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STYLE SHEET

For the papers in English for the *Nirgrantha* Transliteration Conventions

For the papers written in English, words from Sanskrit, Ardhamāgadhī other Prakrits including the Apabhraṁśa, etc., will be diacriticised if rendered in Roman script. (Quotations can also be in the Nāgarī script). [Here we suggest those for the Sanskrit (classical), the Prakrit, the Apabhraṁśa, and the Dravidic languages. For other languages, namely, Arabic, Persian and the modem European languages, the current international conventions for transliteration for their rendering may be followed.]

Diacritical Marks

Vowels

आ ā
ई ī
ऊ ū
ए,ओ ē } (long)
आ ō } (N.B. long ē and ō are for the particular syllables in Dravidic languages.)
ऋ ṛ and not ṛi; (long ऋ, which rarely figures, may be rendered as ṝ)

Nasals

Anusvāra

(ं) ṁ and not ṃ

anunāsikas

ङ् ṅ
ञ् ñ
ण् ṇ (or ṇa as the case many be)

Hard aspirate

Visarga

(ः) ḥ

Consonants

Palatals

च ca and not cha
छ cha and not chha

Linguals

ट ṭa
ठ ṭha
ड ḍa
ढ ḍha and not ḷha

Sibilants

श śa
भा ṣa
स sa

Unclassified

ऋ ḷa
क्ष kṣa and not ksha
ज्ञ jña and not djña
ऌ ḷṛ and not lṛi

General Examples

kṣmā and not *kshamā jñāna* and not *djñāna, Kṛṣṇa* not *Krṣlṇa, sucāru chatra* and not *suchāru chhatra* etc. etc., *gaḍha* and not *gaḷha* or *garha*,(except in Hindi)

Dravidic (*conjuncts* and *specific*) *character*

ൾ ḷ
ഴ ḷ
ൺ ṇ
ൻ ṉ
ർ ṟ

Examples

Ilaṅ-Gautaman, Cōḷa (and not Chola), Munnuṟṟuvamaṅgalam, Māraṇ etc.

Miscellaneous

Where the second vowel in juxtaposition is clearly pronounced:

e.g. *jāṇaī* and not jāṇai

Seūṇa and not Seuṇa

Also, for English words showing similar or parallel situations:

e.g. Prëminence and not preeminence or pre-eminence

coöperation and not cooperation or co-operation

For the Simhalese, excepting where the words are in Sanskrit, the conventions of rendering Simhalese in Roman are to be followed:

e.g. *dagaba* and not *dagaba*

veve or *véve* and not *vev*

Quotations from old Indian sources involving long passages, complete verses etc., should be rendered in Nāgari script. (The western writers, however, may render these in Roman script if they wish; these will be re-rendered in Nāgarī if necessary, by the editors.) Sanskrit quotations rendered in Roman are to be transliterated with *sandhiviccheda* (disjoining), following the conventions of the *Epigraphia Indica*, but the signs for *laghu-guru* of the syllables in a meter(when the citation is in verse) are not to be used.

Place Names

These are to be diacriticised, excepting the anglicised modern:

Examples: Mathurā, Kauśāmbī, Valabhī, Kāñcī, Uraiyūr, TiåCevalli etc., but Allahabad (not Allāhābād), Calcutta (not Calcaṭṭā), Madras (and not Madrāsa).

Annotations

There will not be footnotes; but annotations (or notes and references), serially arranged, will appear *en masse* at the end of the text in each article.

References to published works

Those pertaining to articles, books etc., appearing in the main body of the text, or annotations, or otherwise:

Title of Book, Authoris name (beginning with his initials) title, edition (if any) used, the name of the series (if it appears within it): next the place of publication along with year of publication, but without a comma in between; finally the page (or pages) from where the citation is taken or to which a reference is made.

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The Concept of Untouchability in Gandhi and Ambedkar: An Analysis

Tripti Dhar*
Tanmay Biswas**

Abstract

This article challenges the perceived distinction of welfare programs of "Harijans" proposed by Mohandas Karamchad Gandhi and Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar. This article argues that both leaders' programs have significant similarities in their objectives and in their content regarding on the rise of "Harijans" in India. They may differ in their approaches, but their ultimate goal was same. Gandhiji emphasized on self-reliance and promoted the concept of "Sarvodaya", which aimed at the welfare of all. As part of his campaign, he founded the "Harijan Sevak Sangh" to address the social and economic needs of Dalit. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's contributions to the fight against untouchability were quite remarkable. He felt the Hindu Social Service League (HSS) could be a vehicle for influencing public opinion in favor of ending untouchability as well as creating ways to uplift the 'Untouchables'.

Keywords: *Ambedkar, Caste, Gandhi, Harijan Sevak Sangha, Untouchability.*

Introduction

This article seeks to distinguish between the methods adopted by Gandhi and Ambedkar in the uplift of 'Harijans' (Dalits). It maintains that existing historical and political interpretations, for some reason polarized their welfare efforts in an unreasonable way. This is possible, because untouchability is a social institution existed since time long-established, in some parts of the world, and most notably in the Indian sub-continent. Untouchability is a socially constructed form of discrimination at the core of

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caste systems where members of certain castes, referred to as 'untouchables', 'below' or Dalit are viewed as filthy and unsociable. People identified as 'untouchable' in India, for instance, were not allowed to enter temples, public facilities and even touch persons of upper castes. These groups were usually low and left to deal with poorly regarded occupations such as manual leather tanning or dead animal disposal. This kind of discrimination could be accompanied by severe social ostracism, poverty and even physical violence. While untouchability has been declared illegal in most countries including India, it is not dead in some countries. People's movements which seek to eliminate this practice proposes through education, social change, or laws which enhance equality and dignity of persons.A letter of Ambedkar which has not been previously examined was used in this article. The letter was written on November, 14, 1932, and is addressed to Amritlal Thakkar, General Secretary, Harijan Sevak Sangh (HSS). The following letter marks the first time Ambedkar outlines a specific course of action for the HSS to pursue in order to 'improve the conditions of Harijans'. The article will also focus on the constitution of HSS, prepared by Gandhi in 1932 and altered in 1935, in order to present the contrasting views of Ambedkar. These primary sources will provide evidence to prove the thesis that Gandhi and his associates together with Ambedkar had devised policies for the betterment of 'Harijans' social integration. They have strategies that differ, but their end policies are the same.It is a common fact that one of the foremost issues of Gandhi was the practice of untouchability. He took a stand against untouchability through words and actions, which were radical enough even for a 'caste Hindu' to accept. At the 1920 Nagpur session of Indian Congress where the non-co-operation resolution was adopted, Gandhi's insistence on the removal of untouchability was put forward. His enduring and organized movement under the aim 'fast unto death' on the communal award the British Government announced in August 1932 which provided separate electorates for the untouchables.

The provided text examines understanding of the terms used to define the underprivileged sections of India's population, which at times creates more confusion than seeks to clarify. The inner contradiction of the groups is emphasizing that there is no singular Adivasi identity and all these groups are often described in the various colonially designated terms such as "Antyaj," "Bhangi," "Dalit," "Depressed Classes," "Dhed," "Harijan," "Panchama," "Pariah," "Scheduled Caste" and "Untouchable." Though these

populations probably existed in ancient Indian societies and were referred to different names, they still describe the same population that has been subject to discrimination and oppression for long. These groups are diverse, with internal differences and various socio-economic positions.

Gandhi and Ambedkar both worked for eradicating of Untouchability. The aim of this paper is to find out some similarities and dissimilarityof their movement to fight against Untouchability.

Social Impact of Untochability

Untouchability is a pathological practice which is common within the Indian society and has instituted profound changes. It is the act of classifying people into grades and, more taint, it refers particularly to the so-called Dalit class.

Here are some of the primary social impacts of untouchability

1. Economic Disparity:-Historically, the Dalits have mainly engaged in low wage, unskilled labor, which has brought about high disparities in wealth and income which has led to the chronic economic task. Such has made most people live in poverty and poor track record and record up or chances position.

2. Social Exclusion:-Untouchability thus has brought about socially reproductive stratification where Dalit communities have been marginalized and granted less or no access to social instruments. For example, they have been barred access on education, and health services and other health facilitating practices.

3. Psycological Trauma:- The stigma discrimination and other stereotypes which accompaniments untouchability erodes and denies access to the mental well-being of the Dalits. This leads to inferiority feelings, helplessness and emotional distress.

4. Violence And Discrimination:– As has been mentioned many times, untouchability had some violence history of physical violence or sexual violence directed towards those caste people for instance dalits. This has made them grow in annual fear and insecurity surrounded by their shadow.

5. Social Inequality:- Untouchability has been responsible for creating a perpetual social gap among the people of India. This has further

cemented the caste structure and hampered the establishment of a fair society.

Untochability according to Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi regards untouchable practices as a curse to the Hindu religion and an infringement of human dignity. It does not form any part of the religion but rather a social vice. Gandhi was in no doubt that untouchability was wrong and regarded it as an unjust social ill. According to him, it violated the fundamental principle of ahimsa (non-violence). He fought for the recognition and integration of the untouchables who, Masses all too often lived in the underbelly of society and were placed at the receiving end of intolerance. Untouchability was the stain upon the fabric of Hinduism and all reasonable Indian had shared the sentiment that Hinduism was not anted or had place for violence, caste hierarchy or discrimination. Non-violent forms of protests like social boycotts and other measures were encouraged and employed by Gandhi in some cases to denounce such oppression. His aim was to instill love and oneness among people of all the classes and communities.Gandhi's famous approach regarding the removal of Untouchability, was rather characteristic of his approaches regarding the liberation of India from external control. He maintained that the achievement of this goal was a pre-condition for the moral and spiritual revitalization of India.

Eradicating untochability according to Gandhi

Mahatma Gandhi's approach to eradicating untouchability was deeply rooted in his moral, spiritual, and socio-political philosophy, emphasizing the inherent dignity of every human being and the need to reform Hindu society from within. He considered untouchability a blot on Hinduism and a grave social evil that contradicted the core principles of truth, nonviolence, and equality. Gandhi believed that the practice of untouchability was not sanctioned by true religion but was a perversion of it, and he sought to awaken the conscience of the upper castes to recognize the inhumanity of this practice. He coined the term "Harijan," meaning "children of God," to refer to the so-called untouchables, aiming to restore their dignity and challenge the stigma attached to their caste. Gandhi's campaign against untouchability was multifaceted, involving personal example, public advocacy, and constructive programs. He lived among Dalits, cleaned toilets to dignify

manual labor, and encouraged others to do the same, thereby challenging the notion of purity and pollution. He launched the Harijan Sevak Sangh in 1932 to promote education, sanitation, and economic upliftment among Dalits and to mobilize public opinion against caste discrimination. Gandhi also used his newspaper "Harijan" to spread awareness and appeal to the moral sensibilities of the masses. He advocated for temple entry for Dalits, inter-dining, and the abolition of discriminatory practices in public spaces like wells, schools, and roads. Gandhi's method was reformist rather than revolutionary; he sought to change hearts and minds through persuasion, prayer, and penance rather than through legal compulsion or political confrontation. He believed that true change would come only when the upper castes voluntarily gave up their prejudices and embraced social equality. However, Gandhi's approach was not without criticism. Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, the foremost Dalit leader, criticized Gandhi for not going far enough and for trying to preserve the Hindu social order rather than dismantling it. Despite their differences, both leaders shared the goal of ending untouchability, though their methods and visions diverged. Gandhi's emphasis on moral regeneration, spiritual upliftment, and social harmony reflected his belief in the transformative power of love and nonviolence. He saw the eradication of untouchability as essential not only for the upliftment of Dalits but also for the moral redemption of Hindu society as a whole. His efforts played a crucial role in bringing the issue of untouchability into the national consciousness and laid the groundwork for its constitutional abolition in independent India. Gandhi's legacy in this regard continues to inspire movements for social justice and human dignity, reminding us that the fight against discrimination must be both internal and external, addressing not only laws and institutions but also the values and attitudes that sustain inequality.

Untouchbility accoridng to Ambedkar

B. R. Ambedkar who was a social activist in his time and the chief engineer of the Indian Constitution was culturally happy in understanding the problems of untouchability. His view on untouchability was shaped by his personal experience and extensive academic research. Ambedkar considered it the vilest sin of the most despicable caste system. He thought of untouchability not merely as a social curse but as shunning whole sections of the population of the country, systemically and in a most inhumane manner.

To Ambedkar, untouchability was a slur upon the caste system which placed Hindu adherents in rank order as opposed to meritocracy.

Through colonialism, Ambedkar uses a more subtexts explanation, tries to explain how untouchability was founded in its genesis in the Hindu social class system i.e. varna which consisted of four piecemeal arranged with the priestly Brahmins in the pecking order, well and the sudra at the bottom . Dalits, whose natural place was outside the fast shrunk varna system, were treated as Dalits all through the scale of discrimination. Ambedkar maintained that such a pattern was supported by the literature and anthropology which justified the dominance of specific people over others. Ambedkar was not in favor of worshipping the religious texts of Hinduism which endorsed the existence of untouchables and therefore caste discrimination. One of the most significant pieces of texts of this social reformer is devoted to these issues where he denounces these texts and proclaims a new order of society based on equality and fairness "The Annihilation of Caste." He contended that while these practices were inhumane, they mainly constituted a formidable barrier toward the development of Indian society.

Eradicating untouchabiliyt according to Ambedkar

The theoretical's view regarding the removal of untouchability has been quite deep and complex. Using his background knowledge, he explained that this wickedness should be dealt with through law and politics. He was part of the drafting body of the Constitution of India and so such provisions as anti untouchability and promoting social justice were incorporated. This Clause seventeen of the Indian constitution is not satisfied and says old practices like ancient India and untouchability can only be made illegal for the government not to practice on the people.Ambedkar did not understand why the people used to practice untouchability and believed that the cure for this evil lay in education. He thought that education is a power which would free the downtrodden and make them rebel against the established order. Unable to overcome many societal barriers, he sought out advanced studies and used them to advocate for the powerless.

In 1956, alternative texts dispute, Ambedkar and his supporters vow to Buddhism in order to unshackle themselves from the caste system. Treating caste system that forms inherent hindrance in Hinduism as untouchability,

he embraced Buddhism which he regarded as a progressive religion untainted by caste system. For the Dalits, it was a way of proclaiming their feud against the caste system that exists within the Indian society. For a long time, students have attributed abolishing of untouchability to the contribution of Ambedkar. Judith is however the social economy and social reconstruction will be required, because his ideas constituted not seldom ideal visions, which are once used to give power to the society. Not the first time, not the last time Ambedkar has gone, his ideas and practice are around important persons and their generations who want to change the society and have a better society.

However, at the same time, he did not concert only to the abolishment of untouchability-it was his aspiration to present society where one may never care which jati or society that person belongs to but is respected. Nevertheless, a person's jurisdiction of social justice and human rights movement was lived, acted and worked for Ambedkar and is quite self-evident to his life and activities.

Untouchability, rooted in the caste system, has long been a tool of systemic oppression in India, denying Dalits and marginalized communities' access to basic rights, dignity, and opportunities. The Indian Constitution, through Article 17, explicitly abolished untouchability and made its practice in any form a punishable offense. This constitutional mandate reflects the core goal of establishing a society based on equality, justice, and fraternity. Despite the passage of time, the essence of this goal has not changed. The Protection of Civil Rights Act, 1955, and the Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes (Prevention of Atrocities) Act, 1989, were enacted to reinforce this constitutional vision by criminalizing discriminatory practices and providing legal safeguards to the oppressed. These laws aim to dismantle the social hierarchies that perpetuate untouchability and to empower Dalits through legal recourse and affirmative action. The goal remains to eliminate the stigma and social exclusion associated with caste and to promote inclusive development. Over the decades, the state has also introduced various welfare schemes, educational reservations, and employment quotas to uplift historically disadvantaged communities. These measures are not separate from the original goal but are extensions of the same mission: to create a level playing field and restore dignity to those historically dehumanized. Social reformers like Dr. B.R. Ambedkar envisioned a society where caste would not determine

one's destiny, and their vision continues to guide contemporary efforts. However, the persistence of caste-based violence, discrimination in schools, workplaces, and public spaces, and the low conviction rates in atrocity cases indicate that the goal, though unchanged, remains unfulfilled. The continuity of this goal is also evident in civil society movements, Dalit literature, and grassroots activism, all of which echo the same demand for dignity, equality, and justice. In recent years, digital platforms and social media have become new arenas for raising awareness and mobilizing support against caste discrimination, yet the underlying objective remains the same. Whether through constitutional provisions, legal frameworks, policy interventions, or social movements, the central aim has consistently been to dismantle the structures of untouchability and build a society where every individual is treated with equal respect and opportunity. The language, tools, and strategies may evolve, but the foundational goal of eradicating untouchability and achieving social justice remains steadfast. This enduring commitment reflects the moral and constitutional ethos of India, which aspires to transcend its historical injustices and realize the promise of equality for all its citizens.

The book "Gandhi and Ambedkar: Ideology on Untouchability" by Devath Suresh offers a comprehensive comparative analysis of two of India's most influential figures in the struggle against caste-based discrimination, focusing on their ideological approaches to untouchability. While Gandhi and Ambedkar differed significantly in their methods and philosophical underpinnings, the book underscores that both shared a common goal: the eradication of untouchability and the upliftment of the oppressed. Gandhi approached untouchability from a moral and spiritual standpoint, viewing it as a sin within Hindu society that needed purification through reform and compassion. He coined the term "Harijan" to refer to Dalits, emphasizing their divine status and advocating for their inclusion within the Hindu fold through temple entry movements, inter-dining, and manual labor dignity. In contrast, Ambedkar saw untouchability as a structural and systemic injustice rooted in the caste system itself, which he believed could not be reformed but had to be annihilated. He rejected the term "Harijan" as patronizing and fought for legal and constitutional safeguards, political representation, and ultimately conversion to Buddhism as a means of liberation. Despite these differences, the book highlights that both leaders were deeply committed to the cause of Dalit emancipation and recognized the urgency of addressing

caste-based oppression. Suresh illustrates how Gandhi's emphasis on moral persuasion and Ambedkar's insistence on legal rights were not mutually exclusive but rather complementary in the broader struggle for social justice. The book also explores key historical moments such as the Poona Pact of 1932, where their ideological clash reached a peak, yet also demonstrated their willingness to negotiate for the greater good of the marginalized. Through detailed textual analysis and historical context, Suresh presents a nuanced understanding of how both Gandhi and Ambedkar contributed to shaping India's anti-untouchability discourse. He argues that while their strategies diverged, their ultimate vision of a just and equitable society converged in significant ways. The book serves as a vital resource for understanding the complexities of social reform in India and the interplay between moral idealism and political pragmatism. By juxtaposing Gandhi's reformist zeal with Ambedkar's revolutionary rigor, Suresh invites readers to appreciate the multifaceted nature of the anti-untouchability movement and the enduring relevance of both leaders' legacies in contemporary struggles for equality and human dignity.

The Constitution of Harijon Sevak Sangh

The Harijan Sevak Sangh (HSS) was one of the most active organization in India's campaign against untouchability. It was founded in 1932 by Mohandas K. Gandhi – and was known initially as the All-India Anti-Untouchability League. This organization in India was conceived by Mahatma Gandhi who fought against the evil of untouchability. The organization was widely spread with its chapters all over British India and princely states. The HSS was founded by A.V. Thakkar and the overall monetary patronage of G.D. Birla helped considerably. The HSS was an institution with a constitution, which was written also thanks to Gandhi 's support, stated clearly its aims and means of action.The HSS Constitution established the mechanism for creating Central Board and State Boards for supervising the activities of the HSS. It stands to be one of the striking features of the organizational structure of the HSS that Gandhi himself designed the working arrangement of the organization and devised a functional pattern that facilitated not only unity of command but also active participation of the central body along with its state chapters. He observed that the HSS ought to be representative of Hindus of all castes and Untouchables as well. Of its 15 member management board four were

'Harijans' and it was declared to be active against untouchability (Parekh, 1999: 262). It was with much expectation that Ambedkar accepted the membership of the Central Board of the HSS.

The 14th November 1932 is important because it was the date when he sent a letter to the secretary of HSS A.V. Thakkar defending his ideas on untouchability abolition and urging the secretary to bear in mind his views while formulating a course of actions.The provided text presents the two different views which Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and Mahatma Gandhi took with regard to the abolition of untouchability. In the case of the latter, legal action was needed to guarantee the equal rights of the Untouchables through changes in the law. Economic and social advancement of the Untouchables was the main concern for him. The purpose of changing the politics was to change the socioeconomic status of the Untouchables. Gandhi's emphasis was on social improvement as well as social reform: Ghandhi's constructive program included all round development in moral and ethical standards for the untouchables through alteration in self conduct. Gandhi also mobilized upper caste Hindus to Dalit slums to clean them and develop other aspects of character. The way of dealing with problems followed by Gandhi was that moral perfection of individuals should bring change in the society.

When Ambedkar's proposal for HSS action as presented in his letter to A.V. Thakkar is subjected to a cross examination with H.S.S. constitution of 1935, which was projected by Gandhi, it becomes apparent that the two leader's programs concern the aim and content of their 'Harijans' upliftment welfare programs. For example, "B. R. Ambedkar: The Man Who Did Not 'Die' Gandhi", in addition, the Poona Pact did not allow the British to divide Indian society by quoting caste-based separate electorates as a means to create rifts in the Indian National Movement. The Pact was effectively able to increase the population of 'Untouchables' electing their own legislative representatives. It is worth mentioning Gandhi, as her lover utterly worshipped women, calling them Mothers in His words. It turned out he called know Mahatma.

Programmes of the Harijan Sevak SAngh

Mahatma Gandhi did observe the oppression of the 'Harijans' (a word he invented meaning 'children of God' to the 'Untouchables') at its, and know that the centuries of social, economic, and political subjugation made

anything like an immediate header-on approach difficult. In order to meet this end, Gandhi began 'constructive work' with the purpose of educating and mobilizing the Harijans for such struggles. It encompassed gradual eradication of Untouchability, enhancing the living standards of the Harijans and assimilating them in the broader society. He propelled his colleagues to appreciate and assist the Harijan people.

Gandhi's perspective was more prospective and revolutionary as it apprised itself out of net political motives rather it was a course of social reform. His effort built the order for the stepwise order of the minority empowerment. Gandhi placed great stress upon the explanation of education, sanitation and social awareness as prerequisites to both the individual enrichment and the improvement of the society. Rather than asking people for political action, he focused on seeking to educate them so that they could educate themselves and their society and rise out of poverty.Established in 1932 by Mahatma Gandhi, the Harijan Sevak Sangh (HSS) set out to help the 'Harijans' (the principal outcast of the Untouchables, chosen by Gandhi himself). This organization focused on fulfilling its objectives in following four domains:**1.Civil Rights**: There should be no restriction on drawing water, going to school, entering village square or employing means of public transport.**2**.**Economic Opportunities**: Enhancing the employment chances of the 'Harijans'.**3**.**Social Intercourse**: Seeking provision of homes for 'caste Hindu' 'Harijans'.**4.Eradicating Untouchability**: Definite assistance for 'Harijans' in order to remove untouchability. One of the reasons which member of the community epitomizes is a concept of Francis of the inclusiveness in the society, however, it is often pointed out that the barriers for the acceptance still exist even though the term 'Harijan' was accepted.

The HSS sought to assimilate the 'caste Hindus' and the 'Harijans' with the focus on social integration and erasing untouchability. They made arrangements for specific activities such 'Harijan' days, marches, house to house kampanya, shows, and handlooms. Moreover, they published and distributed several books and magazines with the intention of teaching 'Harijans' knowledge of their rights and instilling in them a sense of self-worth. At the HSS, they provided fellowships, books, clothing in addition to offering vocational skills such as spinning, weaving, tanning, shoe making, and bamboo house construction among others. Furthermore,' caste Hindu' workers were assigned to reside in 'Harijan' areas crouching spade to

facilitate interaction and support. For these social welfare activities, funds were collected from Hindus, and also from other non-Hindus who were willing to contribute.

Mahatma Gandhi founded the Harijan Sevak Sangh (HSS) in 1932 and since it encouraged the crusade against the injustices being done to the 'Harijans' (the name has been changed to Dalits). The HSS's mandate included many in-house administrative measures for the betterment of the Harijan community.

1. Dwellings and Safe Water:- Mobilizing the Town Councils and other Local Governance Structures to quickly assist Harijans with affordable housing and safe water along with clothes. **2. Utilization of Services**:- Prevention of harassment by the physical restrictions of public wells, taps, and other water points to Harijans. Where directly accessed sites aren't in the available places, public water facilities are to be used.**3. Temple Entry**:- It was one of the radical moves to let Harijans into all the temples which aimed at challenging the prevailing order of the society in terms of caste divides. Gandhi maintained that 'caste Hindus' bore the brunt of the day's changes since they played a major part in historical repression. On their part, he also suggested that Harijans should try to engage in self-purification and upliftment[12]. For Gandhi, the abolition of untouchability was not only a means to purify Hinduism, but a furthering of the idea of national integration of people belonging to different religions. In a way, this agitation was one such social movement through which it was sought to appeal and awaken the conscience of the masses against the evil practice of untouchability.

Methods of Uplift

In a letter written by Ambedkar to A.V. Thakkar on November 14 and dated 1932, he is critical of the Harijan Sevak Sangh (HSS) social reformist movement. For instance, he said that the HSS should not include such elements as temperance, gymnasia, cooperation, libraries, everywhere and schools if the purpose is to create and cultivate better people with a higher sense of morality. These efforts did not address the fundamental problem of the oppression of the Depressed Classes that Ambedkar argued.In terms of methods of promoting the downcast Harijans, Ambedkar found Gandhi's methods as non-radical, and echoed that that is where the problem lay, that Gandhi was more about making people better than addressing the

social oppression that was the issue 2. D Kumar Srivatsan explains that, in this case, the Mahatma was mistaken: 'Each man's suffering is a consequence of the sins he has committed in the past'. This was how Ambedkar viewed such an attitude 2. Guha also points out that the goal of social reform which Gandhi adopted was to induce the Hindus of different castes to a state of spiritual equality.The conflict occasioned by B.R. Ambedkar on the one hand and Mahatma Gandhi on the other in regard to a touching subject of untouchability is a junction in the development of social and political processes in India. Both of the leaders hoped to reach the goal, which was to do away with untouchability in all its forms, but they were different in the means of reaching this target.

Gandhi's Perspective

Gandhi view that untouchability is a social disease brought about by the caste Hindus and it is only with this awareness of it and change in their perception that such practices can be dealt with.He stressed on the need for inclusion of Untouchables and presented peoples' hygienic standards or food restrictions as negotiations which are not quintessential to the abolishment.He opposed the non-cooperation of Harijans who were not able to get rid of certain practices stating that it was not easy to influence established cultures.He added that all the conditions in respect of entry into a temple should be applicable to Hindus in General and not only Harijans.

Ambedkar's Perspective

But for Ambedkar, the issue was differently posed, he would consider the caste system as the fundamental cause itself that needs to be done away with in all possible means that are necessary including constitutional means. At first, he advocated for coming up with ways that would bring out the equality of the people with the religion but as he grew up, he grew disillusioned by Hinduism- it was too conservative.Ambedkar maintained that it was a waste of time appealing to the clemency of caste Hindus and called for the liberation and independence of the Dalits themselves.Yes, these different views are quite useful in producing the understanding of the struggle against untouchability in India. In Gandhi's case his methods were mainly directed at transforming some moral and social aspects of society, while in Ambedkar's case changing of the social structure was the only way such a problem could be resolved.

There is no doubt that Dr. B.R. Ambedkar's ideas on the Harijan Sevak Sangh were revolutionary in nature. He pointed out that the improvement of 'Untouchables' cannot be limited to the individual level only and called for attempting to change the social sphere of the 'Untouchables'. That is why, in this case, he pointed towards the direction which insisted on carrying out a sociopolitical transformation which would enable the 'Untouchables' to live with full civic rights like any other citizen and receive equal social standing in society.

Ambedkar was of the opinion that unless the social conditions of the Hindu population are transformed, then solving the issue of equality of the 'Untouchables' is a futile endeavor. He was focused on elevating the status of the excluding, as well as sought to address alarming inequalities by appealing to education and encouraging empowerment as well as greater social reform.

Towards eradicating untouchability

Ambedkar understood problems of social reforms even in the beginning. He correctly perceived the knotty situation that has a combination of social, political, and legal accountabilities that would hamper better progress.Ambedkar predicted a backlash by the Dalits (Untouchables) and caste Hindus to the attempts of destroying the social caste hierarchies, which was a possibility he thought, would occur. He claimed that the colonial state tended to oppress caste Hindus, which meant that disobedient Dalits assuming their rights are likely to be the objects of oppression and crimes. As things are, Ambedkar placed faith in the agency of the law and law enforcement in the course of solving the problems of violence directed at the Dalits and enhancing the efficacy of any change agenda. The tendency to amass public support and the necessity of a devoted manpower to defend the cause of the Dalits at the bottom were quite evident in Ambedkar's thinking.

