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The Role of Knowledge and Action in Man's Gradual Perfection According to Sadra

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Abstract

The Human soul has two faculties of theoretical intellect and practical intellect. The soul's divine matter has the potential to elevate and seek absolute perfection and if man abandons it purposelessly, it will go towards darkness. The gradually perfecting and evolutionary qualities of the soul are among the indisputable principles of Sadrian philosophy and substantive motion is one of its main arguments. Based on this, man is constantly in a state of motion and becoming. The main discourse of this article is that man's gradually perfecting motion in Sadrian philosophy towards ultimate happiness and the peak of existence is not possible except through knowledge and action. Knowledge and action correlate to one another and each is the cause for the development and actualization of a more perfect degree of the other. Although, in terms of assigning value knowledge is higher than action because in the initial stage knowledge is the cause for action in a way that without it action has no meaning; and in higher stages as well, knowledge is the purpose of action and action is the prelude and constituent of knowledge which results in the removal of inner and outer obstacles and veils, i.e. it creates the groundwork so that man's divine existence becomes manifest and results in a knowledge known as "Divine Knowledge".

Keywords

soul, knowledge, action, substantive motion, gradual perfection, Sadra.



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Introduction

The human soul has two faculties: the theoretical and practical intellect. The theoretical intellect is in respect to the essence of the soul and the practical intellect is in respect to the association of the soul with the body. Therefore the soul has the two capabilities of elevating and seeking perfection towards God and descending into darkness. This article studies the circumstance and levels of the elevation of the soul through knowledge and action and how they interact according to Sadra.

Man's Reality

According to Sadra, the whole of man's reality is his soul and all the perfections that he attains through the soul's perfective motion are justified. Man's soul is essentially unbodied but at the same time requires tools and faculties to serve it. Of the most important of its faculties is the faculty of intellect. The soul essentially has the capacity to attain perfection and man's perfectiveness in Transcendental Philosophy is a matter that has a close relationship with some of Sadra's philosophical principles like substantive motion and the "real and diluted" (haqiqat and raqiqat) principle.

- a. Substantive motion: according to the theory of substantive intensive motion, man's existence is one with motion and becoming and man has a unified personal identity which traverses the levels of perfection through perfective and intensive motion and with his own volition and free-will.
- b. The "real and diluted" principle explains the common perfect attributes between man and God and many of the rules that apply to God also apply to man albeit with the preservation of levels in regards to man. Therefore, man can traverse the levels of perfection and elevation to the extent of human potential and thus, according to Sadra, the path of perfection, perfective motion and essential and internal transformation is open to all and man can become the manifestation of Divine names and qualities.

The Interaction of Knowledge and Action in Man's Gradual Perfection

Man possesses theoretical and practical faculties and through theoretical faculties gains knowledge and cognizance and through his practical one performs actions. Therefore, knowledge and action are considered as the essential pillars for the actualization of the soul's perfection.

Sadra explains the effect and impact of knowledge and action in the process of the gradual perfection of the soul through the example of repentance and says that repentance is a practical measure that materializes in response to man's

knowledge of the fact that sins are deadly; i.e. whenever man attains knowledge of the annihilative characteristic of sins, a state of regret is born in him which results in repentance; therefore, every knowledge leads to a state and every state is the root of an action. According to Sadra if man acts upon the requirements of knowledge, his soul will be purified and he will receive mystical intuition because knowledge and action are correlated to each other and each is the cause for the growth of the other and actualization of a more perfect stage for man in a two-way process; i.e. knowledge leads to action and action is a cause for the creation of knowledge and cognizance in higher stages. This new knowledge creates new action suitable to it and in the same way that action also creates an emphatic knowledge. In other words, in the initial stages, knowledge is a prelude to action, but in the higher stages, action is a prelude to knowledge, i.e. it removes the obstacles and veils of the soul and provides the groundwork so that man's divine existence manifests itself and it leads to a knowledge known as "Divine Knowledge".

Regarding the effect of knowledge on the soul and its perfection, the important issue is that according to Sadra, the knowledge that leads to the perfection and elevation of the soul is knowledge of God and His attributes, of Divine angels and His Prophets (peace be upon them); because in Sadrian philosophy, the soul would be more perfect in proportion to the extent of the higher existential levels of its perceptions. On the other hand, reasoning is the highest level of perception and God possesses the most intense level and stage of existence and whoever has a more complete and perfect existence, his intellectual existence in the mind of the knower is more complete and perfect; therefore, knowledge of God and intellection regarding Him has the most intense effect in the elevation and perfection of the soul. It is notable that in Sadrian philosophy, the theoretical and practical faculties of the soul unite in the higher stages of perfection and as a result, man's knowledge is his action and vice versa.

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A Study of Jalal al-Din Davani's View Regarding the Relationship between Possible Beings and the Necessary Being: Dependency or Relationality?

