and Koselleck have offered many insights into these matters. See Blumenberg (1993) and Koselleck (2004).

[19] One only has to return to Derrida's "Ousia and Grammē: A Note on a Note from *Being and Time*" in *Margins of Philosophy* (1982). There he takes on Heidegger and Hegel simultaneously in response to Aristotle.

[20] For example, these motifs derive from his awe-inspiring *Of Grammatology* (1973) and works prior to it.

[21] To take on one of these giants is hard enough, two is gargantuan, but three stretches the ability of any thinker. But it must be ventured.

to these desires, and then expand phenomenologically on a theory of self-consciousness about that subjectivity's own self-reflection beyond body-hood. Time incarnate passed death without a body is not akin to our presumptive intuitions of an 'afterlife' – say approaching a light when a self leaves a dead body to some unbounded space of infinite love.[22] And we do not want to move too quickly about the previous passage on the self-sacrifice motion of preparatory rites, auspicious day, gathering and cleansing, fire-offering-chant threshold (which appears linear but is not because these are not separate events) and simply link that to some mysterious ontological whole called 'brahman' – 'container of desires.'

Rather, we are concerned with what follows the statement of the dichotomies that lead up to this assertion of brahman, namely the passage that draws the sharp distinction between those who depart from this world without knowing the self, who then lack freedom in 'these worlds' and those who do not depart in self-ignorance and therefore gain freedom in 'all worlds.' There, in that tiny, barely noticeable space, we will mediate for a while knowing full-well that an implicit hierarchy, a perverse theodicy that justifies haves and have-nots becomes encrusted in a temporalized knot: that Gordian bind is the event of passage and reincarnation, and that brahman as the state which eclipses all distinctions including life, passage, reincarnation in the cycle of selves will be instantiated as the highest of all Hindu values. One person's freedom is another's enslavement, and dialectics collapse within the complexity. Time fills it-self up and expires in a dispersion that oozes out in all directions by which any sequence between origin, end, other than origin, and other than end fail to cohere. This is true of the source of time itself which is not localized in one place – internally or externally – beginning here or there, or ending here or there.

For something like birth (from a previous death and hence a rebirth) is a point of time, the stretching of life, and then death as a negation point in time, which then catalyzes another birth (hence rebirth) ad infinitum. So it would seem. Every birth would be a non-original, non-present split between a death and rebirth contained within it even though those are not two points in a disambiguated relation. We need to be reluctant and desist from entertaining spatialized thought. Nor do we want to go down the path of playfully creating ever new distinctions between origin, non-origin, other than origin, other than non-origin to conceive of this event of passage – birth – death/rebirth, etc. The spatial-temporalization of all this must be questioned. Hence these values of 'transmigration and reincarnation' (spatialized ontic entities or picture-representations to use the Heideggerean and Hegelian registers for ordinary,

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[22] One can think of Western conceptions of the 'afterlife' and 'near-death' experiences, whether religious or scientific in description. For example see the highly cited work of Raymond Moody, *Life After Life* (2015). Personally, this is not the kind of literature we would analyze in scholarly academic philosophical inquiry. It is just an example of what exists in the popular imagination regarding 'life after death.'

inauthentic thinking) must be 'transvaluated' just as Nietzsche did in his unrelenting critique of Christian morality.[23] Something bizarre is at work here, which has massive repercussions for caste stratification, oppression, and inequality that englobes the entire social whole of the Hindu mind and society. And internal adherents within Hinduism claim it is the oldest living continuous religious tradition, as if antiquity makes it the wisest, in that it predates the birth of the monotheistic Abrahamic faiths – Judaism, Christianity, and Islam – and the eventual 'offshoot' of Hinduism, namely Buddhism, which made its appearance centuries before Christianity.[24]

Let us develop some of the distinctions. The interrelations of relations and differences and non-interrelations of those relations and differences in the heart of the Upanishadic passage is what will consume us like the fire-chant. We are trying to conceive of a much larger macro-Event that connects while differentiating the question of self-sacrifice with the problem of the distinctions being made between departing the world without knowledge of self and loss of freedom with departing the world with knowledge of self to gain all freedom, not to mention the ontological meaning of 'freedom in many worlds.' And then the problem of the *relation* of freedom and movement emerges.

Being-in-*this*-world presupposes a self that knows itself to be in a world but it really doesn't know itself. It may not know its relation to the world or whether what it knows about being-in-the-world is real or not. And this is not the skeptical question of knowing whether a world or other worlds exist or not.

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[23] See in particular his *On The Genealogy of Morals* in Kaufmann (2000). Nietzsche states in the preface to his greatest work: "What was at stake was the *value* of morality – and over this I had to come to terms almost exclusively with my great teacher Schopenhauer, to whom that book of mine, the passion and the concealed contradiction of that book, addressed itself as if to a contemporary (– for that book, too, was 'polemic'). What was especially at stake was the value of the 'unegoistic,' the instincts of pity, self-abnegation, self-sacrifice, which Schopenhauer had gilded, deified, and projected into a beyond for so long that at last they became for him 'value-in-itself,' on the basis of which he *said No* to life and to himself. But it was against precisely *these* instincts that there spoke from me an ever more fundamental mistrust, an ever more corrosive skepticism! It was precisely here that I saw the *great* danger to mankind, its sublimest enticement and seduction – but to what? to nothingness?" See Kaufmann (2000, 455). One should not jump to a quick superficial comparison or conflation of Nietzsche's critique of Western morality from its Greco-Roman roots through Christianity to his nineteenth century present with our attempts to 'transvaluate' the self-sacrifice fire-offering chant and the question of time, eternity, self, body, the Brahman and the 'real.' We should be cautious, extremely self-reflective, and willing to divide within our presentation new assumptions about why and how the 'transvaluation' of the values espoused in the Upanishads differs and delays any simple comparison and contrast with Nietzsche's critique of his own Western Christian moral heritage. We will resume this work in a future paper.
[24] Ambedkar questions this notion of Hindu anteriority with regard to Buddhism. In historical fact, what today exists as Brahmanic Hinduism descends from elements whereby Buddhism may have been the original architect of central ideas minus the oppressive caste system. See his *The Triumph of Brahmanism: Regicide or the Birth of Counter-Revolution* (2010).

It may cling to an illusory conception of how somehow its birth, death, and presence in the world are ordered in a certain way that gives it a sense of actually existing. This is not a question of a self or soul that lives in a body or a body that seems to live out itself with or without the self or soul. It is not a question of being-inhabited as in the body lives out its habitation in a sphere beyond itself because the whole notion of an interior-exterior with regard to the lived experience of body (and not subjective consciousness in the body) has to be analyzed.[25] Lastly, we are not considering body as an extended world, whereby world is an extension of body.

One can be born, live, and die not knowing who they truly are (let alone the unity of being birth, body, death as an entity beyond the empirical, chronologized human being), and for this Upanishad, this is the peak of a tumultuous un-freedom. Perhaps one cannot control internally the possibility of transition and hence the conscious experience of being reincarnated in the next life. Freedom has a higher sense of self that can encase birth, living, death and incarnation into a higher transcendental horizon of time, which is not simply that of lining up birth with past, present with life, and death with the future. This is not the freedom of a living agency, someone who is free to choose to eat something or not for example, i.e. enacting a fast in an act of martyrdom unto physical death.

