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Simone de Beauvoir on Freedom

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Abstract
While accepting ontological freedom, anchored in her existentialism, Simone de Beauvoir also shows how, material conditions limit women's freedom. I suggest we read de Beauvoir's account of freedom, not only alongside existentialism but importantly Marxism. De Beauvoir's account makes clear that although women's situation allows for some choices, the range of possibilities open to them is different from, and more restricted than the majority of men. Her notion of freedom is gendered. Freedom varies with circumstances, and women's freedom in society is curtailed. She draws attention to the ways in which social position can produce damaging situations of alienation and oppression. Marx stressed that in all circumstances agency was possible but constrained by circumstances. He was also concerned with what changes in material conditions would enable the proletariat to have possibilities which would reduce alienation and facilitate human potential. De Beauvoir took up this issue with regard to women. She however, adds the way in which ideologies of femininity become *internalised* and frame the possibilities which seem open to women. I argue, there is no neat distinction between ontological and practical freedom in de Beauvoir's account, and that changes in circumstances can improve ontological freedom.

Introduction

Toril Moi (1999: viii) suggests, "freedom – not identity, difference or equality – is the fundamental concept in de Beauvoir's feminism." Simone de Beauvoir insists that women and men are free human beings capable of independent, creative action. However, women's situation, historically, economically, biologically and psychologically conspire to render them as inferior oppressed beings, made into objects; which leaves a woman's road to liberation a complicated issue.

For Moi, *The Second Sex* (1949), "provides a brilliant starting point for future feminist investigations of the body, agency and freedom." (Moi 1999: 83) The basis of this article is to explore de Beauvoir's view of freedom and

agency for women, and how she argues, their freedom in society is curtailed. I will argue the complexity of her account is informed by her acceptance alongside her existentialism, of Marxism. I argue that by examining de Beauvoir's work in the light of Marx we can resolve some of the tensions previously highlighted in her work (Le Doeuff 1980; Lloyd 1983), and, in particular we can derive from *The Second Sex* a coherent, and enlightening account of human freedom.

On the last page of the conclusion to *The Second Sex,* de Beauvoir cites the *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts* (1844), as an endorsement of Marx' vision, of a non-alienated society where humans (including women), have the possibility of exercising freedom and agency without oppressive circumstances. I suggest that de Beauvoir modifies key existentialist concepts by reading them within the context of a historical materialism derived from Marx.

De Beauvoir identifies herself as an existentialist and shares the insistence on humans as for-themselves defined in terms of ontological freedom:

> Every subject posits itself as a transcendence concretely, through projects; it accomplishes its freedom only by perpetual surpassing towards other freedoms; there is no other justification for present existence than its expansion towards an indefinitely open future. (De Beauvoir 1949: 17)

Existential freedom is often described as having two different aspects (McCulloch, 1994):

1. Ontological freedom is the freedom which makes us human. The responsibility of choice and the consequence of such a choice lay entirely with the existent. There are no excuses or conditions that determine or require any decision to be made. A person is the sum of their freely chosen actions. This is the freedom as transcendence, referred to in the previous quote; freedom in this sense is usually regarded as an all or nothing matter.

2. Practical freedom refers to one's situation, a condition of our freedom, that which the subject asserts itself against. One always finds oneself in a situation in relation to which freedom to make choices is conceivable. I choose future actions from the range of possible options this particular situation affords. Practical freedom admits of degrees.

I shall suggest, however, contrary to the traditional view of de Beauvoir as merely incorporating concepts from Sartre's existentialism, that de

Beauvoir's account interprets these concepts in a Marxist way. De Beauvoir argues that woman's current existence operates differently to that of man's, as hers sets limitations to what projects are possible for her, in ways men's do not. The notion of freedom is gendered. De Beauvoir's view of women is, "our freedom is not absolute, but situated." (Moi 1999: 65/6) Choices are to be understood as reactions to situations and, in the case of woman, her situation is experienced as oppressive, and constricts her from engagement in projects. However, what she makes of that situation is nonetheless not fixed. Choices, for de Beauvoir are always possible; but they may each be problematic in some way. For her, this situation impacts on a woman's ontological freedom; on her capacity for transcendence.

Kruks (2012: 33), suggests for de Beauvoir, "oppression" is an obstacle to autonomy. Oppression is produced by objectifying woman, restricting social roles and making woman the non-reciprocal Other. Life is experienced by woman (more so than man), as a conflict; a conflict between her human existence and the societal demands of womanhood. How one engages and makes sense of the world as human, is bound with the fact that one is a woman. De Beauvoir examines power and oppression and the effects this has on agency and freedom, not only for an individual but also on a general, social level. De Beauvoir discusses how patriarchal ideology and practice require women to choose between embracing her womanhood, or rejecting femininity and therefore womanhood altogether, in order to embrace her humanity and freedom. Moi states:

> In a sexist society women often find themselves in situations where they are obliged to make a choice between being imprisoned in their femininity or having to disavow it altogether (…) The amount of time feminists have spent worrying about equality or difference is a symptom of the success of this ideological trap. A genuinely feminist position would refuse either option, and insist rather, that women should not have to choose between calling themselves women and calling themselves writers, or intellectuals. (Moi 1999: 206)

For Moi (1999: 206), de Beauvoir held, "a genuinely feminist position."

De Beauvoir is making a number of claims; firstly from an existential perspective woman is a human existent and therefore a free subject. Secondly from a phenomenological perspective, woman is produced and defined by man rather than by herself, and the definition is reliant on a patriarchal

ideology. Thirdly the contradictions that exist for woman, as a consequence of a patriarchal ideology, serve to promote her oppressed status and therefore inhibit her freedom. She is in effect claiming, that from a phenomenological point of view, there are limits to a woman's ontological freedom which, as an existentialist she embraces. Similarly a woman's possibilities are limited as her body is *experienced* as a potential obstacle, a burden to the exercise of freedom. However, she stipulates that woman is still free to transcend her practical situation. Persisting with her existentialism appears to be at odds with her phenomenology.