Ilahe Zare* | Abbas Jevareskian** | Qasem Kakaei*** |
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Abstract

According to Sadra, the relationship between possible beings and the Necessary Being is dependency. He believes that all other Muslim philosophers before him, including Jalal al-Din Davani understood this relationship to be relational. However, Davani, who in his works holds that the relation between the cause and the effect is a kind of "attribution", explains this relation in two different forms, the first of which is known as the theory of Zawq al-Ta'alluh (Inclination to Divinity); from his views in this regard one can mostly conclude the relationality of possible beings. In the second form he uses the concept of emanation instead of causality and the notion of the source of attributions (Um al-Nisab) to more precisely explain the concept of "attribution" and considers it to be synonymous with manifestation and emanation in a way that one can say Davani's view corresponds to that of Sadra concerning personal unity. In this paper, firstly it is shown that the second approach to Davani's view is a more complete and precise one and secondly, it is concluded that two matters caused Sadra to believe that Davani considered possible beings to be relational beings: Davani's unsuccessful explanation of his intended meaning and Sadra's inattention to the second form of the explanation of "attribution".

Keywords

Jalal al-Din Davani, relational being, dependent being, attribution, emanation.



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Introduction

Jalal al-Din Davani (830-908 SH) was one of the philosopher's of the Shirazi school of thought who is mostly known for his theory of Inclination to Divinity. In this theory, he describes the type of existence of possible beings in relation to God by using the concept of attribution; and because he has likened possible beings to the accident, it is said that he considers the existence of possible beings to be types of attributive or relational existences; but, considering the meaning he intended and his extensive works, a higher meaning can be found for the concept of attribution and the type of existence of possible beings which is close to the views of Sadra in this regard, whereas this meaning has not been given due attention.

A Summary of the Article

Two views can be mentioned in the discussion of the type of existence of possible beings in relation to the Necessary Being: relational and dependent existence. Sadra claims that he is the first person to believe in the dependency of possible beings and holds that philosophers before him, including Jalal al-Din Davani believe possible beings to be relational beings. But a study of the works of Jalal al-Din Davani shows traces of belief in the dependency of possible beings.

Multiple articles have been printed in an attempt to converge between Davani's theory of Inclination to Divinity and Sadra's views; for example: "Personal Unity According to Davani", by Hossein Muhammed Khani; "A Comparative Study of the Philosophical Explanation of Personal Unity of Existence According to Davani and Sadra", by Baqer Hossein Lou and Hamed Naji; "A Study of the theory of Inclination to Divinity Concerning Unity of Existence", by Mahmoud Qayumzadeh; "Causality According to Jalal al-Din Davani and Sadra"; but regarding the concept of Davani's "attribution" also an article has been written by Munizheh Palangi titled: "Attribution Theory in Davani's Thought", in which they have compared this concept to Aristotle's "homonyms in a single attribution" and Sadra's "Illuminationist Affixation". But in the present paper more proofs and more extensive analysis of the concept of "attribution" and particularly the concept of the source of attributions has been accumulated through study of more of Davan's sources and works, including a commentary which was written by one of his students in the treatise of al-Zowra'. By distinguishing between his explanations concerning the theory of Inclination to Divine and theory of emanation and on the other hand, distinguishing the theory of specific gradational existence and Sadra's theory of personal unity, the concept of "source of attributions" in the theory of emanation was identified as being equivalent and consistent with dependent existence in Sadra's personal unity idea. Accordingly, first the distinction between relational and dependent existence has been addressed and Sadra's intent regarding the dependency of the effect has been explained; in the next step, through study of other evidence and views in Davani's

works, the concept of attribution has been analyzed and we specify whether relational existence or dependent existence can be deduced according to Davani's concept of attribution.

The concept of attribution in Davani's views has been explained in two forms and the second form completes the first. In the first form, Davani presents an initial and vague concept of attribution. He considers existence to be limited only to God and on the hand is faced with multiplicities which he cannot consider as existing and neither can he refute them. Therefore, he uses the concept of attribution in order to provide this meaning. But in the second form, he presents attribution with the concept of initial relation and limits it to the relationship between God and other than Him and considers it to be synonymous with manifestation and emanation. But Sadra, as the inventor of the theory of considering possible beings to be dependent, believes that Davani's writings confirm the relationality of existence, whereas he has not mentioned anything of the second form of attribution; this is while that theory is totally correspondent with Sadra's theory of manifestation and the explanation of personal unity in regards to dependent existence.

Ultimately, it must be sad that even though Davani's intent and meaning of attribution corresponds with dependent existence (according to Sadra's personal unity theory), however, one cannot claim that his words are equal to that of Sadra's; because, one cannot find the discipline and cohesiveness of Sadra's Transcendental Philosophy in Davani's works, which is why he has not been successful in explaining some terms and examples.

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The Equality of Tajarri and 'Isyan in Violating the Law of Will

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Abstract

This article focuses on the relation between Tajarri (insolence, audacity) and the Law of Will: has the Law of Will been violated in instances of Tajarri or, in other words, has the Law of Will been disobeyed, broken and defied? This article does not focus on the circumstance of the external act in which Tajarri has occurred. Therefore, one can consider the present discussion to apply to instances where an external act has not taken place, a circumstance that the agent abstains from committing an act against the law due to the presence of obstacles and in doing so does not extend Tajarri to the domain outside of his self. It will be shown that in the area of natural dispute and conflict, there has certainly been no violation of the law, in the same way that in instances of 'Isyan (transgression), there has absolutely been a breach of the law; in this case, the violation of the law by the agent in instances of Tajarri is linked with the violation of the law by the agent in instances of 'Isyan in terms of ruling; rather, it can be said that the violation of the law by the agent in instances of Tajarri has no difference from that of 'Isyan.