Furthermore, for these selves that do not know themselves and lack 'self-consciousness,' to use a superficial appropriation of the Hegelian term, have 'desires.' But these wants or longings do not allow it to acquire 'complete freedom of movement in any of the worlds.' Perhaps this refers to past worlds (past selves) or future worlds (future reincarnated selves). Or may be that distinction that equates past with self and reincarnation with future is false because obviously every self is reincarnated from a past and as a present self is on its way to becoming a future reincarnated self of a past present. What is strange about this temporalization is that you have a double ejection of two

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[25] The later Merleau-Ponty works would be instructive here, particularly his notion of the 'The Intertwining-The Chiasm.' See his *Visible and the Invisible* (1968). The editor of this incomplete manuscript (at the time of Merleau-Ponty's premature death) offers this text in a footnote, which are Merleau-Ponty's own words: "it is that the look is itself incorporation of the seer into the visible, quest for itself, which is of it, within the visible – it is that the visible of the world is not an envelope of quale, but what is between the qualia, a connective tissue of exterior and interior horizons – it is as flesh offered to flesh that the visible has its aseity, and that it is mine – The flesh as Sichtigkeit and generality. -» whence vision is question and response... . The openness through flesh: the two leaves of my body and the leaves of the visible world. ... It is between these intercalated leaves that there is visibility... . My body model of the things and the things model of my body: the body bound to the world through all its parts, up against it -» all this means: the world, the flesh not as fact or sum of facts, but as the locus of an inscription of truth: the false crossed out, not nullified." See Merleau-Ponty (1968, 131). We will have to return to these uncanny reflections as we ponder the mystery of mortals, immortals, body-hood, self, and the Real in the Upanishads.

infinite regresses in to the past and future multiplying past and future presents whereby the present is hollowed out. Presence has not even been traced, erased, and therefore defying any dialectical antinomies of presence and absence, their differences, relations, sublations, or something other to all these possibilities. This means there is neither a present present nor any present period. The present has finally disappeared, but even every element of that proposition does not make sense, let alone its supposed totality. And yet that is the basis of the conscious self, whether it recalls the past self that was reincarnated or the future self that will be a reincarnation of the present. Let us pause here before moving to the other side of the dichotomy (those who do know themselves before departing the world), let alone the minute relations and differences within the dichotomy. Let us engage in the phenomenological deconstruction of what we have seen so far.

The detachment of self from desires in this world is the pre-condition for running ahead of oneself towards oneself as the event of departure and not the actual future event of death. But this does not occur for unknowing selves in desires that further burrow them into the world precisely when departing. This includes the desire to depart from the world and to imagine what that event would be like, let alone experienced, without being-in-a-world. Something asymmetric is being set up here that somehow forecloses the possibility of a self-conceptualizing movement (through all the worlds) that would then signify an authentic freedom; not the false freedoms of desiring things in this world of objects, peoples, and things. Departing the world without self-knowledge does not mean leaving the world without knowing empirical or factual things about one's life, record of achievements, or the history of the world up to the point of one's own epoch. It does not include knowledge of the date of one's birth or what present in history one is living in. Departure itself is the problem, and this is transition-movement not of any 'thing,' including one's own life, in the passage of time in this world. It is not the event of time passing as image, which is not the passage of things in time.[26] We must conceive of the problem in terms of a complex event, one without a unitary-set of spatial boundaries. Spatializing time itself could lead us astray.

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[26] As interesting as Gilles Deleuze's post-empiricist reflections on the 'movement-image' and 'time-image' are in his *Cinema* volumes, we cannot be drawn into this poststructuralist discourse, which presupposes interpretations of spatialized images in film. This is not to reduce his impressive creativity and philosophical force. Rather, his theorizing-conceptual world and discourse do not apply in the religious-ontological domains we are studying. See in particular Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema, Vol 2: the time-image* (1989). At least this is our assumption about Deleuzian empirical philosophy, others may venture another interpretation.

The Hegelian Detour:

Let us now take a slight detour through Hegel (1977, 410). In the *Phenomenology*, (CC.) Religion follows (BB.) Spirit, the latter of which discusses morality (Hegel 1977, 364). At this juncture, Spirit's consciousness of itself has moved passed this phase of morality. And before Hegel moves to the first of three sub-sections of (CC.) Religion, Hegel offers a slight preface, if you will, as he opens up the whole space of (CC.) Religion.[27] Let us read this section slowly in light of the first part of the dichotomy of the Chāndogya Upanishad, namely 'departing the world without having discovered the self, where *real* desires do not capture the freedom of movement in *any* of these worlds.' We are on the tracks of trying to understand what is truly being said here.

In the opening paragraphs of (CC.) Religion, before he proceeds to the sub-sections of A.) 'Natural Religion,' B.) 'Religion in the form of Art,' and C.) 'The Revealed Religion' (Hegel 1977, 453) the latter of which will be Christianity, Hegel gives us quite a bit to appropriate and reformulate in our critical deconstruction of the Hindu *Upanishads*. In the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel, of course, is speculating about the history of Western philosophy and religion, not Eastern traditions. We are not claiming that there is some buried intention in the *Phenomenology* to cryptically address Eastern religious achievements, which Hegel refuses to make explicit.[28] Likewise, we are not concerned with critically analyzing Hegel's Eurocentrism in his own early nineteenth century context. Rather, it is *our* task to appropriate and transform the contents of the *Phenomenology* with a view to deconstructing the inner aporias, contradictions, tensions of the Upanishadic books to expose the fallacies of the caste system and its metaphysical moorings. We also have the benefit of two centuries of thought after Hegel, and the resources of many great thinkers whom Hegel influenced.

As the *Phenomenology of Spirit* crescendos towards its ending sections, Hegel states:

> 673. Even Consciousness, in so far as it is the Understanding, is consciousness of the *supersensible* or the *inner side* of objective existence. But the supersensible, the eternal, or whatever else it may be called, is devoid of self; it is only, to begin with, the universal, which is a long way yet from being Spirit that knows itself as Spirit. Then there was the self-consciousness that reached its final 'shape' in the *Unhappy* Consciousness, that was only the *pain* of the

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[27] For a reading of religion in Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, see Cyril O'Regan, *The Heterodox Hegel* (1994); William Desmond, *Hegel's God: A Counterfeit Double*? (2003); and Part "VI. Religion" in the anthology, Steward (1998).

[28] For example, it was not until his much later lectures on the *Philosophy of World History* where Hegel addresses India explicitly, including a strenuous critique of the metaphysical foundations of the caste as best he understood it. This is not the place to go into that discussion because we want to stay focused on a critical appropriation of the *Phenomenology* in our critical encounter with the *Upanishads*. For more on Hegel, the philosophy of Hinduism, andcaste, see Sampath (2018).

> Spirit that wrestled, but without success, to reach out into objectivity. The unity of the *individual* self-consciousness and its changeless *essence*, to which the former attains, remains, therefore, a *beyond* for self-consciousness. The immediate existence of *Reason* which, for us, issued from that pain, and its peculiar shapes, have no religion, because self-consciousness of them knows or seeks *itself* in the *immediate* present. (Hegel 1977, 410)

And then to restate the passage from the Upanishads before we swim back and forth between the two texts and in Western and Eastern realms of thought where they are never contiguous:

> So, those here in this world who depart without having discovered the self and these real desires do not obtain complete freedom of movement in any of these worlds, whereas those here in this world who depart after discovering the self and these real desires obtain complete freedom in all the worlds. (Upanisads 1996, 167; Chāndogya Upanishad 8.1.4)

These are the passages with which we will remain in the remainder of this essay. A chiasmic intertwining of the positivities and negativities of both Hegel's text and the Upanishads means that relations of difference and margins have to be uncovered in a double movement that is irreducible to a single, unitary event of interpretation. The double entwining movement constitutes a complex event that desires its own self-comprehension so to speak.

The remainder and the trace are important signifiers as we navigate both texts. For the remains point to not just the obvious, for example the presence of absence or the absence of the presence, or the relation and non-relation of presence to absence and vice-versa. To think of an incarnation of the remainder, a crypt that conceals a time frozen within it while we on the outside witness the expiring and passing of time in the stillness of what remains – that is the inspiration. But the 'remains' itself has not been understood in any of these categories. What is retained in the remains has nothing to do with the remains itself, a futural possibility of making death incarnate, a real being, with its own volition and hence 'time.' Death in that case would not be the specter of a past living time, but a living time itself unlike any other. But this is not the remaining of time itself, time as the remains, or time as the ground to understand, intuit, or apperceive not just what remains but the remains itself. But even this 'itself' is misleading. Hence our need to return to Hegel's passage. The content will fill itself up.