I suggest however that her argument, although displaying tensions is not incoherent. Women have to make some sense of their lives and they do this by choosing from the limited roles society offers, for example wife and mother. Many of the options are not satisfactory, they are limited and consequently this reduces the possibilities that women envisage for themselves. This limitation of choice within a framework that emphasises freedom and agency may seem contradictory. However, de Beauvoir views the human condition as one of ambiguity. Consciousness and materiality, freedom and constraint are *combined*, as fundamental within the lived experience of any embodied subject. De Beauvoir accepts ambiguity, the contradictory element of existence, and I will return to this later.

The apparent tensions between the phenomenological and the existential aspects of de Beauvoir's thought are, I shall argue, mediated by her historical materialism, influenced by Marx. Marx himself stressed that in all circumstances some agency was possible, but *what* agency was possible, was constrained by those circumstances. He was also concerned with what changes in material conditions would enable the proletariat to have possibilities which would reduce alienation and facilitate the expression of their human potential. De Beauvoir took up this question with regard to women. She recognises the importance of the material and ideological dimensions of existence, and suggests that we need to make changes to these dimensions of existence, if women's potential for freedom is to be extended and improved. For de Beauvoir, what becomes apparent is that there is no neat distinction between ontological freedom and practical freedom; her account is more complex than this neat categorisation allows. The organisation of society privileges one group at the expense of another, this I argue is a Marxist insight; but de Beauvoir put it to work to provide an account of the position of women.

This view has the support of a number of writers. Lundgren-Gothlin (1996: 177), argues de Beauvoir's position is influenced by Marx, she stipulates:

> A recurrent theme in *The Second Sex* is the necessity to distinguish between abstract freedom according to the law and concrete freedom i.e. the ability actually to undertake positive action in society. This aligns de Beauvoir with a Marxist concept of freedom.

Kruks (2012: 8) agrees:

> as de Beauvoir further developed her thinking she also began to increasingly attend to the practical material constraints on freedom, and in doing so, to incorporate elements of a non-reductionist Marxism within her analysis.

I will therefore argue that de Beauvoir's existentialism is refracted through Marxism. Kruks (2012) acknowledges de Beauvoir's Marxism as present in later works and in particular de Beauvoir's discussion of *Old Age* (1970) but I suggest that her Marxist historical materialism, was the dominant strand of her thinking in the *The Second Sex*. Lundgren-Gothlin (1996) acknowledges the influence of Marx in this earlier text, but I argue that this influence can be used to resolve criticisms which have been made of de Beauvoir's position, in ways Lundgren-Gothlin did not pursue. De Beauvoir becomes primarily concerned not only with the metaphysical possibility of freedom, which characterises the human condition as such, but, more concretely with the material and social conditions which make the meaningful exercise of freedom possible. To understand her we need to see the interweaving of these two strands.

I will begin with a discussion of the existential concept of freedom which focuses on Sartrean thought primarily described in *Being and Nothingness* (1943) but also in *Existentialism and Humanism* (1948). I will then move on to Marx and his concept of freedom and how de Beauvoir was directly influenced by this. (She quotes Marx, particularly his early texts, throughout *The Second Sex*.) Marx argues, the possibility of exercising our freedom by engaging in freely chosen projects is linked to the material and social circumstances, and this I argue de Beauvoir recognised and endorsed. She advocates changes in legal, social and economic conditions for women to

achieve greater emancipation and create the possibility of labour which is not alienated and has the possibility of transcendence. Human action has created social institutions which serve as limitations to women's freedom, and it is these institutional aspects of a woman's situation that de Beauvoir argues require change. De Beauvoir reiterates Marx' view, that changes in material circumstances have the potential to reduce alienation, and promote human flourishing and the possibilities for freedom.

The Existential Conception of Freedom

Freedom is integral to existentialism. For the existentialists, the world is divided into two categories; the for-itself and the in-itself. An in-itself is an object, it has no consciousness, it cannot realise other possibilities. A being-for-itself has consciousness; this is us, as human beings and we are unlike other objects in the world. We are both object and subject and so can view the world as having future, as yet unrealised possibilities. (McCulloch, 1994)

Sartre and Absolute freedom

For Sartre, a for-itself views the world as a nothingness. We experience the world as a world of unrealised possibilities. As nothing is pre-determined for Sartre, we can negate the world and the self as it is, and create ourselves and our possibilities anew. This Sartre in, *Existentialism and Humanism* (1948), suggests is human reality, "Existence precedes essence." (Sartre 1948: 26) A for-itself is a being which experiences the world as it is, yet also, as it is not, as a nothingness. It encounters a situation in which it finds itself, and from here is able to negate the present and envisage other possibilities and opportunities related to that situation. To act is inescapable and the responsibility for such actions is also inescapable:

> abortive attempts to stifle freedom under the weight of being (…) show sufficiently that freedom in its foundation coincides with the nothingness which is at the heart of man. Human-reality is free because it is not enough. It is free because it is perpetually wrenched away from itself and because it has been separated by a nothingness from what it is and from what it will be. (…) Freedom is precisely the nothingness which is made-to-be at the heart of man and which forces human-reality to make itself instead of to be. (Sartre 1943: 440)

There are particular facts or situations that a for-itself has to encounter. Embodiment, material status, historical status and economic status, all contribute to a situation, out of which freedom asserts itself. Freedom therefore is only realised in response to a situation. For there to be freedom there must be a context in which one acts, a context which can be surpassed or transcended. One cannot be free to choose an action or direction if there were no options. (Morris, 2008) Sartre acknowledges that there is a facticity within a situation, that one did not choose. Facticity refers to these factual conditions of our existence. Facticity is a necessary condition out of which transcendence occurs; it is actual possibilities for the exercise of freedom. Without facticity, transcendence is unattainable, there is no point of reference or range of possibilities; yet without transcendence, facticity and the human experience is reduced to the in-itself, to no more than an object.