Ambedkar sensed that the conventional approaches of evangelism, as well as rational appeal, would be inadequate to change the deeply held caste oppression among the 'caste Hindus'. Rather, he claimed, a great disaster would have to be brought about on the community in order for it to rethink its practices. Advocacy has been carried out for the securing of civic rights and services for the 'Untouchables' even in opposition to and threat of violence from 'caste Hindus'. This was necessary for the so-

called social justice as he would call it.Srivatsan (2008: 98) brings out the point that while there were thoughtless and violent subjugators, even within the latter tradition, a good number could be cultured when properly placed in critical situations about caste. **Read more on the following:** The Ambedkarization of SRI: "Brahmos recognize the goodwill of the government of SRI within" Parsons had to say "perhaps headcover is more important than dress." In this context, justice lies in the works and means surrounding it rather than in the individual themselves.

Gandhi and Ambedkar's perspectives against caste discrimination mechanisms of anti-caste movements diverge from each other as can be put accurately throughout the judgement from the critique. On the one hand, Gandhi interceded by the nonviolent force of truth and compassion and never said a word about the exclusion of untouchables. On the last margin however be interposed legal and political work based upon direct actions as one of the most effective methods to seek dignities for the oppressed.

The Indian National Congress, in July, 1937, did in fact constitute ministries in eight provinces under the provisions of the Government of India Act, 1935. The provinces included Madras, Bombay, Central Provinces, Orissa Provinces, Bihar, United Provinces, North West Frontier Province, Assam[1]. Some of the reforms carried out by the Congress governments included social changes and welfare movements to help the progress of 'Harijans'.Though the Civil Disobedience Movements of 1920–22, 1930–34 and 1942–45 were politically effective movements in their own right, they were positively detrimental to caste. Being incarcerated together gave a sense of equality among the national workers who abided by the rule of caste. This served as a public forum for deliberations that sought to abolish caste and untouchability.

The British policy about the 'Untouchables' in India indeed appears characterized by a timidity to do away with their socio-religio-legal disabilities and a fascination with treating them as a legislative minority for legislative purposes[1]. This policy was quite in tandem with the wider scheme 'Divide and Rule' which was meant to sow discord within Indian society so as to cripple the national movement.It was Dr. B.R. Ambedkar, a great leader of the 'Untouchables', who noticed two major reasons as to why the British would not take away these social disabilities. Firstly, they argued, the British

were not truthful in their desire to solve these problems; they used the situation of the so-called runways rather as an excuse to procrastinate the self-governance of India. Secondly, there was the disdain for politicians from the orthodox Hindus, particularly in the wake of the agitation that followed the 1891 Age of Consent Act. As a consequence of this worry about the reaction of the people against British authorities, the British were unable to meddle with social and economic laws and hence tried appeasing the reactionaries of Hindu society instead.

Dr. B.R. Ambedakar, in his address during Izoku at the first round table conference held in the years 1930-31, was quite critical of the British government on how the plight of the 'untouchable' has not been remedied. There wasn't any indication of concern for the rights of individuals belonging to the 'Untouchables'; they were ignored as not there because British rule concentrated on British power rather than British social policy.The opinion of the Mahatma Gandhi and that of B.R Ambedkar regarding the practice of Untouchability and its role in the freedom struggle are poles apart. Gandhi thought that untouchability was an important social problem but it should be treated as one of the issues of swaraj and not be self-directed. He said that swaraj once secured would enable further elimination of the practice of untouchability.

Against an Economy of caste oppression

Dr. B.R. Ambedkar elaborates the focus of the Hindu Social Service League on the injustice of 'Untouchability' that, is also essential to ensure equal opportunities for 'Untouchables'. He emphasized how they were discriminated against, including where they were the last to be hired and the first to be laid off at the time of recession. Such discrimination made it likelier for them to be assigned the most unskilled labor in cities, and they would be fired the moment there was the slightest trouble in business. Women fared worse considering still more prejudice was encountered by them over the allocation raw materials for piecemeal work in relation to 'caste Hindu' females and often ended up with famine and haggardness. Ambedkar's struggle was focused and directed on removing these inequalities amongst the people by promoting education, economic initiatives, and reforms. To this day, his legacy is central to the struggle against caste discrimination in India.

He stressed the fact that it was essential for private and public firms owned by 'Caste Hindus' to hire 'Untouchables' in accordance with their skills which would assist them financially and enable them to assimilate into the working population. This vision was further supported by Mahatma Gandhi who was also keen on including many 'Caste Hindus' to these efforts in the fight against the practice of untouchability. Both leaders saw that there was a need to change the views of the society and this required all the sectors of the society to take part and support the process of change.

The Harijan Sevak Sangh (HSS) has indeed played a major role in raising the voice for better living conditions for the sweepers, and other disadvantaged sections of the society.

1. Municipal Loans and Advances: Municipalities like Ujjain and Bhilsa in Gwalior offered low-interest loans to sweepers. For instance, in Faizabad Municipality in the United Provinces, a sum of was advanced to the Sweepers' Cooperative Society, which was subsequently recovered from the salaries earned by its members in monthly installments.

2. Housing Initiatives: Because of the work done by A.V. Thakkar, secretary of the HSS, the Sindh Hyderabad Municipality provided less than rupees 10000 for construction of quarters for sweepers.

3. Employment Opportunities: Workers of HSS did overtime to mitigate the illegitimate status of 'Untouchables' through employment opportunities in government services, in the factories, in shops and even in the houses of 'caste Hindus' which was quite uncommon for them. They went to the extent of inducing 'untouchables' to become barbers or washer men and even coaxed 'caste Hindus' to patronize them.

4. Agricultural Support: For instance in Ambarnath, Maharashtra, the HSS arranged for the supply of seeds and bullocks for cultivation to 'Untouchables'.

5. Wage Improvements: For instance, in Loharka village, Amritsar District, Punjab, the HSS managed to ensure that 'Untouchables' who worked as field laborers were paid better wages.

Such programs mark the HSS concern over the upliftment of the poorer and downtrodden sections of the people of Indian country.

Conclusion

The fundamental difference between Mahatma Gandhi and B.R. Ambedkar in their approach to untouchability lies in their ideological foundations and strategies for social reform. Gandhi viewed untouchability as a moral and spiritual blemish on Hindu society and sought to eradicate it through reform within the Hindu fold. He coined the term "Harijan" meaning "children of God" to refer to the untouchables and emphasized the need for upper-caste Hindus to purify their hearts and treat untouchables with dignity and compassion. Gandhi believed in the essential unity of Hindu society and aimed to uplift the untouchables without dismantling the caste system entirely, advocating for the abolition of untouchability but not caste distinctions per se. His methods were rooted in non-violence, self-purification, and appeals to conscience, often relying on symbolic gestures such as cleaning latrines and living among the untouchables to inspire change. In contrast, Ambedkar approached untouchability as a systemic and structural problem embedded in the very fabric of Hinduism and the caste system. He rejected the notion that untouchability could be eradicated through moral persuasion alone and argued that the caste system itself must be annihilated to achieve true equality. Ambedkar emphasized legal, political, and educational empowerment of the Dalits and demanded constitutional safeguards, separate electorates, and affirmative action to ensure their rights. He was critic of Gandhi's paternalistic attitude and symbolic gestures, viewing them as insufficient and patronizing. Ambedkar's activism was grounded in rationalism, social justice, and the assertion of Dalit identity and dignity. His ultimate rejection of Hinduism and conversion to Buddhism in 1956 was a radical act of protest against the religious foundations of caste discrimination. While Gandhi sought to reform Hinduism from within, Ambedkar sought liberation from it. Gandhi appealed to the conscience of the oppressors, whereas Ambedkar mobilized the oppressed to demand their rights. Gandhi's approach was conciliatory and spiritual, aiming for harmony, while Ambedkar's was confrontational and political, aiming for justice. This divergence reflects their broader philosophical differences: Gandhi prioritized unity and moral reform, while Ambedkar prioritized justice and structural change. Their contrasting approaches continue to shape debates on caste and social justice in India, with Gandhi representing reformist idealism and Ambedkar embodying radical transformation.

Gandhi's campaign against caste and untouchability indeed had a profound impact on Indian society. His approach was multifaceted, raising awareness about the oppression faced by 'Harijans' (a term he coined meaning 'children of God') and was actively involve with the struggle for their own liberation. The Harijan Sevak Sangh (HSS), which Gandhi founded, served as a platform for both 'caste Hindus' and 'Harijans' to work together towards eradicating of untouchability. This initiative fostered meaningful social interactions and helped to bridge the gap between the two communities, despite the asymmetrical nature of these interactions which sometimes caused friction with leaders like Ambedkar. Gandhi's belief that no system of oppression could be dismantled without the active participation and political education of its victims was the central to his strategy. This approach not only highlighted the injustices of the caste system but also empowered the oppressed to fight for their rights, making it a significant contribution to the broader agenda of social reform in India.

In contrast, Mahatma hardly paid not enough attention to the concrete and timely requirements of the 'Untouchables.' Ambedkar believed that Mahatma's strategy would not solve the practical and pressing problems of the oppressed community.This variation in strategy is indicative of their larger ideological deviations: It appears that while Gandhi wanted such reforms to come from within the Hindu society, Ambedkar in the end believed that the Hindu social order could not be reformed as desired and that the way out of it was through Buddhist conversion where there would be no discrimination.

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Art, Truth, and Beauty: Gandhi's Redefinition of Aesthetic Values

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Abstract

Indian aesthetics is often criticized for neglecting social and moral issues, focusing solely on spirituality. However, Gandhi offers a philosophy of art that addresses the meaningfulness of both social and spiritual life. For Gandhi, art is useless if it does not address the truth. He does not view art in isolation but integrates it with human life, prioritizing a better life over artistic expression. Gandhi asserts that while art has its place, it is not synonymous with life itself. The true purpose of art, according to him, is not just to produce happiness and enjoyment but to elevate and purify. Superior art imparts lessons, reveals life's design, and connects people, bridging the gap between human knowledge and divine experience. This paper explores Gandhi's unconventional approach to aesthetics, emphasizing the integration of social and moral dimensions into the realm of art.

Keywords: *Form, Content, Beauty, Truth, Life.*

The relevance of art has long been a subject of reflection for philosophers and intellectuals, particularly regarding whether art has a purpose or is valued purely for its own sake—a central question in aesthetics. Philosophers present compelling arguments on both sides of this debate. Some argue that art possesses intrinsic value, offering unique aesthetic experiences that need no external justification. Others contend that art serves broader purposes, such as communication, cultural reflection, and emotional impact, making it a powerful tool for societal critique and personal growth. This ongoing discourse underscores the complexity and significance of art in human life, highlighting its dual roles as both a means and an end.

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In this paper, we explore Gandhi's perspective on art. While Gandhi did not provide a systematic theory of art directly, he did not deny the importance of artistic expression. This nuanced stance adds complexity to his views on the subject. Gandhian perspective on art seems to be complicated in the first look because of certain assumptions that differentiate from the specialists in the theory of art. By breaking the boundaries of the established canons of understanding of art as an idealistic pursuit in the dominant sense, Gandhi challenges this notion. For him an art which is only in the realm of ideas and not engaging with larger issues in the society is not utilitarian and therefore is restrictive. Thus, Gandhi pleads for an inclusive and engaged pursuit of art. For him art is the expression of the inner self and all true art is the revealing of the soul. All true art should help the individual to realize the inner self. By reading in this direction, one gets the idea that art, for Gandhi is a path way to self-exploration finally culminating in the pursuit of journey towards the ultimate truth.

Gandhian Perspective on Art: Understanding Form and Content

The art that emanates from the creation of the artists embodiesthe union of the content and form, wherein the idea- truth moves towards the material expression- form. The artist, according to Gandhi, delves into two kinds of activities: inner and the outer. The inner activity pertains to content, while the outer activity pertains to form.

There are two aspects of thing-the outward and the inward…. The outward has no meaning except in so far as it helps the inward.[1]

Gandhi's understanding of art goes beyond mere appreciation and analysis of its form, which he characterizes as the outward experience. He considers this outward aspect to be only a part of the entirety of art, not warranting much emphasis. Instead, Gandhi places the importance of art in the inner domain. For him, this inner realm is far more significant, as it is where the critical essence of art originates and takes shape.

"All true art is thus the expression of the soul. The outward forms have value only in so far as they are the expression of the inner spirit in man."[2]

It would be prudent to spell out relation between form and content that has informed art all over the world with varying understandings. The

common explanation of the relationship between form and content is presented here in brief. Form and content are two important aspects of art and have been used as points of entry to understand art. Aestheticians since the beginning have delved into the question of what is important: form or content? Form is understood as the sum total of the physical aspects of an artwork, the features of art which includes line, texture, colour, and shape. These are the most elementary and essential structures of expression. Design of an artwork, for example, shape, size and colour in the context of the painting which is given to cognition is the form of the painting. Hence, along with design, the actual physical materials used by the artist, is called form. These are the basic elements of a work of art, independent of the content. Now, defining content gets a little complicated. Content is generally considered as what is being said and form is considered as the way it is being said. Content is idea-based; it can be emotive or intellectual expression. Content of a work of art is a statement, expression, or mood that an artist develops which is experienced by the connoisseur of art.

Form is generally known as outer expression and content is known as inner expression. Content is the essence of every art. It can be said that both 'form' and 'content' cannot be separated from each other. But thinkers differ in the enumeration of aesthetic theory by giving emphasis either on the form or the content. M. Hiriyanna, in his writings gives importance to content. He writes, "the legitimate function of form is to subserve the content; and if it assumes, greater importance, the work in which it does so mark a lapse from the best type of art."[3]

Similarly, Gandhi also gives importance to content. Gandhi emphasizes the inner faculty of art, that is, content. For him the outward expression is meaningless if it does not enable one to realize the inner self. Gandhi does not give preference only to the expression of form. He says that form has value only when it helps an individual to realise the content. Hence form has its importance in relation to the expression of the inner self. "These productions of man's Art have their value only so far as they help the soul onward towards self-realization."[4]

This contention of Gandhi leads us to a nuanced reading where different strands are delineated making the generalisations more accountable to the specifics.

Art critics may not accept Gandhi's overemphasis on content over form, as he does not formalize the structure of art. This is not the first time Gandhi has prioritized content over form. While other art critics have also argued for the importance of content, they still define the formal structure and demonstrate how content is depicted through it. For example, the *dhvanivādins* prioritize rasa but do not avoid explaining how content is conveyed through its formal elements.

Even if Gandhi's emphasis on the inner aspect (content) is accepted and the external form is compromised, this approach could lead to distortions in the form of art. The problem then arises: what would be the basis for considering something as art? Without a defined formal structure, it becomes challenging to establish criteria for what constitutes art, potentially leading to ambiguity and subjectivity in its evaluation and appreciation.If evaluation and appreciation are not essential, as Gandhi suggests, then what is the need for art? If the primary goal is to communicate 'truth,' this can be achieved through ordinary means.

Let us try to explore if art can ever promise to realise the ultimate truth. We have seen that Gandhi strongly emphasizes on truth by saying that nothing really exists except the truth.

Importance of Truth in Art and Interrelatedness with Beauty

This truth is not an abstract truth but an outpouring of idea into form where the beauty is revealed in the form tracing its source in the idea that is truth. Therefore, the primacy of truth leading to an act of truth as artistic endeavour results in beauty. It is this art-form which is 'beautiful', is not because of its formal attributes but because of the idea behind these attributes that have shaped the form. Truth is primary and beauty is secondary. This hierarchy of relation is not actually divisible into formal categories but form an embodied whole. Beauty cannot be explained in the absence of truth.

I see and find Beauty in Truth or through Truth. All Truths, not merely true ideas, but truthful faces, truthful pictures, or songs, are highly beautiful. People generally fail to see Beauty in Truth, the ordinary man runs away from it and becomes blind to the beauty in it. Whenever men begin to see Beauty in Truth, then true Art will arise.[5]

Truth and beauty are related in such a way that truth leads to beauty not the otherwise. If someone claims to see and to find truth through outer beauty, that is not conceivable.

……. that mere outward form may not make a thing beautiful. To a true artist only that face is beautiful which, quite apart from exterior, shines with the Truth within the soul. There is then, as I have said, no Beauty apart from Truth. On the other hand, Truth may manifest itself in forms which may not be outwardly beautiful at all. Socrates, we are told, was the most truthful man of his time and yet his features are said to have been the ugliest in Greece. To my mind he was beautiful, because all his life was a striving after Truth, and you may remember that his outward form did not prevent Phidias from appreciating the beauty of Truth in him, though as an artist he was accustomed to see Beauty in outward forms also?[6]

From the above quotations we can extrapolate Gandhian ideas of beauty and its relation with truth as a different type of beauty that we normally encounter in the definitions. For Gandhi, the 'beautiful' is not just residing and represented in the form of an artwork which informs the onlooker. The conventional attributes of beauty based on certain conventions of form would then gain primacy which is normally understood as beautiful. For Gandhi, whole point is missed when one does not recognise truth in this beauty. If the truth is not available in a beautiful form where beauty is defined according to certain conventions, this being the dominant idea of beauty is rejected by Gandhi. On the other hand, he subverts the idea of beauty by redefining it as the manifestation of the truth. It is this manifestation of truth that may appear to be not aesthetically appeasing as in the case of Socrates in Greece but for Gandhi such a connection between the truth seeker the truth and an act of truth resulting in art work is beautiful. Therefore, the subversion of beauty by expanding its definition or in other words by redefining the conventional ideas of beauty and to include truth as primary and the end product as secondary. Though, (it may not be pleasing) gives us a new idea of beauty.

Gandhi's Vision on Natural Beauty, Manmade Beauty, and Truth

Gandhi reaffirms his position very clearly on the question of location of beauty, a theme that has preoccupied the minds of philosophers since the early period. For Gandhi also, like many philosophers, it is nature alone that is of paramount significance. By dwelling on the characteristics of nature but also all-encompassing in multiple facets and never failed to enthuse anyone, to manmade works of art, Gandhi begins his distinction between nature and manmade art. There is a sense of perfection and over awing

potential in nature which is ever present and never fails. Quoting from many examples, Gandhi asks how can one not be affected by nature. This potential to affect one's senses and beyond is a beauty of nature uncounted by the onlooker. On the other hand, man-made objects of art do not come to this proportion and simply cannot match nature. While the intension of the creator cannot be doubted, which is why nature is paramount does not apply to the arts. Art is not devoid of beauty but the proportions are different when compared to nature. What proceeds from this is that for Gandhi beauty in art means having the characteristics of embodying certain qualities that reflect moral goodness.

Have I not gazed and gazed at the marvellous mystery of the starry vault, hardly ever tiring of that great panorama? Have I not the forests and the seas, the rivers and the mountains, the fields and the valleys with which to slake my thirst for beauty? Could one conceive of any painting comparable in inspiration to that of the star-studded sky, the majestic sea, the noble mountains? Is there a painter's colour comparable to the vermillion of an emergent dawn or the gold of a parting a day? No, my friend, I need no inspiration other than Nature's. She has never failed me yet: she mystifies me, bewilders me, sends me into ecstasies. What need have I for the childish colour-schemes of humans? Beside God's handiwork does not man's fade into insignificance? And-to be more concrete-tell me how can art be so thrilling, after all, when Nature, the mightiest artist, is there to cater for us![7]

Gandhi does not glorify beauty in nature because it appeals to the senses, rather it is a representation of the ultimate truth as a creator. In this scheme of things, the beauty of nature enthrals one and all by its awesome qualities, but for Gandhi, he does not stop at this marvelling qualities but proceeds ahead. In this long journey to seek the basis of this beauty the destination is at the creator's end. It finally rests in the ultimate truth.

Indeed these beauties are truthful, in as much as they make me think of the Creator at the back of them. How else could these be beautiful, but for the Truth that is in the centre of creation? When I admire the wonder of a sunset or the beauty of the moon, my soul expands in worship of the Creator. I try to see Him and His mercies in all these creations. But even the sunsets and sunrises would be mere hindrances, if they did not help me to think of Him. Anything which is a hindrance to the flight of the soul, is a

delusion and a snare; even, like the body, which often does hinder you in the path of salvation.[8]

For him, art is a reflection of truth and the truth of it is not an abstract; this is something solid and tangible. Hence, when a man starts to see beauty in truth, only then the true art arises. But truth is to be found in the actions of human beings performing their consciously appointed task.Therefore, beauty seeks its most satisfying expression in a person's emotions, thoughts and actions of perfectly moral quality. Therefore, truth and beauty according to Gandhi are not separable from each other; beauty is always associated with truth. To quote Madan Gandhi:

In Gandhi's aesthetics and world view, beauty comes to be associated not only with morality, but with the highest form of self-realisation as well. Thus for Gandhi, life itself was the supreme art. Beauty, to him does not represent an isolated aspect of reality but inseparably associated with truth and goodness was for him part of existence. Art for Gandhi was neither to be a specialized portion of life nor something super-added to other processes of life as is the case with modern art.[9]

Though, Gandhi has given importance to the beauty in nature and maintains that God is the original source of beauty but he does not deny the existence of art like poetry, painting, music, and sculpture if the artistic expression is uncontrollable. For example, Gandhi speaks of Meera Bai and Kabir as the great artsits:

They are so moving because they are so genuine. Mira sang because she could not help singing. Her songs well fourth straight from the heart — like a spray. They were not composed for the lure of fame or popular applause as so many's are. There lies the secret of her lasting appeal.[10]

From the above quotation we get some more ideas of Gandhi on art. While Gandhi had always extolled the primacy of beauty in nature, he also gave room for beauty in art though he did not value human creations highly in comparison to nature. But, this is not to discount the fact that there is no beauty in art. For Gandhi, who asserts truth as the foundational corner stone of all activity, for beauty to exist in art, truth is the foundational aspect. It becomes necessary when certain restrain feelings do not find an outlet and are therefore bursting out to reveal the intensity of emotions, for, there cannot be contained. By quoting the example of Meera and Kabir, Gandhi treats

this type of art as an unmediated expression of the inner self emanating from the search for the truth. The emphasis on the unmediated aspect also points to the untainted truth.

Art, for Gandhi, is the power to connect oneself. Anything that enables one to realize one's true self that is the real art. Hence, true art for Gandhi is the inner expression of truth. All the arts should be put together in life. Of course, the greatest artist for Gandhi is definitely the one who has lived the finest life. True beauty after all involves in purity of soul. The beauty of poetry is that the creation goes beyond the poet. The true nature is self-evident as soon as you take out it from the cobwebs of ignorance, it becomes clear.

Gandhi's Unique Perspective on Creativity and Truth

Gandhi was a keen observer and lover of anything which is artistic. But his meaning of beauty and art was quite different from others. For him, a pure soul is beautiful; nature is beautiful; any sacrifice that removes the misery of man is beautiful; and other compartments of life, including political, social that liberates an individual from external and internal bondages is beautiful. For example, the invention of spinning wheel or the *singer* sewing machine were creations of art. There is no beauty apart from truth is one of the strong statements. Beauty is not an ultimate value-something that should be pursued for its own sake. In Gandhi beauty is well connected in the highest form of truth.

If beauty is man-made then should be the result of genius. Again, Gandhi differs from others when he speaks of creativity. For him creativity is not merely an efficient expression of art. Gandhi delves into the creativity of art by imposing great responsibility on the artist. He gives preference to the idea of art than the creation of artistic form. An artist is not an ordinary person who can play with colours in case of painting and can make use of words in the case of poetry. A painting is a painting only if it enables to make realise the truth. Creativity for Gandhi is double edged, it is not only to produce an art-work but the artist must herself have seen or realised the truth. Gandhi believes that the greatest art is possible if the artist holds purity of character and perfect personality. "I said so categorically …...that the greatest artist is he who lives the finest life." [11]Purity of life is the chief and highest form of art.

Life is and must always be greater than all the arts put together. I go still further. For I say that he is the greatest artist who leads the best life. For what is art without the background and setting of a worthy life? An art is to be valued only when it ennobles life. I object emphatically only when people say that art is everything, that it does not matter even if life has to be held subservient to its (i.e., art's) fulfilment. I have then to say that my values are different, that is all. But fancy people saying that I am opposed to all arts on that account.[12]

Gandhi wants the artist to fulfil a distinctive social role, that of disseminating the moral excellence to the masses. It should help people to understand life and reality. The artist is a member of a society like any other individual, hence, the artist must always be vigilant to educate the masses. He/she must know how it is going to influence people. Creation of art must be in such a way as to uplift the moral and spiritual level of society.

…...let the artist guard against self-deception and self-love. Let him be always alive to his duty towards the masses. To that extent that his art benefits the masses, it is to be approved of. To the extent that it doesn't, it is to be discouraged.[13]

The artist should be careful about the content of art because it is the essence of every art. For Gandhi, art is an extension of the pursuit of Truth. He criticizes those artists and works of art where creativity is shown only on the outward expressions.

But I know that many call themselves artists, and are recognized as such, and yet in their works there is absolutely no trace of the soul's upward urge and unrest.[14]

Hence, the outer forms have value when it expresses the inner self. An artist can create such art when one has experienced that truth. The best art is possible when artist have vision and purity of ideas.

He stresses that the artist must enable individuals to see the truth. Artistic creativity is not merely to create art rather to enable the appreciators to realise the self. He prefers to have no art than the meaningless expression. Even a starry night is preferable than a meaningless art work if that enables to realise the ultimate truth. A piece of painting if it just decorates the walls and cannot arouse the desire to know the truth is worthless. Whereas a

beautiful evening is valuable if it leads to the realisation of the creator who is a source behind them. If same experience can be found in any man created art, for Gandhi, that is the real art. Hence, an artist is the one who create such art which makes others to see the truth.

Truth is the first thing to be sought for, and Beauty and Goodness will then be added unto you. Jesus was, to my mind, a supreme artist, because he saw and expressed Truth; and so was Mohammed, the Koran being the most perfect composition in all Arabic literature—at any rate—that is what scholars say. It is because both of them strove first for Truth, that the grace of expression naturally came in; and yet neither Jesus nor Mohammed wrote on Art. That is the Truth and Beauty I crave for, live for, and would die for.[15]

Here, again, Gandhi does not depart from the tradition who maintains that a poet and a seer are identical. For him Tagore, Valmiki, Tulsidas are not merely the poets rather are the great teachers of humanity:

…...he has left up the Gitanjali, the poems which brought him world fame. The great Tulsidas left us his immortal Ramayana. The renowned Vedavyasa left us a history of mankind. They were not mere poets; they were teachers. Gurudev too wrote not only as a poet but as a rishi. Writing, however, was not his only gift. He was an artist, a dancer, a singer, with all the sweetness and purity that art in its finest sense should contain.[16]

Gandhi is unique in himself as he does not deviate from his responsibility to the society and social welfare. Another aspect of creativity according to him is to serve the humanity. Gandhi's position on creativity takes us to the context of his time when the idea of art was been debated with positions ranging from art as an aesthetic experience only- art for art sake verses the social utility of art. In this framework Gandhian ideas of creativity are very clear and endorse the point that creativity should be in the service of the larger good.

The man who invented the sacred spinning-wheel had shown a greater genius than Hargreaves (inventor of the spinning jenny), and greater than anyone else in the country ever did.[17]

For Gandhi, truth and beauty are connected with each other. Gandhi believed that the aesthetic quality of beauty is not displayed where individual craftsmanship and uniqueness is absent. Diversity is a specialty of creativity

and it always looks for this quality. Gandhi recognized that an artist shows the diversity of life. Beauty is that which has a universal appeal, millions of people appreciate an art and attain happiness. The true artist, for Gandhi, is the one who with his/her genius produces the right expression, and that is expressed through the spinning wheel. Such kind of artists are the Indian villagers who have produced the treasures of art that they learn through generations. A unique characteristic that lends beauty to hand spinning is not in the instrument that is trivial and rudimentary but in the act of an artistic endeavour where the mind and body are united in a creative practice.

After all, true art can only be expressed not through inanimate power-driven machinery designed for mass production but only through the delicate living touch of the hands of men and women.[18]

Gandhi is not interested in the art as such but the people who can make sense of their lives through art. "……. but here too, just as elsewhere, I must think in terms of the millions."[19]

Gandhi even once did not consider the thought of art for art's sake as we have already discussed in the first chapter. Art for Gandhi is not an end in itself, it is always a means to achieve the higher truths and benefits of humanity.

People who claim to pursue "art for art's sake" are unable to make good their claim. There is a place for art in life, apart from the question-what is art? But art can only be a means to the end which we must all of us achieve. If, however, it becomes an end in itself, it enslaves and degrades humanity.[20]

Art does not exist in isolation for Gandhi since it connects to all aspects of human activities. This connection is not only organic and holistic but also a necessary part of the life process. Art is only a means towards the larger end of self-realisation. Criticizing the mistaken belief that art exist for art sake is not only fallacious but also promotes self-delusion is what Gandhi asserts. His point is that such an isolationist view of art as an end in itself would make the individual be obsessed with art as an end and forgetting the continuum. Therefore, instead of engaging with art as a process of self-realisation the individual is consumed by art. Such art is not art for Gandhi at it does not have any social linkages. Gandhi apparently criticizes all art which exists for its own sake and does not have social utility.