The *Upanishads* speak of the 'self' and knowledge of it. Hegel, by contrast, is weary of any stage by which the self has a conception: that is whereby the conception itself is not grounded in Spirit, which can organize any relation between self, self as conscious of itself, and hence self-consciousness as both consciousness of consciousness and consciousness of self. The terms seem to multiply but not aimlessly. The schism between the two realms – consciousness of consciousness as self-consciousness and consciousness of self as self-consciousness – means that some Other is beyond both those possibilities. Why

74

that Other haunts the distinction between the two, concealing what the actual difference between them really is, and what the difference conceals about 'itself' is part of the problem. The 'self' in general has to be bracketed; it does not signify any simple predicate, including the impossibility or negation of any existence of self or even self as existence. Eventually what becomes the problem of the self-conceptualizing movement is neither consciousness of self nor consciousness of consciousness, in which both are 'subject' and 'object,' but rather a complex event as fully fledged living Notion of Spirit. This is a concrete actualization, not an irreality if we follow Hegel all the way through. But we are running ahead.

These precautionary statements will help us foreground the distinction being made in the *Upanishad* text about a self that knows itself before departing and one that does not. The distention, differentiation, delaying between them cannot be simply adduced by any interpretation of what the two by themselves could possibility mean, and therefore what their 'contrast' really points to. All we can say is that on one side of the divide, there is being-in-the-world, an event of departure without knowledge of self, an equation of self with 'real' desire, and therefore a lack of 'freedom' of 'movement in any worlds'; and on the other side, there is also being-in-the-world but *this time* an event of departure that does involve knowledge of self, an equation of self with 'real' desire, and thus the acquisition of a 'complete freedom in all worlds.' Freedom has a type of completion (not an enclosed bounded object), and it is something that is acquired. Now with the Hegelian registers, we can expand on what all of this possibly means. And for the thesis we are developing in this analysis, a horrific antinomy of social oppression known as caste finds its metaphysical and theological justification in these Upanishadic texts. The Ambedkarite critiques seeks to thoroughly undermine such justification that goes unquestioned.

Within the Hindu context, freedom indeed is predicated on the prevention, inhibition, stripping away of freedom whereby some (lower caste) selves are deemed not to have knowledge of themselves in the event of departure. In Hegel's text, we can exfoliate the following with regard to the mystery of the Upanishadic promise that departure (not understood in any ordinary sense of dying or death) is something that occurs in the world, and not a departure from the world, while the goal is attainment of freedom in all worlds, past, present, and future selves. Death is like a transcendental subject stretched out among all worlds if properly grasped. It is an event, not absence or nothingness. Or it would seem that is the case. Let us test that hypothesis.

For Hegel, 'understanding' or perceptual-conceptual knowledge is not simply a representation of objective existence in its totality in the form of laws that describe an unchanging essence. For example, when one speaks of an immutable fact: 'that is a true statement.' It is a grasping of the 'supersensible,' which one could mistakenly take as a going beyond, above, or soaring outward and beyond any concept of a beyond (say the non-graspable 'outside' the physical universe), when in fact Hegel speaks of the 'inner side' of existence in its

Rajesh Sampath

objectivity. It is a living reality within all external reality – whether a dynamic or static reality, for example the universe. One tries to divine the laws – religious or scientific – of this world. One thinks they are grasping in the inner vitality and movement of what makes this world occur as a truth in such self-knowledge. But at this stage in the shapes of Spirit's history phenomenologically construed, there is no self to be found, the universality of organized sets of relations that would comprise the truth of the totality of world is hollow, and Spirit (which is the being of movement) does know itself as Spirit.

Even if one thinks they 'understand' or can generate knowledge of self in some type of unity of consciousness, self being conscious of itself, consciousness being conscious of a self, this is all tantamount to some dry, barren, 'changeless essence.' Self is not founded in and as a totalizing object that could manifest as a concrete notion, even the notion of being. The discovery of the true meaning of the world, which one might attach to some sense of supreme enlightenment or transcendence, mistakes the 'beyond' that dissolves self into its own understanding of what is most vital about objectively true existence – the 'supersensible' or interior world of truth inside an 'objective existence.' Hegel is certainly not thinking about the infinite expanse of the inner-workings of an isolated human subjectivity trying to imagine all that is. But this would become just another 'beyond' – not truly beyond one's superficial understanding of objective reality through representations and picture-thinking of an infinitely rich reality. The 'beyond' is actually submerged into an 'immediate present,' which has no more speculative philosophical value than a truly inert, static object that is in front of one's eyes, say an empty desk with no papers or books on it.

The self is a dead object precisely when it finds itself in the form of representative understanding, for example idealized mathematical language even as non-representative of any physical 'objects.' Whether name or number, self is not really itself. It is certainly not a living event of movement coming to completion of true knowledge being grasped for itself and raised to a higher-level Notion beyond 'Reason' as the cancellation of all previous shapes understood by all prior forms of knowledge (ancient, medieval philosophy, and early modern and modern science). That would be the gathering up of all moments and a congealing into a Notion that takes within itself the negation of all negations in a bursting-forth occurrence. At least, for Hegel, there is no phenomenological comprehension of what 'religion' is in this stage, and not religion's presentation of itself to itself, for example a world religion like Christianity as a religion based on revelation of divine truth as human person. There is indeed something Other to Christianity that the West up to Hegel's time was not able to imagine. And for this reason, consciousness of self remains an 'Unhappy Consciousness' at this stage of truncated development.

Similarly, in the Upanishadic passage, we can say the following in light of the Hegelian distillation, which to remind ourselves is strictly about a Western

trajectory of the history of thought from the ancient Greeks to Hegel's early nineteenth century European present. We are attempting to apply some of Hegel's insights to a context that Hegel did not envision, at least at the time of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*.[29] In the Upanishad, being-in-the-world means despising both self and knowledge of self as being a body inhabiting the physical world. The self is trapped in the body and desires a departure; but the departure, if it is genuine in self-comprehension, does not mean departure just from the sensorial physical world, even the body as a whole world; it is in fact tied to some kind of desire linked to a 'freedom of movement in all worlds.' Contrary to most opinions, this ascetic self is not the negation of world.

A happy consciousness in this Hindu context would not be trapped with a self who desires the things of this world but looks to link up a super-sensory consciousness that allows past dead selves to commune with future reincarnated selves; but this is lodged with some alleged self-consciousness of the 'self' departing itself. The line and continuum must be transcended in another temporal form that is not geometric in nature. Furthermore, the event of departure becomes an 'object' of self-consciousness, which redoubles as a self-knowing-itself. Transcendence of the cycles of lives from increasing consciousness of self (self = desire) would require a diminishment of bodyhood that translates into an equal commitment to a phantasmagorical imagination of freedom as all worlds. The 'self' consumes the body that was supposed to enclose it just as the sacrificial-fire-chant allows the self to achieve its 'greatness.' The body swallows the whole world precisely as the self gesticulates the body, a kind of perverse self-cannibalism of total annihilation. Everything vanishes into an immaterial ether, which is true self-consciousness of movement as event, not pure negation or nothingness. It *becomes* the very materiality of ritual sacrifice. How would Hegelian phenomenological deconstruction treat some of the assumptions here? Let us venture some propositions.

It would seem that the 'supersensory' knowledge of the 'event' of departure as an 'inner-side' of an objective existence of not only self but knowledge of self is linked to some kind of enjoyment or 'desire.' The desire is like an evanescent explosion in all directions in a maddening delight of total bodily transcendence as ritualistic expulsion; time devours its own shape and becomes other to both flowing time and its negation. Hence the desire is temporalized in a way that does not mimic the flow of moments or instants in linear time. This means the self is not a simple moment with an expanse of eternity. The self longs for its plural selves, past and future, death itself is traced as an erasure in the world because one is not departing the world. There is a stretchedness of all being. These selves meeting each other attempt to leave their bodies behind. Movement would be the non-cyclic 'freedom of all worlds' buried

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[29] See our footnote 28 on the relation between the *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) and *Philosophy of World History* (1830).

in this event of departure. 'Universality' or the 'pain' of succumbing to all the desires in this world of superficial things that a self may be attracted to (say for another human being) can never attain to this 'unified individual self-consciousness' as the composite of all selves knowing themselves and absolving themselves of all acts of false self-knowledge. And, certainly the quest for idols or divine objects will also fail to provide what they ultimately promise, namely some revelation of truth. When past and future chase each other, there is no present to be found.