Keywords

Law of Will, duty, natural dispute, Tajarri, 'Isyan.

Introduction

Man's actions are defined either by natural law, psychological law or intellectual law. An action that is determined by the law of intellect is man's most specific act. An intellectual act is formed of intellectual perception and intellectual will.

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In contrast to a natural act and a psychological act, in an intellectual act the will is warranted according to the understanding of the law and not just due to the law alone. The intellect's main condition in terms of action is the condition of will and therefore, the law of intellect in terms of action is known as the law of will. Whenever will is determined according to its own law or pure intellectual law, a pure intellectual act is formed in the natural world.

Along with the capacity of the intellect in being present during action, there are also other natural faculties that man possesses that are also present during action. The practical capacity of the intellect is not at odds with the practical capacities of these non-intellectual faculties; however, there is a possibility of conflict between the two. This conflict which manifests in the form of conflict and disputes regarding the determining of the will can result in the will being inconsistent and contradictory with these faculties. Man's responsibility is determined through his intellectual causality; intellectual causality is the will that rises only from pure intellect (= choice = free will) and is free of all non-intellectual determinants.

Summary

Considering the intellect's recognition of its own practical law which has been completed and perfected through the doctrine of the last Prophet (peace be upon him and his household), compliance means the correspondence between man's actions and the law of intellect if this law has determined the will. In contrast to compliance is rebellion where man's actions do not correspond with the law of intellect and the will is determined through non-intellectual faculties. Sometimes man makes a mistake either in recognizing this law or in the corresponding stage. In both cases, particularly the second, *Tajjarri* and *Inqiyad* (obedience) are placed alongside obedience and *'Isyan*. *Tajjarri* refers to the audacity to take steps to violate the law, even though due to a mistake this violation does not actually take place; *Inqiyad* refers to submission to the law when, for example, a mistake has occurred in the correspondence of the law with a particular matter. Our question in this paper is that has a transgression/*'Isyan* occurred in instances of *Tajjarri* in relation to the law of the intellect and does the title of transgression/*'Isyan* apply to instances of *Tajjarri*?

In order to achieve a more precise answer to this question, we will first address it in the area of natural conflict and dispute. In this dispute, sometimes a person makes a decision to lie based on non-intellectual practical faculties, but by bringing forth its own law, the intellect weakens his previous decision and pulls him towards its own law. This commuting of the will between the faculty of intellect and non-intellectual faculties stems from man's nature and no one is free of it. In this case, only the possibility of daring to violate the law of intellect is surmised.

In Tajarri, daring to transgress from the law of intellect is surmised; an analysis of Tajarri shows that transgression from the law of intellect has occurred as far as the person's free will is concerned.

In this paper, three arguments have been presented which show that transgression from the law has occurred in instances of Tajarri. Some objections have been raised against these arguments; however, the author believes they can be answered.

The first argument considers every action of a person who possesses intellect to be an instance of a matter which that person has willed so that his action is actualized under it in the external world.

The second argument considers Tajarri to reveal the incorrect will of the agent with the purpose of violating the law; a will that is ugly and its evilness extends to the action that is connected to it. The objection raised against this argument is that this incorrect and bad will makes the action bad only when an actual bad action has also taken place because of it; whereas in case of Tajarri it is not so. The answer given to this objection is that the title of transgression of the law in Tajarri is actualized and finds objectivity during an action with the presence of the agent's mental or spiritual factors like determining the will to violate the law. In other words, Tajarri is itself an instance of transgressing against the law and therefore, the common intellect differentiates between a person who audaciously seeks to violate the law and a person who submits to it, even though they may be equal in terms of the external act.

The third argument considers certainty regarding the goodness or badness of an action to be one of the complete causes of its being good or bad. In critique of this argument it has been mentioned that the matters that constitute good and bad must be from the category of voluntary matters, in contrast to the certainty that a person pays absolutely no attention to while performing an action and does not make it a condition of his action. The answer to this objection lies in considering the being good or bad of voluntary acts to be noumenal and in placing certainty among the conditions of the compliance of the agent to the law.

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The Subject's Embodiment In The Midst of Ontology And Ethics: A Phenomenological Survey of The Body In Martin Heidegger And Emmanuel Levinas' Thoughts

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Abstract

In his *Being and Time*, Heidegger does not illustrate Dasein's embodiment but he postpones his illustration for some time in the future, namely in his *Zollikon Seminars* (1959-1969). In the seminars, Heidegger provides his clearest elucidation for this primordial fact that Dasein's embodiment is openness to the world; Dasein's existence extends beyond and over its physical body thereby construing and analysing the world from an existential standpoint. He puts forward the title "bodying forth" for this primordial fact. Dissimilarly, Levinas, by adopting his peculiar ethical approach, criticises the Heideggerian Dasein: Heideggerian Dasein is sufficiently not human (i.e. "from flesh-and-blood"). Levinas lays stress upon the fact that the subject's face-to-face encounter with the Other can be taken from the perspective of embodied reality. A novel wisdom of the body will be constituted in the context of the I's ethical relationship with the Other and the I's widely open receptivity to fulfilling the Other's demands and needs. In this paper, having made an investigation into the subject's embodiment in both philosophers' different phenomenologies, a serious scrutiny will be given to the Levinasian critique of Dasein as it is insufficiently constituted "from flesh-and-blood".