Whatever can be useful to those starving millions is beautiful to my mind. Let us give today first the vital things of life and all the graces and ornaments of life will follow. [21]

For Gandhi giving food to the starving millions, providing them the basic necessities of life takes preference over the pursuit or enjoyment of art in any form. "A certain freedom from abject poverty and carping cares and corroding anxieties of life is the pre- requisite to the production and appreciation of art."[22]

Arguing against the a priori definition of beauty as a quality inherent in art that unfolds itself to the onlooker, Gandhi proposes a very different alternative. For him the starving millions would not find beauty in such an exercise of viewing a piece of art. Rather an act of kindness that would mitigate the suffering of millions is an engaging act of truth, where the millions would discover beauty in such acts of humaneness. "And to the millions we cannot give that training to acquire a perception of Beauty, in such a way as to see Truth in it. Show them Truth first, and they will see Beauty afterwards." [23]

Art for Life's Sake: Gandhi's Integration of Creativity, Truth, and Community

Gandhi's engagement with art is at a considerable distance from that of his contemporaries. While on the one hand Gandhi has been faulted for not having left behind a coherent body of writings on art that would summarise his views, it remains difficult to deduce Gandhian perspectives on art. This aspect is also to be noted the larger context that from the body of writings Gandhi has left behind, we can with some effort recreate his ideas of art. On another plane the Gandhian ideas of art are a critique on modernity and modernist art which is seen as self-serving rootless and isolated from both the community and the individual. However, unlike other aspects of art Gandhi has dealt considerably on music as a form that has large scale transformative potential.

In the modern understanding of art which is seen as an isolated and an activity that is of an abstract and complicated nature, Gandhi posits the idea of art as a simple and elevated pursuit that would transform the masses and help man in his path of realising the ultimate truth. The important interventions made by Gandhi in the understanding of art are the subversion

of truth as primary to beauty as secondary and the displacement of beauty that was seen as a priori and inherent in art works to an activity that would further truth. This furtherance of truth was to be locate in an experiential understanding of art where the onlooker would experience the simple and unmediated forms and thus be on the path to realise the ultimate truth. In another move Gandhi calls for an understanding that is not isolated which would restrict art to a compartmentalised activity. In opposition to this, Gandhi posits art as a this-worldly activity engaged in this world with the objective of realising the ultimate truth. It is this potential of art that leads Gandhi to characterise art as an all compassing and rooted activity in this world and not isolated from other facets of life.

This integrationist approach would place art in this life as an activity that would involve the realisation of the ultimate truth and serve the central purpose of man i.e. self-realisation. This pursuit of self-realisation, for Gandhi is art. And it is also an activity not restricted to the domain of practicing artists but to all who live life in the path towards ultimate truth. One of the significant features of Gandhian pronouncement on art apart from subverting the idea of beauty wherein he says that what is truth, is beautiful though it may not appear beautiful to the conventional standards is the idea of holism. Like the idea that art should have a social purpose needs Gandhi to invest beauty in the spinning wheel that has mitigated the sorrows of millions. Like the formulation of Gandhi on beauty and the need to be society accountable lead to an integration and embeddedness of art in a social matrix. The location of art in society is seen by Gandhi as a living process. This stands in the opposition to many of the abstract and elaborate forms of art that are cut off from everyday life and exist in rarefied locations. Such an art is not only isolationist but also alienating and in in opposition to this Gandhi proposes an idea of art as process of everyday life. This is informed by the act of truth and truth seeking as acts that would lead to a life of art. For Gandhi such a life is also art and artist are understood in his view point as seekers and practitioner of truth. Therefore, the Gandhian understanding of art places the location of art in this world and as an everyday activity that has to be cultivated.

Life is greater than all art. I would go even further and declare that the man whose life comes nearest to perfection is the greatest artist; for what is art without the sure foundation and framework of a noble life?[24]

Gandhi dissolves the distinction between art and life. An artist is not merely who creates an art-work, an artist is one who lives beautifully. Anyone who is able to realize the ultimate truth that is the real art for him. Gandhi gives a humanistic interpretation of art, unlike a traditional theorist, Gandhi does not limit himself to define art, art-experience and art-creativity. Rather, he overuses the term art in order to emphasize the art of living as he is more interested in the betterment of human life.

I can say with all experience at my command that nothing could be more untrue. As I am nearing the end of my early life, I can say that purity of life, is the highest and truest art. The art of producing good music from a cultivated voice can be achieved by many, but the art of producing that music from the harmony of a pure life is achieved very rarely.[25]

As he gives stress to live a pure life and connects austerity with art. If art elevates life, then austerity is an art itself.

But I do maintain that asceticism is the greatest art in life. For what is art but beauty in simplicity and what is asceticism but the loftiest manifestation of simple beauty in daily life shorn of artificialities and make believes? That is why I always say that a true ascetic not only practises art hut lives it.[26]

Hence, Gandhi does not discuss art in isolation rather it is centred around the human life. It will not be wrong to conclude that Gandhi undermines art and gives superiority to the live a better life, even if that life excludes the artistic expressions. Art has a place in life, but art is not life. Gandhi has stated that the purpose of art is not only to produce happiness and enjoyment, but elevation which includes purification. True art gives us lessons and shows us the explicit design of life, only that art is superior. It is a bond that connects man with man. Therefore, art fills the gap between human knowledge and divine experience. Gandhi wants art and literature to reveal the secrets of life that would guide people and provide them support.

In the end it can be concluded that art has two aspects: from and content. Gandhi gives emphasis on content since it leads to the vision of humanity. Gandhi gives priority to the realisation of ultimate truth and that can only be manifested in the rich content of art. Creativity of an artist is not merely to create an art. Creativity is to reveal art that manifests philosophical truths that are not abstract but reflect the sorrows of the starving millions. Gandhi defines beauty in terms of truth. Beauty for him is not an artistic expression that attracts the attention of connoisseur rather, beauty is the other side of truth. Beauty and truth are the two sides of the same coin.

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Suicide and Hinduism: Philosophical Readings

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Abstract

Suicide or self-killing is a common phenomenon in every culture and social setting. But the act of suicide is not permissible in most of human society. Suicide, or the act of taking one's own life, has been addressed in Hinduism with nuanced views depending on the context and intent. Ending one's life prematurely is often seen as a disruption of the natural order and a violation of dharma. In classical Indian philosophy, death is generally classified into three categories: natural, unnatural, and self-willed. Suicide, or self-willed death, is condemned in Hinduism, especially when motivated by personal distress, anger, or emotional weakness, as it disrupts the karmic journey and delays spiritual liberation (moksha). However, certain forms of voluntary death—such as heroic death in battle filed, fasting unto death (Prayopavesana), or religious self-sacrifice-have been historically accepted under specific conditions. Ancient Indian texts such as the Vedas, Upanishads, Ramayana, Mahabharata, and various Puranas differentiate between immoral suicide and morally justified self-sacrifice. Suicide is prohibited when performed for selfish reasons, and those who commit such acts are believed to suffer severe karmic consequences, including rebirth in lower forms or hellish realms. Places like Varanasi, Prayaga, and Amarkantaka are seen as sacred grounds where death, even if self-willed, may lead to salvation. Generally, Hinduism condemns suicide, it simultaneously accommodates nuanced views that allow for exceptions under specific ethical, spiritual, and cultural contexts. This reflects a broader philosophical tension between the sanctity of life and the pursuit of liberation through self-discipline and detachment.

Keywords: *Suicide, religion, Hinduism, morality, karma, rebirth, hell.*

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Introduction:

Death holds a significant place in the realms of philosophy, literature, and religion.It marks the end of life-a phenomenon we inherently desire and strive to preserve. Death can manifest in various forms, and in both philosophical and ethical discourse, it has been categorized in different ways.Primarily, the death of a human being is classified into two broad types: 'natural death' and 'unnatural death'.In 'classical Indian ethics', death is further classified into 'three categories': natural, unnatural, and self-willed death.When death occurs due to natural causes- such as aging or illness-it is referred to as 'natural death'. Conversely, when death results from external or unnatural causes, such as accidents or violence, it is termed 'unnatural death'. It also believed that to die before old age or die before the allotted span (Pura āyusah) is called unnatural. According to the Vedic tradition, the normal human lifespan is considered to be one hundredyears[1]

The term 'mrtyu' (death) appears repeatedly in the 'Rigveda', often portrayed as a terrifying force. There are more than one hundred forms of death.[2] Sanskrit literature describes more than a hundred forms of death and distinguishes between 'kālmrtyu' (timely death) and 'akālm[tyu' (untimely death). Untimely death, or 'akālmrtyu', is often viewed as inauspicious and includes causes such as accidents, murders, or certain forms of suicide. However, not all suicides were automatically considered untimely. For instance, dying in a sacred place like 'Varanasi' or by drowning in the Ganges was sometimes seen as spiritually significant. Ganges[3]

Classical Indian texts also identify various types of 'self-willed deaths', such as suicide, heroic voluntary death, and religiously motivated self-willed death. Among these, 'suicide' is a complex and important subject in the field of applied ethics. Poets, philosophers, priests, and even common people have expressed diverse views on this issue. Suicide remains a 'multi-faceted phenomenon' examined by philosophers, theologians, sociologists, and psychologists alike.

Among all prohibitions against suicide, 'theological objections' are often the most forceful. The history of suicide reflects 'contradictory attitudes': some cultures have condemned it as sinful or immoral, while others have honored it as an act of courage or devotion, depending on the circumstances.

Most 'world religions' teach that God is the creator of the universe and the origin of all life. Therefore, human beings do not possess the authority to end their own lives, as life is a divine gift. Suicide, in this view, is considered a violation of God's will, an infringement upon divine authority. A person who commits suicide interferes with God's exclusive right to determine the preservation or end of life. For this reason, many religious traditions regard suicide as a 'grave sin'.

However, attitudes toward suicide in 'ancient India' were not uniform. In certain contexts, suicide was 'permissible or even revered', especially when associated with religious merit, spiritual liberation, or moral heroism. Thus, suicide has been interpreted in various ways depending on its 'motive, context, and spiritual intent'. This paper will explore how 'Hinduism' approaches the issue of suicide, examining its moral, religious, and philosophical dimensions within the broader framework of classical Indian thought.

Hinduism on Suicide

According to 'Hinduism', the present life is the result of 'karma' accumulated over past lives. One's future birth is entirely determined by the actions performed in previous existences. Therefore, everything a person receives at birth-be it circumstances, conditions, or traits-is considered to be 'ordained by destiny', shaped by one's own past karma. From this perspective, 'suicide is generally regarded as impermissible'. Moreover, suicide is believed to hinder the soul's spiritual progress toward 'liberation (moksha)'. It not only becomes an obstacle in the soul's journey but also results in 'negative karmic consequences' for the individual who takes their own life. However, Hindu texts such as the 'Ramayana' and the 'Mahabharata' contain several instances of 'self-inflicted death'. These examples complicate the strict prohibition of suicide and suggest that the context and intent behind the act play a critical role in its moral evaluation.

In 'ancient Hindu thought', 'self-sacrifice'-especially when performed for noble or altruistic reasons-was considered a 'sacred act'. Historical accounts from ancient India portray such acts as 'noble and virtuous', particularly when done to save others or serve a higher moral or spiritual purposeImportantly, such self-sacrificial acts were 'not classified as **s**uicide[4] This reverence for self-sacrifice is not unique to India. For example, in 'ancient Egyptian belief', suicide was sometimes viewed as a

way to 'escape the suffering of worldly existence'. Similarly, ancient Indian scriptures occasionally glorified self-sacrifice when carried out for a 'greater cause', such as protecting dharma or upholding truth. Thus, while 'suicide is generally condemned in Hindu tradition, certain forms of voluntary death-particularly those associated with 'spiritual intent', 'selflessness', or 'dharma'-have been 'approved or revered' under special circumstances. The moral evaluation of such acts, therefore, depends heavily on 'motivation, context, and alignment with dharmic principles'.

Writers of the 'Dharmashastras' generally regard 'suicide' or even an 'attempt to commit suicide' as a 'grave sin'. However, instances of 'self-inflicted death' or 'self-killing' are found throughout Indian literature, including the 'Bhagavad Gita', the 'Ramayana', the 'Mahabharata', the 'Purānas', and the 'Smrtis'. Sanskrit dramas, classical poetry, and other religious and philosophical texts-such as the 'SaChitās'-also contain numerous references to acts of self-killing. According to classical Indian texts, 'death is commonly categorized into three types' as follows 'natural death'- occurring due to aging or illness, 'unnatural death' - caused by external factors such as accidents or murder. And 'self-willed death'- a voluntary act of endingone's own life, often with spiritual, ethical, or noble motivations.While 'unnatural death'-such as death by accident or murder-is generally seen as unfortunate and inauspicious, certain forms of death are viewed differently. For example, 'the death of a warrior in battle' ('vīra-mrtyu') is often portrayed in ancient Indian texts as a 'heroic and honorable act', celebrated for its alignment with 'dharma' and valor. Thus, although suicide is typically condemned in the 'Dharmashastra tradition', Indian literature presents a 'nuanced view', distinguishing between sinful self-destruction and 'honorable or self-willed deaths' undertaken for higher causes.

It is said in the *Rigveda*,

> Warrior losing life in battle reap the same rewards
> that those who makes gifts of a thousand cow in
> sacrifices secure[5]

Moreover, it is mentioned in its latter version that death in battle is equated to participation in the *Brahmanical* sacrifice itself[6]

In ancient times, warriors who were defeated in battle sometimes chose to end their own lives-either out of 'shame' or to avoid 'capture and humiliation'. Similarly, women, during times of war and defeat, would

occasionally take their own lives to escape capture, rape, or enslavement. These acts of 'self-willed death' were not regarded as ordinary suicides but were instead associated with 'honor, dignity, and spiritual merit.

It was believed that such voluntary deaths, committed to preserve one's 'honor or purity', were 'spiritually significant' and could lead to 'attainment of heaven'. In particular, 'voluntary heroic death'- whether in battle or to avoid dishonour- was a recognized and practiced form of 'self-willed death' in ancient Indian society. These actions were viewed as 'noble sacrifices', and it was commonly held that those who died in this manner would be rewarded in the afterlife

Even *Bhimaparva* (17.11) states that

> for a Kshatriya, it is considered a sinful and dishonourable act to die at home from disease. According to the ancient code of conduct, a true Kshatriya is expected to face death on the battlefield, meeting his end by the shord rather than through illness or oldage[7]

Nothing is mentioned about suicide (ātmahatyā, ātmaghāta) in the Vedas. However, by the 6th century B.C.E., we find certain indications of suicide, showing that it was becoming a social concern. At the same time, ideas of specific forms of death, such as self-willed death and religiously motivated death, began to emerge[8]

The Vedas permit suicide for religious reasons and regard the sacrifice of one's own life as the highest form of offering. Scholars such as Hillebrandt have pointed out that vague evidence of self-sacrificial practices is mentioned in James Hastings' 'Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics'. Nearly all religions discuss the concept of self-sacrifice, though certain cases of suicide are strongly condemned when committed without justifiable reason9

It is said that those who commit suicide for selfish reasons will be condemned to hell for a period of sixty thousand years. According to Parāśara (IV, 1–2),

"if a man or woman hangs himself or herself out of extreme pride, rage, affliction, or fear, he or she will fall into hell for sixty thousand years[10]

The rite of cremation is strictly prohibited for those who commit suicide. Throughout Brahminical tradition, however, several forms of voluntary death-

often motivated by religious reasons- were accepted at different points in time. Various acts of self-annihilation were approved in Indian tradition when they were believed to serve a higher benefit for society. For example, the sage Dadhichi willingly sacrificed his life for the welfare of the world. He offered his body to Indra so that his bones could be used to create the divine weapon 'Vajra', which the gods employed in their battle against the demons. Dadhichi's self-sacrifice was regarded as a noble act of service for the greater good of society.

According to some Western thinkers, all forms of self-termination are labeled as suicide. However, such views are not entirely acceptable, as they fail to distinguish between suicide and other forms of voluntary death. In Indian culture, certain voluntary deaths are not considered suicide but are instead described as acts of self-release or self-sacrifice. These deaths are undertaken for noble causes and are often referred to as religious deaths. The *Jabalaupanishad* says,

> that *sannyasin* (ascetic) who has acquired full insight, may enter upon the great journey, or choose death by voluntary starvation, by drowning, by fire or by a hero's fate[11]

But such actions should perform deliberately without any attachment. Those who have no meaning in life or cannot lead a religious life, they can invite death voluntary. This death was treated as a matter of individual choice and freedom.

Manu does not support ordinary suicide. He states that no water should be offered for the benefit of the soul of one who deliberately ends his own life[12] (Verse: 89) However, he does recommend voluntary termination of life in specific cases, such as for aged kings. According to Manu,

'A Kshatriya king, after placing his son in his position, should give up his body in battle filed'. A commentator on 'Manusmrti' (IX.223) further explains that if death in battle is not possible, the king may undertake fasting unto death ('prāyopaveśa'). Manu also suggests that voluntary death may be chosen as a means of atonement for sins. The 'Raghuva Aśa' (VIII.94) provides an example of this practice.

> how Aja in his old age when his health was shattered by disease resorted to fasting and drowned himself at the confluence of holy rivers,

> the Ganges and the Saryu, and immediately attained the position of a denizen Heaven[13]
>
> But *Shruti* clearly states that death should not be invited before the scheduled time for the person who is eager to get the heaven[14]

Mahāprasthāna refers to the act of undertaking the "great journey" toward death, where an individual wanders into the wilderness and eventually dies through starvation, exhaustion, or similar means. 'Samādhimarana' is a particular form of self-willed death that occurs while one is absorbed in meditation. 'Prāyopaveśana', comparable to the Jain practice of 'Sallekhanā' (self-starvation), involves abstaining from food and awaiting death. The term 'prāya' is explained in Kālidāsa's Raghuvamśa (VIII.94) as 'fasting unto death.' This practice is permitted only for those who have completed all their duties in life and who no longer possess worldly desires or ambitions.

***Upanisads on* Suicide:**

According to the Upanicads, suicide is strictly prohibited. These sacred scriptures condemn the act and affirm that those who take their own lives will, after death, enter a sunless realm shrouded in impenetrable darkness. In the 'Purāna's, this place is described as 'hell'.The 'Īśāvāsya Upanisad' (verse 3) further states-

> 'Those who commit suicide are condemned to an extremely harsh afterlife.'[15]

Moreover, it is also mentioned in *Rigveda* that one cannot commit suicide for every human has to live for a hundred years accomplishing one's appointed tasks. The same view is expressed in Yama Smriti.

> Yama (verses 20–21) prescribes that if a person attempts to end his life by methods such as hanging and succeeds, his body should be smeared with impure substances. If he survives, he should be fined two hundred 'panas', while his friends and sons should each be fined one 'pana'. Thereafter, he must also undergo the penance prescribed in the 'śāstras'[16]

Śankarācārya also condemns the act of physical self-slaying (suicide). He points out that prohibitions against suicide are clearly found in the Vedic scriptures. Similarly, the Bhagavad Gītā strictly prohibits suicide, emphasizing that taking one's life for selfish reasons does not merit 'śrāddha' (ritual respect) or the essential last rites.

In human society, every respectable person seeks to live with dignity, since honor and respect are closely tied to social prestige. For such individuals, dishonor is considered worse than death itself. As the Bhagavad Gītā (Chapter 2, Verse 34) declares, "It is better to die than to live in dishonor."According to the *Bhagvad Gita,* a person who commits suicide dishonors himself, because he has no respect for his own life. For this reasons, he does not get any respect from society. So, we cannot support suicide under any situation.

***Mahābhārata on* Suicide:**

The *Ādiparva* of *Mahābhārata* (179:20) declares that one who commits suicide do not reach blissful world. But different types of suicidal attempts are narrated in *The Mahābhārata*. In the *Ādiparva, Vashishtha* attempts self-killing and in the *Banaparva* Duryodhana fasts to kill himself. In a footnote to a verse in the *Anushāsanaparva, Neelkanta* says that self-killing due to illness is justified. In the *Anusāsanaparva*, we have found that self-killing due to incurable disease is accepted. There are many statements in favour of self-killing. In the *AtrisaAhitā,* there is a *sloka* which states that an old man who has no consciousness about his physical purity and is rejected or refused by doctors due to his incurable disease, kills himself by fire or fasting. This kind of self-killing is *mānabika* (humane) or considered as morally valid[17]In his *History of Dharmashastra* [vol 2, part 2], P. V. Kane translates a line from a religious text as:

> If one who is very old (beyond 70), one who can't observe the rules of bodily purification (owing to extreme weakness), one who is so ill that no medical help can be given, kills himself by throwing himself from a precipice or into fire or water or by fasting[18]

The 'Mahābhārata' classifies all acts of suicide into two categories: moral and immoral. A suicide committed out of anger, attachment, or any form of personal emotional distress cannot be considered a moral act. The fate of such individuals, according to the text, is hell. The commentator

Nīlakantha, in his exposition on the 'Vana Parva' (17.83), affirms that those who take their own lives in this manner are destined for hell, or 'Asuraloka'. Suicide motivated by anger, affection, or emotional impulses is therefore completely forbidden. However, in both the 'Anuśāsana Parva' and the 'Śalya Parva' of the Mahābhārata, certain arguments are presented in favor of suicide under specific spiritual conditions. If a person, having attained knowledge of Vedānta and realizing the impermanence of 'saAsāra', ends his life in a holy place by fasting or through self-immolation, such an act is regarded as legitimate. The texts further assert that the person who dies in this manner will attain heaven (Anuśāsana Parva 26.62–64).

The 'Śalya Parva' also records instances where individuals, without any personal motive but solely for spiritual significance, chose to end their lives by drowning in sacred rivers such as the Ganges at Prayāga (Śalya Parva 39.33–34).

> The 'Matsya Purāna' (28.33) similarly states that those who die at Amarkantaka-whether by fire, poison, water, or fasting—will enjoy celestial pleasures. It further adds that one who casts himself down from the peaks of Amarkantaka will never return to the mortalworld[19]

The peak of *Amarkantaka* is considered as 'holy spot' and this process for committing suicide is admitted as right means of taking life of oneself. (*Matsya Purana:Verse* 28-33 / 34-35) Moreover, it is also said that

Whoever relinquishes his body at Prthūdaka, on the northern bank of the Sarasvatī, after reciting Vedic prayers, will no longer be afflicted by death thereafter (Mahābhārata, Śalya Parva 39.33–34).

Certain sacred places-such as Prayāga, the Sarasvatī, and Benares (Kāśī/Varanasi)-are regarded as sites where self-killing by drowning may be undertaken with the intention of attaining release from saAsāra. In such cases, the individual is not considered guilty of the sin of suicide. The Skanda Purāna (VI.22.76) also affirms that Kāśī is a holy place where self-killing does not incur sin. Commentators on the Mahābhārata identify three essential conditions for such an act:

1. The person must possess knowledge of Vedānta before choosing self-killing.

2. He must clearly realize the emptiness of worldly life and the impermanence of the empirical world.

3. The act must not arise from physical suffering, grief, or despair.

When performed under these conditions, this form of voluntary death has been described by some scholars as an act of self-sacrifice at a sacred place, undertaken for the attainment of 'moksa' (ultimate liberation). In this context, Pandit Satya Narayan Chakraborty also supports the above interpretation.However, the Mahābhārata also mentions that suicide may serve as a form of penance for certain grave sins. For example, in cases of incestuous relations, self-killing is prescribed as atonement: if a person engages in sexual relations with his mother or sister, he is enjoined to end his own life. Such suicide, however, does not lead to liberation. The epic strongly condemns incest and prescribes self-killing merely as a punishment for the transgression.

Similarly, suicide is prescribed for those guilty of killing a Brāhmin. In such cases, the sinner is allowed to face death at the hands of archers on the battlefield. The archers, aware of his intent, understand that he seeks death as an act of atonement for the sin of Brahminicide.

Conclusion:

The question of suicide in Hindu thought is complex and layered, reflecting tensions between strict prohibitions and conditional allowances. While the Vedas, Upanicads, Dharmashāstras, and later commentators generally condemn suicide as a grave sin that disrupts the soul's karmic journey, Indian tradition also recognizes exceptions where voluntary death may carry religious or moral value.

Suicide motivated by anger, despair, or personal suffering is universally denounced and believed to lead to hellish states such as 'Asuraloka'. Such acts are seen as violations of 'ahimsā' and divine order, denying God's sovereignty over life and death. The 'Bhagavad Gītā', Śankarācārya, Manu, and Yama Smrti all uphold this prohibition, emphasizing honor, dignity, and responsibility to family and society.

In special contexts, voluntary death has been revered as an act of self-sacrifice. Ancient texts describe practices such as 'prāyopaveśa' (fasting unto death), 'mahāprasthāna' (the great journey), and 'samādhimarana' (death in meditation), undertaken by ascetics or kings who had fulfilled their

duties and renounced worldly attachments. Sacred sites like Prayāga, Kāśī, and Amarkantaka were believed to sanctify such deaths, granting liberation. Likewise, heroic deaths in battle (vīra-mrtyu) or legendary sacrifices such as that of Sage Dadhīci were honored as noble and in harmony with dharma, rather than condemned as suicide.

Thus, Hinduism distinguishes between sinful self-destruction and voluntary, dharmic self-release. The moral evaluation depends on intent, context, and alignment with spiritual goals. Ultimately, while ordinary suicide is forbidden, self-sacrifice for higher causes has been accepted-even honoured-as a legitimate path to liberation (moksa).

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Ontology after the Quine-Carnap Debate

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Abstract

In this paper, I will argue that Carnapian meta-ontology can still guide contemporary metaphysics without committing to his dismissive attitude toward metaphysics. To achieve this goal, I will consider ontology in the light of the Quine-Carnap debate. Carnap first attacked metaphysics in 'The Elimination of Metaphysics Through Logical Analysis of the Language' (1932) and then paved the way for the deflationary accounts of ontology through his 'Empiricism, Semantics, and Ontology (1950). Despite his efforts, metaphysics survived. How did it come to be? If Putnam (2004) is right, it was Quine's arguments against Carnap that revitalized metaphysics. This paper aims to examine this debate's legacy on contemporary metaphysics. In section 1, I will briefly formulate the debate. I will first present Carnap's case and then Quine's charge against it. In section 2, I will examine Quine's charge. Using the literature that followed the debate, I will present how these charges can be mitigated. In this section, I will also present a serious issue for ontology (and metaphysics) and show how it finds its roots in Carnap's writings. Subsequently, I will argue that Carnap's project can be reasonably taken as reformative instead of merely dismissive. Finally, in Section 3, I will use insights from Hofweber (2016a) to suggest how a reformative project on carnapian insights can work.

Keywords: *Meta-ontology, metametaphysics, ontology, linguistic frameworks, Quine.*

I

Introduction: The Quine-Carnap debate

The central aim of Carnap (1950) was to show that accepting abstract entities is perfectly compatible with empiricism. He argues that we

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can accept these entities without recourse to a platonic ontology. The heart of the issue was whether we could ask questions like 'Are there numbers, properties, propositions, etc.?' meaningfully without accepting the entity's independent existence. Carnap's deflationary attitude towards ontology emerges from an attempt to answer this problem. This attitude is termed as deflationary or skeptical because, according to Carnap, the questions of ontology are pseudo-questions. That is to say, they lack any cognitive content and are to be dismissed. But this dismissal is not all. Eklund (2013) points out that there's also a positive view embedded in it. He writes, "Central to the positive view is a distinction between internal and external questions and the notion of frameworks." This distinction and the notion of framework is essential to Carnap's account in his text and is precisely the point of dispute between Quine and Carnap.

Simply put, a Carnapian framework is a 'system of linguistic expressions'. According to Carnap, whenever we have to speak about a new kind of entity in our language, we have to introduce a system of 'new ways of speaking'. This procedure is called the construction of a framework. To introduce a framework, we have to introduce a general term for new entities and variables of the new type. The general terms would be predicates of a higher level such as 'number', 'color', etc. and we can say that a particular entity belongs to that predicate and that the entities are values of the variables. For example, take the system of numbers. We introduce this framework with certain expressions and rules. The general term in it is 'number' and particular entities are expressions like 'Two' or 'Three'. The questions are asked relative to the framework. Those asked within the framework are internal questions.

For instance, we can say 'Three is a number.' Now, if we ask the question 'Are there numbers?' internally, we get an affirmative answer. Once we have accepted the framework, it follows trivially. These are either answered logically (using analytical methods) or factually (using empirical methods) with their answer following from the framework. But there is another sense in which this question could be asked, It is the metaphysician's sense. A metaphysician contends, "We mean to ask whether numbers are real prior to the acceptance of the framework." This is an external question which, Carnap says, is to be rejected. Questions asked outside the framework are called external questions. It must be noted, however, that not all external questions are rejected. Certain kinds of external questions are spared the

dismissal. These are external questions of a pragmatic kind. These are pragmatic when it concerns which framework we should adopt for our purposes and factual when it concerns the reality of the framework. Factual questions are traditional ontological questions in the metaphysician's sense and are not acceptable. So the only existence questions Carnap's account admits are internal questions.[1] This makes up the internal/external distinction in Carnap's deflationary account.