For a self to truly liberate itself, it must learn to hate itself too, whereby self-loathing becomes a bottomless pursuit of enlightenment, the departure from all concrete desires of the world. For in the structure of caste, any present self is the karmic effect of the actions of a previous self, whereby bad actions catalyzed by false desires leads to a descent in a more oppressed caste, for example the Dalit formerly known as 'untouchable,' and all good actions can promise a higher, happier, ascendant 'Brahmanic' self. This is the type of injustice instantiated in this system of thought-belief. Ironically, however, the love for another (one's family, friends, or even members of one's caste) becomes impossible, a repetition of that false desire. Detachment from the desirous self for another cannot be substituted by yet another false desire for self, and the singularity of being-one-self is an evacuating of all and every being; a hypnotic stance of pure amorality and indifference towards the suffering of everything around oneself. Love becomes impossible, and this however is beyond good and evil in a way that Nietzsche could never imagine. Out of this morose a-morality arises the social-sovereign justification of caste; the latter has to conceal the inner-despotism of a metaphysics that prioritizes the destruction of false desire for self for another self with the promised notion of true transcendence in the event of bodily departure. The 'freedom of movement of all worlds' is indeed an un-holy grail, and everything is at stake in beating everyone else to its treasure.

One can ask about a type of Nietzschean *ressentiment*, or the resentfulness of a false morality deriving from a self-hatred, a will to weakness culminating in nothingness, a complete denial of all life-affirming desires because one has installed transcendence of the world as the highest calling. When in fact one does not know if one is only deepening a falsehood presenting itself as an objective truth. For once a system of morals comes into being, it can also become a system of domination.[30] Coming back to the Hegelian lens, we can re-submerge back in the Upanishadic realm. But we have to install an initial contrast with another great philosopher mentioned earlier, namely Heidegger.

Trying to discover a self as an event of departure while being-in-the-world is not quite a Heideggerean 'anticipatory resoluteness,' a 'being-towards-death' in which the greatest possibility for Dasein (being-there) 'to be' is the 'possibility

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[30] Every great European thinker of the twentieth century acknowledged the debt they owe to Nietzsche, for example all the works of Foucault.

of impossibility,' which is death.[31] And not to forget, for Heidegger, Dasein – that entity that poses the 'question of the meaning of Being anew' is its 'relation' of Being as 'transcendens' in which the very Being of Dasein is grounded in the 'primordial' mystery of 'finite, ecstatic temporalizing of time.'[32] As long as Dasein 'is,' it is incomplete, it's Being or 'is-ness' is never present, which means death is also not a moment in time (for example past or future); but as inherently finite temporalizing-eventful structural 'whole' or totality (which is not a delimited point in space-time) stretched out and self-stretching in 'thrown' existence, Dasein does not live forever in some superficial concept of eternity. There is no Christian afterlife for Dasein.

Dasein is after all 'being-in-the-world' without being an extant and extended object in the world, which itself is rooted in some ideal space-time. Nothing in the history of philosophy up to Heidegger's attempt can help explain this 'state' that Dasein finds itself in. Dasein tries to grasp itself as 'whole,' including both its 'ends' ('being-towards-death' and 'being-towards-birth').[33]

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[31] This is in reference to Section 50 of Chapter I in Division Two of *Being and Time*. Heidegger states: "Death is a possibility-of-Being which Dasein itself has to take over in every case. With death, Dasein stands before itself in its ownmost potentiality-for-Being. This is a possibility in which the issue is nothing less than Dasein's Being-in-the-world. Its death is the possibility of no-longer being-able-to-be-there. If Dasein stands before itself as this possibility, it has been fully assigned to its ownmost potentiality-for-Being. When it stands before itself in this way, all its relations to any other Dasein have been undone. This ownmost non-relational possibility is at the same time the uttermost one. As potentiality-for-Being, Dasein cannot outstrip the possibility of death. Death is the possibility of the absolute impossibility of Dasein. Thus death reveals itself as that possibility which is one's ownmost, which is non-relational, and which is not to be outstripped [unuberholbare]. As such, death is something distinctively impending." See Heidegger (1963, 294). As mentioned, none of this is meant to be passed over lightly but points to the necessity of sustained philosophical research on Heidegger and the Ambedkarite-inspired critique of the 'philosophy of Hinduism,' starting with its most esoteric philosophical texts, namely the *Upanishads*. Time and death have to be reconceived in entirely new ways, a feat that remains unaccomplished after Heidegger's grandiose attempts at novel philosophical thinking.

[32] From section 5 of chapter II of the Introduction of *Being and Time* Heidegger states: "question of the meaning of Being must enable us to show that the central problematic of all ontology is rooted in the phenomenon of time." See Heidegger (1963, 40). And from section 7 of Chapter II of the Introduction: "Being and the structure of Being lie beyond every entity and every possible character which an entity may possess. Being is the transcendens pure and simple. And the transcendence of Dasein's Being is distinctive in that it implies the possibility and the necessity of the most radical individuation. Every disclosure of Being as the transcendens is transcendental knowledge. Phenomenological truth (the disclosedness of Being) is veritas transcendentalis." See Heidegger (1963, 62).

[33] This is in reference to section 72 of Chapter V in Division Two of *Being and Time*, in which Heidegger starts to break down, declaring that his whole attempt up to that point could be fatally flawed and that he may not be able to answer the question he set out to answer, namely the 'question of the meaning of Being.' See Heidegger (1963, 424-425). To repeat yet again from the previous footnote, all of the current research is laying the groundwork for a future confrontation with Heidegger's corpus of which *Being and Time* is paramount and cannot be

Therefore finite time (with a birth and death inclusive) comes from a deeper ground that escapes anything any human being – at least for Heidegger – has to had to say in the history of Western metaphysics, theology, and religion. Yet it remains undisclosed, otherwise it risks being derivative and not truly primordial, as in ontologically foundational. And like Hegel's *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Heidegger's *Being and Time* does not reckon the problem of time, birth, death, and 'rebirth' in the Hindu tradition. After all Hindu reincarnation is not the Christian notion of a one-time occurrence-resurrection promised to all who have faith in the great factual event that took place over two thousand years ago in Roman-occupied Jewish Palestine.

Conclusion

So we return to Hegel one last time in the concluding encounter with the *Upanishad*. Keeping in mind allied problems in Heidegger for future investigations, we can offer some preliminary conclusions. Or rather, this initial Heideggerean horizon will give us some caution about a Hegelian speculative expansion of what truly lies buried in the Upanishadic text and perhaps behind it. We venture into a previously undisclosed realm with Hegel giving us the initial thrust. In the very next paragraph after the one we have been analyzing in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* thus far, Hegel states:

> 674. On the other hand, in the ethical world we did see a religion, namely, the religion of the *underworld*. It is the belief in the terrible, unknown night of Fate and in the Eumenides of the *departed spirit*; the former is pure negativity in the form of universality, the latter the same negativity in the form of individuality. Absolute Being is, in the latter form, indeed the *self* and *present*, since other than present the self cannot *be*. But the individual self is *this* individual shade which has separated from itself the universality, which Fate is. True, it is a shade, a superseded particular self, and thus a universal self; but the negative significance of the shade has still not changed round into the positive significance of the universal self, and therefore the superseded self still has, at the same time, the immediate significance of this particular essenceless being. But Fate devoid of self remains the unconscious night which does not attain to an immanent differentiation, nor to the clarity of self-knowledge. (Hegel 1977, 410)

If time permitted, we could spend countless pages immersing ourselves in this passage. In this raw moment, Hegel indeed mentions the 'departed' spirit, a spirit to which we must return. He also mentions 'Fate,' which in the Hindu context has a complex relation to karmic cycles, sin, and reincarnation. But it

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evaded. What philosopher in the twenty-first century can possibly claim to taking on the philosophical interrogation of the problems of time and death and not deal with Heidegger? That is utterly impossible. Taking it one step further, trying to crossover to an 'other beginning,' which the post-*Being and Time* Heidegger dreamed of, means stepping outside the (gentile) Western Christian-Greco-Roman foundations of metaphysics, and truly engaging a foreign tradition, in this case Hinduism.

would behoove us not to conflate belligerently the philosophical assumptions in Hegel's understanding with the non-Judeo-Christian and non-Greco-Roman ancient context of Hinduism. Whether Calvinistic predestination of Nietzsche's Eternal Return, or anything the ancient Greeks had to say about tragedy, cannot help us in our desperate attempt at liberation from the Hindu cycle of being; and that includes the ontological question of what the very *being* of what birth, death, and rebirth even means. What we can say is this in closing.