Keywords

Embodiment, Emmanuel Levinas, Ethical Phenomenology, Fundamental Ontology, Martin Heidegger, *Zollikon Seminars*.



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Introduction

Embodiment occupies a peculiar place in both German and French phenomenologies; giving it a meticulous scrutiny can characterise phenomenologists' attitudes and approaches towards the world, thereby specifying the correlation between (human) existence and the world. Among different phenomenologists, Heidegger and Levinas have been selected as two opposite cases for comparison just because of their basic differences in attitudes to the subject-matter: Dasein's embodiment comes finally in line with understanding and interpreting fundamental ontology, that is, Dasein's existence is always able to interpret the world from outside/beyond its physical borderlines so as to come to understand the world. Thus, being-in-the-world, according to Heidegger, finds a specific interpretation of embodiment with an ontological analytic import. Unlike Heidegger's, Levinas' phenomenologisation of the body is in line with his Other-oriented ethics. A novel wisdom of the body takes its form from the I's ethical relation with the Other, and is also constituted out of the I's mere receptivity towards the Other's demands and needs. With this in mind, the sort of possibilities embodiment provides for the ethical I is a sort of sensibility and vulnerability -, namely of absolute passivity.

Objective and Method

The authors' main objective, in this paper, is to put forward a new comparison between two distinctive kinds of attitudes and approaches towards embodiment within philosophical tradition of phenomenology: ontology and ethics. What makes this investigation into the subject-matter necessary is the fact that the whole presence of the subject in the world comes to reality with its bodiliness; the reality about which Heidegger and Levinas are not in agreement with each other, and therefore are on the two opposite sides. Heidegger gives an excellent example of ontological analysis of embodiment to which Levinas stands in striking contrast; it can apparently be feasible to ground embodiment theory on the subject's moment of encounter with the Other. The body already gives the first and foremost motive for being an ethical subject (= ethical embodiment). Since this research is classified in the realm of basic (and not applied) research, the authors' advocated approach to the main questions about, and possibilities of both ontological and ethical embodiments is phenomenological; and accordingly, the method adopted to proceed with the subject-matter is a descriptive-interpretative one in order to bring about a justifiable reading of the from-library-taken notes.

Conclusion

Two significant approaches to embodiment within German and French phenomenologies stand in apparent contrast with each other: ontology and ethics.

A brilliant exponent of the former is Heidegger and that of the latter is Levinas. Levinas' criticism of Dasein's embodiment is reliant upon its abstractness and (pure) ontological directedness; for (human) existence to be in relation with itself and its surrounding world it is necessary to be sensitive and receptive toward the Other's demands and material needs (= ethical embodiment).

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Absence Causation and a Critical Review of a Non-Realistic Theory

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Abstract

Causality in some contexts such as “Hamid’s failure to water his plants was a cause of their death.” and “Rickets is caused by a deficiency of vitamin D” can be called “absence causation”. In this paper, the main question is whether the use of the term “cause” in such instances due to carelessness and a misuse of language or denotes something that is real and independent of our minds. Defending the first view can be called “anti-realism” in absence causation and the second as “anti-realism”. Helen Beebe is one of the contemporary philosophers that defend anti-realistic theory of absence causation. Her main argument is, in short, as Davidson said, that causation is a relation between events, whereas there are no negative events, therefore, there is no genuine absence causation. However, the main objection that those like her encounter is the common and strong linguistic intuition in sentences like Hamid’s inattentiveness to plants. Beebe has argued that our intuitions in these cases are wrong and the author strives to show that her arguments have failed to achieve this goal.

Keywords

absence causation, causal anti-realism, causal realism, Helen Beebe, Donald Davidson, David Lewis.



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Introduction

In an ordinary sentences like: “Hamid’s failure to water his plants was the cause of their withering.” Non-existential matters have been placed as one side of the causality relationship. More importantly, in some legal or moral claims such as “the death of the patient is caused by his doctor’s refusal to perform surgery.” cause or effect is absence. This type of causation can be called “absence causation”. The analysis and study of the different aspects of absence causation has attracted the attention of some philosophers in the past few decades.

In respect to the metaphysics of absence causation, two opposite views can be recognised: realism and anti-realism. According realism, absence causation is genuine and cannot ultimately be reduced to existential causation nor non-causal realities. In contrast, anti-realism does not believe in any genuineness for absence causation and explains it under existential causation or non-causal realities. Helen Beebee is one of contemporary anti-realists in this realm. Going forward, I will try to explain and then evaluate her arguments. I believe her arguments are unable to show the anti-reality of absence causation.