Sartre's notion of freedom makes us free in all aspects of our mode of being in the world. We are free to choose what is of value and significance to us as the people that we are, and in respect of the projects that we choose to engage in. The meaning that an individual places on their facticity has a bearing on the situation they find themselves in, but the meanings and values that are employed, are entirely of their own choosing. There are no excuses for how an individual lives their life or how they conduct themselves in the face of their facticity. Human existents are the sum of their actions, but are not fixed by their past. They are free to be and to live their situation, however they choose, "man is condemned to be free." (Sartre 1948: 34)

Transcendence and Immanence

Consequently, transcendence is an ontological human feature. Fully human existence has the freedom to expand in to an undefined future, a future not fixed by a past, "Every individual concerned with justifying his existence experiences his existence as an indefinite need to transcend himself." (De Beauvoir 1949: 17) Immanence is the opposite, where the projection into future projects and liberties is either denied or refused. To live in immanence, an individual is not living an authentic existence as a subject, in the existential sense, but in accordance with the world of givens, the immediate. (Bergoffen, 2003)

Transcendence and immanence have a gender orientation for de Beauvoir, she points out that, transcendence has been aligned with the male and immanence with the female, "the male is still the only incarnation of transcendence." (De Beauvoir 1949: 85) Of woman de Beauvoir insists, "she

lives condemned to immanence; she incarnates only the static aspect of society." (De Beauvoir 1949: 85) These concepts are gendered in two ways. Firstly the concept 'man' is defined to include transcendence and the concept 'woman' to include immanence, de Beauvoir (1949: 61) states, "behaviour where the subject posits his transcendence is considered masculine." Secondly, the situation of men and women makes transcendence possible for men and difficult for women. In the historical situation in which she is placed a woman's body is not simply an instrument of her will, and a woman's activities in general are not easily viewed as transcendent.

Suggesting that transcendent activity is male and immanence is female seems to leave de Beauvoir open to critique. (Moi, 2008; Le Doeuff, 1980) To differentiate between transcendence and immanence as gendered categories, implies that male activities which are linked to transcendence are of a higher quality and therefore ones which women should also pursue. Women's activities are viewed as immanent.

The point I would like to make here, is that both notions of transcendence and immanence are necessary to activity, and the concept of freedom is not reducible to either; for de Beauvoir, transcendence and immanence are irreducible aspects of human existence. (Scarth, 2004) Lundgren-Gothlin (1996), points out that transcendence and immanence are confusing concepts in de Beauvoir's account; de Beauvoir, does appear to regard male activities as transcendent and female ones as immanent. However she is reflecting on the *historically situated*, gendered subject, whose activities take on the dominant values of the society in which they are positioned. De Beauvoir's position on transcendence is therefore a complex one, and I think the claim that she has adopted masculinist values is misplaced. She accepts, along with Sartre that freedom as transcendence is of high value. Such freedom has been traditionally associated with men and she is asserting it also for women. But unlike Sartre, she views the opportunities for transcendence as tied with the material and social conditions and women's situations restrict the possibility of transcendence for them.

The difference between the situation of men and women can be illustrated through one of Sartre's examples. Sartre uses an example of a woman meeting with a man in the early days of a relationship. For Sartre, the woman denies her desires for intimacy, yet seeks intimacy nevertheless, and is therefore in bad faith:

> She is profoundly aware of the desire which she inspires, but the desire cruel and naked would humiliate and horrify her. Yet she would find no charm at all in a respect which would be only respect. (Sartre 1943: 55)

These are abstract issues until the man takes her hand in his. She is then in the moment and has to decide whether to leave her hand there, or remove it. She leaves it there and for Sartre, this encounter is bad faith on the woman's behalf. By not removing her hand she is not reciprocating the desire, but is enjoying it without having to acknowledge this to the man, or to herself. She is exhibiting bad faith also by regarding her hand as an object, something passive, with no possible options, but something upon which events and actions just happen.

A problem for Sartre's account however, is the lack of recognition that the way we do experience the world can constrain what choices are visible and available to us. Circumstances can and do impose limitations. There is no acknowledgement that society and circumstance can impact on an individual and impact upon their decision making, or in fact limit choices. To refer back to the example of the woman on a first date, she may not have removed her hand because she was in a public place and did not wish to draw attention to the situation. She may have feared the judgement of others. Would she have the choices that Sartre suggests she does? Can she feel empowered enough in certain circumstances, to either remove her hand or reciprocate the man's advances? As a woman her choice here seems circumscribed in a very different way from the man making the advances. Because the man grabbed the woman's hand, he made a move on her. Whatever she decides to do, the woman's situation now is one that has been forced on her by the man; she will be acting on his terms, rather than her own, this is symptomatic of patriarchal social power. The way society and subsequently woman views herself and her situation does not enable her to believe she does in fact have a choice to either resist, or to freely express her own desires. (Moi, 2008)

De Beauvoir recognised that choices are made within circumstances in which certain possibilities come into view and others do not. What comes into view is a consequence of one's past and present situation and these possibilities are very different for men and women.

Marx' Conceptions of Freedom

Marx discusses freedom in several ways, most importantly in his early writing, and there are some important parallels between the discussions here and the conceptions of freedom found in existential thought. True freedom is only possible for Marx under communist forms of social organisation. This position I argue places de Beauvoir, closer to Marx than to Sartre. She grounds her account of freedom in material, social, economic and ideological conditions.

Metaphysical Freedom

A key feature of human nature, for Marx is praxis, our ability to actively transform the social and material conditions of our existence, in terms of goals we have set ourselves. However, as society develops in a particular way, so too our nature as human beings develops in particular ways, which can either promote or constrain the human potential for praxis. Some freedom of action is always possible for Marx however agency is exercised in conditions not of our choosing.