'Fate' in Hinduism, at least in the Upanishadic passage we have been dealing with, is not mere repetition of an indefinitely distant self, which is non-original because in the infinite regress it can be derived from a previous self that is first. The origin itself is non-original as Derrida would say, which means there is no origin of the 'trace,' only a trace of an origin that never was. Therefore the trace defies both presence and absence, let alone any simple definition of their difference dialectically understood or otherwise. Linear time as a succession of movements of moments and moments of movement is inadequate in trying to plumb the mysteries of the logocentric metaphysical tradition of the long 'text' known as the West in its 'historical totality.'[34]

In the Hindu 'text', the further one goes back 'in' time, it is as if the origin of the movement continues to distend itself backwards, like a reverse delay, a stretching indefinitely in a past that is never a stable present, whereby even the event of erasure is itself erased and pushed back further. One is constantly sucked back into an infinitely extended death known as the past that never ends. That is why being-in-the-world as true knowledge of self as desire transcends any simple notion of birth (which can never be divorced from being construed as also an event of death and rebirth). The origin explodes in a million temporal directions while suffocating the 'self' seeking its event of departure. It is not that one cannot escape from death as an inevitable fact of life looking into the future; rather, one cannot escape from death that will not disappear at the origin. It may look like a departure from *this world* – there here and now of the living present that one finds oneself in – but it also cannot be that because right around the other side of the horizon so to speak is the promised 'freedom in all worlds.' One can see the fence that imprisons oneself but one cannot see what lies beyond it. And here we do not speak of anything spatial, for in fact we are considering the metaphysical mystery of time itself, albeit in a new way.

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[34] See Derrida's magisterial *Of Grammatology*. He states at the very outset of his work in his preface: "It goes without saying that around that axis I have had to respect classical norms, or at least I have attempted to respect them. Although the word 'age' or 'epoch' can be given more than these determinations, I should mention that I have concerned myself with a structural figure as much as a historical totality. I have attempted to relate these two seemingly necessary approaches, thus repeating the question of the text, its historical status, its proper time and space. The age already in the past is in fact constituted in every respect as a text, in a sense of these words that I shall have to establish. As such the age conserves the values of legibility and the efficacy of a model and thus disturbs the time (tense) of the line or the line of time." See Derrida (1973, lxxxix-xc)

To truly get at this desire of a most radical and uncanny transcendence known as the Brahman requires a gross self-aggrandizement, a growth of living, dead, and reliving selves, a mausoleum collection of pure, macabre selfishness because literally no other self, as in another human being's self, must appear. The supreme Self in fact has devoured all selves. Any remainder would be part of the false desire and false knowledge and hence no true freedom. The tragedy is that inflexible distinctions in the stratified social order hypostatizes essential differences of human beings along the order of inferiority and superiority, no different in that regard when it comes to the evil of biological racism. But the supra-Self that gather all selves in all directions of time as an infinite borrowing is always individual (albeit with many selves); to include another human being is to invite what is most impure, to invite the defecation within the delightful sweet that is about to be consumed, namely the event of departure. In this world, one not only dies alone, one cannot admit the possibility of the life and death of the other in a mono-maniacal quest for self-knowledge and self-transcendence.

What we have here in this light of demonic freedom is an ever deeper darkness, the recess and abyss that is also an arising movement like the chant-fire-sacrifice. Leaving this world means departing from the ethical responsibility for life, as in life alive today, whereby past selves and future selves can never be present, otherwise one never really 'departs' from the world. One has to depart from the world of all others in order to depart from this world, which means to gain selfishly and greedily all possible worlds for oneself. In this 'religion of the underworld' and 'night of Fate devoid of self,' as Hegel says, something else occurs, and not the 'clarity of self-knowledge.' Rather, an 'unconscious night,' a night of dreams and nightmares takes over. For the Hindu, the 'self' attached to this world in the event of departure confuses a 'desire' without subjectivity with a 'freedom' without world. The joyous communion is an elusive sequence of infinite jets in two directions of time, all past dead selves imagined as true, and all future reincarnated selves imagined as real. To have self-consciousness of this super-movement, which is the greatest meta-self-consciousness, reflects the peak of Brahman condescension and elite conquest, an Elysian field for which no other caste can strive. In the Brahman, the 'dead truly bury the dead,' but unlike the Hegelian and Christological registers, the dead also consume the living in the eternal totalitarian system known as caste.

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Rajesh Sampath

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The Performative Practices in Politics: The Ukrainian Maidan and its Carnivalization

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Abstract: Performance theory is one of the methods that can explain dynamic and unpredictable social phenomena. The basics of our research are to be found in the artistic practices that destroyed previous classical patterns in art, while overcoming its boundaries. Accordingly, performance as a practical phenomenon has become the basis for a theoretical explanation of different political processes with carnival nature that influence and change social reality. This article proves that the Maidan in Kiev had a performative nature as well, which developped spontaneously due to its active involvement of the human body and the release of unconscious elements. It is claimed that the use of performative practices inside the Maidan allowed to overcome the totalitarian vertical logic of power, realizing democratic ideals and overcoming nihilism. Therefore, we suggest that performative theory can be applied to similar carnival political, social, and cultural phenomena, revealing their procedural and creative substance.

Keywords: performative theory, performance, politics, the Maidan, carnivalization, power.

Introduction

At the end of the 20th century, humanities were experiencing a 'performative turn,' the beginning of which is associated with John Austin's theory of speech acts, which was presented in his course *How to Do Things with Words*. The connection of language and action was also noted by Hanna Arendt in *The Human Condition*, where she stated that human activity needed language as action (Arendt 1998). The linkage of language and action leads to the manifestation of a person in the world where specific performative identification is created. According to Arendt's theory, it is possible to distinguish two fundamental identifications in the social world. The first one is happening through language and action. It demonstrates *who* a human being is. The second one is identification by reference to physical parameters of corporeality (body and voice), expressing *what* a human being is.

The formation of performative theory is associated with the critique of Austin's speech acts within post-structuralism: Jacques Derrida's deconstruction, Michel Foucault's theory of disciplinary power, and Judith Butler's (self)criticism of feminism and gender theory. This stage of performative turn is characterized by the fact that the concept of performative is not limited by its linguistic meaning but further expands into social, cultural, and political contexts. In

addition, the transformation of interpretation into the basic methodological procedure in the humanities replaced the institutional critique of hermeneutics, which was manifested in Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht's work *Production of Presence: What Meaning Cannot Convey* (Gumbrecht 2004). Thus, the performance theory became a powerful tool for understanding atypical social phenomena that the previous classical models could not explain.

As a result, a methodological approach called "performative studies" appeared within the human sciences. The basic concepts for the further understanding of political reality and the Maidan are performatives, performances, and performativity. Performatives are a type of speech acts that do not merely describe the world but also express certain actions that have both social and political meaning. Performance refers to social practices that involve presentations of sensuality and corporality within a social, political or cultural space. Performativity is a term that refers to the basic characteristics of social, political, and cultural phenomena, which are interpreted within the framework of performative studies. The correlations between performatives, performance, and performativity are stated by German anthropologist Christoph Wulf. In particular, he states that performances can describe an artistic and social activity, performative action is useful for the analysis of speech, and performativity is a derivative concept that actualizes the connections between the previous models (Wulf 2005).

The specifics of performative studies are that they can be implemented both as a theoretical model and as an empirical approach, absorbing different social practices within their conceptual limits. Hence, this approach is also popular not only among philosophers, sociologists, and cultural anthropologists but theatre directors, actors, dancers, and artists, who also use this model for the future realization of their ideas. It means that the performative turn orients the social and human sciences not only towards the understanding of society but also on its current often invisible transformations. In this regard, the performative and hermeneutic approaches complement each other as procedures for explaining social reality.