Quine criticized the grounds for Carnap's deflationary position in Quine(1951b). This dispute came to be known as the Quine-Carnap debate. Quine's first attack follows from his refutation of the Analytic/Synthetic distinction. He contends that the notion of linguistic frameworks presupposes the same distinction he had rejected in his Quine (1951a). Note that for Carnap internal questions could be answered by analytic or empirical means while external questions of the relevant kinds were answered by taking in pragmatic considerations. The Analytic-Synthetic distinction is what divides these camps. What Quine tries to show is that Carnap's internal questions are no less pragmatic in nature and the distinction is superfluous. He writes, "If there is no proper distinction between analytic and synthetic, then no basis at all remains for the contrast which Carnap urges between ontological statements and empirical statements of existence. Ontological questions then end up on par with questions of natural science." (Quine, 1951b, p. 71)

At this juncture, a question can be raised: Did the I/E distinction really presuppose the Analytic-synthetic distinction? Certainly, many philosophers have attempted to show that the internal/external distinction can be achieved without dependence on the Analytical-synthetic distinction. We shall come to those defenses later. First, we must note that Carnap himself admitted to relying on the said distinction. In a footnote, he writes:

> "Quine does not acknowledge the distinction which I emphasize above because according to his general conception, there are no sharp boundary lines between logical and factual truth, between questions of meaning and questions of fact, between the acceptance of a language structure and the acceptance of an assertion formulated in the language." (Carnap, 1956)

Yablo (1998) points out that owing to Carnap's acceptance of Quine's anti-reductionism compels Quine to show that the external questions are not as free as they are taken to be. On the contrary, they are 'theoretical' and 'evidence-driven.' Quine rephrased the Internal/External distinction in terms of category questions and subclass questions. Quine defines category questions as "questions of the form 'Are there so-and-sos?' where the so-and-sos purport to exhaust the range of a particular style of bound variable" and subclass questions as "questions of the form 'Are there so-and-sos?' where the so-and-sos do not purport to exhaust the range of a particular style of bound variables." (Quine, 1951b, pp. 68-69) The external questions are category questions and the internal questions can take the form of either subclass or category questions. This means that when we raise an existence question, we can raise it either internally or externally. Raised externally, it would be the traditional question of ontology and internally, it would be answered trivially.

Once Quine rephrases Carnap's distinction in his own terms, he shows that the status of the question with respect to this new distinction depends on the style of variable we pick. Consider this illustration- Suppose a language L_1 has a set of variables V such that V= $\{v_1, v_2, v_3 \ldots, v_n\}$ and elements of V refer exclusively to numbers. Another language (say L_2) has a set of variables W such that W = $\{w_1, w_2, w_3, \ldots w_n\}$, and the elements of W take not only the class of numbers but also other classes as values. Then the difference will ascertain the nature of the question "Are there numbers?".

In the language L_1, the question is a category question and in L_2, it is a subclass question. Thus the style of the variable emerges as the determining factor. Whether the existential quantifier ranges over one style of a variable or another determines the kind of question that is being asked. According to Quine, picking the style of the variable is a trivial consideration. For Carnap, however, if his distinction is to hold, this choice must not be trivial. Then one recourse available to him is to show that there is some plurality in the language and that a single existential quantifier cannot range freely over any style of variable. This amounts to showing that some spheres have been carved out in the language and that they are 'fundamentally segregated' (Quine, 1951b). Carnap does not provide any grounds for this segregation and the absence of such a segregation makes the internal/ external distinction superfluous.

As a result of these attacks, Carnap's account is weakened by Quine's charges. Carnap does not respond meaningfully to Quine and hence, is declared as the loser of the debate. To what extent these charges succeed has been debated. We will see how it has been done in the next section.

II

The efficacy of Quine's charge is the question of interest for this section. Let's take stock of that. To be clear, Quine's central criticism is against the dependence of Carnap's distinction on the so-called Analytic-Synthetic distinction. This claim can be delineated into two further claims.

Claim 1- Internal/External distinction depends on Analytic/Synthetic distinction

Claim 2- There is no Analytic/Synthetic distinction.

Arguments against Quine's criticism can also be divided into two strands, each focusing on these two claims respectively. The first strand denies that Internal/External distinction *requires* the Analytic-Synthetic distinction. The second strand denies the rejection of the Analytic/Synthetic distinction. In this paper, I will focus on the first strand. For the second strand, the limitations can be found in Grice and Strawson(1956), and Putnam (1975) among others.

The alternative is to show that Carnap does not need to depend on the said distinction for his account. For instance, suggesting this, Bird writes,

> "The central reason for claiming that Carnap does not need to appeal to the analytic/synthetic distinction is that it provides a meta-linguistic characterization which affects our classification of items in a language but does not need to affect their occurrence in a language or even their role, at least not in ways relevant to the present issues." (Bird, 1995)

The meta-linguistic characterization provided by Analytic-synthetic distinction is but one method of identifying the language. Any other method can do equally well. So as long as the 'languages' can be identified, the internal/external distinction can be raised.[2] If this is the case, then loyalty to the Analytic-synthetic distinction is not needed to arrive at the Internal/External distinction. Therefore, Carnap's distinction can be saved. Yablo (1998)

similarly points out that Quine's 'objection doesn't embarrass internal/external as such,' it affects 'only Carnap's way of developing the distinction.' In his interpretation, Carnap's distinction is only 'indirectly' supported by the analytic/synthetic distinction as the former 'presupposes the framework-hood' and frameworks are made of, among other things, 'analytic assertion rules'. He argues that these rules need not be of this nature for the distinction to hold. The internal/external distinction can still be arrived at if the notion of the framework that links the two distinctions is altered adequately. Yablo does exactly that by reforming the framework to include the practice of 'make-believe games'. The internal/external is then rephrased in terms of metaphorical and literal distinction. The answers to the internal questions are of the former kind and that of the external questions are of the latter kind. A person who accepts a framework (Say X-framework), if asked, "Are there Xs?" internally would reply 'Yes'. But the same person need not commit to the literal ontological existence of X. Whether this rephrasing is adequate is a separate question. On this, I would stay neutral, at least for now.[3]

These attempts show that Carnap's distinction doesn't require the Analytic/Synthetic. Yet the distinction is not saved as Quine's criticism is not just limited to that dependence. The second way Quine undermines it is by rephrasing them into category and subclass questions. Though by most philosophers this part of Quine's attack is deemed less important, it still has some ramifications which we shall address later in this section. First, we will consider what the critics of this position say. Many critics of this position argue that Quine's move to rephrase the internal/external in terms of category and subclass does not amount to much and is, in fact, an unwarranted move on his part. For example, Thomasson writes,

> "For if I am right above, the real issue is not (and never was) the distinction between category and subclass questions: *that was Quine's own imposition. Carnap's internal/external distinction is not the same as Quine's subclass/category distinction* [emphasis added]—as can be readily seen by the fact that category questions may be asked either as internal questions (answerable trivially) or as external questions." (Thomasson, 2014)

Some critics like Bird(1995) attacks Quine's move to rephrase the distinction. According to Quine, Subclass questions are not asked externally. They are asked as category questions. Bird (1995), however, argues that no such limitation exists for us. Consider the language L_2 as presented above. In it, the variables of set W could take numbers as values along with other classes such as things. We could still raise the theoretical external question about numbers and things as we did when they were taken as the only value of the variable of a certain language. In other words, nothing prohibits us from asking 'Are there numbers?' in L_2 as we asked in L_1. Thus, subclass questions can be external questions. Another reason to dismantle Quine's re-interpretation is that Quine takes the answers to category questions asked internally to be trivially analytic or trivially contradictory. On Bird's reading of Carnap, some category questions when asked internally can have answers that flow from 'matters of fact' (Bird, 1995). Bird admits that if the internal/external distinction is 'equivalent' to Quine's rephrasing then Carnap's position must be rejected. But as they are not equivalent, Quine fails to provide sufficient ground for his attack. A similar construal of Quine's position is taken up by later critics such as Thomasson (2014, 2016), Yablo (1998), etc.

Contrary to this popular approach, Ebbs (2019) establishes Quine's reading as the correct one. Against Bird's argument that subclass questions can be equated to external questions, she points out that the proponents of the 'new standard interpretation' miss the definition of external questions that Carnap provides as 'questions concerning existence or reality of the system of entities as a whole.' (Carnap, 1956, as cited in Ebbs, 2019) Further textual evidence provided by her also makes a case in favor of Quine's original interpretation. She shows that the category and subclass distinction is not merely an imposition made by Quine at whim[4].

Quine contends that this distinction 'is not invariant under logically irrelevant changes of typography'[5]. Herein lies the central force of this new distinction which carries within itself a serious ramification. I am talking about Carnap's alleged pluralism.

Prima facie, it appears that Carnap rejects a single existential quantifier binding all styles of variables. The popular reading of his account suggests that there could be different existential quantifiers ranging over different kinds of entities. In other words, it allows for quantifier variance. Simply put, in this reading, 'exist' could mean something for entities such as

numbers and something else for entities such as 'things'. Quine could not accept this move and rightly so. If Carnap is really committed to the view that there could be different existential quantifiers for different frameworks, then he is surely mistaken.

However, some philosophers like Price (2009) maintain that Carnap need not be committed to this view. To show this, Price uses the notion of category mistakes as propounded in Ryle (1949). He interprets what Carnap is supposed to defend in its terms. He assumes this; The reason to resist the homogenizing of the quantifier is that we make a category mistake when we take the number and physical object together under the same variable. Carnap never explicitly mentioned the notion of category mistakes by himself.

Ryle suggests that there can be more than one sense of 'exist' as there is more than one sense of 'rising'. The 'rising' in 'hopes are rising' and 'Inflation is rising' are different from each other. In the same manner, 'The numbers exist' and 'The table exists' use the ambiguous term 'exist' that has two senses. This reflects a shade of ontological pluralism.

It is not surprising that this notion irked Quine. In Quine (1960), he counters this by raising the question: why can't it be that 'exist' is unambiguous? Why should we take the difference as the difference between two senses of 'exist' and not as the difference between numbers and tables?

Price sympathizes with this position. He suggests transforming the understanding of 'two species of existence'. Ryle can simply say the notion of existence can be taken in one way as Quine suggests. It can be linked to quantification. The quantification can be done over numbers, tables, etc. The difference would simply be in the talk.

What we do when we say 'tables exist' is different from what we do when we say 'numbers exist'. In effect, it means that it involves a category mistake if we take two separate kinds of entities (say A and B) and overlook the difference in the function of talk of A and the function of talk of B.

What Quine is focusing on is the difference between A and B. Ryle is not talking about that. He is focusing on the difference between the talk of A and the talk of B. 'A exists' and 'B exists' both can use the same notion of existence. Category mistakes come in when we confuse both these sentences with having the same function. Price further proclaims that Quine can be said to be right when he says there is only one logico-syntactic device of existential quantification.

Carnap could very well be in line with this suggestion if he admits that there is a core notion of 'exist' that is unchanging with frameworks. Thomasson (2014) shows that that can be done if Carnap is interpreted as one in Frege's lineage. Frege claimed that 'exists' is a second-order concept just like 'number'. It is a formal notion and not a material notion. Carnap was influenced by Frege. Carnap(1963) explicitly says Frege has the greatest influence on him in the field of semantics and logic. Therefore, it is much more reasonable to take him in Frege's lineage and understand his view in light of Frege's view. Then the notion of 'exist' for Carnap should be a formal notion. He does not explicitly exclude the possibility of allowing the notion 'exist' or symbol '"' to have various meanings. Anti-deflationists primarily attack him for his silence. But their attacks fall blunt if we notice that Carnap does not endorse the view either. Thomasson further writes, "But Carnap is not committed to the idea that the 'concept of existence' may vary in ways that seem to implicitly shift the standards for existence and the truth conditions for quantified claims." (Thomasson, 2014) The kind of change in the existential quantifier in moving from one framework to another that is acceptable in Carnap's account is but a 'trivial' sort of change. It does not have any bearing on the core notion of 'exists'. This formulation of Carnap is very well compatible with Quine's view and, at the same time, allows us to keep the Carnapian account.

Thus, both the charges of Quine against Carnap can be reasonably dealt with if a slight modification of Carnap's account is allowed. If it could be shown that internal/external doesn't necessarily require the analytic-synthetic distinction and that at one level there is some segregation of language possible, we could protect the virtues of Carnap's account. Quine himself would appreciate the same. The primary purpose of Quine (1951b) was not to be critical of Carnap's attempt, but, as Ebbs (2019) points out, it was to reduce his and Carnap's 'divergences'.

While it is true that Quine's criticism was a blow to the anti-metaphysical project, Carnap's project is valuable to contemporary metaontology. Carnap was an important early meta-philosopher. Metaphilosophical underpinnings pervade his text. On a closer reading, they are quite obvious. Consider what he says about external questions:

> "From these questions, we must distinguish the external question of the reality of the thing world itself. In contrast to the former questions, this question is raised neither by the man in the street nor by scientists, but only by philosophers. Realists give an affirmative answer, subjective idealists a negative one, and the controversy goes on for centuries without ever being solved. And it cannot be solved because it is framed *in a wrong way* [emphasis added]." (Carnap, 1950)

In opposition to this wrong formulation, Carnap provides the 'right way' of asking the philosopher's question. This, of course, is to brand them as questions of practical concerns. Therefore, Carnap's project is not merely dismissive. It is *reformative*. The purposes for which we are employing the language are the factors that affect our judgment of acceptance or rejection of a framework. Unsurprisingly, in Carnap'smetaphilosophical thought, philosophy aims to aid science. In the same text, he writes,

> For those who want to develop or use semantical methods, the decisive question is *not the alleged ontological question of the existence of abstract entities* [emphasis added] but rather the question whether the use of abstract linguistic forms or, in technical terms, the use of variables beyond those for things (or phenomenal data), is expedient and fruitful for the purposes for which semantical analyses are made, viz. the analysis, interpretation, clarification, or construction of languages of communication, *especially* [emphasis added] languages of science." (Carnap, 1950)

Carnap here almost hits the correct mark. His text, whether deliberately or not, raises one of the appropriate questions for a metaphilosopher: the relation of philosophy and science or what must philosophy do for science or vice versa. A closely related idea is how philosophy and science should interact. The virtue of this text is that it throws light on this important metaphilosophical question. Why is it important? We will see that in the next section.

III

The logical positivists argue that metaphysics is meaningless. But their charge depends on their narrow criteria of cognitive significance that has been rejected. Nor is their metaphilosophical stance of much interest. Instead, I think the important question is not whether the questions of metaphysics are meaningless or not, but in what way, they are meaningful. In other words, it is not whether they should be asked, but in what way they should be asked.

Let me illustrate this worry. Metaphysics (especially ontology) aims to ask the question of reality- what there is? But the same question is also asked by Science. Take the case of atomism. The question could be 'Are there any such units that are the building blocks of other objects but themselves are not composed of any other thing?' Metaphysics can argue all for atomism and against it, but Science is much more successful in providing the answer to this question. When Boltzmann and Mach quarreled over the status of the atom, theirs was not a metaphysical dispute. Yet their question mimics a metaphysician's question. They are also asking a question similar to the ontological question- Are there atoms (in general)? This overlap of metaphysics and science is a concern for the metaphysician for he needs to show that his project has a legitimate domain of its own. I think this is also the primary question that should be asked to ascertain the legitimacy of metaphysics.

Hofweber (2016) recognizes a similar concern and sets out to carve out a domain for metaphysics which he calls 'ambitious, yet modest metaphysics'. This project takes inspiration from Carnap's internal/external distinction which he terms 'Carnap's Big Idea' (Hofweber, 2016b). According to him, Carnap is right in having his distinction but provides the wrong support for the same. He fixes that by providing a separate formulation of the distinction that has consequences on how we should understand the questions of metaphysics. In the rest of this section, I will spell out what his position is.

Hofweber argues that quantifiers are polysemous. They have at least two readings: the domain conditions reading and the inferential role reading. In domain conditions reading, the quantifiers make a claim about the domain of all the objects they range over, while in the inferential role reading, we require the quantifier to perform an inferential role where the

quantifier inferentially relates to other quantifier-free statements. Using this, Hofweber arrives at a new internal/external distinction. He dubs the domain conditions reading as the external reading and the inferential role reading as the internal reading. Similar to Carnap's program, where the answers to questions in internal reading were trivial, the answers to internal questions in Hofweber'sprogram are also trivial. However, unlike Carnap's external questions, Hofweber's external questions are meaningful. This is because the responses to domain conditions reading are substantial.

This substantiality of the external question allows the possibility of an ambitious, yet modest, metaphysics. By 'modest', Hofweber means that the relationship between science and philosophy must be such that science need not depend on philosophy's judgment of its result. Both disciplines can respect each other's separate domains. And by 'ambitious' he means that it should have certain questions it is supposed to answer. On this attitude, we are not allowed to go to other domains for answers. Therefore, there should be some exclusive questions for metaphysics (call it the question of the domain). From this question, the question of method follows. It asks how should we answer the questions of the domain. Hofweber elaborates on them by considering the traditional question of ontology: 'Are there Xs?' (Call it OQ)

Suppose that the discourse of the X is X-discourse. It comprises singular terms such as X_1, X_2, X_3, and so on. Call these terms X-terms. It also includes some quantifiers. The examination of this X-discourse will reveal the crucial question for metaphysics. First, we have to ascertain whether X-terms are used referentially or non-referentially and whether the relevant quantifiers are used internally or externally. We will ask in what way the terms and quantifiers have standardly been used. Hofweber is trying to seek a pattern here. He proposes four options: two unstable ones and two stable ones. The unstable options imply that our X-discourse is incoherent. These options are:

1. That quantifiers are generally used internally and X-terms are broadly referential.

2. That quantifiers are generally used externally and X-terms are not broadly referential.

He rejects these options and focuses on the stable options that he calls Internalism and Externalism. Internalism about any domain of discourse

is when, in general, its singular terms are not referential and quantifiers are used internally. Externalism about a domain of discourse is when, in general, its singular terms are referential and quantifiers are used externally. If externalism about the discourse is true, then the response to the OQ would be affirmative and if internalism is true, then the response would be negative. So, a necessary step in answering the ontological question is ascertaining whether internalism or externalism is true about the discourse. However, this is a difficult question to ascertain, and hence, it is a substantial one. This is precisely the question Hofweber wants metaphysics to grapple with. In this view, our search would be aided by linguistic considerations and inspection of our minds and actions.

An upshot of this program is that it attempts to draw metaphysical conclusions through thinking about our mental and linguistic representations alone. The widely accepted view is that we cannot draw metaphysical conclusions this way. The way reality is does not have to follow from the way we *represent* reality. A bunch of closely related questions follow this approach. We could ask whether the language we should adopt to draw metaphysical conclusions is the historically given languages as we have them or if not, how can we decide the language that should inform our project? We could also ask why we trust our *present* representations to provide us with an accurate account of reality. The way our number-talk is today doesn't guarantee that the answer it provides to the ontological question is the one we should accept. An answer to these questions will be revealed only with further research in this direction. Doing so would not only clear what metaphysics is supposed to do, what questions it must ask, and what methods it must use, but it would also clear how metaphysics can fit in with science. Thus, Hofweber's program emerging from Carnap's project provides us with a way to guide contemporary metaphysics. It does so by presenting us with one more metaphilosophical question we can grapple with. [6]

Conclusion

Carnap's account was no doubt riddled with errors. As Quine showed, its dependence on Analytic-synthetic distinction, its assumption of segregation of language, and the unhappy consequence of quantifier variance all raised problems for it. While some later works criticized Quine's interpretation, the worry for the deflationist account persisted. Carnap's views attempt a criticism of traditional metaphysics with the help of internal-external

distinction, but with the untenability of the said distinction, as he formulates and argues for it, the text's anti-metaphysical goal fails. Noting, however, that this is not the primary goal of the text, we can make use of the same distinction in a reformative way. A closer reading of Carnap supports our conclusion. One possible way of doing so is provided by Hofweber(2016b) who presents a new formulation of internal-external distinction with a different support. Hofweber's position depends largely on linguistic and mental considerations. The reformative element of this position is the new project it proposes for metaphysics namely *ambitious, yet modest metaphysics*. Whether this project is tenable is a question of further research.

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1. For more on what frameworks exactly are, see Ekund (2013, 2023), and Broughton (2021).

2. Bird rephrases frameworks in terms of 'language'. It is not to be confused with historically given languages.

3. Thomasson (2007) calls Yablo's position a misinterpretation of Carnap, while Gallois (1998) supports it.

4. Ebbs provides a compelling account of evidence from Carnap's Empiricism, Semantics, and Ontology and his other writings on the same issue. For more, see Ebbs (2017, 2019).
5. Quine (1951b).
6. Hofweber defends this approach by attempting to close what he calls the language-metaphysics gap. For more on this, see Hofweber (2023).

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Hedonism and Harmony: Callicles' Contribution to Plato's Conception of Pleasure

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Abstract

In Plato's dialogues, Socrates' interlocutors are typically portrayed as intellectually unrefined individuals who require stimulation to clarify, develop, and refine their ideas. However, *Gorgias* introduces a significant departure from this pattern with the introduction of Callicles. Unlike other interlocutors, Callicles presents a sophisticated challenge to Socrates as he constructs his arguments on logically sound premises. This paper examines the critical influence of Callicles on the development of Plato's views on pleasure. The first section analyzes the faceoff on pleasure between Callicles and Socrates in *Gorgias*. The second section explores how this encounter influences Socrates' subsequent development of different ontologies of pleasure in the Book IX of *Republic*. The paper argues that the consistency between *Gorgias* and the *Republic* regarding the nature of pleasure can be traced to the ongoing philosophical dialogue between Callicles and Socrates. Through this analysis, Callicles is repositioned as a key figure in the evolution of Plato's views on pleasure.

Keywords: pleasure, restoration, rhetoric, *Gorgias*, *Republic.*

Callicles: That man who has filled his urns can have no pleasure. Rather, his is the life of a stone…for once he fills [his urns], he experiences no joy or pain. Living pleasantly consists of the greatest inflow. (*Gorgias* 494a)

Gorgias is among the earliest dialogues written by Plato. It also presents Plato's nascent views on Pleasure. The underlying theme of the dialogue contemplates the best way to live life. This theme further develops into a contrast between a rhetorician's life and a philosopher's. Although

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Plato does not elucidate the latter, his main focus lies in critiquing the former way of life.[1] This aim is accomplished by cross-examining the interlocutors-Gorgias, Polus, and Callicles, who are themselves rhetoricians. Plato condemns the life of a rhetorician by proving the futility of *rhetoric* itself. He argues that rhetoric, as opposed to a craft, is a mere knack.[2] A significant portion of the dialogue is devoted to a discussion on what a craft is[3], and how it is opposed to a knack, which merely tries to impersonate the former. In this context, Plato introduces pleasure as *that* which a knack ultimately aims at. A knack unlike craft pursues pleasure and gratification.For instance, 'cookery' as a type of knack aims at gratifying bodily appetites (469d-471d).[4]

By associating the pursuit of pleasure with something Socrates criticizes, the dialogue diminishes the value of pleasure right from the outset. However, the discussion of pleasure is not just limited to this particular instance.

The theme of pleasure keeps appearing throughout the dialogue. Though the initial mention of pleasure is brief, where it is linked to a mere knack rather than what is best (465a), it subtly underscores the distinction Plato has in mind between pleasure and the Good. This relation comes into light explicitly, in an argument with the third and the most interesting interlocutor, Callicles[5], at 484d.

The main argument concerning pleasure begins with the concern: which life is preferable for a person. Where Socrates promotes an orderly and temperate life, Callicles unhesitatingly declares the life of unrestrained pleasures as the most desirable.

The analogy of urns: Callicles' *leaky urns*

At 493e, Socrates gives an analogy to explicate the two alternatives presented. He compares the lives of temperate and intemperate men with *jars*. The temperate man, according to Socrates, possesses "sound and full" jars. Once he fills those jars, he is no more concerned and therefore rests. On the other hand, the intemperate man has "leaky and rotten" jars which need to be filled recurrently as they keep leaking. As a result of it, the intemperate man suffers from extreme distress.[6]

Till this point, Plato does not hint at his readers with the Restoration model of Pleasure[7]. However, Callicles, surprisingly, seems to advocate the model to support his hedonism.

At 494a Callicles argues

"That man who has filled his urns can have no pleasure. Rather, his is the life of a stone…for once he fills [his urns], he experiences no joy or pain. Living pleasantly consists of the greatest inflow (494a)" (Dodds, 1990, p.68).

The concepts Callicles employs align closely with Plato's replenishment model of pleasure. According to this model, "pleasure is a replenishment or a restoration to the natural state, where the subject undergoing replenishment is aware of it" (Wolfsdorf, 2012, p.234).[8] Pleasure, therefore, is seen as a process of *filling*[9]. Callicles' use of the term "inflow" seems to echo Plato's idea of filling. Additionally, "greatest" refers to the intensity of pleasure. For Plato, to experience pleasure, one must be simultaneously aware of the restoration, and for this awareness to occur, the restoration must be intense enough.[10] Thus, the greater the inflow, the more recognizable the pleasure becomes. Another notable point is that Callicles' statement reflects an advanced understanding of pleasure that Plato himself becomes aware of, only in his later views. I contend that Callicles' views align with Plato's perspective on pleasure in the *Republic*.

The *Republic,* amongst other things, defends the thesis: "the just man is happier than the unjust"[11] (Erginal, 2011, p.288). To support this statement, Plato presents us with some arguments. One of the arguments is related to pain and pleasure and hence is pertinent here. It goes like this: Socrates first claims that pain and pleasure are opposites, with there being a state between them that he calls "neutral". This state is an intermediate state and is regarded as a state of "calm" for the soul. Socrates contends that when followed by pain, people often mistakenly assume this state to be pleasure. He highlights a common belief as an example, where for sick people "being healthy" is pleasant. This realization comes only after their encounter with illness. Similarly, people who experience pleasure find "the cessation of pleasure" as painful.

In both cases, "the neutral state" is mistakenly assumed as either pleasure or pain while in reality, it is neither but just the termination of the two: "The neutral state appears pleasant when it is next to what is painful, and painful when it is next to what is pleasant (584a7-8)" (Erginal, 2011, p.289).

Callicles, similarly in the *Gorgias*, by contrasting the situations of two men, actually marks a demarcation between "pleasure" and "the intermediate state". Callicles' awareness of the difference between the states where "one experiences neither joy nor pain" and "the process of the inflow of pleasure", reflects Plato's distinction between the intermediate state of calm and the experience of pleasure itself.

It's quite evident that Callicles, at this point of the dialogue, supplied us with some significant remarks on the physiology of pleasure. In fact, Callicles' views are in coherence with Plato's views in the *Republic*. But Callicles aims to support hedonism which is not Plato's view. Pleasure is enough for a good life for Callicles. Not to forget the unbridled seeking of power. On the contrary, Socrates is surely critical of Calliclean Hedonism[12]. How can then Plato and Callicles' ethics differ significantly if their views are based on the same underlying model? Perhaps it is possible that Socrates does not deny but simply overlooks Callicles' view. Possibly, at this juncture of time, Plato's dialogues represented an ethical tradition and therefore, concerned itself not with the physiology of pleasure but only with the ethics of it.[13]

Gerd Van Riel further notes that Callicles' hedonism, although a hedonist replenishment, nevertheless is about replenishment which gives rise to pleasure (2000). The problem lies in believing that "constant replenishment gives rise to pleasure, which in turn guarantees the goodness of this kind of life" (Riel, 2000, p.11). Being dismissive about the differences in kinds of pleasure, Callicles ultimately lands in a superficial view of pleasure, contrary to what Plato has in mind.

Plato's Restoration model of pleasure

Since for Callicles, undifferentiated, indiscriminate, pleasure leads to happiness, Socrates bothers himself with proving the futility of *this* inference and not his conception of pleasure. Also, the background concern is to determine who is the happiest amongst the two- temperate and intemperate man. This is why, from this point onwards the dialogue takes a different route. Socrates now attempts to defy the identity between pleasure and Goodness. Through this attempt, he targets the assumption that Callicles takes for granted in his previous argument.

The argument Socrates advances against the identity of pleasure and the Good is important for two reasons. Firstly, it establishes the Platonic distinction between pleasure and the Good against Calliclean hedonism. Secondly, at this point of the dialogue, Plato's restoration model makes its debut. Let us first look at Plato's argument against the identity of pleasure and the Good.[14]

At 495a, Socrates takes Callicles's approval on the fact that good and evil cannot be present at the same time whereas, it is possible to experience pleasure and distress simultaneously. Moreover, where pleasure and pain can also cease together, it is impossible to cease from Good and Evil at the same time or so Socrates assumes. Therefore, enjoyment or pleasure is not good and distress or being in pain is not doing badly. This argument proves that the nature of pleasure is fundamentally opposed to the nature of the Good.

Riel suggests that in *Gorgias*, a clear necessity for recognizing qualitative differences in pleasure is introduced (2000). It is only after the above argument that Plato, at 499c, hints his readers about qualitative differences in pleasure. Gosling & Taylor rightly points out that "against Callicles' undiscriminating lust for pleasure, which threatens to overthrow every standard of behavior, it is clearly relevant to point out the paradoxical consequences of maintaining that every immediate pleasure is good, and the consequent necessity of criterion to distinguish between good from harmful pleasures" (Gosling & Taylor, 1982, p.76).

Surprisingly, Callicles himself seems to show an awareness of the differences in pleasures. Riel observes that after the two arguments advanced to disprove the identity of Good and pleasure, Callicles changes his position suddenly by stating "some pleasures are better than the others" (Riel, 2000, p.11). However, differences in pleasure dooms Calliclean hedonism even further. "If one pleasure is preferred to another, it is implied that this preference is guided by a criterion external to pleasure" (Riel, 2000, p.11). And since the external criterion is none but the Good, it naturally follows that pleasure and the Good can no longer be held identical.