For Marx, it is not possible for man to fully exercise his metaphysical freedom within a capitalist structure, as he is unable to realise his species being. His historically contingent nature, (the way he has become formed by the society he is in) is at odds with his human potential. A division becomes apparent whereby man is divided into a public self and a private self, Marx (1846: 83/4) states:

> But in the course of historical evolution (…) there appears a division within the life of each individual, insofar as it is personal and insofar as it is determined by some branch of labour and the conditions pertaining to it.

The material and social circumstances of capitalism, divides labour in a hierarchical way and as a result, man's activity becomes fixed as a *something* that is not a result of his own decision making process. For Marx, the position of the working class within capitalism is an exploited one and their freedom is constrained. Yet, however fixed a position may appear there is always some possibility of resisting. (Wolff, 2010) Something can always be done to bring about change, but what change this is, is constrained by circumstances and in some circumstances the changes are very small. Marx was therefore interested in exploring what combination of circumstances would enable

major social change in ways that would promote genuine human emancipation, and the maximisation of the human capacity for praxis.

Political Freedom

Marx (1844), argued that genuine human emancipation could not be found within the political/ economic system of liberal capitalism. Although the fully liberal state would claim equal freedom for all and formal equalities for all; freedom remained formal and had little bearing on everyday life. At its best, liberalism makes us all citizens subject to its laws; but, in everyday life we have different amounts of freedom. Marx insists that liberalism assumes egoism as fundamental to human nature. The laws of society are conceived as a means to protect us, as individuals, from other individuals, who we regard as in competition with us. Under capitalism the supposed equalities and freedom attached to us politically as citizens, are undermined by the conditions of everyday life:

> The perfect political state is, by its nature, man's species-life, as opposed to his material life. All the preconditions of this egoistic life continue to exist as civil society outside the sphere of the state, but as qualities of civil society. Where the political state has attained its true development, man – not only in thought, in consciousness, but in reality, in life – leads a twofold life (…) in which he considers himself a communal being, and life in civil society, in which he acts as a private individual, regards other men as a means, degrades himself into a means and becomes the play thing of alien forces. (Marx 1844: 6)

Consequently the liberal/ capitalist state produces alienation. Man is alienated from society (as it appears to be structured in a way that is inevitable), other individuals (as we are in competition with them), and from his self, (as projects in which he is engaged do not originate in himself). Under capitalism, the labour that has developed is not of man's own free activity and as a consequence the proletariat, whose labour produces products that have no value or meaning for them, is alienated labour. The activity and the product produced are regarded as something that is imposed and therefore contrary, to the exercise of freedom. He therefore insists that man cannot fully exercise freedom under capitalism. Moreover capitalist ideology serves to disguise the possibilities for freedom; the notion that agency and change is actually a possibility is obscured. Ideological change is therefore a requirement.

Genuine Emancipation

For Marx the conditions required for genuine human emancipation, requires communism. For Marx the possibility of exercising our freedom by engaging in freely chosen projects is linked to material and social circumstances. (Wood, 2004) Real human freedom, is found within co-operative and inter dependent relationships with other people. It is also found in the opportunities individuals have to choose their own actions and the product of their labour. This for Marx is only possible within a communist structure in which each recognises that their own freedom requires the freedom of others:

> Within communist society, the only society in which the original and free development of individuals ceases to be a mere phrase, this development is determined precisely by the connection of individuals. (Marx 1846: 118)

What Marx is advocating in order to reach freedom in its true sense is a freedom *to* form relationships with other people in a communal enterprise, which adopts concepts of co-operation, rather than separation and alienation. Non-alienated labour has clear echoes in Sartre's account of freedom as requiring self-directed projects originating, not in external conditions, but in the for-itself. However, unlike Sartre, Marx saw change of economic and material conditions, alongside change at the level of ideology, as the only way that such emancipation is humanly possible. It is this position that I am arguing, de Beauvoir directly reiterates, "(…) woman among others is a product developed by civilisation (…) if this process were driven in another way, it would produce a very different result." (De Beauvoir 1949: 777) Changes in legal, ideological, social and economic conditions for women are required to enable the exercise of meaningful freedom.

De Beauvoir's Conceptions of Freedom

De Beauvoir as an existentialist makes use of concepts and vocabulary that resonates with Sartre. However, I argue that her use of existential categories, are mediated by Marxist ones. De Beauvoir argues the situation for men and women is not the same in society, (one group benefits at the expense of another). The range of possibilities open to many women is *different* from, and *more restricted* than, those of the majority of men. The material conditions, practices and institutions of society (which includes the economic, labour and political structures as well as the materiality of the

body), co-here in ways which are more oppressive to women; they limit women's freedom. In this way de Beauvoir (1949: 679) makes the bold claim:

> If these same situations are compared, it is obvious that the man's is infinitely preferable, that is to say he has far more concrete opportunities to project his freedom in the world.

Her detailed discussion of lived experiences of women demonstrated that she believed choices for them were possible and that choices were inescapable, this she accepts from Sartre. These choices however are limited because of women's situation. In order to promote their capacities to exercise freedom there needed to be changes in these circumstances. Men will not willingly give up the position they have as the autonomous subject and as it stands, women develop characters which make them ill-equipped to assert their autonomy. In these circumstances therefore most choices women have available, result in an unsatisfactory outcome. This de Beauvoir argues is how, for women, freedom is curtailed and how oppression occurs. To project forward to future intentional projects requires freedom. To struggle with another consciousness in order to assume the position of the Subject requires freedom. For de Beauvoir, unlike Sartre, woman does not begin as a free subject. De Beauvoir (1962: 346) states, "not every situation was equally valid: what sort of transcendence could a woman shut up in a harem achieve?"