Beebee’s anti-realism and her arguments

Beebee’s main reason to deny the reality of absence causation is upholding Davidsonian view of causation which she calls “non-relationism”. According to this theory, causation is always a relation between events. Her main argument is that believing in a reality for absence causation raises a dilemma, neither option of which can be accepted: either non-relationism (i.e. it is not so that causation is always a relation), or the existence of negative events.

By assuming relationism and caliming that it is the dominant view in contemporary philosophy, Beebee has tried to reject the problems of refuting the reality of absence causation. The most serious objection she encounters is the strong verbal intuition present in previous examples.

Her strategy to rebut the objection consists of two main steps: 1) apart from the abovementioned examples which are positive causal claims about non-existential matters, there are some negative causal claims as well; for example, Hamid who is completely unfamiliar with Sa’id, and who is unable to put out the fire at Sa’id’s house, is not the cause for its destruction. According to Beebee a non-relationist must refute these negative claims. Therefore, we have two types of intuitional causal claims about absence causation: positive and negative; a relationist considers negative claims to be false and a non-relationist considers the positive claims to be false. None of them consider both of them to be true. 2) The positive causal claims about absences are false.

To demonstrate the falseness of the positive claims, Beebee has tried to first show that there is no any objective difference between positive and negative causal claims; thus, one of them is necessarily false and next tries to explain them away by explaining our mistake in positive intuitions. Beebee’s explanation for

positive intuitions is to show the possibility of mistaking causal explanation with absence causation. Causation is metaphysical relation between events whereas causal explanation is an epistemic relation between descriptions of events not between events themselves. Although the explanative claim that “Hamid’s plants wilted because he failed to water them” is true but this corresponding causal claim that “Hamid’s inattentiveness to his plants was the cause of their withering” is false. Beebee accepts the explanative role of non-real facts but believes that these facts cannot be one side of a causal relationship.

Assessment of Beebee’s arguments

I think that there are at least four objections to her arguments. The first is that she cannot convince a non-relationist to consider Hamid’s inability in putting out the fire to be the cause for the destruction of Sa’id’s house because, there is no reason for the non-relationist to consider the lack of relation to be a sufficient condition of causation, he simply considers the existence of a relation to not be a necessary condition. The second objection is that Beebee either presupposes falsity of positive causal intuitions or is inclined to conclude - from the possibility of our failure to distinguish between causation and causal explanation – the occurrence of such a mistake, which is incorrect.

The third is that she hasn’t argued on the lack of objective difference between positive causal claims and negative claims but has only presented arguments for not finding a difference. However, not finding is not proof of inexistence.

The fourth is that a non-relationist can, in agreement with Lewis, even in instances of non-relation like the example of Hamid’s inability in putting the fire at Sa’id’s house, give an unvarying judgment and consider Hamid’s inability to be a cause but do not mention it as such because it is not particularly note-worthy. Not mentioning does not equate to not believing. There are many non-existential matters that have a causal role but are usually not mentioned because doing so does not hold any importance.

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Morality and Alienation: A Criticism of Railton's Account of Consequentialism

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Abstract

In recent decades, one of the challenges facing morality is its alleged conflict with what are among the most important contributors to human well-being. It is claimed that adopting moral theories may alienate one from that which makes one's life worthwhile, such as her affections, her personal commitments, as well as from other people. In his paper, "Alienation, Consequentialism, and the Demands of Morality", Railton attempts to answer this objection from a consequentialist point of view. For this purpose, he has formulated a new version of consequentialism, which he calls "sophisticated consequentialism". This version, he thinks, avoids the problem of necessitating alienation. This paper first provides an explanation of Railton's formulation of consequentialism and then goes on to criticize the solution he has devised for the problem of alienation by using this formulation and while showing certain incoherencies in the proposed formulation, refuses to accept it as a new version of consequentialism. It is also argued that there are problems in how Railton's account solves the problem of alienation which ultimately render it non-consequentialist.



Keywords

consequentialism, morality, alienation, factors of human happiness, Railton, sophisticated consequentialism.

Introduction

For almost half a century, some normative theories of ethics have been criticized on the grounds that living up to their demands may alienate one from one's personal commitments, one's affections, or one's intimates. The question is that

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if our actions are supposed to be ultimately motivated by morality, is there any room left for our other commitments such as love, friendship, and various spontaneous actions, which are among the most basic components of happiness and of what make our life worthwhile. In reality, if a moral theory guides us towards a moral life that results in our alienation from these crucial elements, it means that it has an incompatible conflict with what constitutes our well-being, and this gives us sufficient reason for refusing it. In his paper, “Alienation, consequentialism, and the demands of morality”, Peter Railton tries to answer to this objection on behalf of consequentialist theories. In order to do so, he presents a version of consequentialism that he thinks may reduce the problem of alienation in morality. This paper examines and criticizes the way Railton’s proposal tries to solve the problem.