Despite introducing qualitative differences in pleasure, Plato seems surrounded by a worry. To recognize the problem, we must look at the replenishment model that Plato introduces now, in the *Gorgias*. "A clear conception of pleasure as the fulfillment of a desire or the replenishment of

a lack" (Riel, 2000, p.10) is evident in *Gorgias*. At 496e Socrates contends that drinking amounts to "filling of a lack". From the examples provided, it seems that in *Gorgias*, Plato focuses primarily on bodily replenishments. However, this raises the question of how he acknowledges qualitative differences in pleasure. Wolfsdorf's distinction between "brute and bodily pleasures" (2012) offers valuable insight in addressing this issue. This distinction makes us mindful of the fact that within appetites concerning the body, qualitative differences persist. For instance, eating food to satisfy one's hunger is quite different from preferring a bowl of salad instead of mac and cheese when one is hungry. While the former denotes a brute pleasure, the latter reflects a more refined bodily pleasure. A bodily pleasure, unlike a brute one, involves a connection between pleasure and a form of evaluative judgment.[15] Therefore, it can be argued that qualitative differences still exist even within the realm of bodily replenishments.

In *Gorgias*, Plato appears to be more focused on exploring the relationship between Pleasure and the Good. He distinguishes between "the pursuit of the Good for the sake of pleasure" and "the pursuit of pleasure for the sake of the Good", supporting the latter while condemning the former way of life. However, despite the emphasis on the Good, pleasure is not overshadowed or sidelined in the dialogue. As Riel suggests, though pleasure is mentioned only a few times, it remains a significant theme (2000). In fact, it can be seen as a "partial answer" to the central question of the dialogue: How should one live and organize their life?

The life of a person that is spent around the pursuit of pleasure is condemned based on two factors. First, their life is like leaky jars, which never get replenished completely. It is because such life lacks "measure". Second, such life is based on false beliefs and not knowledge. Thus, it conflates the distinction between the Good and pleasure. These two ideas form the core of Plato's anti-hedonism. This idea contains the following suggestions. To lead a good life, one's pleasures must be measured and to be able to enjoy a pleasure, it must be regulated by the "knowledge of good and evil".[16]

Moving further, it is not enough to merely argue that pleasure and good are not identical. This difference must be demonstrated. And to demonstrate the difference, Socrates must explain *how* pleasures differ qualitatively. Therefore, to dismantle Calliclean hedonism completely, Plato

must throw light on the account of pleasure that he merely introduces in the *Gorgias*. This task leads Socrates to deepen his understanding of pleasure by taxonomizing pleasures in the *Republic*. *Republic* offers different ontologies of pleasures, ranging from mixed and unmixed, to intense and genuine pleasures.

II

Socrates: Do you think that someone being brought from the lower region towards the middle would suppose anything other than that he was being brought up? And standing in the middle and looking at the place from which he was brought, would he think he was anywhere other than the upper region, as he hasn't seen what is truly up? (Republic, 584d6-9)

In *Republic*, Plato introduces a distinction between "Mixed pleasures" and "Pure pleasures". Along with this, he makes his readers aware of the subtle differences lying within the experience of mixed pleasures. A mixed pleasure consists of not only pleasure and pain but also a third element which is the cessation of both pleasure and pain.

Consider a person suffering from cancer, enduring intense pain. After multiple rounds of chemotherapy, they are eventually cured. The return to health is undoubtedly a source of pleasure, as it marks cessation of the constant pain. However, the individual is aware that cancer could return, meaning the pain has only subsided temporarily. In believing they are liberated from it, they may be mistaken. Hence, the mere cessation of pain does not necessarily equate to liberation from it.

Plato clarifies this distinction through the metaphor of "up-down-middle" in the *Republic*.

"Do you think that someone being brought from the lower region towards the middle would suppose anything other than that he was being brought up? And standing in the middle and looking at the place from which he was brought, would he think he was anywhere other than the upper region, as he hasn't seen what is truly up? (584d6-9)" (Erginal, 2011, p.291).

Plato argues that "cessation of pain" and "liberation from pain" represent two distinct things.

Cessation of pain denotes the state that lies between pleasure and pain.

Hence it is a state. On the contrary, liberation from pain involves a process. It includes "the most and the greatest of the so-called pleasures that reach the soul through the body (584c4-7)" (Erginal, 2011, p.290). Plato is marking a crucial distinction between phrases that are ambiguously similar sounding. He, thus, plays the role of a semanticist, dissects the meaning and highlights the nuances of the distinction between the terms.[17]

According to Erginal, Plato, through this metaphor, draws our attention to important distinctions within the experience of pleasure. The first involves conflating pleasure or pain with the state of their cessation. The second arises from confusing pure pleasures with mixed pleasures, a mistake made when the process of "liberation from pain" is mistakenly equated with the experience of pure pleasure. I propose a third type of error: the illusion of regarding the state of calm as a pure pleasure. However, for Plato, pure pleasure is attainable only by transcending the cyclical interplay of liberation from both pleasure and pain.

Plato links these distinctions to his physiological model of pleasure, offering criteria to assess the truth or authenticity of pleasure. For Plato, a mixed pleasure is a mere shadow of pure pleasure. One might question how a pleasure can be less true or real. The truth of a pleasure is grounded in the Restoration model of pleasure. Erginal supports this, stating, "Plato makes it abundantly clear that liberation from pain, such as the pleasure of eating, qualifies as pleasure—since it is a case of 'being filled with what is appropriate to our nature' (585d11)—though it is a less true/real pleasure due to its lower degree of participation in 'being' and 'truth'" (Erginal, 2011, ft nt. 21, p.294).

The truth behind the *mixed pleasures*

One may also question whether an impure pleasure constitutes a simple or complex experience. Impure pleasure as a simple experience is a process of moving away from more pain to less pain. Here, pleasure is nothing but a decrease in pain.[18] Erginal, however, argues against this reading of impure pleasures. According to him, impure pleasures are "complex experiences" in which pleasure and pain represent separate entities. *Gorgias* provides evidence for this reading. Plato, in the *Gorgias*, arguing against the Calliclean hedonism mentions "pleasure of eating" and "pain of hunger" as two independent episodes.[19] These two even when co-exist, are nevertheless separate phenomena. Pain of hunger represents a lack and

pleasure of eating represents filling. Hence, even if impure pleasures are an inferior species of pleasures containing pain, they nevertheless contain pleasure as a distinct component. Consequently, pleasure and pain are distinct but not opposed since they can be simultaneously present. Erginal adds, "though pleasure and pain have been introduced as opposites, it is clear that the metaphor up-down-middle does not construe them as the opposite end-points on a linear scale, as one might suppose from the common examples of opposites, such as black and white (an example Plato himself uses as an analogy at 585a3-5)" (Erginal, 2011, p.300).

If pleasure and pain are present as distinct phenomena in an impure pleasure, how can we understand the relationship between them in a mixed experience ?

Let us consider the example of eating one more time. Even if I get a delicious meal when I am extremely hungry, I desire food only for the sake of filling my stomach to the extent where I stop feeling hungry anymore. We are often welcoming towards this state of fullness or satiety, in spite of the fact thatin this state the pleasurable feeling also comes to an end. It is because with the simultaneous presence of pleasure and pain, the latter always outweighs the former. The more desirable state then turns out to be the cessation of both pleasure and pain. This shows that the intensity of pain is always greater than the intensity of pleasure which is why the task of pleasure in a mixed experience is only to neutralise the pain. It appears then that in a mixed pleasure, it is the neutral state which is the actual end one strives for, unconsciously. The state of calm can then certainly be regarded as pleasurable in its own way.

Callicles in *Gorgias*, similarly, in choosing a life of constant inflow of pleasure accepts the inevitable pain attached to it. Emily Fletcher, commenting on this, notes that "Callicles does not choose a life in which pleasure outweighs pain, nor does he choose a life that contains an equal but moderate amount of each in preference to one that contains neither. Instead, he chooses a life that contains the extremes of both pleasure and pain" (Fletcher, 2008, p.20). However, drugged by the intensity of pleasures, Callicles does not realise that his experience is actually only about counterbalancing pain. Hence, no matter how intense the pleasure might feel in a mixed experience, it is only useful as long as it is able to cancel out the pain which is equally intense.

Now to be able to cancel out each other, both pleasure and pain must possess a certain quantity. This implies that Impure pleasures are quantifiable. Erginal confirms this by adding, "the pain and pleasure involved in any impure pleasure are quantifiable in the sense that each has a specific magnitude that can be weighed against each other, and the negative value of (the magnitude of) pain can be subtracted from the positive value of (the magnitude of) pleasure" (Erginal, 2011, p.302).

The shift in the lower and middle regions reflects merely an increase or decrease in the negative hedonic value. This further proves that impure pleasures are 'pain centred' where pleasure never outweighs pain. Pure pleasures then must be about outweighing pain on the hedonic scale.

Furthermore, the phrase "liberation from pain" now makes more sense since impure pleasures are more about pain than pleasure itself. They are literally about getting liberated from pain.

Moreover, these upward and downward movements represent the processes of replenishment and disintegration of the natural state. This illustrates how the restoration model is further developed with this theory in *Republic*.

Pure Pleasure: A *Genuine* Choice

As discussed earlier, in Book IX of the *Republic*, Plato argues that the just man is happier than the unjust. He offers three primary arguments to support this claim. One of these arguments asserts that the just man is happier because he experiences pleasures that are "superior", "true", or "pure". Therefore, Plato seeks to demonstrate the superiority and truth of "the upper region". However, in the *Gorgias*, Plato links the concept of "filling" with a "preceding desire", which presents a challenge to the ontology of pure pleasures. According to Plato, replenishment requires the presence of some kind of lack first. Yet, since pure pleasures are not accompanied by any pain, they do not restore a lack. This raises an issue: if pure pleasures do not involve the resolution of a lack, how can they be properly understood within the framework of the Restoration model?

Intriguingly, in the *Republic*, along with the introduction of pure pleasures, a new conception of a "painless desire" appears. Erginal mentions this conception while discussing the difference between impure and pure pleasures. He writes, "an impure pleasure is so fundamentally parasitic on

the painful condition that it tracks the removal of pain, diminishing as it diminishes, and not ever surpassing it. Pure pleasures, on the other hand, "do not come out of pains", the pleasure being the satisfaction of a painless desire, which means that the agent starts out from the neutral state and moves upwards from there" (Erginal, 2011, p.304).

But how can restoration take place without a preceding lack? It appears that the restoration model operates differently in the upper region compared to the lower and middle regions.

This can be understood with the help of an example.

In case of satisfying one's thirst, a person can drink only to the point where his body gets fully hydrated again. He knows it when he stops feeling thirsty and the simultaneous pleasure from drinking also ceases. Erginal calls this the "natural point of termination". However, there is no such limit in the case of "pleasures of learning". Reading a good book can certainly be satisfying but reading only to a particular extent as sufficient sounds absurd. In fact, the more one reads, the more they feel the need for reading. Furthermore, when I am hungry and I eat, my pleasure and distress follow a linear movement. They scale down as I proceed to eat more and more. On the contrary, while reading Tanizaki's *The Makioka Sisters*, I might experience the same joy throughout the novel or maybe less in the beginning and more as I proceed towards the end. The point is that the pleasures of learning are different from pleasures of eating and drinking in *the manner in which restoration takes place* in both. This makes us infer that restoration can still take place even if the pleasure remains constant. Moreover, in the case of pure pleasure the filling which takes place is different because it comprises the nourishing of the rational part of the soul (586 a).

It is indeed noteworthy how Plato retains his uniqueness in the manner of applying the Restoration model.

Now although impure pleasures portray an inevitable dependency on Pain, they are still appealing. This claim indeed enjoys a commonsensical appeal. When I know, I am going to a party, I want to feel hungry so that I can fully enjoy the meal later.

Erginal states an example according to which people usually prefer "the pleasure of having sex" to "the contentment of having had sex". It indicates that even if impure pleasures are just about outweighing pain, people

tend to find them preferable. This appeal of impure pleasures could be understood with the help of another metaphor that Plato advances in *Republic IX- the skiagraphia metaphor*.[20] Like the up-down-middle metaphor, "the skiagraphia metaphor" delves into another aspect of our phenomenology. According to the metaphor, when contrasting colour patches are put together, they appear more vigorous. Similarly, a pleasure feels more intense when it is juxtaposed with a painful event. Hence, impure pleasures are more intense than pure pleasures because unlike pure ones they are clubbed with painful events.

Plato does not mean that an impure pleasure only appears intense while actually it is not. He does not want to accuse us of having a false experience. Impure pleasures are intense, according to Plato. However, they are not *genuinely pleasant.* Hence, understanding Plato's rejection of impure pleasures means grasping the difference between "genuine pleasantness" and "mere intensity". The intensity of pleasure has nothing to do with how pleasant a pleasure is. Those who fail to see this, end up preferring impure pleasures over pure ones. *But who would fail to recognise this difference and why?* Perhaps those who are "inexperienced" in knowledge and virtue. Hence, it is observable how Plato's budding idea of *Gorgias* where he grounds the experience of pleasure in knowledge, takes an elaborate form in the *Republic*.

Experience (of a mixed pleasure) can either cloud our judgement or it (of a pure one) can help us form a valid judgement. Those who do not have the required experience according to the Platonic standards would not only prefer impure pleasures but would also anticipate *false pleasures.*

False Anticipatory pleasures, again, are a failure of judgement and not pleasure itself. One can continue to feel pleasure and still be wrong about it. Erginal argues that pleasures can be false at the level of belief as well as of awareness. For instance, I might anticipate a certain pleasure and not experience it when I finally come across it[21]. Here, my belief about the anticipated pleasure is incorrect. Furthermore, there can also be cases where I anticipate and even feel the pleasure when it arrives. However, even after being *aware* of the pleasure, I may still not *have* it.[22] The latter case simply means that the pleasure I experience is intense enough which is why I feel it. There is no falsity in the experience itself. The pleasure is simply not a genuine one.

Conclusion

One thing which is evident from Plato's early works on pleasure is that initially, Plato concerned himself, mostly, with the ethics of pleasure. From assessing pleasure's relationship with the Good, to holding an attitude of suspicion towards it, Plato warns us about an irrational pursuit of pleasure by showing its ethical shortcomings. In fact, he makes use of the Restoration model to further justify his ethics of pleasure. Initially he connects pleasure with the fulfillment of a deficiency. Then he modifies the filling itself according to the quality of pleasure. After this particular attempt, the restoration ceases to be a mere physiological model. The restoration itself becomes subject to different sources of beliefs and motivations. In the *Republic* he grounds his views on pleasure in his tripartite theory of soul. Pleasure is therefore significant. In the process of appraising pleasure, pleasure helps Plato build the possibility for his own metaphysics.

Callicles plays a crucial role in shaping Plato's views on pleasure in the *Gorgias* and *Republic*. His unapologetic defence of hedonism challenges Socrates to refine his arguments. This leads to a deeper exploration, on Socrates' part, of pleasure's place in a good life. Callicles' claim that good is synonymous with pleasure compels Socrates to distinguish between necessary and unnecessary pleasures. This distinction enables Plato to critique hedonism while preserving a space for legitimate pleasures that contribute to the soul's well-being.

By engaging with Callicles' provocations, Plato expands his framework of pleasure in the *Republic*. Callicles thus becomes more than an opponent; he is the catalyst through whom Plato refines and deepens his treatment of pleasure.

Notes & References

[1] The critique of rhetoric is one of the main themes of *Gorgias*. For an in-depth discussion of Plato's critique of rhetoric, see McComiskey, B. (2002). *Disassembling Plato's Critique of Rhetoric in the Gorgias (447a-466a)*. In *Gorgias and the New Sophistic Rhetoric* (pp. 31-60). Southern Illinois University Press.

Schiappa, E. (1991). *Protagoras and Logos: A Study in Greek Philosophy and Rhetoric*. University of South Carolina Press, explores the tension between philosophy and rhetoric in classical thought. Additionally, Nichols, J. H., Jr. (1998). *Plato's Gorgias*. Cornell University Press provides a close reading of

the dialogue with an emphasis on its rhetorical and philosophical arguments. Further insights can also be found in Yunis, H. (1996). *Taming Democracy: Models of Political Rhetoric in Classical Athens*. Cornell University Press, which situates the critique within the broader context of Athenian political life.

[2] To understand the nature of Plato's critique, see Miller, D. (2012). Rhetoric in the light of Plato's epistemological criticisms. *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric, 30*(2), 109–133. https://doi.org/10.1525/rh.2012.30.2.109

[3] Readers can acquaint themselves with the discussion of *technē* in Woolf, R. (2013). Why is rhetoric not a skill? *Phronesis, 58*(1), 1–26; Roochnik, D. (1990). Is rhetoric an art? *Rhetorica: A Journal of the History of Rhetoric, 8*(3), 207–224; Levy, D. (1992). *Technē* and the problem of Socratic philosophy in the *Gorgias*. *Journal of the History of Philosophy, 30*(1), 17–35; and Hall, R. W. (1976). *Technē* and morality in the *Gorgias*. *Journal of Value Inquiry, 10*(2), 113–119.

[4] See Moss, J. (2007). *The doctor and the pastry chef: Pleasure and persuasion in Plato's Gorgias*. *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy, 32*, 267–292.

[5] A lot of papers have been devoted to Callicles, showcasing the contribution his character has made to the dialogue. See, for example, Sheehan, R. J. (2001). *Who was Callicles? Exploring four relationships between rhetoric and justice in Plato's Gorgias*. *Rhetoric Society Quarterly, 31*(2), 55–73. My claim, however, is limited to describing his role in the Platonic corpus of pleasure.

[6] For a discussion on Plato's views on rhetorical form and the analogy of leaky jars in the *Gorgias*, see Irani, T. (2024). *The purpose of rhetorical form in Plato*. *PhilArchive*. Retrieved from https://philarchive.org/rec/IRATPO-3.

[7] Plato's replenishment model of pleasure suggests that pleasure is the restoration of one's natural state. For a detailed discussion on this model, see Erginel, M. M. (2019). *Plato on pleasures mixed with pains: An asymmetrical account*. *Journal of the History of Philosophy, 57*(4), 459–478.

[8] To better understand Plato's replenishment model of pleasure, consider the classic example of thirst and drink. When a person feels thirsty, their natural state is disrupted by the lack of water. The pleasure they experience from drinking arises from the restoration of balance, as the body is replenished and returned to its natural state of equilibrium.

[9] In his book *Pleasure in Ancient Greek Philosophy* (2012), David Wolfsdorf discusses the concept of pleasure as "re-filling", which goes beyond the simple act of filling. For Wolfsdorf, pleasure involves not just the replenishment of what is lacking, but also the re-establishment of something that was previously lost or depleted. This idea of re-filling adds a layer of restoration to the process of filling.

[10] For Plato, pleasure is not only the replenishment of one's natural state but also involves the perception of that restoration. This suggests that the lack and replenishment may not always be intense enough to be perceived. Plato

discusses the perception condition of pleasure in *Philebus*, particularly in 35c-36a, where Socrates examines the role of perception in the experience of pleasure and distinguishes between true and false pleasures. For further discussion on the perception condition of pleasure, see Vlastos, G. (1991). The theory of pleasure in Plato's *Gorgias*. *Phronesis, 36*(1), 22–45; Fine, K. (2000). The anatomy of pleasure: Plato's view of hedonism. *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy, 18*, 1–35; and Irwin, T. H. (1995). Plato on the pleasures of the soul. *Journal of the History of Philosophy, 33*(2), 125–145.

[11] For the background to this claim, see Plato, *Republic*, Book IX, 580d-581a.

[12] Particularly from 493b-496a, Socrates challenges Callicles' belief that the pursuit of pleasure is the highest good. Socrates argues that the life of unchecked pleasure leads to imbalance and suffering, as opposed to the life of virtue, which fosters true happiness and harmony. This critique highlights the philosophical divide between Socrates and Callicles, with Socrates rejecting hedonism in favour of a more rational approach to the good life.

[13] Vlastos (1954) argues that in the early dialogues like the *Gorgias*, Socrates uses the method of elenchus not only to challenge his interlocutors but also to narrow the scope of philosophical inquiry, focusing primarily on ethical and moral issues rather than metaphysical or epistemological ones. For a more detailed analysis, see Vlastos, G. (1954). *Socratic elenchus*. *Philosophical Review, 63*(2), 139–151.

[14] This is an ideal point to introduce the restoration model of pleasure, since Socrates rejects the notion that pleasure is equivalent to the Good, yet he also maintains that some pleasures are worthwhile and can be part of the good life. The replenishment model emphasizes the positive aspect of pleasure.

[15]For Warren (2016), this association reflects a deeper worry which evoked philosopher's interest in the simultaneous presence of our tendency to experience pleasure and pain, and our ability to think, understand, learn, remember, plan, and recall.

[16]The idea of measured pleasures evokes Plato's idea of measurement introduced in *Protagoras* (356d-357a) and connects to the notion of "limit" from *Philebus* (23c-25e). Acting as a bridge between his early and later views, *Gorgias* then offers the foundation for Plato's understanding of pleasure.

[17] There is also a concern surrounding whether mixed pleasures can be regarded as pleasures at all. Erginal (2019) strongly disagrees with Frede (1985), who argues that Plato's texts provide evidence for the view that mixed pleasures represent an "inferior kind of pleasures" and that they are "pseudo pleasures" or not pleasures at all. According to Erginal, although Plato assesses mixed pleasures (or liberation from pain) as shadows of pure pleasures, he still calls them pleasure, whereas he refrains from using the word "pleasure" for the cessation of pain (state). In fact, calling them pleasure allows Plato to foreground his "appearance-reality" distinction or "degrees of reality" theory. This distinction is evident in how Plato differentiates between the superficial

experience of pleasure and the deeper, more genuine pleasure he considers more real, highlighting varying degrees of reality in experiences and their alignment with true pleasure.

[18]This view of pleasure as a mere decrease in pain aligns with Epicurus' account of pleasure, where he identifies pleasure primarily as the non-existence of pain (ataraxia) and argues that the greatest pleasure is achieved by minimizing bodily pain and mental distress. For a detailed exploration of Epicurus' conception of pleasure, see Inwood, B. (2001). *The Epicurus Reader: Selected Writings and Testimonia*. Hackett Publishing. Inwood discusses how Epicurus understands pleasure in relation to the reduction of pain and the cultivation of tranquillity.

[19] Plato, *Gorgias*, 493a.

[20] Plato, *Republic*, 586b.

[21] For instance, I might anticipate feeling immense pleasure from securing a dream job, however, when I finally begin the role, the reality of the work may fail to match my expectations, leaving me feeling indifferent or even disappointed. This highlights how the anticipation of pleasure can differ significantly from its actual experience.

[22] I might be surrounded by the comforts of a luxurious vacation—stunning views, fine dining, and relaxation—yet feel preoccupied by personal worries or stress. This shows how pleasure can exist without being *felt*.

For further discussion, see Erginel, M. M. (2006). Plato on a mistake about pleasure. *The Southern Journal of Philosophy, 44*(3), 447–468. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.2041-6962.2006.tb00013.x

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Dreams Beyond Illusion: Some Philosophical Reflections

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Abstract

Every individual dream, often every night, yet to think carefully about what this means is to confront some of the deepest puzzles of philosophy. In this paper, I aim to highlight the importance of our dream experiences and what it means to dream. It still remains an under-researched area in the philosophy of mind. I aim to discuss varying perspectives and argue that dreaming is not a marginal curiosity but a vital form of our consciousness. I will examine the phenomenological character of dreams, showing how they involve a kind of awareness, selfhood, and occasionally meta-awareness. I briefly explore the philosophical implications of dreaming, including Descartes' skeptical argument, debates on hallucination versus imagination, and the ethical problem of agency in lucid dreams. Lastly, taking all descriptions together, I provide a brief structure of functional and evolutionary perspectives of our dreams. I conclude that dreams are not simply ephemeral illusions; they are a genuine mode of awareness that reshapes our understanding of mind, consciousness, and the self.

Keywords: *Awareness, Consciousness, Dreaming, Philosophy of Mind, Reality, Self, Skepticism.*

I. Introduction: The Question of Dreaming

When we ask ourselves what does it means to dream, we are stepping back and touching on one of the oldest and most persistent questions in philosophy. Dreaming has remained a source of inquiry, skepticism, and speculation for a very long time.[1] The issues and queries surrounding dreams are deeply personal, as we all experience them. Dreams are significant in that they raise profound questions about epistemology and the broader field of philosophy of mind. Rene Descartes' (1641/2008) dream argument and

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skepticism about the external world compel us to contemplate the nature of consciousness and reality. This argument has become a widely accepted standard in the epistemology of dreams, serving as a valid starting point for questioning the reality of our dreams. As Windt (2019) points out, "dreams pose a threat towards knowledge because it seems impossible to rule out, at any given moment, that one is now dreaming" (p. 1). The question of what it means to dream is not just a question about dreams, but it tests the limits of certainty itself.

In this paper, I discuss some of the puzzles related to dream research, starting from the epistemology to phenomenology to ethics. There are concerns regarding what kind of phenomenon our dreams are. I argue that dreams are a genuine expression of our consciousness, which is essential to understanding the philosophy of mind. Similarly, I aim to discuss how dreams are a kind of 'seeming-consciousness' that reveals their significance in explaining our consciousness, distinct from the waking state (O'Shaughnessy, 2002). If we know about these aspects of dreams, then there arises some ethical questions as well. To dream, then, is not just to experience a world but also to grapple with the question of who I am in that world and whether I can be held accountable for what I do there.

Dreaming is a diverse phenomenon, so its meaning cannot be captured from a single perspective (Windt, 2015). At once, it represents a kind of epistemological threat, a kind of phenomenological transformation, and at the same time an ethical challenge. To discuss some of the questions, this paper is divided into three sections. First, I will examine the debates and the relationship between dreaming and our consciousness, discussing how dreams illuminate what it means to be aware. Second, I will briefly delve into the philosophical significance of our dreams, specifically regarding epistemology and ethical questions. Lastly, I will discuss the functions and meaning of our dreams, both in terms of evolutionary accounts and in terms of the role they play in shaping the self.

II. Dreaming and Consciousness

To understand what it means to dream, I must begin by focusing on the question of consciousness. Dreaming is not something abstract which can be solved in isolation from our lived experience; it is itself a genuine mode of our consciousness. However, what kind of consciousness is it?

Here, I delve into the debates which emphasizes the similarities between dreaming and waking awareness. Also, it is important to note the descriptions of those who lay the stress in the ways in which dreaming represents a kind of diminished, distorted, or altered mode of consciousness.

Cicogna and Bosinelli (2001), in their article "Consciousness during dreams," provide us with a starting point by distinguishing between the three levels of awareness present during our dream state. They are, namely, phenomenal awareness, self-awareness, and meta-awareness (pp. 27-28). The first type of awareness refers to the experience of objects and events around us, such as seeing a bird in a tree or watching a movie. Self-awareness refers to a state where there is a recognition of oneself as a participant in the dream world. Meta-awareness is the awareness of the primary experience itself. It is usually absent; most of the time, we do not realize that we are dreaming, unless we experience the rare phenomenon of lucid dreaming. These levels of awareness provide a comprehensive understanding of the complexity of our consciousness during dreams.[2] This tripartite framework implies that our dreams are not a complete withdrawal of consciousness but instead add a reconfiguration of its layers. We may be able to retain a sense of being 'me' within a dream, and we certainly can experience a world of objects and events, but we usually lack the reflective stance that would allow us to question the reality of what is happening. This lack of reflective stance in dreams raises interesting questions about the nature of consciousness and self-awareness, suggesting that these aspects of our mental life are not as straightforward as they may seem.

However, I find O'Shaughnessy's account particularly illuminating in this context. He describes dream state as "a seeming consciousness" (2002, p. 399). In this background, our dream world mirrors waking life by providing a domain in which we can perceive, feel, and think, but it lacks the grounding in reality that our waking consciousness provides. Dreaming generates "an unreal replica of waking consciousness" (O'Shaughnessy, 2002, p. 399). In other words, dreams replicate and mimic the structure of our consciousness without fully achieving it. As I can infer, I am struck by the uncertainty of this particular position. Dreams seem to be close enough to waking life to confuse us, but they also differ from waking consciousness in fundamental ways. They are 'seeming-consciousness' but not actual consciousness.

Scientific accounts of dreaming extend this analysis. Foulkes (1999) provides a relatively simple definition of dreaming as "the awareness of being in an imagined world in which things happen" (p. 9). In contrast, Allan Hobson and his colleagues defined dreams as:

> [m]ental activity occurring in sleep characterized by vivid sensorimotor imagery that is experienced as waking reality despite such distinctive cognitive features as impossibility or improbability of time, place, person and actions; emotions, especially fear, elation, and anger predominate over sadness, shame and guilt and sometimes reach sufficient strength to cause awakening; memory for even very vivid dreams is evanescent and tends to fade quickly upon awakening unless special steps are taken to retain it(Hobson et al., 2000,p. 795; Sutton, 2009, pp. 526-527).

These diverse definitions reflect different dimensions. Foulkes highlights the imaginative aspect; on the other hand, Hobson et al. stress the hallucinatory character and breakdown of its coherence. When we look into these diverse perspectives, we can notice that they agree on the notion that dreaming involves consciousness, but they diverge in its character. The question arises: Is dreaming best understood as a form of imagination or as a form of hallucination? The former emphasizes the creative freedom of dreams, while the latter elucidates their involuntary and deceptive nature (Windt, 2015; Thompson, 2015). Rosen (2024) suggests that both can be present while we dream. Dreams can be sometimes vividly imaginative, undisturbed by the logic of waking life. However, they can also feel hallucinatory in nature, producing some moments of joy or terror so strong that they get carried into our waking lives.