Throughout *The Second Sex*, de Beauvoir spells out ways in which a woman's freedom is constrained. Social institutions, (marriage for example) serve to reinforce the notion that inequality is a natural (biological) state. For her, however, such institutions are human creations, and so historically variable and therefore changeable. She recognised, as did Marx that for freedom to be a possibility, the organisation of production and reproduction must change. If one party is already privileged, materially and socially, even physically, then reciprocal relations disappear. For de Beauvoir, the male and female relationship has a different dimension to that of two, general individuals. Woman is always the Other, never in a position to challenge the primacy of man. Ideological myths about women's positions and women's bodies become internalised by women and constrain the possibilities that society offers and the possibilities that they see for themselves. A woman's body is a situation and woman acts in response. The consequences of the

situation of women, de Beauvoir shows concretely, in the day to day lived experiences of women, how limited the choices available to them really are.

Tensions

I have shown that for de Beauvoir, social structures and institutions have a real material impact on a woman's existence. This is where de Beauvoir's debt to Marx is clear, and her difference from the Sartre of *Being and Nothingness* is marked:

> Forbidding her to work and keeping her at home is intended to defend her against herself and ensure her happiness. We have seen the poetic veils used to hide the monotonous burdens she bears: Housework and maternity; in exchange for her freedom she was given fallacious treasures of 'femininity' as a gift. (De Beauvoir 1949: 773)

She recognises that within these circumstances, a woman's ability to exercise transcendence is limited.

A tension appears however, as she also argues that woman can transcend her situation and it is her responsibility as a human existent to do so. Yet, rather than view this as a simple re-assertion of Sartre's position, I think we can also relate it to Marx. Marx had claimed that it is always possible for us to exercise praxis of *some kind*. Circumstances however, can ensure that whatever choice we exercise, we are not able to fulfil our human potential. De Beauvoir also disclosed, in her discussion of the options open to women, that women could exercise choice; but whichever option they chose in the circumstances in which she was writing, led to unsatisfactory outcomes.

De Beauvoir is in effect subverting Sartre's concept of freedom by insisting that woman cannot live her situation as a free choice, but, she is also arguing here, that if a woman's circumstance were to change, then transcendence would become achievable. Such transcendence however, requires a different society. De Beauvoir (1949: 13) argues:

> Yes, women in general are today inferior to men; that is, their situation provides them with fewer possibilities: the question is whether this state of affairs must be perpetuated (…) Many men wish it would be: not all men have yet laid down their arms.

However, de Beauvoir's position here also reflects the fact that in her account of freedom, she insists that we must respect the ambiguities of existence. For de Beauvoir part of what it is to be human is to exist in a state of ambiguity, this is relevant for *both* men and women. True human existence creates ambiguity; it creates a paradox, whereby bodies are required in order to exist and therefore transcend, yet bodies as integral to a human being are also part of the objective dimension of our lives, they are immanence. There is a dialectic at work here, "that if the body is not a thing it is a situation: it is our grasp on the world and the outline of our projects." (De Beauvoir 1949: 46) The ambiguities of subjectivity/embodiment play out in a number of ways that condition the lived experience for both men and women. The binaries of subject/object, one/other, interdependence/conflict, (to name a few) are inescapable yet unresolvable and are at the core of social relationships. (Scarth, 2004) De Beauvoir argues this ambiguous position is representative of *both* men and women. The male body is just as ambiguous and subject to finite existence as is the female body, however, men, de Beauvoir argues, try to evade this recognition. Men (as a social category), view their bodies as something transcended in pursuit of their chosen projects. Both men and women therefore need to accept the ambiguities which inhabit freedom; an interplay of transcendence and immanence. With this recognition, de Beauvoir is arguing not only that freedom as transcendence requires certain conditions to be realised. She is also insisting that a transcendence un-constrained by immanence is not an achievable state for anyone.

Freedom and Old Age

De Beauvoir's account of freedom is re-addressed in her work *Old Age* (1970). In this work, she also makes explicit that bodily change and material and social conditions impair the possible exercise of ontological freedom.

The aged are, (just as are women) entrenched in social institutions and structures which view them as inferior. Denied the public realm of productive work, (as just one aspect), they are regarded as superfluous and experience poverty and degradation as a result. De Beauvoir (1970: 443) states:

> For man living means self-transcendence. A consequence of biological decay is the impossibility of surpassing oneself and of becoming passionately concerned about anything. It kills projects.

For de Beauvoir physical decline is combined with objectification, economic poverty and social superfluity. If one lives in material poverty then freedom is limited. Here, in the discussion of the aged de Beauvoir again acknowledges that the social structures and institutions are at fault. Kruks (2012: 23) states:

> Irrespective of which particular modes and dynamics are at play, what always makes a situation one of oppression is that it curtails the ambiguities of an embodied subject and forecloses freedom.

For the aged to be given freedom would require a socialist revolution of the kind Marx described. De Beauvoir (1970: 603) argues, "what should a society be, so that in his last years a man might still be a man? The answer is simple: he would always have to have been treated like a man."

Summary: Can Liberation be achieved?