Railton’s Defence of Consequentialism

Aiming to present a version of consequentialism that does not alienate us from what makes our lives worthwhile, Railton proposes a distinction between subjective consequentialism and objective consequentialism and advocates what he calls sophisticated consequentialism, which he defines as a standing commitment to leading an objectively consequentialist life but not to a particular form of decision making, therefore avoiding any obligation for seeking to lead a subjectively consequentialist life. To bring about the best outcome, a sophisticated consequentialist may take into consideration everything other than the outcome of a certain action; because she realizes that if individuals possess certain enduring motivational patterns, character traits, or *prima facie* commitments to rules, the overall result would be better, even though they would miss some opportunities to maximize the good. For example, she may inculcate in himself certain dispositions to act rapidly in emergencies when there is no opportunity for consequentialist deliberations. This conception of consequentialism, according to Railton, not only permits our enduring commitments and personal relations, but also sees them as necessary, and therefore does not result in alienation. However, Railton believes that alienation is not always undesirable; he mentions cases in which, in a confliction between moral judgements and non-alienation, the former has a greater claim on us.

Criticism of Railton’s Project

Three aspects of Railton’s project are susceptible to criticism: his axiology; the distinctions he proposes between subjective, objective, and sophisticated hedonism or consequentialism; and his success in solveing the problem through making these distinctions. The first objection concerns the apparently incorrect supposition he has that intention is voluntary and considers it possible to refrain

from seeking happiness in order to become happy. This assumption seems problematic since having such an intention demands a contradictory will. But the main problem is the second one which concerns the distinction he proposes between objective consequentialism and sophisticated consequentialism, which does not seem acceptable. Moreover, *with respect to the actions of the agent who is obligated to them*, there is no difference between those views and subjective consequentialisms: According to all three views, one must first define what maximizes one's happiness and, at the same time, has no choice but to choose actions based on this very knowledge that he himself has attained. Given that these distinctions as well as the advantage Railton assumes for sophisticated consequentialism are the basis of his argument in dealing with the problem of alienation, his argument fails if one does not accept these distinctions.

It seems however, that what Railton undertakes through making these distinctions is providing a more comprehensive understanding of the way we promote "maximal good"; i.e., he views "considering the consequences" not as an individual's narrow focus at a specific point in time on the consequences of what she does, but as a consideration of the consequences of one's actions from a wider and deeper perspective.

However, this project needs to meet two conditions in order to be successful: firstly, it should be able to show that non-alienation from what is valuable to us always eventually gives rise to more good and secondly, if it seeks to distinguish between that which leads to more good from that which does not, it requires certain *consequentialist* tools; but Railton can neither show that point, nor has access to these tools. As a result, it seems that he should either withdraw his claim or abandon pure consequentialism.

Conclusion

Railton tries to present a more well-thought-out version of consequentialism. However, firstly, the basis of his argument, i.e. dividing of consequentialism to subjective, objective, and sophisticated forms is disputable, and secondly, even if his proposal is examined independent of this argument, it consists of non-established claims and also requires deviation from pure consequentialism. Railton seeks a deliberated way for moral decision-making which takes into account all reasonable considerations, but, on the one hand, such a theory, if possible, cannot be purely consequentialist, and on the other hand, considerations which play a role in morality are so extensive and complicated that the possibility of successfully incorporating them in a single theory seems very unlikely.

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The Role of Imagination in Constituting Objectivity According to Kant

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Abstract

Kant believes providing objectivity is one of the most essential functions of imagination. The role of imagination in establishing objectivity includes both the epistemic determinant judgment related to understanding, and the aesthetic reflective judgment. Kant constantly places imagination in connection with matters such as understanding, self-consciousness and/or pure intuition, or common sense, and reflective judgment. Imagination has always maintained a core role in relation to other faculties of cognition. This role could be simply regarded as the possibility of constituting objectivity. This paper seeks, in the first step, to critique pure reason by addressing how imagination in relation with understanding serves as a source of objectivity and then provides answers as to how imagination in its unity with common sense and the operation of reflection presented in the critique of the faculty of judgment, provides an objective reference to them, without which, the common validity for aesthetic-taste judgment will be lost. Hence, in Kant's view, imagination has a requisite role in providing objectivity.

Keywords

imagination, understanding, self-consciousness, formation, reflective action, common validity, common sense.



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Introduction

Imagination in Kantian philosophy has an important role. In this essay we try to determine the role of imagination. Kant claims the imagination plays an essential role in the constitution of objectivity. We can find the constitutive role of imagination in the *Critique of Pure Reason* and the *Critique of Judgment*. Kant believes providing objectivity is one of the most essential functions of imagination. The role of imagination in establishing objectivity includes both the epistemic determinant judgment, and the aesthetic reflective judgment. Kant constantly places imagination in connection with matters such as understanding, self-consciousness and/or pure intuition, or common sense, and reflective judgment. Imagination has always maintained a central role in relation to other faculties of cognition. This role can be simply considered as the possibility of constituting objectivity.

The role of Imagination in the *Critique of Pure Reason*

In the *Critique of Pure Reason* imagination serves understanding and has some essential functions without which objectivity is impossible. The first of these functions is that the imagination produces a transcendental formation which forms a connection between sensation and understanding in order to provide the possibility of applying categories of understanding. However, apart from this function, it is also considered as the origin of every kind of unity. For example, it creates unity in simple perceptions and creates the possibility of the formation of unity in sensory multiplicity; hence it can provide the condition for unity in manifold. Moreover, in relation to pure sensory intuitions, the imagination provides the possibility of their embodiment in time and space as a whole. Similarly, the imagination is the source of the unity of self-consciousness which is necessary for all our cognition. If we look at this collection of functions of imagination we will notice its essential role in the constitution of objectivity.