There are varying perspectives regarding the conscious nature of our dreams. There is no agreement regarding this among the philosophical community so far. Norman Malcolm (1959), for example, has argued against the idea that dreams count as conscious experiences. He is of the opinion that the concept of dreaming is incoherent, since dream reports are unverifiable when it is happening. In this sense, as Malcolm puts it, "if a man had certain thoughts and feelings in a dream, itno more follows that he had

those thoughts and feelings while asleep, than it followsfrom his having climbed a mountain in a dream that he climbed a mountain whileasleep" (Malcolm, 1959, pp. 51-52; Sutton, 2009, p. 525). Daniel Dennett (1976) likewise proposed the 'cassette theory,' where consciousness is not attributed to the dream state, and it is only constructed retrospectively upon waking up. These skeptical accounts regarding the conscious nature of dreams challenge what Sutton calls the 'received view' of dreams, which suggests dreams are conscious experiences during sleep (Sutton, 2009, p. 525)[3].

However, the positions of Malcolm and Dennett seem to me to be dismissive of the lived reality of dreaming. The coherence and intensity of dreams, their emotional force, and the phenomenological continuity they maintain with waking life suggest and point to them as being genuine experiences.

> A narrative of dream experience which takes the form of a continuity must have as its object an experiential continuity across time, involving persisting items which reappear at intervals, and must assume therefore the existence of a continuous temporally extensive framework in which the various dream elements are positioned. While a dream might survive the existence of a temporal gap- a sort of temporal blind-spot which is not experienced- somewhat as a film survives an 'interval'- narratability of the kind which characterizes dreams is inconsistent with a break-up into temporal instants. It necessitates experiential continuity and the persistence of elements (O'Shaughnessy, 2002, p. 401).

O'Shaughnessy stresses that dreams possess a kind of unity and narratability: they are not mere fragments but structured episodes that can be recounted as stories (2002, pp. 400-401). This narrative dimension reinforces the idea that dreams have experiential integrity. At the same time, I must recognize the value of Dennett's challenge. It compels us to confront the methodological problem of studying consciousness in dreams, where self-reporting is the primary evidence. Unlike waking consciousness, dreams are private and are not directly accessible to others. This epistemic

gap perhaps explains why dreaming has remained, as Sutton observes, "a fascinating, diverse, and severely underdeveloped area of study" (2009, p. 524). In my view, dreaming represents a unique balance between continuity and discontinuity with waking life. It is a kind of consciousness unencumbered of some of its usual anchors: sensory input, reflective self-awareness, and bodily action. What remains is a realm of the mind in which experiences unfold with the immediacy of perception but the freedom of imagination. To dream, as I think, is to experience consciousness in purified, altered form, an understanding that makes dreams invaluable for the philosophy of mind.

III. The Philosophical Significance of Dreaming

Suppose we know that dreaming is indeed a genuine mode of our consciousness. In that case, its philosophical significance often lies in how it challenges some of our basic assumptions about knowledge, reality, and morality. Dreams are not only curious by-products of our sleep, they delve into the very foundations of epistemology and ethics. We have often thought and found that reflecting on dreams forces us to ask questions that otherwise remain hidden in the narrative of our waking life. Descartes' skeptical argument in hisMeditations (1641/2008) is the most famous philosophical use of dreams. He realizes that he is often deceived by dreams into thinking he is awake when sitting by the fire. He cannot be very certain that he is not dreaming at that very moment (Descartes, 1641/2008). This 'now dreaming doubt' suggests that for any sensory experience, however vivid it is, we can never be sure that it corresponds to reality. As Windt (2019) notes, doubt undermines sensory-based knowledge :

> …even though some of his sensory-based beliefs might be true, the possibility that he might now be dreaming renders him unable to distinguish his true beliefs from those that are false. His doubt prevents him from possessing sensory-based knowledge about the world (Windt, 2019, p. 2).

Several philosophers have tried to reflect and respond to Descartes. Hobbes contends that dreams are often marked by incoherence and absurdity, whereas our waking life has a more consistent logic (Hobbes, 1651/1996). Locke suggested and pointed towards pain as the distinguishing mark: we can dream of being in a fire, but we cannot actually feel the burning pain in

a dream as one does when awake (Locke, 1690/1975). However, recent research in dreaming and some empirical studies (especially in the case of lucid dreamers) show that pain, though rare, can in fact occur in dreams (LaBerge, 2009). These empirical studies undermine Locke's reply and restore the claim of Descartes' skepticism.

In contemporary philosophical discourse, philosophers have adopted different strategies. Ernest Sosa (2007, chapter 1) argues that in dreams, "we do not genuinely believe, we only make believe" (as cited in Springett, n.d., p. 5). If this claim is correct, then our dreams do not undermine waking knowledge, because they never seem to involve any actual belief in the first place. Jonathan Ichikawa (2008) tends to resist this classification and description. Even if we know that dream states involve a kind of imagination rather than belief, they can still generate experiences phenomenally indistinguishable from waking ones. Thus, Ichikawa concludes that skepticism remains "epistemically irresponsible" to dismiss the very possibility that what we take as waking belief is not itself a dream imagining (Springett, n.d., p. 5). Here, I find Ichikawa's argument convincing, since the power of dreams lies precisely in how real they feel, regardless of their metaphysical status.

Beyond skepticism, dreams also raise some of the important questions regarding ethics and moral responsibility. In Confessions Book X (Chapter 30), Augustine grappled with his sexual dreams, wondering how, despite his commitment to chastity, he could have such dreams. His argument goes to distinguishing between dreams as 'happenings' rather than 'actions.' According to him, since a dreamer has no agency, no dream actions can be considered as sin (Flanagan, 2000, pp. 179-183). This reasoning is particularly compelling, yet it depends on the fact that our dreams lack genuine agency. With the recognition of the phenomenon of lucid dreams, this reasoning and assumption can be challenged. In a lucid dream, when we realize that we are dreaming and choose to act, whether to fly, to confront a fear, or to harm a dream character, it seems that we are exercising our agency during dreams. Whether such dreams can carry any moral accountability remains a matter of debate, but they tend to complicate Augustine's distinction.

Thus, the philosophical significance of dreaming is threefold. Here, in this paper, I have discussed only the knowledge and morality. The third is about the reality, whether dreams are more inclined towards imagination or

hallucination (for recent discussions, see Rosen, 2024). I have briefly discussed this in the previous section. First, dreams tend to depict skepticism by disrupting the line between appearance and reality. Secondly, they challenge our moral accountability by raising important questions of responsibility in states where agency is uncertain. All these debates together show that dreaming deserves serious attention as a central problem in philosophical discourse.

IV. Functions, Self, and Meaning

Now that we know dreams carry some epistemological and ethical importance, the next question that comes to our mind is: What functions do they serve, and what meaning do they hold in our lives? The important question is: do dreams exist for a purpose, or are they merely unintentional by-products of sleep? There have been various debates among philosophers and psychologists regarding this for a very long time. The answers to this vary from psychoanalytic theories of hidden meaning to evolutionary accounts that highlight survival theories. I believe that reflecting on such theories provides us with an account of why we dream and also insights into what it means to dream.

Sigmund Freud, who is the pioneer of psychoanalytic tradition, famously contends that dreams as the 'royal road to the unconscious.' In his work The Interpretation of Dreams (1900/1950), he argued that dreams conceal forbidden wishes, allowing our repressed desires to be expressed symbolically. Carl Jung (1972) later reformulated this viewpoint, treating dreams as expressions of archetypes and collective symbols rather than simply wish-fulfillment. Although much of the psychoanalysis has now fallen out of favor in scientific circles, I still think it is important to acknowledge how Freud and Jung placed meaning at the heart of dreaming. According to their interpretations, dreams were not meaningless noise but important communications from the depths of the psyche (also see Flanagan, 2000).

In contrast, modern neuroscienceresearch often explains and decodes dreams in functional or evolutionary terms (Flanagan, 2000; Domhoff, 2022). Revonsuo, in his 'threat simulation theory,' notes that dreaming evolved as a biological defense mechanism. It allows us to rehearse the threatening situations in a safe environment, often enhancing our survival skills (Revonsuo, 2000, p. 878). In line with this theory, the vividness and

emotional intensity of dreams are not random noise but adaptive, preparing us to respond to threats and dangers. On the other hand, Flanagan (2000) argues and suggests that dreaming may help us to regulate emotions, consolidate memory, or integrate experiences into a narrative self (Flanagan, 2000, pp. 180-182). I think and find these theories of dreaming convincing because they place dreams within the broader story of our lives and adaptation. At the same time, neuroscientists like Domhoff (2022) suggest that dreams may not have a specific function at all. According to him, dreams are natural products of brain processes during sleep rather than purposeful tools. Even in his framework, dreams reflect a kind of our waking concern and self-conception. So, in this sense, even if dreams are not adaptive in an evolutionary sense, they still reveal the structure of the self.

The next point, which is the most striking aspect of dreaming, is the relationship between dreams and the self. Cicogna and Bosinelli (2001) emphasize that our dreams usually include a sense of personal identity: a dreamer recognizes themselves as 'I,' even in the bizarre circumstances (pp. 29-30). In this context, dreams reassert our continuity of the selfhood even during the altered states of consciousness. Simultaneously, our dreams do destabilize the self, introducing certain scenarios in which we might become someone else or lose our sense of identity altogether. This tension between the disruption and continuity in dreams makes it a compelling lens to understand what it means to dream. Dreams often carry symbolic meaning, whether we accept or reject Freud's theory of wish-fulfillment. Dreams are structured in such a way that they resemble stories, often reflecting our deepest aspirations or concerns. When we dream, we do not simply process any random brain activity; instead, we live through narratives that feel personal and significant, even if they are strange. This unity and narrative descriptions of our dreams suggest that they are not meaningless noise but genuine expressions of our mind's effort to organize experience (O'Shaughnessy, 2002, pp. 400-401).

So, in this sense, dreams matter in our lives because they provide a model of consciousness itself. They demonstrate that our mind can generate a world of experience in the absence of external stimuli. This description is crucial in understanding dreams as they reveal that our consciousness is not merely a passive mirror of reality but an active creator of imaginative worlds.

To dream means to participate in a kind of generative power of the mind. I would say that dreams are functional in some respects, but they are also meaningful beyond their functions. In my view, what it means to dream is to encounter our consciousness in its most creative and revealing form, a kind of consciousness that forms and is formed by the self.

V. Conclusion

In this paper, while tracing the question of what it means to dream and its significance, I have discussed some of the important questions. Dreams, as I have argued, are not mere curiosities of sleep but are the vital expressions of our consciousness. To dream is not only to simulate a kind of reality, but also to expose the structures of our mind that make reality intelligible. It means to discover the self in flux, to face skepticism about reality, to test the boundaries of agency, and to participate in the mind's power to generate meaning. In dreams, we tend to imagine a world that is both real and unreal and, at the same time, threatening and liberating. It means to encounter the creativity and fragility of consciousness. Dreams are not mere illusions in the sense of being nothing, but they are the genuine experiences that reveal how our mind builds an imaginative world. I believe that the deepest meaning of dreaming is that it reminds us that our world, whether during sleep or awake state, is always in some sense, a beautiful creation of our consciousness.

Notes & References

[1]For a general overview of how problems surrounding dreams have been analyzed historically, see Flanagan (2000), Hobson (2002), Windt (2015), Thompson (2015) and Rosen (2024).

[2]Lucid dreaming is a state in which we are aware that we are dreaming. In this phenomenon, we can sometimes have volitional control, rationality, and intentionality. This unique state of consciousness challenges the traditional understanding of dreaming as a passive experience, suggesting that our consciousness during dreams can be as active and intentional as in waking life. For a complete review of lucid dreams and problems surrounding this phenomenon, see LaBerge & Rheingold (1991) and LaBerge (2009).

[3]The received view of dreaming is that when we experience dreams in real-time, it is conscious and subjective experiences. Most philosophers and psychologists, including Aristotle, Descartes, Flanagan, Windt, and others, subscribe to this view (see Springett, n.d.).

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Be Your Own Light : Buddha and Krishnamurti

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Abstract

In the history of Philosophy,Buddha and Jiddu Krishnamurti stand in holding their hands while approaching the problem of human suffering. Buddha is well-known for his significant renunciation for the cause of human suffering. Although he was a prince by birth, he renounced his royal life with all the luxuries and went to forest and lived the life of a hermit doing meditation and the like in order to find out how human suffering, misery and pain could be terminated. As far as Krishnamurti is concerned, he too, like Buddha, went for renouncing his designation as world-teacher to find out how human suffering can be put to an end. And astonishingly, both of them made the way of freedom from suffering entirely a matter of personal endeavour. As per both of them, freedom from suffering is possible only when every individual works on his own for the same without expecting any assistance from others. Their exhortation to everybody is "Be your own light". The present paper is primarily an exposition made to gather Buddha and Krishnamurti's perspective on suffering in one place. It also ventures into the mechanism that they have prescribed as a way out of suffering. With this end in view, the paper is divided into four sections—first section is introduction; second section includes Buddha's approach to suffering while the third section deals with Krishnamurti's perspective on the same; and the last section is conclusion where I put my observation by weighing up their respective approaches.

Keywords: *Buddha, Krishnamurti, salvation, authority, freedom, suffering, light.*

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Introduction

In the history of philosophy, two personalities stand astonishingly close to each other. They are—Jiddu Krishnamurti and Buddha. In spite of belonging to two different eras, both of them influenced the entire mankind by their unique approach to human problem of suffering and pain and its solution. Buddha is well-known for his significant renunciation for the cause of human suffering. Although he was a prince by birth, he renounced his royal life with all the luxuries and went to forest and lived the life of a hermit doing meditation and the like in order to find out how human suffering, misery and pain could be put to an end. After six years of his spiritual journey, Buddha attained enlightenment and consequently able to understand the whole course of human life; he came to know why human life arises, why it suffers and how this suffering comes to an end. Buddha did not sit idle after his enlightenment; he moved from place to place to propagate his teachings among people. Accordingly, he formed an order of sixty one monks and sent them worldwide to spread his teachings with the view to make man free from suffering and pain and consequently to get enlightenment,

"Go ye now, O Bhikkhus, and wander, for the gain of the many, out of compassion for the world, for the good, for the gain, and for the welfare of gods and men. Let not two of you go the same way, preach, O Bhikkus, the doctrine which is glorious in the beginning, glorious in the middle, glorious at the end, in the spirit and in the letter, proclaim a consummate, perfect and pure life of holiness. There are beings whose mental eyes are covered by scarcely any dust, but if the doctrine is not preached to them, they cannot attain salvation. They will understand the doctrine." (Valea, 2008, p.57)

As far as Krishnamurti is concerned, he too, like Buddha, went for renouncing his designation as world-teacher which was entrusted upon him by the Theosophical Society. He was primarily concerned with bringing about a radical change in the world which, according to him, can be made possible through a revolutionary change on the individual level. And this individual transformation does not require the help and guidance of any teacher, any guru, political or religious. In fact, in his view, resorting to any kind of help actually prevents revolutionary individual transformation to happen. That is why, Krishnamurti refused to hold the position of world teacherand accordingly dissolved the already existing order with the declaration,

"I maintain that truth is a pathless land, and you cannot approach it by any path whatsoever, by any religion, by any sect. That is my point of view, and I adhere to that absolutely and unconditionally. Truth, being limitless, unconditioned, unapproachable by any path whatsoever, cannot be organized; nor should any organization be formed to lead or coerce people along any particular path……..you will probably form other Orders, you will continue to belong to other organizations searching for truth……If an organization be created for this purpose, it becomes a crutch, a weakness, a bondage, and must cripple the individual, and prevent him from growing, from establishing his uniqueness, which lies in the discovery for himself of that absolute, unconditioned truth……Because I am free, unconditioned, whole, not the part, not the relative, but the whole truth that is eternal. I desire those, who seek to understand me, to be free, not to follow me, not to make out of me a cage which will become a religion, a sect……I have now decided to disband the Order, as I happen to be its Head. You can form other organizations and expect someone else. With that I am not concerned, nor with creating new cages, new decorations for those cages. My only concern is to set men free absolutely, unconditionally free."(Krishnamurti, 2014, p.ix)

Instead of being a teacher, Krishnamurti travelled worldwide and engaged in various public talks to make people aware of the necessity of the radical change in them.

Buddha's approach to suffering

To begin with**,** Buddha taught that attaining salvation is always based on one's personal effort as he believed that no one other than the individual himself can free him from suffering and make him enlightened. According to Buddha, suffering is the unavoidable aspect of human life. And this belief of Buddha is rooted in his belief in universal impermanence of everything. In Buddha's view, nothing is permanent in the world; everything changes from moment to moment. Change is the very law of the world. Everything which has origin has its destruction also. For instance with birth, there is death; with arising, there is passing; with coming together, there is separation. Any exception to this is an impossibility according to Buddha. As everything in the world is impermanent, transitory, so there cannot be anything substantial; all phenomena, whether mental or physical, is transient. And it is only when we take the impermanent as permanent, we begin to suffer. We always want to have happiness and pleasure and avoid pain being ignorant of the

fact that happiness does not last long; it is impermanent and its passing brings suffering to us. In Buddha's view, salvation or enlightenment consists in the termination of this all-pervading suffering and thereby in the attainment of a suffering free state. And suffering can be terminated if we embrace it according to him. Interpreting this attitude of Buddha towards suffering, Thich Nhat Hanh writes,

"Without suffering, you cannot grow. Without suffering, you cannot get the peace and joy you deserve. Please do not run away from your suffering. Embrace it and cherish it. Go to the Buddha, sit with him and show him your pain. He will look at you with loving kindness, compassion and mindfulness, and show your ways to embrace your suffering and look deeply into it. With understanding and compassion, you will be able to heal the wounds in your heart and the wounds in the world. The Buddha called suffering a Holy Truth, because our suffering has the capacity of showing us the path to liberation. Embrace your suffering and let it reveal to you the way to peace." (Hanh, 1999, p.5)

As it is already mentioned, salvation in Buddha's view is the result of one's own effort and intelligence; every individual has to thrive for his emancipation through his own diligent effort without resorting to any external help, human or divine. We find Buddha saying, "Now monks, I exhort you: the components of the personality (samkhara) are subject to decay; exert yourself with diligence." (Scumann, 1974, p.32).That is why, he denied the efficacy of prayer, worship and the like. He considered petitionary prayer as an illusion. His argument was that just as to cross a river, one need to put some effort such as making a boat or swimming so that he could cross over to the other shore instead of sitting down and praying intensely with the hope that the far bank of the river will come to him and carry him across, likewise to overcome suffering and get the spiritual height of enlightenment, one need to work hard on his own by leading a moral life, by controlling his passions, calming his mind and by freeing himself from all kinds of mental defilements instead of relying upon prayer. Buddha's point is that every individual is efficient enough to make his emancipation possible; no one other than himself can do anything in this regard. In Buddhism, the law of karma took the place. According to Buddha, law of karma is an impersonal natural law operating strictly in accordance with our actions. Each of our action has its results and therefore, anything happens to us, whether good or bad, is the result of what we have done. Therefore, Buddha declared that

man is the architect of his own destiny; it is entirely within his capacity to change his condition. In this way, law of karma in Buddhism has become the law of personal responsibility, that is, every individual has to take the responsibility of whatever he has done. In other words, he has to bear the consequences of his own actions; others cannot bear the results on his behalf. While talking about the intensity of the law of karma, Buddha said that the results of one's own action associate with him like a shadow. A man cannot take with him his worldly possessions such as his property, his servants and the like but the results of his own actions. So no one can escape himself from the responsibility of whatever he has done, good or bad. In fact, in Buddha's view, man is the heir of his own actions as he said, "By oneself, indeed, is evil done; by oneself is one injured. By oneself is evil left undone; by oneself is one purified. Purity and impurity belong to oneself. No one purifies another."(Dhammapada, V-165) That is why, Buddha vested the entire responsibility of attaining enlightenment solely on the individual himself. He even taught not to follow his teachings without exercising one's wisdom and intelligence. He put importance on verifying whatever he has said in the light of one's own reason. His recommendation was that at the very outset, the disciples should carefully assess and reason out their master's teachings before going to accept them.Thus, Buddha always emphasized wisdom and introspection instead of blind faith. His way is a way to enlightenment through one's own free thinking. This makes the importance of faith in Buddha secondary only. As the Buddhist scholar Walpola Rahula rightly says, "Almost all religions are built on faith—rather 'blind' faith it would seem. But in Buddhism, emphasis is laid on 'seeing', knowing and understanding and not on faith or belief."(Rahula,1959, p8)Throughout his life, Buddha was an uncompromising empiricist who put emphasis on verifying things through one's own experience; faith or belief did not have any place in his self-help scheme of salvation. In his own words,

"My teaching is not a philosophy. It is the result of direct experience. The things I say come from my own experience. You can confirm them all by your own experience. I teach that all things are impermanent and without a separate self. This I have learned from my own direct experience. You can too. I teach that all things depend on all other things to arise, develop and pass away. Nothing is created from a single, original source. I have directly experienced this truth and you can also. My goal is not to explain theuniverse, but to help guide others to have a direct experience f reality.

Only direct experience enables us to see the true face of reality." (majjhimanikaya, 2004)

While working on his own emancipation through his own individual effort, a man has to follow the eight-fold path prescribed by Buddha. We find him saying, "Going on this path, you will end your suffering. This path was preached by me when I became aware of the removal of the thrones (in the flesh)." (Dhammapada, Verse 275).This noble path consists of eight steps—right view, right thought, right speech, right livelihood, right action, right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration. This eight steps comprising Buddha's noble path are not that they are to be practiced one after another in the order stated above; rather they are to be developed more or less simultaneously as per the capacity of the individual. In fact, they are interlinked with each other and as such the development of the one requires the help of the other. These eight together aims at accomplishing the Buddhist ideals of ethical conduct (*sīla*), mental discipline (*sama±hi*) and wisdom (*prajñ±*) which consequently lead an individual to enlightenment. Among the eight stages, right view and right thought constitute wisdom in Buddhism. Right view stands for the understanding of the four noble truths of Buddha. It is the understanding of impermanent nature of things, that is, understanding things as they really are. Right thought stands for thought of selfless renunciation, of non-violence and of love and compassion extending towards all beings.Right speech, right action and right livelihood constitute ethical conduct which forms integral part in Buddha's self-help scheme of attaining the spiritual height. No spiritual development is possible without the moral conduct of the individual. So it is required that an individual should deliver right speech, perform right action and earn right livelihood. Right speech stands for abstinence from all sorts of wrong and harmful speech such as telling lies; backbiting; slander talk; from using harsh, rude, impolite and abusive language; and from idle gossip. Such an abstention from wrong and Harmful speech naturally makes an individual to speak in a friendly, benevolent, pleasant, gentle, meaningful and useful way. Right action requires abstinence from destroying life, from stealing, from dishonest dealings and from illegal sexual relationship. It also requires that an individual should help others in leading a peaceful life in the right way. Right livelihood means earning one's livelihood through the profession that harms others such as trading in arms and deadly weapons, intoxicating drinks, poisons, killing animals and the like. It equally requires that an individual should earn his

livelihood through just and honest means.Right effort, right mindfulness and right concentration constitute mental discipline. They aim at training and disciplining the mind. Right effort has two aspects—one is positive and the other is negative.In its negative aspect, right effort requires that an individual has to prevent the arising of evil and unwholesome states of mind and accordingly to get rid of such evil and unwholesome states that have already arisen within the mind. Positively, an individual has to cause to arise good and wholesome states of mind not yet arisen and also develop as well as to make perfect the good and wholesome states of mind already present in him. Right mindfulness stands for the diligent awareness that an individual is required to have with regard to bodily activities, sensation or feelings, the activities of the mind and ideas, thoughts, conceptions and things. Right concentration stands for four stages of *Dhy±na* generally known as trance or recueillement. In the first stage, passionate desires, along with some unwholesome thoughts such as lust, ill-will, worry, restlessness and skeptical doubt are discarded on the one hand and feelings of joy and happiness are maintained along with some mental activities on the other. In the second stage, there is the suppression of all intellectual activities and development of tranquility of the mind, along with the retention of joy and happiness. In the third stage, joy is completely disappeared while the disposition of happiness remains with the addition of mindful equanimity. In the fourth stage, only pure equanimity and awareness remains. In this way, by developing wisdom, performing ethical conduct and training as well as disciplining the mind through the eight steps consisting of the noble path, an individual can attain liberation. This is entirely a matter of personal effort and understanding; the individual needs not resort to anybody external to him. This is how in Buddha's view, one can be one's own light.

Krishnamurti's approach to suffering

As it is mentioned earlier, Krishnamurti talked about revolutionary change in men. In his view, without such a change, man cannot hope for putting an end to his suffering and consequently, unable to establish peace and order in the world outside. He declared that men have been working hard to bring about the same in the world for years. But the problem remains the same; men are still in the midst of enormous suffering and pain. The world is still lacking peace and order. And the reason behind this predicament is that we never try to bring about transformation in ourselves; without any transformation within ourselves, we have been trying to change the world

which ends up in nothing but failure. So Krishnmurti was always in favour of bringing about a fundamental change in men. He said,

"Surely, to bring about a radical change in the world, we need a tremendous revolution—not a communist revolution, which is no revolution at all, nor any revolution of a merely social nature but a fundamental transformation in ourselves." (Krishnamurti, 2012, p.44)

This revolutionary change that Krishnamurti talked about is a change from within; it is not the result of any pressure or compulsion from outside. In fact, any change happened due to any compulsion is not a real change according to him as he said, "A change brought about through compulsion, through influence, through sociological pressure, through various forms of legislation, is not a real change, but merely a modified continuity of what has been." (Krishnamurti, 2012, p.231-232) He further said that we change superficially if the same happens due to any compulsion or any influence or the hope of attaining something. In his own words,

"We do change superficially through various forms of compulsion, through reward and punishment, through external pressure, through being influenced by the books we read and so on; but it seems to me that such change takes place only on the surface, which is no real change at all." (Krishnamurti, 2012, p.232)

Krishnamurti pointed out the fact that most of us change under pressure or compulsion; I try to change because my society demands it or my family wants it or my religion asks me to do so or my guru expects me to behave in a transforming way. As a result, a superficial transformation takes place although inwardly I remain the same. So Krishnamurti considered this not as a real change but as an adjustment or conformity to my family or my society or my religion; they influence me to behave in a certain way whereas in reality, I do not want to behave in that particular way. For instance, I am compelled to be non-violent, non-envious, loving whereas inwardly, I am violent, envious and cruel.We confine to the outward demands as we fear to lose security and comfort in our lives. In short, his conviction is that when our action born out of fear, compulsion, influences and the like, then outwardly it may appear to be a change, but actually it is not a real change. If we deeply enquire into ourselves, then we can find that we want something to do while we are told by authority to do something else and in that way a gap is created between 'what we are' and 'what we should be'. In other words,

under the dictate of authority, we suppress our desires, our likings, our inclinations; we are compelled to do what we actually do not want to do and as a result, there arises conflict which consequently trap us in the midst of misery and pain. So Krishnamurti maintained that holding an idea such as "Generosity is virtue" or "Non-violence is good" is of no vale until and unless we make an enquiry into ourselves whether we are generous or non-generous, whether we are violent or non-violent. Thus, authority prevents us to see the fact or the truth about ourselves. So if we have to bring about actual transformation in ourselves, that is , transformation from within, we need to decline authority. Krishnamurti pointed out that we always look for readymade solution in others. But without bringing about actual transformation in ourselves, we cannot hope for attaining liberation from suffering; our predicament would continue forever. So we ourselves have to work on our own so that we can become our own light as he says, "You do not rely on anybody; then you are a guide to yourself, a light in the midst of darkness." (Krishnamurti, 2012 p.206) And in Krishnamurti's view, authority creates hindrance in the path of one who tries to be his own light. So he denies authority as it is only in a free mind that revolutionary transformation takes place,

"….there must be a complete inward revolution, a total transformation in your thought in your whole being; and that is not possible as long as you rely on authority, whether it be the authority of the Buddha, or of one of the Indian teachers, including myself. To rely on authority at any time destroys the capacity to find out what is true. Freedom from authority is the beginning of the fundamental revolution, of this individual transformation which is essential to the discovery of what is truth, what is God, and it is only this discovery on the part of each one of us that can bring about a different world." (Krishnamurti, 2012, p.205-206)

Krishnamurti considered suffering as a fact. In his view, suffering is our constant companion; it ever-increasing without an end. But we try to run away from suffering; we try to escape from it through various means which only escalate it. In other words,whenever we become aware of our suffering, instead of facing it, we resort to a guru or a belief or an idea as a way of escaping from our suffering. In the words of Krishnamurti, "When he becomes conscious of his strife and pain, the inevitable response is to escape from them through beliefs, through social activities, through amusements, or through identifying himself with political action either of the

right or of the left. But the confusion and the sorrow are not solved through escapes which only intensify strife and pain." (Krishnamurti, 2013, p.151) This means thatrunning way from suffering is not a way to get rid of it; for the same to happen, we have to embrace suffering. As he said,