De Beauvoir did not, however, think that a socialist revolution would be sufficient to bring about the liberation of women:

> One must certainly not think that modifying her economic situation is enough to transform woman: this factor has been and remains the primordial factor of her development, but until it brings about moral, social and cultural consequences it heralds and requires, the new woman cannot appear; as of now, these consequences have been realised nowhere: in the USSR no more than in France or the United States; and this is why todays [new] woman (…) appears as a real woman disguised as a man, and she feels awkward in her woman's body as in her masculine garb. She has to shed her old skin and cut her own clothes. She will only be able to do this if there is collective change. (De Beauvoir 1949: 777)

In the (now former) USSR, de Beauvoir makes reference to above, a form of socialism was practiced. However de Beauvoir makes it clear that women were still suffering oppression. Changes in social and economic organisation are necessary but also crucially, ideological changes in men were needed if women were to be able to exercise the freedom, which was constitutive of their humanity:

> When finally it is possible for every human being to place his pride above sexual differences in the difficult glory of his free existence, only then will woman be able to make her history, her problems, her doubts and her hopes those of humanity. (De Beauvoir 1949: 767)

De Beauvoir argues, for women, transcendence only becomes achievable through raising awareness of the current exploitative (for her patriarchal) social, economic and ideological situations. This raising awareness for both men and women is what *The Second Sex* is trying to achieve. What de Beauvoir is stressing here is that woman's situation is contingent; woman's situation is created by man rather than by woman herself. The central aim de Beauvoir sets out to achieve within *The Second Sex* is a greater sense of clarity for women; that sexual difference does not justify cultural stereotypes and socially accepted norms; that myths of femininity do not determine what women are. Clearly an important step for her in bringing about change is to achieve such clarity, so that women can become aware of what is forming them, reflect on it rationally and make choices, as she did, which resist dominant ideologies of femininity. However liberation was not simply a matter of such rational clarity and self-determining choices, women are very limited in what such self-determining choices can achieve. Liberation for women is not achieved merely by individuals acting in good faith. Moi (2008: 213) argues:

> If there is one point ceaselessly repeated in *The Second Sex*, it is the fact that under oppressive social constraints, women are never truly free to choose: Beauvoir's utopia consists in the vision of a society where no choice would be unfairly constrained by social conditions.

The way for women to begin to achieve a positive, concrete freedom is within the public realm of work. To make productive work possible she must have choices about her reproductive role. De Beauvoir (1949: 142), argues, "Relieved of a great number of reproductive servitudes, she can take on the economic roles open to her, roles that would assure her control over her own person." The sexual division of labour as it has historically developed limits a woman to alienated labour, in particular to domestic labour, which is outside the remit of creativity, in the sense that de Beauvoir wishes to argue. More control over their biological bodies will create more roles within society as viable options, roles other than those of wife or mother. But to achieve this

she places emphasis on society, rather than the individual. In a move that is more Marxist then existentialist, she insists society must create such opportunities.

For de Beauvoir then, it is not just about enlightening women with regards to the current exploitative ideology, it is also about changing the material and economic dimensions of society. This is the central most important point. Freedom for women requires social and material change. Productive labour within the public realm would also give women the opportunity to unite as a collective, in order to become a greater, politically active voice. Change for de Beauvoir also involved changing relations with men. To achieve liberation two transcendent consciousnesses must meet as equal. The only way for women (and men) to live authentically, is to achieve an interdependent existence with each other. This has echoes of Sartre *and* Marx with his view of human nature as co-operative and interdependent. What de Beauvoir argues is that to realise true human potential is to acknowledge and allow both subjects the freedom to be transcendent, this is the only way to authenticity; freedom is paradoxically about inter-dependency:

> To emancipate woman is to refuse to enclose her in the relations she sustains with man, but not to deny them; while she posits herself for herself, she will nonetheless continue to exist for him as well; recognising each other as subject, each will remain an other for the other; reciprocity in their relations will not do away with the miracles that the division of human beings into two separate categories engenders. (De Beauvoir 1949: 782)

De Beauvoir's account opens up the possibility, "that greater freedom will produce new ways of being a woman, new ways of experiencing the possibilities of a woman's body." (Moi 1999: 66) But freedom requires structural and material changes. This recalls one quote by Marx, one in which I think de Beauvoir endorses throughout her writing, "the philosophers have only interpreted the world; the point is to change it." (Marx 1845: 11) For de Beauvoir the human conditions of ambiguity, consciousness and materiality *combined* are inter-connected and cannot be viewed in isolation, in the account she offers of freedom and agency.

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Humor and Disobedience: Understanding Controversial Humor

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Abstract
In this article, I analyze controversial humor and argue that the concept of disobedience is of central importance when evaluating, for instance, harsh or potentially hurtful jokes. Following social critic Erich Fromm (1900–1980) I claim that disobedience is a dialectic concept: that is, it includes the possibilities both to affirm and to reject. This observation connects humor to other values, and pivotal is how humor is related to the question of what it means to be a human being. Through this insight, I argue that controversial humor may shock and be offensive, or it can be amusing and even have a cathartic effect. In the end, in evaluating humor it is necessary to analyze the values behind humor, that is, what humor obeys and what it disobeys.

Introduction

Chaud Ananas
Quenelle
Je suis Charlie Coulibaly

The three humorous[1] but controversial phrases above were invented by French comedian Dieudonné M'bala M'bala who has been accused of anti-Semitism, among other things. The first phrase, *Chaud Ananas*, is pronounced "shoahnanas", which refers to the Hebrew word "shoah", meaning "apocalypse". In France, the word is used to describe the Jewish holocaust. To test the limits of freedom of speech, M'bala M'bala is known to end his shows with a signature song about pineapples; in this, he makes fun of the Jewish tragedy. The *Quenelle* gesture, on the other hand, is a certain kind of reversed Nazi salute which is spreading in social media. "*Je suis Charlie Coulibaly*" refers to the tragedy of Charlie Hebdo with a murky twist: the name of a terrorist who killed four Jewish people in an attack on a

[1] I do not claim that M'bala M'bala's ideas are examples of "good humor" (whatever that means) – just that they could be and have been considered humorous.

Kosher store was Amedy Coulibaly. With this "Je suis" statement, the comedian apparently mocks the way people were demonstrating for the freedom of speech after the terrorist attack. Because of the controversial style of his humor, Dieudonné M'bala M'bala's shows have been cancelled and banned in numerous cities around France.[2]

M'bala M'bala has been convicted in court repeatedly as his humor has been seen as demeaning and anti-Semitic. The comedian himself claims that he mocks the hypocrisy of the French, who do not dare to handle their own colonial history nor the war in Algeria whilst denouncing events and issues occurring elsewhere. M'bala M'bala claims that there are restrictions against the freedom of speech in France, and that his humor is aimed at demonstrating this.