The interpretative analysis of a perfomative action is based on modern hermeneutics, which also has political consequences. Accordingly, Stanley Rosen explains: "Every hermeneutical program is at the same time itself a political manifesto or the corollary of a political manifesto" (Rosen 1987, 141). Moreover, performances with a specific political meaning require implementation of hermeneutical interpretation in order to identify hidden political messages. Within this context, social performances can be defined as situations for pre-understanding of the political world with the help of special art practices and manifests, achieved in the process of its interpretation. Therefore, the politics of performativity connects with the politics of interpretation.

We argue in this paper that some social/political phenomena have a deliberate performative nature that can be realized by political actors and artists as two opposite

types of representation. These phenomena cannot be analyzed through the use of hermeneutic interpretation since it cannot explain their variable and incomplete nature, mostly focusing on stable and completed contexts. In addition, we assume that many phenomena do not have a performative nature, but this does not eliminate the fact that they can be analyzed within the performative theory, which reveals their procedural (gaming) essence. Following that, the Ukrainian Maidan (the civic protests of 2004 and 2013-2014) is an example of a social phenomenon with a performative nature. Performative studies can reveal their cultural/aesthetic and social/political significance in the perspective of carnivalization and overcoming cultural, political or philosophical limitations.

Art, Performance, and Politics

The history of performance begun with an attempt of certain artists to separate themselves from the previous tradition, namely avant-garde and modernism. First, they rejected the long and habitual border between an artist and an audience, when the former always performed the leading role. In this regard, such division of roles and functions for the art of performance was inadmissible since it had nothing to do with life. Artists believed that everyone can be an artist and everything can be conceptualized as well as performed, thus "performance art has opened hitherto unnoticed spaces" (MacDonald 1993, 175). Secondly, performance integrated various types of art including theater, music, and dance, and thus developed into an interdisciplinary field of one's expression. However, the main difference from these arts is that performance was aimed to develop narrative in a non-linear way due to the active participation of the audience. Lastly, performance was particularly sensitive to real life although it often separated itself from it because of its apolitical position. According to Taylor, performances "function as vital acts of transfer, transmitting social knowledge, memory, and a sense of identity reiterated behavior" (Taylor 2003, 2). Following this, performance art conveyed the main social problems of the past century, including feminism, racism, the Vietnam War, the Holocaust, and capitalism.

In fact, it is difficult to identify the first stage of performance since many artists, directors, and musicians used performative elements in their texts. Within this framework, even the first resonance exhibition of impressionists can be an example of a performative action where artists, spectators, and critics were involved as full participants into the same discourse. RoseLee Goldberg tracks the history of performance from futurism although she claims that the early futuristic performance was a kind of demonstration rather than an aesthetical practice (Goldberg 2011, 11). She adds that futurist practices had more propaganda than art (Goldberg 2011, 11) although they are often inseparable. Considering the goal of the current research, it is significant that performance within the avant-garde movement expressed its interest in political issues, trying to change the surrounding reality due to its aesthetical (and often non-aesthetical) techniques. The origin of performance shows that this kind of

art expanded traditional forms of expression as well as the perception of social reality, which was interpreted as a product of artist's consciousness but not as an objective and inaccessible part of existence.

Performance in its essence has always been a political action because it tried to undermine the established constructs of power and any available hierarchies in the society. Performance art developed in the 1960s and became a form of rebellion against the capitalist values, American politics, and masculine discourse. Therefore, it is not surprising that female artists were the most prominent representatives of performance, who tried to rewrite the so-called 'masculine' history of art and, what is even more important, to rehabilitate their social status. For example, although a well-known performance *Cut Piece* (1964) of Yoko Ono was not designed to criticize specific historical episodes, but it is still referred to the issue of social injustice. The artist reflected the problem of war through her body, which was a performative canvas for the audience, representing the human body as a form of passive struggle against the human aggression of that time. Moreover, Ono proved that the female body could exist as a way of social opposition according to the tradition of peaceful protests.

All things considered, performance has always used the human body as a method of rebellion against a certain political regime, which was associated with the Dadaist and modernist actions. Artists believed that the human body could express the deepest unconscious instincts and insults, so the involvement of a large number of people was an indispensable element in performance. This fact allows to apply the performative theory in the future analysis of public spaces, social protests, and even metropolitan areas. On the one hand, the body is a powerful performer for creating new social messages that can substantially change a prevailing order. On the other hand, performance art uses the body as a text for its own aesthetic practices, transforming the previous means of artistic expression. In this regard, social protests, demonstrations, and revolutions are those specific embodied practices that reveal the collective unconscious as well as the invisible mechanisms of social life.

Nevertheless, the human body is only a medium between one's idea and the audience, where the transmission of an aesthetic message is often open and unfinished. Hence, everyone can participate in the performance without knowing its main purpose, which makes the process itself more important than its ultimate goal. Therefore, the performance can last indefinitely in time and space as well as it can be contributed to countless times. For example, the performance *4.33* (1952) of John Cage conditionally sets the frames of action, but within these limits the audience can do anything. Similarly, the performance *Rhythm 0* (1974) of Marina Abramovic assumed complete freedom of action for the audience that could perform various actions with the artist's body with the help of 72 objects that lay on the table. It proves that the interaction of the artist's body with the audience allows not only to rethink social stereotypes or ideologies but also to create a parallel social reality that can influence the development of various

88

processes and phenomena. In this regard, Diana Taylor notes that the task of performance was to rebuild the structure of cultural memory by changing the basic codes of history and identity (Taylor 2003, xviii). This formula is also relevant for German performances and actions (the struggle against the Nazi past), Yugoslav (the protest against the Soviet regime), and modern Russian actions (rethinking the communist and totalitarian ideologies). All of them were on the verge of aesthetical and political areas while changing the content of both cultural memory and the artist's role in the creation of social reality.

On the other hand, conceptual performances are not always related to politics, trying to distance themselves from any ideological connotations. The artists work purely with abstract categories that have nothing in common with politics. For example, the Moscow group of conceptualists *Collective Actions Group* organized *The Balloon* in 1977, which tried to go beyond the ideological limits of its society. They mounted a large ball of four meters in diameter and stuffed it with smaller balloons and a ringing alarm clock inside, letting the whole haystack-shaped thing to drift down the river Klyazma (Moscow Conceptualism 2017). It is important to mention that there were no spectators, but the whole performance was realized in a specific place and time. The problem is that apolitical performances are often associated with conceptualism, which is not always aimed at collaborating with the audience. Nevertheless, performance often refers to different aspects of politics, considering it as an emancipatory and destructive practice towards people.

Such division is close to Jacques Ranciere's theory of political art, where he proposes to use *the distribution of the sensible* in order to explain the interplay of art and politics, in particular in their distribution of sensory data. Ranciere states that the aesthetic distribution reflects an appropriate social division and, as a result, cannot be politically intertwined (Ranciere 2004). In other words, aesthetic sensations are not a product of human consciousness or spirit but depend on politics and its logics: "It is a delimitation of spaces and times, of the visible and the invisible, of speech and noise, that simultaneously determines the place and the stakes of politics as a form of experience" (Ranciere 2004, 13). Accordingly, art exists as a form of aesthetic representation and articulation of political phenomena, namely the mechanisms of emancipation, political erosion, indifference, and populism. However, Ranciere insists that this concept should not be confused with Walter Benjamin's discussion of the 'aestheticization of politics' (Ranciere 2004, 13). At the same time, Ranciere's vision of art and politics is still relevant to the Marxist aesthetics that interprets art in the context of socio-economic relations. Thus, it has nothing to do with the sphere of transcendence either. Moreover, this concept deals with the conceptual foundations of performance, which tries to go beyond the limits of ideological discourses but still manifests it in its specific way.