"You can be aware of suffering and in this awareness, the cause of it is known. Since you run away from sorrow, through many forms of escapes, be aware of these escapes and come directly, actually face to face with suffering. Only then can sorrow come to an end." (Krishnamurti, 2013, p.210-211)

So, according to Krishnamurti, in order to solve our problem, we need not require any authority; on the contrary, we need a mind which is free, unconditioned, independent and uninfluenced. What is essential is to see the fact, to discover what is true for ourselves to end our predicament and only a free, unconditioned mind is able to do it. Therefore, Krishnamurti rejected the efficacy of any system, any method as in his view, in order to get rid of suffering, there must be a revolutionary change in ourselves and we cannot bring it out until and unless we develop a mind which is self-critical, that looks at things without any pre-conception, without any judgment, without any influence. And the development of such a mind is not possible when we follow a system or a method because when we do the same, we have to act accordingly the method or the system and thus, it prevents us to act on our own. In other words, the very following of a method conditions our mind and freedom from all sorts of conditioning is the primary requirement in Krishnamurti's scheme of salvation

According to Krishnamurti, instead of looking for a path or following a method, we should look at ourselves or we should make an enquiry into ourselves freely, directly without any interference; we have to know ourselves, to understand ourselves. We find Krishnamurti saying,

"Man himself, you yourself, have to face this confusion by putting aside all systems and all beliefs and trying to understand what is actually taking place within yourself. For, what you are the world is; and the world cannot be regenerated without first transforming yourself. So, the emphasis must be laid not on the mere transformation of the world, but on the individual himself, on you; for you are the world and the world is not, without you. For this transformation, the leader—spiritual or secular—becomes a hindrance, a degenerating factor in civilization. This regeneration can take place only when—setting aside all the impediments such as nationalism, organized

religions, organized beliefs, and those barriers that set man against man, like caste, race, systems, and so on—you understand yourself by being aware of your daily thoughts, feelings and actions." (Krishnamurti, 2013, p.151)

Thus, Self-knowledge does not require any help. It is seeing, perceiving or looking at ourselves from moment to moment; it is experiencing us as how we behave or act or respond in our everyday life. In short, self-knowledge is looking at the self as it mirrors in relationship,

"Because if I look to another for help, I become dependent, which means that the other becomes my authority; when I only know myself through the authority of another, I do not know myself at all. And merely reading psychological books is of very little importance because I can only know myself as I am observing myself from day to day, watching myself in the mirror of my relationship with another. To watch myself in that mirror is not to be merely introspective or objective, but to be constantly alert, watchful of what is taking place in the mind, in myself." (Krishnamurti, 2012, p.71)

Thus, in Krishnamurti's opinion, self-knowledge requires a special kind of alertness or awareness of the mind which is devoid of any choice or judgment or evaluation. To have self-knowledge is to become aware of whatever is going on right now within ourselves; it is the discovery or revelation of truth about ourselves and for this, we have to aware without any choice or selection. This is called *choiceless awareness* by Krishnamurti. While talking about its nature, he said,

"*Choicelessawareness* implies to be aware both objectively, outside and inwardly without any choice. Just to be aware of the colors, of this text, of the trees, the mountains, nature—just to be aware. Not choose, say "I like this", "I do not like that" or "I want this", "I do not want that"." (Krishnamurti, 2005, p.73]

Thus, Krishnamurti views *choicelessawareness* as being aware of something without assessing it. In short, his *choiceless awareness* is just being aware of what is actually going on without valuing it as good or bad, right or wrong, pleasant or unpleasant and the like. For example, if I am violent right now, then *choicelessawareness* requires that I passively observe my violence without qualifying it as either good or bad. Krishnamurti's opinion is that it is only when I see myself as violent, I can go beyond it and become non-violent. On the otherhand, when there is a choice, we cannot understand a thing in its true nature. When I have an idea that "non-violence is the greatest virtue", I will want myself to be non-violent. In my choice to be

non-violent, my attention diverts from the fact that I am violent. That is why, Krishnamurti opined that to be aware, we cannot have choice. And for *choiceless awareness* to take place, we need a free, unconditioned, uninfluenced mind because if our mind is conditioned, influenced, we become selective, we choose between 'what is' and 'what should be'. For example, if my mind is under the influence of the religion I belong to, I always try to act or behave or see things according to the do's and don'ts professed by my religion neglecting the fact or truth. According to Krishnamurti, to possess a free mind is to have "the capacity to inquire, not into what other say, but to inquire within yourself, to investigate, to examine the whole structure of a human mind—that is our mind, your mind." (Krishnamurti, 2014, p.182) Thus, to possess a free mind is to enquire into what is true and what is false for myself. "You are not free, and it is absolutely necessary to be free to find out what is true and what is false for yourself which no one can tell you, no system, no guru." (Krishnamurti, 2010, p.13). In short, Krishnamurti talks about aloneness of our mind which means distancing our mind from all those that condition the mind. In his own words,

"It is not a matter of going out into the country on a Sunday morning, sitting quietly under a tree and so on. The aloneness of which I am speaking is pure, incorruptible; it is free of all tradition, of all dogma and opinion, of everything that another has said. When the mind is in this state of aloneness, it is quiet, essentially still, not asking for anything, and such a mind is capable of knowing what is true. Otherwise, we are ever burdened with fear, which creates so much conflict and confusion in us and in the world." (Krishnamurti, 2012, p.109-110)

Buddha and Krishnamurti: Weighing up

If we weigh up the approaches of Buddha and Krishnamurti towards the problem of human suffering, then the following pointscome about—

To begin with, both Buddha and Krishnamurti prioritize individual responsibility in relation to one's own transformation. And this comes out as the significant point of agreement between the two. As Dalai Lama rightly points out, "Krishnamurti's statement that it is the responsibility of each individual to bring about their own transformation is reminiscent of the Buddha's advice, "You are your own master.""(Rinpoche &Mendizza, 2017, p.13) Both of them taught the self-help scheme of salvation or transformation which does not require the necessity of taking any assistance from others.

Only the individual has to work for his own emancipation through his own diligent effort. In other words, for both Buddha and Krishnamurti, the only way to be one's own light is every individual's personal endeavour. Buddha taught that by following the Noble Eight-fold path, that is, by having proper understanding of the real nature of things, by performing ethical conduct and by disciplining the mind, an individual can hope for attaining freedom from suffering. Krishnmaurti taught that an individual cannot take the help of any path, rather he should develop a certain kind of mental attitude in order to make himself free from suffering. Here appears a difference between Buddha and Krishnamurti as the former prescribed a specific path for salvation whereas the latter categorically rejected the efficacy of any path in the quest for salvation as for him to follow a path is to work within a particular pattern that makes us remain in bondage.

Secondly, both Buddha and Krishnamurti were against uncritical acceptance. Both put emphasis on having a skeptical mind. Buddha always encouraged people for exercising their reasoning power so that they could weigh his teachings,

""……not because it is a report, not because it is a tradition, not because it is suitable, nor because your preceptor is a recluse, but if you yourself understand that this is so meritorious and blameless, and when accepted, it is for benefit and happiness, then you may accept."(*Anguttara Nikaya*)

Krishnamurti too vehemently criticized the act of accepting or following,

"I do not demand your faith. I am not setting myself up as an authority. I have nothing to teach you—no new Philosophy, no new system, no new path to reality; there is no path to reality than to truth. All authority of any kind, especially in the field of thought and understanding is the most destructive, evil thing. Leaders destroy the followers and followers destroy the leaders. You have to be your own teacher and your own disciple. You have to question everything that man has accepted as valuable, as necessary."(Krishnmurti, 2010, p.15]

Here too lies a difference between Buddha's perspective on acceptance and that of Krishnamurti. Buddha kept a place for acceptance in his scheme of salvation as he said that after proper enquiry into his

teachings, one can go for accepting the same if he finds it beneficial for his emancipation. But Krishnamurti never talked about acceptance in any form. He refused to be a teacher as well as to propagate any philosophy. He was critical of everything; he even did not allow his listeners to follow whatever he talked about. On the contrary, he invariably asked them to set on a journey of enquiry together with him. A part of his public talk delivered in Madras on January 26, 1952 beautifully justifies this point,

"Question: For truth to come, you advocate action without idea. Is it possible to act at all times without idea, that is, without a purpose in view?

KRISHNAMURTI: I am not advocating anything. I am not a propagandist, political or religious. I am not inviting you to any new experience. All that we are doing is trying to find out what action is. You are not following me to find out. You are only following me verbally. But if you want to find out, if you as an individual want to find out what idea and action are, you have to inquire into it, and not accept my definition or my experience, which may be utterly false. As you have to find out, you have to put aside the whole idea of following, pursuing, advocating, propagandist, leader or example. Let us therefore find out together what we mean by action without idea. Please give your thought to it. Do not say, "I do not understand what you are talking about." Let us find out together. It may be difficult but let us go into it." (Krishnamurti, 2018, p.290-291)

As far as the role of a teacher is concerned, Krishnamurti categorically denied its efficacy. This point can be justified from the fact that he refused to be a teacher. In various talks, he talked about the futility of resorting to any teacher, religious or political, without any fail. As per Krishnamurti, we need a guru because we want comfort, we want satisfaction, and we want happiness. We find him saying,

"Why do you need a guru, a teacher, a leader, a guide? Obviously, you will say, "I need him because I am confused, I do not know what to do, and I am seeking truth." Let us not deceive ourselves about it. You don't know what truth is; therefore, you go to a teacher, asking him to teach you what truth is. You want someone to help you, to guide you out of your confusion; you are unhappy, and you want to be; you are dissatisfied, and you want to be satisfied. So, you choose your guru according to your satisfaction." (Krishnamurti, 2014, p.47).

Self-knowledge cannot be handed down by others; it is revelation or unfolding of one's self in one's day to day activities. In short, self-knowledge is understanding the self as revealed in its relationship with others. Krishnamurti said, "No guru, no book or scripture can give you self-knowledge. It comes when you are aware of yourself in relationship." (Krishnamurti, 2014, p.5)He not only talked about the needlessness of a guru, but also considered him as an impediment in the quest for self-knowledge. In the words of Krishnamurti,

"…a guru is not essential. On the contrary, a guru is an impediment. Self-knowledge is the beginning of wisdom. No guru can give you self-knowledge; and without self-knowledge, do what you will, act in any manner you like, follow any leader, any social or religious pattern—you are only creating further misery. But when through self-knowledge the mind is free of impediments and limitations, then truth come into being." (Krishnamurti, 2014, p.48)

However, Buddha's approach regarding this matter was a little flexible as he accepted the role of a teacher in the context of guiding an individual aspiring for salvation. His view was that the teacher is like a friend who can share his experience to guide his fellow-friends, but he is not a master to whom the disciple must wholeheartedly surrender himself. In short, Buddha's point was that the teacher can, at his best, only indicate that truth, but cannot attain it on his behalf. In his own words, "You yourself must strive. The Blessed Ones are (only) preachers." (Dhammapada, V 276)According to Buddha, critical discernment is necessary for an individual in order to be morally pure in thought, word and deed; he needs some trustworthy person who can reprove him by pointing out his faults. It is in this sense, Buddha felt the necessity of a wise friend or a teacher as we find Buddha saying,

"If a person sees a wise man who reproaches him for his fault, who shows what is to be avoided, he should follow such a wise man as he would revealer of hidden treasures. It fares well and not ill with one who follows such a man." (Dhammapada,V-76)

Thirdly, the paper finds that although it appears that Buddha and Krishnamurti was pole apart in respect of the former recommending a specific method and the latter categorically denying the role of the same, yet in deep down of the matter, this is not true. Because a more penetrating investigation into it reveals that Buddha too put fundamental importance on

developing mindfulness, vigilance or awareness by the one aspiring for attaining a suffering free life. Although Buddha's *Noble Eight-fold Path* has eight steps and right mindfulness is seventh in the list, yet it is the most fundamental among the other. As Thich Nhat Hanh points out,

"When right mindfulness is present, the Four Noble Truths and the seven other elements of the Noble Eight-fold path are also present. When we are mindful, our thinking is Right Thinking, our speech is Right Speech, and so on. Right Mindfulness is the energy that brings us back to the present moment. To cultivate mindfulness in ourselves is to cultivate the Buddha within, to cultivate the Holy Spirit." (Hanh, 1999, p.64)

In the same tone, Sudhakar Despandhe also points out,

"Looked at superficially, the Buddha's teaching would appear to be almost an antithesis of Krishnamurti's teaching. Whereas Krishnamurti scathingly denounces effort, the Buddha seems to be very emphatic on diligent practice and effortful exertion. Indeed the Noble Eight-fold Path is the essence of the Buddha's teaching, and the Buddha exhorts us to practice that path with diligences. Besides, one of the eight limbs of this path is Right Effort, which again indicates the significance the Buddha gives to effort. The term path itself lends support to the conception of a graduated series of steps to be diligently traversed in time. But if we take pains to unravel the essential import of the Buddha's teaching—and not get stuck into the exterior of jargon—we shall find that the essential spirit of the Buddha's teaching can be very simply and succinctly put into one word, Mindfulness." (Deshpande, 2009, p.76)

Thus, mindfulness is ultimately the way of attaining salvation in Buddhism as without it, the operation of remaining seven factors of the Eight-fold path is not possible. Like *choiceless awareness* or complete attention that Krishnamurti talked about, Buddha's mindfulness too is complete attention to the present, to what is, without any judgment in terms of the past and without any effort to accomplish an ideal in the future. And the person who develops such awareness need not cultivate the other seven aspects of the path as they will come naturally to him. That is, right mindfulness frees the person from all his delusions and consequently makes him able to cultivate right views; right thinking, then, automatically comes to him. And the remaining steps follow the same spontaneously. That is why Despande concludes that "the other seven limbs of the Eight-fold path are only different rays of the self-same light of mindfulness." (Deshpande, 2009,

p.77) And this mindfulness exactly corresponds to *choiceless awareness* of Krishnamurti. This point can be justified if we consider some significant sayings of the Buddhist Scholar venerable Gunaratna with regard to the characters of Buddha's right mindfulness,

"Mindfulness is mirror-thought. It reflects only what is presently happening and in exactly the way it is happening. There are no biases.

Mindfulness is non-judgmental observation. It is that ability of the mind to observe without criticism. With this ability, one sees things without condemnation or judgment. One is surprised by nothing. One simply takes a balanced interest in things as they are in their natural states. One does not decide and does not judge. One just observes.

Mindfulness is an impartial watchfulness. It does not take sides. It does not get hung up in what is perceived. It just perceives. Mindfulness does not get infatuated with the good mental states. It does not try to sidestep the bad mental states. There is no clinging to the pleasant, no fleeting from the unpleasant. Mindfulness sees all experiences as equal, all thoughts as equal, all feelings as equal. Nothing is suppressed. Nothing is repressed. Mindfulness does not play favorites.

Mindfulness is non-conceptual awareness……it does not get involved with thought or concepts. It does not get hung up on ideas or opinions or memories. It just looks. Mindfulness registers experiences, but it does not compare them. It does not label them or categorize them. It just observes everything as if it was occurring for the first time. It is not analysis which is based on reflection and memory. It is, rather, the direct and immediate experiencing of whatever is happening, without the medium of thought.

Mindfulness is present-time awareness. It takes place in here and now. It is the observance of what is happening right now, in the present moment.

Mindfulness is non-egoistic alertness. It takes place without reference to self….mindfulness stops one from adding anything to perception, or subtracting anything from it. One does not enhance anything. One does not emphasize anything. One just observes exactly what is there—without distortion.

Mindfulness is goal-less awareness. In mindfulness, one does not strain for results. One does not try to accomplish anything. When one is

mindful, one experiences reality in the present moment in whatever form it takes. There is nothing to be achieved. There is only observation.

Mindfulness is awareness of change. It is observing the passing flow of experience. It is watching things as they are changing…..it is observing all phenomena—physical, mental or emotional—whatever is present taking place in the mind." (Gunaratna, 1990, p.144-146)

These passages reveal that Buddha's mindfulness shares exactly the same features with Krishnamurti's *choiceless awareness*. So, the paper concludes that both Buddha and Krishnamurti recommend the same mechanism for the one who wants to be his own light amidst the darkness of suffering.

Declaration

I hereby declare that the present paper entitled "Be Your Own Light: Buddha and Krishnamurti" is original and has not been published or submitted elsewhere for publication.

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Discourse on *Aśvattha* in the Bhagavadgītā

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Abstract

In the Bhagavadgītā, the discussion of the world treedescribes the nature of the empirical world and a person's position who by being detached from the actions that bind can grasp the truth. The truth can guide a person in realizing the real nature of the *Param Puruṣa*, who is the motivator of action and that realized person canperceive the collective undivided Supreme Self amidst the multiplicities of the illusory world and that itself will help him in resolving an action. This discourse occupies a very significant position from Vedic times and is encompassed in the XVth chapter of the Bhagavadgītā. To explain to Arjuna the truth about the reality of the Self, Kṛṣṇa set forth the verses of the XVth chapter which are of great metaphysical value. It is believed by the commentators that in the XVth chapter, to generate dispassion, Kṛṣṇa first describes the nature of the empirical world, through the metaphor of the tree. It appears that the commentators misconstrued the syntax of the opening verses of the XVth chapter as they thought that the imperceptible tree of the world with firmly fixed roots must be felled with the mighty weapon of detachment. But a careful study of the verses concerning the *Saṃskṛta* syntax points out that, the Bhagavadgītā merely talks of the cutting of adventitious action binding roots and not of the *aśvattha* itself. Again, something that is *avyaya*cannot be cut and cutting down the world tree means rejecting the existence of *Saṁsāra* which is quite absurd from the Bhagavadgītā's perspective. In this paper an attempt is made to reflect on the most secret doctrine taught to Arjuna by Kṛṣṇa by understanding which one becomes wise and by being wise can knowledgeably resolve an action i.e. a person who is *Jñāni* will know *Brahman* because knowledge of action is knowledge of *Brahman*.

Keywords: *Bhagavadgītā*, *Aśvattha*, *Brahman*, Action, *Puruṣa.*

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1. Introduction

The Bhagavadgītā one of the most widely read, translated as well as commented Indian philosophical text begins with a practical problem of life. Arjuna refuses to participate in the war which has come by itself. Through the discussion of the world tree, Kṛṣṇa wanted to make Arjuna understand the nature of the empirical world and a person's position who by being detached from the actions that bind can grasp the truth. The truth can guide him in realizing the real nature of the *Param Puruṣa*, who is the motivator of action and he can perceive the collective undivided Supreme Self amidst the multiplicities of the illusory world and that itself will help him in resolving an action. This discourse of the world tree, which occupies a very significant position from Vedic times, is presented in the XVth chapter of the Bhagavadgītā. With the intention of explaining to Arjuna the truth about the reality of the Self, Kṛṣṇa set forth the few beginning verses of the XVth chapter, which are of great metaphysical value. Śaṅkarācārya in his Gita Bhaṣya, while commenting on the first three verses of the XVth chapter have emphasized cutting, eradicating the *Aśvattha* tree by means of the strong sword of non- attachment.

It is generally believed by the commentators that in the XVth chapter, to generate dispassion, Kṛṣṇa first describes the nature of the empirical world, through the metaphor of the tree. The person who has become detached from the world is capable of grasping the truth regarding the real nature of the Lord. Śaṅkara's commentary is the earliest extant commentary available on the Bhagavadgītā and on its basis, it isgenerally believed that the world is illusory and through the metaphor of the tree,it is being stated that *Aśvattha*, the tree of transmigratory life, the tree of *Saṁsāra* perishes every moment. But the message of the Bhagavadgītā is quite different and this paper makes an attempt to clarify it. Through the metaphor of the tree, Kṛṣṇa wants to make Arjuna understand how he has to perform action in the world by freeing himself from bondage of *Karma*. Instead of taking the world to be illusory Kṛṣṇa highlights the reality of the world and advises Arjuna to get involved actively in the worldly affairs by performing action without attachment.

2. Śaṅkarācārya's interpretation on the opening verses of the XVth chapter

If we go through Śaṅkara's comment on the opening verses of the XVth chapter then we find that according to him, in verse XV.1, the roots of

the eternal tree of the world which is *Brahman* having unmanifest power of *Māyā*is upwards because it is subtler than time by virtue of its being the cause and also because of its eternality and vastness. The branches of this tree of empirical life spread downwards consisting of *mahat*, egoism, the subtle element does not last even for the morrow. Therefore, it is called *Aśvatthaṃ* because every moment it perishes but at the same time it is imperishable since its emergence is from time without beginning. According to Śaṅkara, another qualification of the tree of *saṁsāra* is that it is protected by leaves, which indeed are the Vedic hymns. Though there are multiple meanings of the word '*chandāṃisi*' but it appears that the entire commentarial tradition has found the meaning 'Vedic hymns' for the word '*chandāṃisi*' to be most suitable in the context of the text for unifying the meaning of the whole text. It is believed by the commentator that the Vedic hymns reveal what is righteous and unrighteous and also the causes and results of Vedas. The branches extend below covering the sphere of living beings and extend upwards to the sphere of Brahmā; which 'in accordance with their work and in conformity with their knowledge' (Kaṭha Upaniṣad 2.2.7) flourish because of the qualities *Sattva*, *Rajas* and *Tamas.* Sense objects as their twigs sprout from the branches which are the fruits of action of body, speech and mind.

Along with the primary roots, Kṛṣṇa also highlights the secondary roots spreading downwards out of which the latent impressions like attraction, aversion etc. arise from the fruits of action and which are the causes of engagement in righteousness and unrighteousness. These roots spreading downwards are apt to produce later the actions in abundance, characterised as righteous and unrighteous below in the world of human beings because human beings are competent for works.

The form of the tree of the world is not perceived in the same way as described in the previous verses because its nature is such that if it is destroyed than it is seen like water in a mirage, like a dream, magic, an imaginary city seen in the sky. Therefore, its real form cannot be perceived, neither its end, nor beginning, nor its foundation. The firmly rooted *aśvattha* tree of the world has to be cut off with the strong sword of non-attachment. The strength of the weapon here refers to the constant stability of mind heading towards the Supreme Self and non-attachment means detachment for progeny, wealth and the worlds. After cutting off thetree of the world, the State of the Primeval Spirit beyond that tree has to be sought from which

there is no return. The state has to be felt by taking refuge in that Primeval Person Himself from whom emerged the eternal manifestation, the manifestation of the illusory tree of the world just as magic from a magical show. The wise ones can move towards that state by freeing himself from egoism, non-discrimination, by conquering the evil of attachment, by being ever devoted to spirituality, overcoming desires and the dualities like pleasure and pain.

From Śaṅkara's comment as presented above it appears that he misconstrued the syntax of the thirdverse stated above, i.e. XV.3, as he thought that the imperceptible tree of the world with firmly fixed roots mustbe felled with the mighty weapon of detachment. It appears that the commentators following Śaṅkara misconstrue the syntax of the opening verses of this chapter.

3. Deep metaphysics inherent in the first three verses of chapter XV

Letus take a look at the first three verses of chapter XV: *ūrdhvamūlamadhaḥśākhamaśvatthaṁprāhuravyayam/ chandāṃsiyasyaparṇāniyāstaṁvedasavedavit// adhaścordhvamprasṛtāstasyaśākhāguṇapravṛddhāviṣayapravālāḥ/ adhaścamūlānyanusantatānikarmānubandhīnimanuṣyaloke// narūpamasyehatathopalabhyatenāntonacādirna ca sampratiṣṭhā/ aśvatthamenamsuvirūḍhamūlamasaṅgaśastreṇadṛḍhenachittvā//* "The *śāstras*speak of the imperishable *aśvattha* tree as having its roots above and branches below; its leaves are the Vedic hymns, and he who knows this is a knower of the Vedas. Its branches extend below and above, and being nourished by the *guṇas* creates the entire universe with sense objects as its shoots; below in the world of humans stretch forth the roots promoting action. Its real form is not perceived in the world of humans, neither its end, nor its beginning, nor its foundation. Having cut off this *aśvattha*tree along withits deep-grownroots by the sharp sword of non-attachment……"The Bhagavadgītā followed Vedic literature and the discussion of *aśvattha* already occurred in the Śāstras. In Ṛgveda 10.97.5 which states, "*aśvatthevoniṣadanaṃparṇevovasatiṣkṛtā/ gobhājaitkilāsathayatsanavathapūruṣam//* the term*aśvattha* is mentioned and in thissūkta*aśvattha*is referred to as a tree. In Ṛgvedic mantra 1.24.7: *abhudhnerājāvaruṇovanasyordhvamstūpamdadatepūtadakṣaḥ / nīcināḥsthuruparibudhnaeṣāmasmeantarnihitāḥketavaḥsyuḥ //* the

term*aśvattha*is not being mentioned but the mantra highlights an inverted tree with roots above and branches below. There is mention of *aśvattha*in *Kaṭhopaniṣad*6.1 which says: *ūrdhva- mūlo'vāk-śākhaeśo 'śvatthassanātanaḥ / tad evaśukram tad brahma, tad evāmṛtamucyate / tasminlokāḥśritāḥsarve tad u nātyetikaścana / etatvai tat* // Here *aśvattha is declared to be* timeless, eternal *Brahman*. Even in MaitrāyaṇaBrahmaṇaUpaniṣad (6.4), there is mention of *aśvattha* as Brahman with roots above and its branches are elements like space, air, water, fire, earth. From the above reference of earlier literature, it appears that there is no mention of cutting down the *Aśvattha,* whereas emphasis is on eternal *Brahman*on which the world depends. The ślokas XV.1, 2 and 3 of the Bhagavadgītā follows the same idea. Instead of cutting down the *Aśvattha,* the verses merely talk of the cutting of adventitious action binding roots.

Binod Kumar Agarwala in his paper, 'The Origin of Erroneous Exegetical Tradition of the Bhagavadgītā' writes commenting on the third verse, "According to the *Saṃskṛta*syntax the first noun to the left verb with appropriate *vibhakti*indicating the *karma karaka* is the real *karma karaka* while any other noun with matching vibhakti in the form of *karma karaka* is to be taken as the qualifier of the real *karmakāraka*. In the last line of Bhagavadgītā XV.3, *aśvatthamenamsuvirūḍhamūlamasaṅg aśastreṇadṛḍhenachittvā* the *karma karaka* of the verb *chittvā*is the *suvirūḍhamūlam*. Which *mūlam*: *ūrdhvamūlam*of XV.1, or *suvirūḍhamūlam*, i.e. intertwined form of *adhaścamūlānyanusantatāni karmānubandhīnimanuṣyaloke* of XV.2? It is indicated by *enam*, which refers not to *ūrdhvamūlam*of the first verse but to the intertwined form of the roots mentioned in the second verse. *Aśvattham*with matching *vibhakti*in *karma kāraka*, as it occurs further to the left of the verb, is merely the qualifier of *suvirūḍhamūlam*the real *karma kāraka*. So, the Bhagavadgītā merely talks of the cutting of adventitious action-binding roots and not of the *aśvattha* itself". As mentioned in the verse the tree of the world is *avyaya*and something that is *avyaya*cannot be cut, cutting down the world tree means rejecting the existence of *Saṁsāra*. So, it appears that the commentators might be due to their *Advaitin* conception of the illusory nature of the world, construes the syntax of XV.3 erroneously. Agarwala's interpretation follows that of Abhinavagupta. Abhinavagupta in his commentary stated that – "The lower roots (*adhastanamūlāni*) of the *aśvattha*tree are both good and bad

action produced in the world of human beings. In the sentence, 'Having cut off this tree (tam cittva) along with its deep-grown roots', the verb 'to cut' applies to the noun '*aśvattha* tree' as well as its adjective 'deep-grown roots'(*suvirūḍhamūlam*). However, in this case the emphasis is only on the adjective. As for example, in the Vedic injunction, 'a stick holder (*daṇḍī*) should issue orders to the servants. If we apply this principle to the above quoted sentence, then it is not the tree but its deep-grown roots stretching belowthat should be cut." The syntactic interpretation given by Abhinavagupta indicates that the *aśvattha*tree cannot be cut; rather its adventitious downward growing roots are to be cut.

It appears from the above discussion that the tree is rooted in *Brahman* and action emerges from *Brahman. A*s in verse III.15 Kṛṣṇa says: *karma brahmodbhavaṃviddhi*(penetrate that action originates in *Brahman*), that is, the motivation of action comes from *Brahman* not from *Prakṛti,* which is only an instrument of an action without which action cannot be performed. But human beings who are motivated by *Prakṛti,* through their actions, disrupt the unity of cosmos in which all have to participate. So, philosophically on the basis of the description of *aśvattha,*Kṛṣṇa wanted to shape Arjuna's structure of thinking so that he understands how to perform desireless action by cutting the *karmānubandhīni* roots by weapon of non-attachment. Further, Kṛṣṇa is identifying himself with the *aśvattha* (verse X.26states, "*aśvatthaḥsarvavṛkṣāṇāṃdevarṣīṇāṃcanārada/ gandharvāṇāṃcitrarathaḥsiddhānāṃkapilomuniḥ* //) So it has been said that the *aśvattha*is imperishable. It seems some of the traditional Indian commentators have erred in understanding the meaning present in the verses as cutting down the *aśvattha* tree is misreading the doctrine of the Bhagavadgītā.