The previous paragraphs raise the question: are there boundaries to humor? Apparently, in a legal setting there are.[3] But then, there is also a general tendency to claim that humor should not be restricted, and that we must be able and free to joke about anything. In this paper, I focus on analyzing the tension between these two poles, and I will offer a novel viewpoint from which to understand the present conflict. To do so, I examine Erich Fromm's insights about disobedience, and develop them in relation to humor.[4] To understand the cultural phenomenon of controversial humor, I apply philosophical ideas—both historical and recent— to contemporary examples of humor.[5] Previously it has been claimed that one cannot laugh at, say, a racist joke if one is not a racist him- or herself (de Sousa 1987). This view is implausible, as Aaron Smuts (2010) has noted, and he suggests that in the field of ethics of humor one should leave the character examination aside, and focus solely on the consequences of humor. This solution is, however, not satisfying either. As Simon Weaver (2011, 190) points out, it is extremely

[2] In this paper, I use British (The Guardian 2015), American (The New York Times 2014; 2015), and Finnish news sources (Helsingin Sanomat 2015; Nyt 2015) to discuss M'bala M'bala's way of conducting humor.

[3] Many countries have, for instance, laws against blasphemy. However, for the sake of brevity, I will not discuss the legal details about humor.

[4] In *political philosophy*, civil disobedience has been a heated topic recently. However, I handle disobedience as a more general concept from a *social philosophical* perspective. Thus, I do not treat humor, for instance, as a consistent thought strategy against oppression, as, for instance, Majken Jul Sorensen (2008) does. In my analysis, humor is not necessarily a tool for something but, instead, a deeper attitude, a part of character structure.

[5] The examples used in this paper are from Western countries, such as, France, England, Finland, and the United States.

hard to predict and calculate the consequences of humor as a racist joke can produce both racist and non-racist meaning simultaneously. To develop from the previous positions, I argue that if one tries to understand the social and cultural significance of controversial humor, it is necessary to examine the underlying motives of the joker, as well as the values shared by the audience. Simply put, to understand controversial humor it is necessary to understand the social context of this kind of humor. In this article, I offer a theoretical framework to understand humor in the light of Fromm's social critical thinking, and especially in relation to his way of using the concept of disobedience. This is a novel approach, as Fromm's ideas have been basically non-existent among humor research, and on the other hand, the philosophy of humor has not been studied among other Fromm theorists than myself. In addition, in this paper I offer a new constellation of theoretical analysis of humor discussing both classic and contemporary philosophers as well as modern humorists. In this, I respect the Frankfurt School's critical theory and its guiding idea to use philosophical concepts to understand cultural phenomena.

I understand the concept of humor in the lines of incongruity theory, that is, there is a conflict of cultural categorizations at the heart of humor. However, in this paper I will not offer any kind of totalizing theory of humor; it seems a rather hopeless effort to find out a single reason why something is funny. In my reading, the concept of humor is in a sense dynamic, as humor is always bound to concrete contexts. Thus, what is considered to be funny in one historical moment can be, say, tragic or incomprehensible in another. This theoretical position helps to understand why funniness is perceived differently between certain social groups; in a certain social setting a particular joke can be tremendously funny, and for others the very same joke can be just low-minded and not funny at all. This means that the incongruity of humor has to be recognizable and understandable, and the possibility of "getting" a joke is deeply rooted in the cultural context and how language is used within it. For instance, a joke about philosophical concepts can be utter nonsense to people who are not familiar with those concepts.

It should also be noted that if something is labeled as "a joke", it does not mean that this joke could not have any morally significant consequences. To claim that one is "only joking" does not free the joker from moral responsibilities. It is possible that a seemingly innocent joke can be demeaning and racist. I want to stress that this paper is not intended to promote nor to give excuses for, say, distributing anti-Semitic attitudes via

humor. Nevertheless, I am interested in how, for instance, superficially racist humor can be humane and life-affirmative on a deeper level. The rich tradition of Jewish jokes is full of illustrations of this kind of warm and thought-provoking humor, even though they often handle historical horrors like the Holocaust.

First, 1) I will discuss the question of restricting humor. Then, 2) I present an alternative way to understand the question of restricting humor in the light of the concept of disobedience, focusing on how Fromm uses it. The theme of disobedience is then 3) linked to the question of controversial humor and its cultural significance. After that, 4) I discuss how to understand underlying meanings behind offensive joking. Finally, 5) I summarize the article by offering a point of view on how to make distinctions between different kinds of aggressive humor; and how to estimate and evaluate, for instance, M'bala M'bala's humor.

1. Should Humor Be Restricted?

The question about the limits of humor is age-old. Plato claims that in his ideal state there would be laws to restrict humor, and, for example, poets should not have an unlimited freedom to mock people: "A composer of a comedy or of any iambic or lyric song shall be strictly forbidden to ridicule any of the citizens either by word or by mimicry" (Plato, Laws 935e). This restriction is connected to the idea that laughter threatens to loosen one's rational self-control (Plato, Republic 388e). Epictetus has a similar idea, and claims that one should not laugh much nor thoughtlessly, and that it is important to restrict oneself from triggering laughter in others (Epictetus, Handbook, ch. 33), because laughter does not further self-control nor peace of mind. On the other hand, Aristotle sees laughter in an affirmative light, and claims that it has an important role in social life. However, not just any kind of humor is positive, and he calls for socially virtuous humor. (Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics 4.8., 1128a4—13.) These three philosophers share a critical idea: laughter is not always a positive factor in human life, and they all ask what can be found behind laughter and to where humor leads. Generally, they question the value of humor and laughter.