The most important thing to mention is that Ranciere opposes autonomous and heteronomous art. The former refers to a closed sphere

because it serves only its ideas. This idea refers to the romantic aesthetical doctrine of 'art for art's sake' which exhausted itself after modernism. In addition, this art is associated with the institute of a museum, which is opposed to the second type – street art. Ranciere tries to prove that such division is not relevant today, but it seems that hetero-dominated or non-institutional art replaced the autonomous one due to the process of politicization. As a result, this led not only to the expansion of themes and methods of art but also to its socio-cultural mission, where performance plays the role of approval and implementation of the most relevant social practices. Ranciere's theory does not only undermine traditional notions about the social function of art but also completely changes the role of politics in the creation of aesthetic content. According to this logic, an artist cannot create out of politics because, according to Ranciere's belief, he/she inevitably creates his/her time and space, thus falling into the sphere of sensual distribution: "It is thoroughly possible, therefore, to single out the form of politicization at work in a novel, a film, a painting, or an installation. If this politics coincides with an act of constructing political dissensus, this is something that the art in question does not control" (Ranciere 2004, 62). Hence, art is a direct element of social reality, which always transforms or formats it according to its goals. However, a philosopher does not explain where these goals come from or what the final goal of its aesthetical activity is. If it only realizes political goals, then what is the role of an artist in this process? It is also substantial for performance art when the roles between an artist, an audience, and social institutes are not always clearly demarcated but constantly invisible and changeable.

Progressing further, the artists refused to use traditional methods of expression, especially the mimetic ones, absorbing every possible gesture and object from everyday life, pretending to be an integral or even dominant part of reality by politicizing and conceptualizing it in such a way. It also refers to the idea of meta-politics that opposes the forms of politics to those elements that are formed by political actors: "It can be said that an artist is committed as a person, and possibly that he is committed by his writings, his paintings, his films, which contribute to a certain type of political struggle [...]. It means that aesthetics has its own politics, or its own meta-politics" (Ranciere 2004, 60). Thus, Ranciere proposes a paradox in which art becomes art when it ceases to be itself. In this case, performance clearly illustrates the situation when artists abandoned the classical means of mimesis and crossed the line between art and non-art into the space of reality and politics.

Joseph Boyce, one of the leaders of performance, noted that art should truly change everyday life of human beings (Goldberg 2011, 184). This transformation of art into life and vice versa expressed the essence of not only Boyce's philosophy but of many other performers who used the concept of "social sculpture" for their actions as well: "His idea of 'social sculpture', consisting of lengthy discussions with large gatherings of people in various

90

contexts, was a means primarily to extend the definition of art beyond specialist activity. Carried out by artists, 'social sculpture' would mobilize every individual's latent creativity, ultimately moulding the society of the future" (Golberg 2011, 151). In spite of this, the desire to create art outside of politics, museums, and hierarchies turned out to the opposite situation when every performative gesture offered or denied a certain version of reality, and thus was inevitably transformed into ideological action.

Consequently, performance has always been sensitive to social problems, rethinking them in the form of subjective-subjective interaction, where the main purpose was to create an interactive field of collision between different social strata through the active involvement of their own corporeality. Therefore, it was difficult for many critics to distinguish the art of performance from theater, dance or even everyday life since their actions were close to the surrounding reality. On the other hand, the performative shift updated various fields of humanitarian knowledge by returning performance its status as a serious art: "With performance as a kind of critical wedge, the metaphor of theatricality has moved out of the arts into almost every aspect of modern attempts to understand our conditions and activities, into every branch of the human sciences – sociology, anthropology, ethnography, psychology, linguistics" (Carslon 2004, 72). Clearly then, performance allowed to reflect different complex social and political processes due to its procedural, decorative, and interactive nature.

The Politics of Performativity and Interpretation

Considering the correlations between hermeneutic interpretation and performative studies, it is important to underline how they differ from each other. At a first glance, the procedural nature of performative theory predetermines the involvement of hermeneutics. For instance, Gumbrecht claims that his *The Production of Presence* does not tend to be an anti-hermeneutic project: "Challenging the exclusive status of interpretation within the humanities, however, does not mean that this book is 'against interpretation.' It is interested in what it will suggest we think and, as far as possible, describe as 'presence' but it by no means aims at being antihermeneutic. In this spirit, the book will suggest, for example, that we conceive of aesthetic experience as an oscillation (and sometimes as an interference) between 'presence effects' and 'meaning effects'" (Gumbrecht 2004, 2). Therefore, according to the theorist, the focus on "materialities of communication" (its attention to the corporeality in the process of communicative interaction), "nonhermeneutic" (the critical approach to the institutionalization of hermeneutic), and "the production of presence" (the effects caused by materiality of communication), do not completely deny "the production of meaning" including the procedures of interpretation in social sciences and humanities (Gumbrecht 2004, 2).

Dmytro Shevchuk, Maksym Karpovets

In the context of correlations between interpretation and performativity, there are two kinds of politics. The first one is the politics of performativity, which can be applied in the perspective of the performative field. At the same time, the politics of meaning as the second type can be realized in the hermeneutic field, including its different possibilities for understanding. The similarity between these kinds of politics is evident in the fact that both of them use opportunities of language as communicative means in the public space. This kind of politics is connected with the creation of the modern public space, including such processes as public disturbances and protests. For example, Gumbrecht describes the genesis of the hermeneutic field from the New Age, which is associated with the development of new ideas about public space: "The public space was imagined as the sphere of deliberation where all participants would bracket their personal and group-specific interests in order to reach consensus. Such were the premises for the early institutions of political representation, above all, for the parliament as a place where the competition of different opinions and of different visions of the future was supposed to be transformed into consensus and into a joint punctual vision of the future" (Gumbrecht 2004, 35). The politics of performativity also suggests the necessity of political dialogue and consensus, trying to "revitalize" the modern political discourse in such way. In particular, this intention has been realized in the project of "performative democracy."

First of all, this "revitalization" is aimed at developing a new type of engagement that involves a wider involvement of members into the political discourse, thereby allowing to overcome the particular interests of a certain group. However, the problem of performative politics is how to institutionalize it within different social groups, considering their carnival nature. Elżbieta Matynia explains the connection between performance and carnival: "Performative democracy, like the carnival studied by Mikhail Bakhtin, is a transitory phenomenon and, accordingly, cannot be institutionalized... In its best moments, it is an example of a joyous and subversive experience that is played in the carnival public space..." (Matynia 2009, 16-17). This thesis explains the use of performative democracy as an instrument against totalitarian practices. Relying on the spontaneity of carnival experience, the politics of performativity uses non-institutional mechanisms of interpretation in order to understand such social and political events that cannot be controlled by the authorities. The interpretation of social and political phenomena within the framework of performative studies is ensured through the reference to mimetic gestures, which involves applying the experience of corporal practices and speech. At the same time, the procedure of understanding does not include a principle of reflection but involves the performative elements of regularity and repetitions.

The performative approach involves the performing of meaning, thus it is possible to assume that political action has a gaming nature. However, the game of performance is full of spectacularity within predetermined scenarios.

92

Hermeneutics, on the contrary, understands the process of gaming in a different way: it indicates how the phenomenon of the political exists but does not reveal its performative elements. Moreover, the hermeneutic understanding of the game implies more freedom of its realization because one cannot impose meaning in the process of gaming as well as in communication. In this regard, the manifestation of political meaning requires more freedom for its realization, referring it to democratic institutions. Within this context, the Maidan revealed democratic political, social, and cultural meanings only because of its performative essence.

The Performative Nature of the Maidan

The Maidan is a social and political phenomenon of protest that affected the political order and, even more importantly, changed the social landscape. The word "Maidan" became a universal political concept, defining different protest actions in the beginning of the 21th century. Therefore, the phenomenon of the Maidan has various interpretations that depend on political positions and systems of social values. This title is also associated with a kind of sacred topos, especially after the killing of protesters in February 2014. In other words, the Maidan became a special dimension of publicity within the system of the social imaginary that intensively shapes and distributes political meanings. Clearly then, it is important to implement a kind of theoretical mapping in order to understand the real essence of the Maidan, namely in its performative manifestation.