4. Relation between *Param Puruṣa*and *Puruṣa*

In XV.6: *natadbhāsayatesūryonaśaśāṅkonapāvakaḥ/ yad gatvānanivartantetaddhāmaparamaṁ mama*//, Kṛṣṇa states that neither the sun, nor the moon, nor the fire can illumine that Supreme Abode of Viṣṇu because they can illumine only the physical things but not the *Param Puruṣa*which Itself is the time. After reaching that Abode there is no return because a person merges with that imperishable state. Kṛṣṇa is trying

tobring in the distinction between *Param Puruṣa*that Itself is Time and *Puruṣa*that manifest in Time in the following verses starting from XV.7 to XV.15. The relation between *Jīvas*and the Supreme Self isemphasized in Chapter XIII of the Bhagavadgītā. In the XIIIth chapter the relation between *Kṣetra*and *Kṣetrajña*is precisely dealt with and we get to know that the union of these two is believed to be the cause of everything emerging. The Bhagavadgītā is following Ṛg Veda through Pañcarātra literature and this can be found from the similar ideas between them. According to the Vedic view, *Kṣetra*means clearing; a cleared space in jungle or thick forest. *Puruṣa*can manifest as *Aśvattha*only when there is clearing of the *Kṣetra.* When time emerges *Puruṣa*reverberates in each *Jiva* and then It appears as portion but actually It is present wholly in each and every *deha*as *dehin*. Because of His cosmic manifestation, the Lord, the only One present in all the fields on whom have been superimposed the attributes like attachment, aversion etc. appears to be distinct and there is no other agent other than Him. That is why the relation between *Kṣetra*and *Kṣetrajña*is inseparable, continuous, inevitable, changing and voluntary.

A person who has the eye of *Puruṣa*, i.e. who can grasp the totality knows the continuity of *Kṣetra*with the other *Kṣetras.* Such a *Yogī*instead of remaining in the world of movement can pull away the senses along with the mind from the objects.

When *Kṣetrajña*leaves a *Kṣetra*and moves to another *Kṣetra*, it takes the senses along with the mind just like wind carrying away scents from their abodes – flowers etc. The *Samasti Puruṣa*experiences the objects by resting on the body and presiding over the five sense organs and the mind. The Lord expresses sorrow for those who are deluded by the varied experiences of the seen and unseen objects. They do not realise the totality (*Samasti Puruṣa*) because while departing from that they resided over or staying in the present one or experiencing objects like sound etc. they come into contact with the *guṇas*whose essence are pleasure, pain and delusion. Only those who are *Jñāni*, who have the right insight, can perceive the Self, the *ParamPuruṣa*within them. For such a person pleasure and pain is same and instead of getting affected by feeling there is *Sānta Rasa.*

Kṛṣṇaalso speaks regarding the excellent adjuncts of the *Dehin*, which illumines all things but even the light of fire, sun etc which are the illuminators do not illumine it. Kṛṣṇa is impelling everything whether it is the moon, sun or fire. The splendour of the sun that illumines the whole world, the same splendour that is in moon and fire is known to be the splendour of Viṣṇu. Here special emphasis is given to the light, which ispresent in the sun (although the light that is consciousness is equally present in all moving and non-moving objects) because in the sun etc. the excellence of *Sāttva*is very much in abundance. Therefore, the light that is consciousness is spread out in abundance in them alone. So, special reference is given to it (Sun etc.). But that does not mean that it is abundant only there. It is present everywhere but what matters is the degree of abundance.

5. The nature of the Self (the *Samasti Puruṣa*, the totality within each being)

After entering the earth, Viṣṇu sustains all beings of the world, free from all attachment. Without His sustenance, the earth would have crumbled, sink down. And also, by becoming the sapful*soma*, He nourishes all plants and herbs and, in that way, soma infuses its own juice into everything. Again, He is Himself (the fire)Vaiśvānara and by being that He dwells in the body of living beings, along with His association with *Prāṇa*and *Apāna*. He digests the four kinds of food eaten by masticating, swallowing, sucking and licking. *Samasti Puruṣa*is seated in the hearts, in the intellects of all beings; memory, knowledge as well as loss emerge from Him. He, Himself is to be knowledgeably resolved; He is the knowledgeable resolver and is the felt knowledgeable resolve. He is the origin at or of the *Vedānta*and He Himself is the knower of the contents of the Vedas too.

After setting forth the real nature of the Self, i.e. the totality within each being, Kṛṣṇa distinguishes Him from His limiting adjuncts – mutable and immutable. In the lived world, there are two forms of *Puruṣa*–the perishable that perishes in time and gives rise to new form and the imperishable that itself is the time. Theforms of *ParamPuruṣa*keep on changing from eternity to eternity. Apart from these two, there is another form of Puruṣa and i.e. the *avyayaĪśvaraḥ*. He is extolled in the world and in the Vedas as the *Puruṣottamaḥ*, theSupreme *Puruṣa*(Person). He is the

eternal, pure, conscious Self present in all beings and at the same time He through His own measuring capacity enters the three worlds called - *Bhūḥ*(Earth), *Bhuvaḥ*(Intermediate Space) and *Svaḥ*(Heaven) and sustains them. He Himself is timeless, yet He emerges in time. These three forms together constitute the *Samasti Puruṣa*; in other words,*avyayaĪśvaraḥ*is the unity of the three forms.

6. Knowledge of *Brahman* is knowledge of action

Arjuna was deluded and was overpowered by emotions as he was unable to grasp the *Samasti Puruṣa.* But the un-deluded who knows Kṛṣṇa as the *Samasti Puruṣa*, shares Him with his mind fixed on Him as the Self of all. Sharing Kṛṣṇa means a *Jñāni* knows how to participate in his own share of action that emerges in time to maintain the totality. Such a *yogī*is aware that the action he performs emerges from *Brahman*, is for *Brahman* and gets vested in *Brahman*. The Bhagavadgītā itself is taken to be a scripture but here it is very much clear from the context that the fifteenth chapter is referred to as such. Not only has the entire text of the Bhagavadgītā but also the whole purport of Vedas been briefly stated in this chapter. Thus, in this chapter Kṛṣṇa taught to Arjuna the most secret doctrine by understanding which one becomes wise and by being wise he discharges his own *Karma* in the world without attachment. A *Jñāni* will know how to perform action without being bound and how to avoid the actions that bind. It has been rightly said in verse IV.33: "O scourge of the foe (Arjuna), for all works without any exception culminate in wisdom." Through right insight, a holistic thinker can realize the totality within instead of individual Self. That realization will help him in resolving an action because knowledge of *Brahman* is itself knowledge of action.Kṛṣṇa teaches Arjuna how to participate in action and for that he is trying to establish the correct structure of thinking. To act correctly one has to think correctly. The tremendous appeal of Bhagavadgītā is in our lives because once we start to think correctly, our actions will lead us towards the right direction. We as *Dhirā* can discharge our *karma* as a member of the society and at the same time can attain perfection through our action by being free from the bondage of action.

Notes & References

1. *Abhinavagupta's Commentaryonthe Bhagavad Gita*, Translated by Boris Marjanovic, p.296-297.

2. Binod Kumar Agarwala, "The Anugītā as a Gloss on the Bhagavadgītā Part I: The Origin of Erroneous Exegetical Tradition of the Bhagavadgītā," *Journal of Indian Council of PhilosophicalResearch*, (August,2016), p.415.

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Ecosophy: A Psychological Transformation towards Environmental Sustainability

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Abstract

This paper explores the profound role of Arne Naess's concept of Ecosophy in fostering a psychological transformation towards nature, emphasizing a deeper, more intrinsic connection between humans and the environment. Naess, through his Ecosophy, advocates for an expanded sense of self that integrates the well-being of all life forms, promoting a shift from anthropocentric to eco-centric values. This psychological transformation is essential to environmental sustainability, as it fosters a mindset where nature is not merely a resource but an integral part of the self. Naess's notion of Self-realization encourages individuals to transcend narrow self-interests and align their personal identity with the broader ecological system. By grounding ecological ethics in psychological change, Ecosophy provides not only a framework for individual transformation but also a philosophical basis for collective ecological responsibility. The paper argues that such a shift is indispensable in the present era of ecological crises, where technological solutions alone are insufficient. Ecosophy, therefore, acts as both a catalyst for sustainable living and a philosophical orientation that redefines the human–nature relationship in terms of interdependence, oneness, and ethical responsibility.

Keywords: *Arne Naess, Ecosophy, Eco-psychology, Psychological transformation, Self-realization, Environmental Sustainability.*

Introduction

The ecological catastrophe of our day is a fundamental crisis of perception and thinking as much as a material one. Environmental deterioration, biodiversity loss, and climate change highlight the shortcomings of a worldview that values humans above all else and views nature as a tool

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for manipulation and utility (Naess, 1989; Devall& Sessions, 1985). It appears that what is needed is not only exterior reform but an inside transformation—a reorientation of the human self in connection to the natural world—given the failure of technical and policy-driven solutions alone (Katz, 1999; Oelschlaeger, 1991).

Arne Naess's concept of Ecosophy takes on relevance within this philosophical framework. According to Naess (1973, 1989), a fundamental change in human identity and awareness is necessary to ensure environmental sustainability. Ecosophy encourages people to see themselves as participants in a larger ecological sphere of meaning and value rather than as objective spectators by promoting Self-realization and biocentric equality. This enlarged sense of Self opposes the utilitarian view of nature and fosters an outlook that holds that human flourishing is inextricably linked to flourishing of the earth (Naess, 1995; Drengson& Inoue, 1995).

The objective of this paper is to examine ecosophy as a catalyst for psychological transformation toward environmental sustainability. The study contends that ecosophy offers the philosophical and normative foundation for critically situating ecological action, whether it is technological, political, or cultural, rather than presenting it as a stand-alone or utopian idea. This study aims to show how Naess's vision reveals the deeper conditions of sustainability and forces us to reconsider what it means to live responsibly on Earth by examining ecosophy as a psychological and ethical reorientation.

Understanding Naess's Ecosophy

Influenced by both Eastern philosophies and Western ecological research, Arne Naess combined in-depth philosophical analysis with ecological thought to construct his notion of Ecosophy. Deep ecology, which advocates for a more deeper interaction between humans and nature and recognizes the intrinsic value of all forms of life, developed from his critique of superficial environmentalism, which concentrates on pollution and resource depletion (Næss, A., 1990).

In order to structure his philosophy, Naess established the concepts of *norms* and *hypotheses*. According to his paradigm, hypotheses are empirical claims that may be checked or confirmed by experience and observation, whereas norms are value-based guiding principles that serve as a guide for behaviour. These standards, which are founded on moral and ecological

precepts that promote the well-being of all living things, serve as the foundation for Naess's deep ecology methodology. The idea that all living things are equal—what he refers to as 'biosphrical egalitarianism'—is one of the fundamental principles of ecosophy (Næss, A., 1990).

Naess developed derivation techniques through hypothesis formulation in order to arrive at the ultimate norm in his philosophical framework (Naess, A., 2002).

N1: Self-realization!

H1: The higher the Self-realization attained by anyone, the broader and deeper the identification with others.

H2: The higher the level of Self-realization attained by anyone, the more its further increase depend upon the Self-realization of others.

H3. Complete Self-realization of anyone depends on that of all.

N2: Self-realization of all living beings!

H4: Diversity of life increases Self-realization potentials.

N3: Diversity of life!

H5: Complexity of life increases Self-realization potentials.

N4: Complexity!

H6: Life resources of the Earth are limited.

H7: Symbiosis maximises Self-realization potentials under conditions of limited resources.

N5: Symbiosis!

H8: Local Self-realization and cooperation favours increase of Self-realization.

H9: Local autonomy increases the chances of maintaining local self-realization.

H10: Centralisation decreases local self-sufficiency and autonomy.

N6: Local self-realization and cooperation!

N7: Local autonomy!

N8: No centralisation!

H11: Self-realization requires realisation of all potentials.

H12: Exploitation reduces or eliminates potentials.

N9: No exploitation!

H13: Subjection reduces potentials.

N10: No subjection!

N11: All have equal rights to Self-realization!

H14: Class societies deny equal rights to Self-realization!

N12: No class societies!

H15: Self-determination favours Self-realization.

N13: Self-determination!

In the end, Arne Naess uses hypotheses and norms to arrive to Self-realization as the ultimate norm in his Ecosophical philosophical framework. According to Naess, Self-realization comprises the understanding of a more profound and expansive concept of self, one that covers the entire web of existence, in addition to the individual self. It is also vital to emphasize that biocentric egalitarianism is one of the fundamental ideals of Ecosophy. Regardless of how useful they are to people, this idea maintains that all living things have equal intrinsic value and moral standing (Naess, 1989; Devall& Sessions, 1985). The anthropocentric hierarchy that prioritizes human needs over non-human life is rejected by Naess by highlighting 'biospherical egalitarianism'. Naess maintains that the flourishing of all beings must be acknowledged as equally significant since without including this idea, Self-realization runs the risk of becoming anthropocentric itself. Although Self-realization has been covered in extensively throughout the study, biocentric egalitarianism should also be emphasized as one of the highest standards of ecosophy. According to biocentric egalitarianism, all living things—plant, animal, and human—have intrinsic value and the same chance to thrive (Naess, 1973; Devall& Sessions, 1985). Naess attempted to create an ethical perspective in which humans are co-inhabitants of the biosphere rather than superior beings by rejecting anthropocentrism and species hierarchy. The moral basis for ecological stewardship is provided by this egalitarian viewpoint, which holds that all living things have inherent worth, making the exploitation and dominance of nature morally repugnant (Sylvan & Bennett, 1994). Furthermore, as a true identification with nature inevitably extends into respect for the equal right of all beings to live and develop, Naess connects this idea with his theory of Self-realization (Naess, 1989). Since human existence occasionally necessitates giving priority to basic requirements (such as food, shelter, and health), critics frequently claim that complete egalitarianism is impractical. In order to address this, Naess

(1995) makes it clear that behaviour motivated by actual vital needs—rather than luxury or exploitation—can nevertheless be in line with biocentric ethics. Therefore, ecosophy is transformed from a purely psychological orientation into a normative framework that demands ecological justice and ethical responsibility via biocentric egalitarianism.This implies that identityof a person is linked to other living things and the environment rather than being restricted to their own ego. Thus, Self-realization entails appreciating the inherent worth of all living things and realizing that one's own well-being is inextricably linked to the well-being of the planet (Talukder, M.M.H., 2016).

The primary goal of elevating Self-realization to the highest standard is to promote a moral and psychological shift in how people view the natural world. Naess aimed to eliminate the dualistic thinking that divides people from their surroundings by expanding the idea of self to encompass the natural world. People are inspired to take actions that promote environmental sustainability by this deeper ecological identification, not out of duty or fear but rather because they truly feel a part of the biosphere (Naess, A., 1987). As the highest standard, Self-realization lays the groundwork for peaceful coexistence in which people naturally work to conserve and protect the environment because it is consistent with their enlarged self-awareness. In turn, this standard serves as the moral foundation for deep ecology, which promotes significant ecological action and a more sustainable relationship with the planet.

Naess's concept of Self-realization is used in a very distinct and practical way (Talukder, M.M.H., 2016). Like,

T_{0-} self-realization

T_{1-} ego-realization

T_{2-} self-realization (With small s)

T_{3-} Self-realization (With capital S)

The concept of T_3 is used in various names like: 'the Universal Self', 'the *'tman',* 'the Absolute'. T_1 the concept of 'ego-realization' is used as 'self-expression', 'self-interest'. It is the biggest obstacles of realizing the 'Self-realization'. It is like hedonistic attitude towards the other. T_2 the concept of 'self-realization' (with small s) is like Buddhist *Hinayāna* School (Dasgupta, S., 1975, p. 78-166). It is like 'self-preservation', which focuses on realization of particular one person. They think only for himself or herself.

They don't believe in the principle of upliftment of all rather they always focus on his or her development. But the last concept T_3 Self-realization (with capital S), which is highest order activity. It is a concept which binds different creatures with a single thread. In is like inner voice of for something and rather influenced, force and motivated by eternal one. Inspired by Kant, Arne Naess make a distinction between 'moral action' and 'beautiful action'. According to him, moral actions are motivated by moral laws. But beautiful actions are like action of benevolent with inclination. We should act on the basis of moral laws but it richness to incline to treat with joy and respect. It is like the traits of human nature. We need to repress our self; we need to develop our self. The beautiful actions are natural and by definition it is not squeezed forth by the respect of moral laws. It increases maturity activity within the human beings, which gives the result of acting more constantly from 'Oneself as a Whole' (Næss, A., 1990, p. 85-86).

Joseph R. Das Jardins distinguishes needs, interests, and wants in order to comprehend Naess's idea of Self-realization (Jardins, J.R.D., 1994, p. 662-663). Needs include things like food, clothing, housing, clean water, non-toxic air, and so on that are necessary for survival. Along with companionship, health, and education, interests are the things that make people feel good. Additionally, wants are objectives or present desires that a person is drawn to. One might want a dinner party, two or three residences, a weeklong trip, and so on. When we look closely at these categories, we find that they overlap. Food that has enough calories that I need, want, and am interested in obtaining.However, there could be conflicts between them as well. Even if I want to study at home to increase my academic understanding, I still want to take a trip with some of my friends. According to Jardins, wishes are usually viewed as a function of culture, society, and personal preference. These are certainly fleeting and superficial, and as intelligent, environmentally conscious humans, we are encouraged by many moral norms to keep these fleeting desires apart from our fundamental interests.Pursuing these more elevated, sincere interests is how the good life is defined. We progressively realize who we are as we proceed down this path. The motto 'Self-Realization!' or 'Know thyself!' exhorts us to rise above these three levels in order to discover who we really are. It is a method of discovering that there is no discernible ontological difference between the Universal Self and my-self, or between humans and non-humans.

Psychological Transformation through Ecosophy

By encouraging a stronger bond between people and the natural environment, Naess' Ecosophy can be used as a therapeutic strategy for psychological change toward nature. Naess's notion of Self-realization, which broadens one's identity to embrace all living species, can transform the contemporary psychological separation from nature, which is frequently characterized by emotions of alienation, anxiety, or indifference. A more peaceful and caring relationship with nature results from people realizing how closely their well-being is linked to the health of the environment thanks to this enlarged sense of self (Naess, A., 2017).

Ecosophy fosters a mental transformation from considering nature as a useful thing to appreciating it as an essential component of one's own existence by advancing the notion that humans are an essential element of the broader ecosystem. Because people understand that they are not apart from nature but rather are involved in its processes, this viewpoint helps to reduce eco-anxiety and feelings of helplessness (Naess, A., 2013). Furthermore, by emphasizing non-hierarchical links between species, Naess can lessen the human-centric perspective on the environment and promote a mindset of duty and care for the natural world (Valera, L., 2018).

The notion that people need to experience a psychological shift that modifies their basic self-perception lies at the core of this metamorphosis. Critics counter that without structural changes in governance, economics, and policy, psychological transformation could not be enough to address urgent environmental challenges. Although ecosophy offers a crucial internal basis, in order to achieve sustainable results, it must be combined with institutional reforms like strict environmental laws, corporate responsibility, and international climate agreements(Bookchin, 1991; Dryzek, 2013). Therefore, Ecosophy should be viewed as strengthening the moral and emotional legitimacy of systemic interventions rather than replacing them.It is also important to recognize that not every person or culture will be equally open to Ecosophy. People's relationships with nature are influenced by cultural, religious, and socioeconomic variations, and ecological ideas inherited from the West may encounter opposition in some places (Guha, 1989). Therefore, rather than being a general prescription, ecosophy should be viewed as a pluralistic framework that can be adjusted to different worldviews and traditions.

An additional critique is that an excessive emphasis on personal psychological transformation may take precedence over group efforts. The global scope of environmental challenges necessitates the coordination of movements, institutions, and communities (Ostrom, 2010). In order to solve this, Naess's Ecosophy emphasizes that Self-realization is always relational rather than solitary, promoting collaboration and shared environmental responsibility.Critics also contend that people may be prevented from going through the profound change Ecosophy expects by the demands of contemporary life, such as social acceleration, technological dependence, and economic pressures. Even if this is difficult, Naess argues that even minor perspective changes, such local ecological engagement or conscious consumerism, can progressively broaden one's ecological identity (Naess, 1990). Ecosophy is thus not a rigid demand but a gradual, life-long process.

Another worry is that Ecosophy could come across as 'elitist', appealing primarily to people who have the luxury of putting environmental awareness ahead of survival or financial demands (Guha& Martinez-Alier, 1997). In order to solve it, ecosophy needs to be placed in environmental justice frameworks that acknowledge the hardships of underprivileged groups, guaranteeing that social justice and ecological ethics coexist.

Others contend that rather than psychological change, technological innovation—such as carbon capture, geoengineering, and renewable energy—offers more tangible solutions to environmental issues. Although technology is necessary, Naess contends that technological solutions run the risk of recreating the same exploitative logic in the absence of a corresponding change in attitudes. Technology is enhanced by ecosophy, which grounds it in a more profound ecological morality (Latour, 2004).Furthermore, not everyone will find deep ecology appealing, particularly those whose spiritual or cultural traditions have differing perspectives on the interactions between humans and nature (Taylor, 2010). Therefore, rather than asserting a monopoly on environmental philosophy, ecosophy should continue to be dialogical and open to various interpretations of ecological knowledge.

Critics further contend that structural reasons of ecological disasters, such as industrial systems, political lethargy, and capitalist overproduction, are not sufficiently addressed by psychological remedies like Ecosophy (Foster, 2000). This is accurate, but structural changes focus on the 'outer dimension' of transformation, whereas Naess's philosophy addresses the 'inner dimension'. In complementarity, both are necessary.

Finally, others argue that direct, hands-on strategies like local action, therapy, or resilience training—rather than abstract philosophical reflection—could be a superior way to reduce eco-anxiety (Clayton, 2020). These are significant, but Ecosophy offers a more profound, long-term foundation by fostering identity, meaning, and purpose within the ecological whole, guaranteeing that immediate coping is combined with long-term moral change. Ecosophy contends that people can develop a greater sense of ecological consciousness by extending their identity to encompass the natural world. A more harmonious relationship with nature results from this metamorphosis, which cultivates an internal understanding that one's own well-being is inextricably linked to the well-beingof the environment (Wang, C.L., 2019). Attitudes, behaviours, and beliefs of human beings naturally change toward greater ecological responsibility and sustainability as they start to recognize their own importance in the ecological system (Naess, A., 2011).

This psychological shift not only affects behaviour but fundamentally changes, thoughts and feelings of human beings about nature. People start to appreciate the intrinsic worth of the nature rather than viewing it as a resource to be used for selfish purposes, which strengthens their emotional and mental bonds with the natural world (Wang, C.L., 2019). By altering the psychological underpinnings that govern how people engage with nature, ecosophy can be a potent instrument for promoting long-term environmental sustainability. People gain a greater sense of responsibility for the biosphere as a whole as well as for their immediate surroundings as a result of this life-changing experience. Fostering the kind of ecological awareness required to address global environmental concerns and to promote more sustainable lives on an individual and societal level requires this shift in consciousness (McAndrew, F.T., 1993).

A key component of environmental psychology change is the change in how people view nature—from one of usefulness to intrinsic value. In the past, nature has frequently been seen through an anthropocentric lens, where its value is determined mostly by the advantages it can offer to people, such as resources for food, land for construction, or aesthetic components. For a large portion of human history, this utilitarian viewpoint has prevailed, encouraging a mindset that views nature as a resource to be used for financial or individual benefit (Rea, A.W. and MunnsJr, W.R., 2017).

The exploitation of natural resources has resulted in ecological

deterioration, biodiversity loss, and ecosystem destabilization, therefore this viewpoint has, nevertheless, greatly contributed to the environmental issues we currently confront. As a result, there has been an increasing awareness of the need to reconsider the relationship between humans and nature, abandoning the idea that the environment should only be used for practical purposes and instead appreciating its inherent worth (Sandler, R., 2012).

According to the concept of intrinsic value, nature is valuable even if it is not useful to humans; it has intrinsic significance just by existing. Fostering a more sustainable and respectful connection with the environment requires this change in perspective. People are more inclined to safeguard and conserve nature when they start to see its inherent worth, not for their personal gain but rather because it is precious in and of itself. This understanding of the intrinsic value of nature necessitates a philosophical and psychological shift that modifies not only how we engage with the environment but also how we perceive our place in it (Samuelsson, L., 2013).

The values, attitudes and behavioursof the human beings toward the environment are likely to alter as they embrace the ecological Self. This mental shift will promote a stronger sense of accountability and compassion for the environment, resulting in more ethical and sustainable behaviours(Naess, A., 1993). Furthermore, Naess's Self-realization will promote a shift from an anthropocentric worldview—where human interests come first—to an ecocentric one—where the health of the entire ecosystem is taken into account. As people realize that their own well-being is inextricably related to the health of the planet, they will become more committed to environmental conservation. Examining the external forces used to protect the environment, we discover that they mostly focus on changing behaviour, usually through the use of incentives, laws and regulations. However, these approaches usually overlook the importance of a connection to nature on an emotional level (Schmitt, T., 2003). Even if altering behaviour is crucial, it might not be enough to establish a sustainable environmental balance. Arne Naess's ecophilosophical approach, which offers a way to change both behaviour and emotion, will close this gap. According to Naess, a strong emotional connection to nature is necessary for true environmental stability. By helping people to understand their innate connection to the natural world, his philosophy of Self-realization will foster a deep emotional bond. More substantial and enduring environmental projects might be sparked by this link. Naess's ecosophy may therefore result in a profound psychological shift that affects not just our actions but also our

feelings toward the environment (Insel, P.M. and Moos, R.H., 1974). Thus, in addition to having an effect on the psychology of human beings, Naess's Self-realization may serve as motivation for more significant social reforms that are required to address the current environmental challenges (Proshansky, H.M., 1976).

Practical Applications of Ecosophy in psychological change

Arne Naess's Ecosophy can be put into practice by urging people to spend more time in natural settings and engage in mindfulness exercises to increase their awareness of and bond with the natural world. For instance, by immersing themselves in forests, participants in nature therapy programs such as forest bathing can cultivate a sense of calm and wellbeing. This approach promotes mental clarity and lessens emotions of separation by extending one's self to encompass the natural world, which is consistent with ecosophy (Naess, A., 1989).

Educational programs that teach adults and children about the interdependence of all living systems can also incorporate Naess's emphasis on Self-realization. A stronger emotional connection to the environment is fostered via eco-education programs that emphasize biodiversity protection and sustainable living. Ecological behavioursof human beings become more intentional and less motivated by guilt or obligation when they acknowledge that they are a part of nature rather than separate from it. This results in more sustainable lifestyles.

Another practical use of ecosophy is taking part in neighbourhood conservation initiatives or community projects that restore ecosystems. Engaging in projects like planting trees, cleaning up rivers, or promoting organic farming gives people the confidence to improve the environment. Naess's theory that acting in tune with environment helps us realize our expanded selves and reduces eco-anxiety and helplessness is reflected in this.

Incorporating ecosophy into private routines such as journaling or meditation enables people to consider their relationship with the natural world. People can understand their place in the ecosystem by deliberately developing attitudes of respect for all living things (Trevisam, E., Braga, J.T. and Braga, I.T., 2020). Group environments, such deep ecology-based workshops or environmental retreats, offer forums for group introspection and change. In order to foster psychological transformation, participants might examine their relationship with nature and match their values with ecological consciousness.

Ecosophy promotes sustainable lifestyle and consumption choices on a daily basis, such as cutting back on waste, endorsing ethical companies, or switching to plant-based diets. These sensible choices not only help the environment but also support a mentality change as people see their behaviour as manifestations of a more profound ecological identity (Cavazza, E., 2014). People who connect their habits with ecological ideals feel more fulfilled and have a feeling of purpose, which lessens the cognitive dissonance that unsustainable conduct can cause. Thus, Naess's Ecosophy provides a number of useful applications that promote mental change in the direction of a happy coexistence with nature.

His ideology assists people and communities in changing their viewpoints and behaviours to support both mental health and environmental sustainability by encouraging mindful interactions, ecological education and sustainable living.

Conclusion

According to Arne Naess, ecosophy is a significant reorientation of the human state rather than just a therapeutic response to ecological distress. It reclaims the notion that human happiness is inextricably linked to the flourishing of the Earth and opposes the reduction of nature to utility through its emphasis on Self-realization and biocentric equality. Despite being rooted in psychological change, this kind of vision transcends the private realm and has ontological and ethical ramifications for how societies view accountability, advancement, and sustainability.

Philosophical power of ecosophy is found in its inability to provide a comprehensive, all-inclusive answer. It offers a normative framework that allows for the critical positioning of technological, political, and cultural responses by emphasizing the inherent worth of all living things and their interdependence. Ecosophy reveals why systemic reforms are important and what goals they must pursue, not the other way around. It forces us to recognize that no policy, no matter how successful, can last unless there is a matching shift in how people view and interact with nature. Ecosophy must therefore be interpreted as a philosophical foundation where ecological ethics and pragmatic approaches may meet, serving as a catalyst for both individual and societal change. Its contribution is to reshape the very imagination that supports physical action, not to replace it. Ecosophy has a unique role in this regard by reminding us that the regeneration of human subjectivity is

inextricably linked to the existence of ecosystems. Adopting ecosophy means realizing that the development of a self that understands itself as a part of the Earth, rather than technological mastery, is the most profound kind of sustainability.

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