The role of imagination in the critique of power of judgment

In the critique of power of judgment, Kant doesn't take imagination to be in service of understanding; rather he regards it in its freedom. Here, imagination makes a connection with understanding as a whole. Although, this relation between them is not a conceptual one, rather, it is a type of harmony which Kant calls "the free game of imagination and understanding". The free game has an epistemological function and is evaluated in two parts: the analysis of something beautiful and transcendental deduction. In other words, Kant wants to demonstrate the communicability of cognition in human beings through this coordinated game; because if this kind of communicability is not possible, the objectivity of knowledge is impossible as a whole. Kant, however, evaluates imagination in relation with pure reflective judgment and the common sense (*sensus communis*) as well. In this case, imagination first

supplies the material for reflective judgment and then discovers “non-subjective others”, in its relation with the common sense. In fact, the reason for the universal validity of taste judgments is the possibility for comparing actual subjective judgment with the possible judgments of these objective others.

Conclusion

The role of imagination in the Critique of Pure Reason is so essential that without taking it into consideration, we cannot achieve any objectivity for the empirical rules gained through understanding and intuition and even experience itself loses its possibility as a judgment. Therefore, one can understand how imagination provides objectivity for judgments related to understanding.

Kant’s main concern in the Critique of Judgment, in which he addresses understanding and imagination in relation to each other, is an epistemological concern which cannot be explained through taste-aesthetic judgment. From this view, taste-aesthetic judgments come under cognitive judgments and Kant tries to provide a cognitive foundation based on the universal communicability of our cognitive faculties for the conformity of judgment with the object. On the other hand, in the transcendental deduction for the aesthetic judgments, Kant has another approach to imagination. In this approach, imagination combines with the act of reflection and *sensus communis*. By combining with the act of reflection, the imagination provides an represented form of perception which is necessary data for applying reflective judgment. From another aspect, by the eliminating specific condition of the subject and by creating the possibility for the comparison of subjective judgment with the possible judgments of others, the imagination provides the condition for the communicability of taste-aesthetic judgments based on the *sensus communis* which is in fact, providing the possibility of necessity for it. However, through the *sensus communis*, the imagination gains access to a non-objective and objective matter that is others. If others were not considered as objective persons that have possible judgments, valid universal communicability, and as a result, the necessity of taste-aesthetic judgments would not be achieved. By what has been discussed so far, it is clear that the function of imagination is essential for the constitution of objectivity in both critiques.

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Critical Analysis of the “No Relevant Difference” Argument in Defense of the Rights of Artificial Intelligences

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Abstract

There are many new philosophical queries about the moral status and rights of artificial intelligences; questions such as whether such entities can be considered as morally responsible entities and as having special rights. Recently, the contemporary philosophy of mind philosopher, Eric Schwitzgebel, has tried to defend the possibility of equal rights of AIs and human beings (in an imaginary future), by designing a new argument (2015). In this paper, after an introduction, the author reviews and analyzes the main argument and then deals with four criticisms which Schwitzgebel himself has presented and rejected and ultimately, the author presents and explains two new critiques against the argument. According to the writer, though the argument regarding his new criticisms and some other probable critiques is not convincing, or at least needs to be corrected, however, it holds appeal and raises questions and may open a new horizon for future questions and researches.**

Keywords

Artificial Intelligence, rights, ethics, philosophy of mind, Schwitzgebel.

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Introduction

Along with the remarkable progress of science, varied types of super computers, robots and artificial intelligences have emerged. The science of artificial intelligence is still at the initial stages of its awesome path. But at its very beginning, it has inspired new philosophical, ethical and legal questions.

A group of these philosophical questions are moral ones. In such questions, the main focus is on moral considerations about robots and other similar beings. In principle, what moral status may AIs have? Do we have moral responsibility to robots? What is our responsibility towards robots? Can robots have rights similar to animals and humans? Can robots be considered as moral or amoral agents as well? While we are designing and programming robots, should we assume that they have a moral responsibility for their operations and their consequences?

Recently, some philosophers of mind (such as Schwitzgebel: 2015) and Mara Garza have tried to provide an argument (with the title: “No Relevant Difference”) in defense of AI rights. The author seeks to first describe and review the argument and then to criticize it. The “No Relevant Difference” argument has two versions and the main controversy is about the second one.

The second version: The similarity of the moral status of human and AIs

Premise 1. If Entity A deserves some particular degree of moral consideration and Entity B does not deserve that same degree of moral consideration, there must be some *relevant difference* between the two entities that creates the foundation of this difference in their moral status.

Premise 2. There are possible AIs who do not differ in any such relevant or involved respects in the discussion, from human beings and their rights are similar to those of human beings

Conclusion

Therefore, there are possible AIs who deserve a degree of moral consideration similar to that of human beings.