The Maidan can be defined according to the classification of movements proposed by Richard Rorty who distinguishes political movements and campaigns. Accordingly, the philosopher explains his classification: "By a campaign, I mean something finite, something that can be recognized to have succeeded or to have, so far, failed. Movements, by contrast, neither succeed nor fail. They are too big and too amorphous to do anything that simple. They share in what Kierkegaard called 'the passion of the infinite'" (Rorty 1995, 56). Movements have a more universal and global political scale than campaigns, thus they are also incorporated into culture because they have been always inspired by philosophy, literature, art, and history. Therefore, they represent a political potential that is claimed to be the ideal of politics. This situation also refers to Alain Touraine's theory of social movements, where he insists that every movement is a social conflict and cultural project at the same time (Touraine, Macey 1995, 240). Moreover, the movement contains ethical antagonism, when the creation of moral values often requires the creation of political opponents as well as enemies.

Accordingly, the Maidan was one of those social phenomena that had been developed as a performative action although it was not reproduced according to a certain scenario. In fact, the whole movement was a spontaneous and unexpected act, thus the authorities and the general public were not ready for its

practices. During its social and artistic practices, it created such an intense performative field that it managed to gradually organize the entire population around the idea of European integration and democratic values. Moreover, due to its specific and often extreme performances, the Maidan managed to 'blow up' politics, offering a unique experience of the extraordinary. The idea is that the Maidan was an experience on the edge of human capabilities, which is especially relevant for performance and Actionism. People stood in the central square of the city 24/7 at low temperatures, did not sleep for several days, and ate sandwiches with tea. However, this extreme state of the human body awakened the unconscious forms of mankind as well as its archaic collective instincts. Within this context, the Maidan used the creative power of unconscious instincts for creating its alternative version of reality where people lived/performed to the final escalation.

An essential feature of the Maidan was that it had a carnival nature as it was turning the existing system on the opposite one, and, what is more important, changing the unnatural practices through performative actions, in particular breaking the usual rhythm of life in Kyiv. According to Padraic Kenney's theory, any revolution performs as a carnival with its actors, stage, and decorations (Kenney 1989, 21), which fully reflects the situation of the Maidan. The entire central square has become a carnival place of constant protests and demands in a way that physical movement through the center of the city was impossible. Accordingly, the majority of everyday and holiday practices could be organized only in the context of the Maidan's value system. For example, the celebration of the New Year was held near a metal tree that was created as a collage of politicians. The congratulation of the President was also a conditional element, which the majority ignored because of the critical situation in the country and their dissatisfaction with the regime. In this regard, Snow states that performances have always had a creative intention, producing artificial realities due to the imagination of their participants (Snow 2010). Thus, this fact indicates that the participants on the central square in Kyiv proposed their version of reality against the central politics by performing every social and cultural element in its symbolical state of existence.

On the other hand, some structures on the Independence Square continued to work, namely cafes and restaurants, which became a support for the protesters in the winter. Nevertheless, such carnival decorations as the scorched tires, houses, frozen shields, and large artificial barricades can be related to the performative language of the Maidan. These artificial objects formed a line that clearly separated the performative life from the stable, the chaotic reality from the disciplined, and finally separated the world of daily protests from the routine one, which did not lose its rhythm in the city and the country. Therefore, the performative context of the Maidan automatically transformed the routine into something exceptional and artistic, thus creating a

94

special situation for people in order to realize their political goals within this specific situation.

Apart from the fact that the Maidan itself developed as a performative action on the scene, which functioned even during the attacks on the protesters, it also contained several artistic performances. The main goal of these performances was not only to eradicate social anxiety and fear but serve as an impact on power and its structure. One of such examples is the well-known performance on the piano by Markiyan Matsekh who played near the armed riot police. The idea was to convey the social messages of the Maidan through creativity by breaking the aggressive pole of military discourse. The pianist played Chopin's Waltz in C-sharp minor in the coldest winter season, so his fingers could barely move. However, such bodily transgressive gesture was an important element of the performance since it diagnosed a special state of consciousness of the protesters who stood on the square despite physical discomfort. Thus, the pianist's action overcame human physical capabilities, going beyond the physical and mental limits into a symbolic space of the political body. On the other hand, the riot police were also direct participants during the whole performance as well as the Maidan as they were performing the roles of actors and audience at the same time although they did not take any action. It was a powerful and important visual image that transported the Maidan's situation, namely the ongoing confrontation between the civilian population and the armed government, which did not want to change its style of domination in the country.

The performative nature of the Maidan identifies it not only as a life-threatening practice but opens the political perspective of overcoming nihilism in terms of political art. The Maidan in its democratic intentions tried to overcome a vertical order and propose a horizontal perspective of human coexistence where all were equal with each other. In this case, it is important to incorporate the discussion between Ernst Ünger and Martin Heidegger about nihilism which was embodied in the totalitarian regime of Germany. At the same time, Ünger adds that nihilism is sufficiently organized and structured: "Nihilism seems on the contrary to accord itself very well with order which in fact becomes all the more encompassing and machine-like the further the obstacle of traditional values is swept away. Hence why the vast apparatuses of production and destruction assembled in the modern world seem equally capable of serving under different, even explicitly antagonistic, banner" (Bousquet 2016, 32). However, such a type of nihilism makes it dangerous for democracy since it forms a single and unchanging model of being. Accordingly, for the protesters, the Maidan was a form of dismantling the totalitarian regime in Ukraine due to the radical performative practices that were necessary to influence on the dominant political regime. In other words, the performative spontaneous nature of the Maidan was the antithesis of the unchanging order that led to the feelings of hopelessness and despair in Ukraine. It means that the unexpected and

unpredictable practices of the Maidan went beyond the expectations of both the authorities and the international community, resulting in victory albeit with the victims among the civilians.

Consequently, the Maidan has become an incomplete political and social project due to its performative nature. In fact, the Maidan became a structure that can be permanently updated for producing and broadcasting political meanings. Accordingly, each city or region can implement its own Maidan relying on the previous experience. The essence of any performance is that it can be reproduced in all conditions, going beyond the limits of permanent conventions, thus it is a creative and dynamic social process. Within this definition, the Maidan became an open project only due to its performative essence, which allowed it to be constantly collected and reassembled at the structural level, involving various actors for collective actions. Moreover, the Maidan was an event that produced new cultural values and practices by updating the old order of things to the new one. Therefore, the Maidan overcame the artistic conditionality of performance by offering an alternative version of social reality through the attraction of creativity and collective imagination.

Conclusions

Having analyzed the performative theory in politics, namely its implementation within the practices of the Maidan, it can be concluded that the specificity of performance deals with the fact that it is not only a practical or empirical reality but also a theoretical approach with its specific methodological frameworks and concepts. In particular, the performative theory explores the social reality in its gaming and carnival nature, where the stable order can be reorganized randomly and subjectively, thus rooting into the unconscious and even archaic elements of the collective. However, the difference between the performative theory and hermeneutics is that it allows to explain the procedural and unpredictable phenomena. Such procedure has been explicated from art and its possibility to express one's creative vision without limitations by attracting the potential of one's own body, time, space, and audience. Accordingly, art can create the political landscape where the latter determines the nature of social performance.

The performative analysis of the Maidan demonstrated that its performative nature was realized due to the political manifestos, installations, collages, and art performances on the Square in Kyiv. The protesters created a dynamic and open reality according to democratic ideas and the deconstruction of the totalitarian foundations of power. Moreover, the Maidan's opponents performed the role of the audience, allowing to go beyond the limits of established conventions where the main driving element was the human body. On the other hand, the human body was the last border between the carnival reality of the Maidan and the everyday life beyond it. Hence, the Maidan became a virtually unfinished project both for Ukraine and the world, allowing it to be implemented anywhere due to its performative abilities.

96

Finally, the performative studies of the Maidan may be a methodological prerequisite for understanding similar social and cultural phenomena in the future research, including civil protests (the Occupy movement), sports events, and public celebration. Moreover, there are several social and political phenomena that can only be explained through performative theory because of their procedural and unpredictable nature. Thus, we highlight the ability of these phenomena to initiate a particular aesthetic perception of reality by the participants, thus transforming the very social reality into a qualitatively new form of the human being.

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100

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104

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106