The most important critique against the argument is the supposed “possibility” of some particular beings in the second challenging premise of the argument. Many matters which can be considered epistemologically possible (in terms of their conceivability) are in fact impossible metaphysically and in the external world. There is an important distinction between genuine possibility and conceivability. If we really want to discover whether the property or state we are conceiving as possible to be realized in the world, is really a possible one or not, we need to reasons which mostly depend on our scientific and empirical knowledge. Although conceivability can be a method for discovering metaphysical possibles and impossibles, nevertheless, it is fallible and can show possibles as impossible and vice versa.

I think that Schwitzgebel, and Garza have mixed up the two kinds of possibility regarding the possibility of the emergence of AIs who have the same psychological states as that of humans, without having a human body. Based on epistemic possibility, it can be conceived or imagined that it is possible that some robots, without having any human body, can have psychological states such as phenomenal consciousness, free will, feeling, introspection and so on. But considering possible metaphysical worlds which are more limited than conceivable possible worlds, we find that such beings are not metaphysically possible. My claim is that it is not metaphysically possible that a being can have human psychological properties but is not human.

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Art, Public Sphere: An Effort to Understand Arendt's Philosophy of Art

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Abstract

Hannah Arendt's philosophical thoughts have some theoretical proximity with her compatriot mentor Martin Heidegger and on the other hand are directly influenced by contemporary political events like the rising of new forms of regimes and the Second World War. Hannah Arendt is a political philosopher who understands art to be a way to achieve a type of political life and tries to revive a type of political social life which she believes has been corrupted and lost in the modern era by using a liberal foundation like art. Considering that Arendt has not written a distinct and compiled work under the title of political aesthetics or philosophy of art, in this paper we will try to understand her aesthetics which has been presented in the context of a type of political philosophy by collecting, compiling, reviewing and analyzing Arendt's scattered views in her books, articles, lessons and notes. In Arendt's philosophy, the disappearance and corruption of the political character of human life is closely related to the corruption and transmutation of the public sphere. Therefore, the public sphere and its maintenance can somehow be considered as Arendt's political philosophy ideal. The importance of this topic can be realized only when we understand how Arendt thinks the maintenance of the public sphere requires the existence of diversities and how the maintenance of diversity requires art. Due to the character of her philosophy we will review the philosophical foundations which were undefined in her works to make it possible to understand her aim of some kind of political aesthetics which is hidden in her philosophy.

Keywords

Hannah Arendt, pluralism, public sphere, private sphere, phenomenology, *bios politikos* (political life).



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Introduction

This article seeks to find and establish an aesthetic theory which is discoverable through a systematic reading of Arendt's works. Art for Arendt has some political functions and dimensions but this political aspect does not take root from political content or theory like that of political or philosophical categories. A work of art is a phenomenon that creates a sphere which makes political life possible merely with its emergence. In this article we try to address the circumstances of the formation of this mechanism and study the relation between the sphere of manifestation of art (the public sphere) and artistic phenomena according to Arendt. This relation is a mutual one; everything that happens in the public sphere is political and everything that happens in the private sphere would be non-political, i.e., the public sphere and politics are interwoven. Our study on Arendt's scattered works, notes and lectures show us that artistic phenomena and even morality find some political functions only if they appear in the public sphere. Although, in this paper we will address only how the public sphere and works of art depend on each other and in order to do so, we have taken into account other key concepts - like plurality - in Arendt's thought.

Abstract Argument

The main question is: if Arendt had dedicated a whole book mainly focused on aesthetics and art instead of scattered notes and letters, what hypothetical theories or assertions and standards would this thesis contain?

Arendt's principal proposition in this field is that art belongs to the public sphere. Artists display their works in the public sphere. We should mention that Arendt's understanding of public sphere is an environment in which all those present have come together regardless of any particular classifications or gender, nationality etc. This kind of plurality is not limited to human beings and the different forms of human life; but rather, also indicates the variety and number of forms of phenomena manifestation. The meaning of the world that Arendt has in mind also has clear and strong semantic relation with her idea of non-human phenomena like man-made artifacts. The "world", according to her, is something that manifests "among people" and art is also something that is among people.

The public sphere forms in circumstances conditioned to the presence of works of art; art is created in hopes of manifesting and appearing. The more the public sphere weakens, becomes smaller and unsound, works of art too increasingly address private and individual detail. One can conclude with certainty that if the public sphere did not exist, there would also be no art and without it, the plurality which is interwoven with existence would remain concealed and suppressed. Although, Arendt also looks at the issue from another angle; according to her, the public sphere could be more depraved and crumbling that it is without art.

Conclusion

What allows Arendt to transform art into a sphere for the revival of the public sphere and therefore establish political life is a result of her revision of the notion of politics. Arendt finds man to be a political animal and she emphasizes that politics in essence refers to man's participation in a sphere which relates to issues concerning collective and social life. Arendt claims that as one of the most important phenomenal manifestations of human life, art is lifesaving because it holds on to politics and also revives the public sphere as it panders to plurality and also because it needs the existence of the public sphere to be seen and to emerge. Art doesn't need to directly contain any clear political messages or implications in order to establish this link between art and politics. Art is political in that it does not manifest except in the public sphere and in a domain that is determined without individual private needs. And according to Arendt, the public sphere is dependent on art because in the modern world there is no other phenomenon that could highlight plurality and therefore establish the public sphere like art does.

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