In modern discussion, however, the basic tone appears to be relatively different. There is a strong opinion among humor theorists, comedians, and a wide group of laymen that humor is good in itself and it should not be restricted (see e.g. Winston 2012, Hall & Branigan 2004); a recent example of this is present in the aftermath of the tragedy of Charlie Hebdo (see Klug

2015).[6] Defenders of humor claim that humor is a high manifestation of freedom of speech, and this freedom should not be limited by any means; thus, humor has to be uncurtailed. Other typical arguments claim that humor is good for your health although the clinical data has not been able to confirm this (see Martin 2008).

As we can see, there is a cultural contradiction between the pronounced ideal of unrestricted mockery and what M'bala M'bala has done in his comic acts. Wide groups of people defend Charlie Hebdo but similarly wide groups decry M'bala M'bala's way of doing humor. If the principle of unrestricted freedom of speech[7] is taken as a grounding premise, it is hard to condemn a comedian who mocks the victims of a terrorist attack. However, there are valid arguments criticizing this kind of humor.[8] To understand, and possibly to solve, the described tension, one has to analyze the nature of humor and its cultural role and significance in a society.

According to the incongruity theory of humor, humor plays with conflicts between cultural categorizations (for a detailed analysis of incongruity theory, see Hurley & al. 2011, 45—53). As a number of philosophers (e.g. Schopenhauer 1910, Kant 1790, Hutcheson 1750) emphasize, humor is based on paradoxes. The clearest formulation is postulated by Søren Kierkegaard: "the comic always lies in a contradiction" (Kierkegaard 1846, 296). The general idea is that humor challenges and breaks what is considered normal. For instance, take typical examples of humorous simile, such as "that man works like a machine," or "that dog is sitting at the table just like a person!" In these examples, the shared normality of the everyday life is broken in some way.[9]

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[6] The terrorist attack in Paris in January 2015 was widely considered as an attack against the freedom of speech, and the murdered cartoonists as champions of free speech. I have analyzed in detail the problematic aspects of these notions elsewhere (Hietalahti & al. 2016), so I will not put the tragedy of Charlie Hebdo under close scrutiny in this paper.

[7] One of the central problems lies in the conceptualization of free speech, which is so often seen as a *negative freedom* (freedom from). That is a naïve way to understand freedom, and we should widen, as Erich Fromm (1941) suggests, the concept of freedom with the notion of *positive freedom* (freedom to).

[8] For instance, as Brian Klug (2015) has noted, the universal declaration of human rights is based on the idea of respecting the other, and not to guarantee everyone a chance to mock everything as they will.

[9] The very roots of humor are said to have arisen in violating norms; comedy was apparently born alongside with worship of Dionysus, the god of wine and ritual madness. In his ritual worshipping, rules were twisted and broken, and accompanied with laughter. (Alho 1988)

The general idea of humor becomes relatively clear: breaking boundaries is fun, and this tendency has been present in cultural ways of living for millennia. For instance, Saint Augustine discusses in his Confessions the mirth in breaking others' expectations and the shared morality. Augustine recollects how he, as a young boy, stole piles of pears with a group of youngsters but not to eat the fruits. Instead, they threw the loot away: "It was foul, and I loved it; I loved to perish, I loved mine own fault, not that which I was faulty, but my fault itself. (...) It was the sport, which as it were, tickled our hearts, that we beguiled, those who little thought what we were doing, and much misliked it." (Augustine, Confessions, 2.9—16.)

Even though Augustine does not use the term "humor", his and his friends' mischief was clearly funny at least for themselves. There is "tickling of hearts" present, and it can be interpreted that the occasion was humorous for the kids because there was an incongruity between social expectations and their actions. To a certain extent, a similar trait of violating shared morality in the name of humor is present in a number of modern comedies. For example, one of the guiding ideas of the animated comedy series *South Park* (1997-) is that it *laughs at everything*. South Park can be labeled as black humor as it aims to break every existing boundary; nothing is too sacred for South Park to ridicule. Not too surprisingly, South Park's controversial humor has encountered opposition: for instance, the association *Action for Children's Television* has accused South Park of being dangerous to democracy (see Fagin 2000).

On a theoretical level, black humor can be located between funny and terrible, or scary; it is a mixture of horror and laughter. In black humor, moral and social values are distorted and safe norms questioned. Black humor reminds us that all commitments are eventually meaningless – and it does not offer any answers nor demand that anyone share its own position (see Winston 1972, 273—274). As black humor is directed against social norms, it is typically socially critical humor. Socially critical black humor, then, questions the sanity of the current world and our commitments in and to it. As James Nagel formulates, the social implication of black humor "is to call into question the prevailing ethical structure of the society" (Nagel 1974, 51).

There are both academics and comedians who believe that challenging the limits of morality is an essential aspect of humor (see e.g. Gray & al 2009, Smith 2005), and it has been claimed that all humor is at bottom black (see O'Neill 1983, 79—80). However, I claim this tendency cannot be the only nor the leading principle of humor. Following the incongruity theory, humor

has to be based on something: the perceived oddity has to be compared to something that is considered normal. Humor, then, is about comparison, and for this reason, humor – by definition – needs boundaries; an object of humor needs a contrast, something that is taken seriously. Therefore, the common claim that we must be able to laugh at everything everywhere at all times is implausible: or at least, it needs clarification. Next, I will clarify the social philosophical importance of the conceptual basis of humor in relation to the concept of disobedience.

2. Humor and Disobedience

In the previous pages I have demonstrated how humor can be *disobedient*[10] towards, say, cultural mores or shared morality. To put it another way, humor does not *obey* the normal social codes. Erich Fromm states that disobedience is a dialectic concept, which means that disobedience includes the possibility of obeying. Thus, disobedience is an act of resisting something but at the same moment and in the same act standing up for something else. In Fromm's humanistic framework, disobedience

> is an act of affirmation of reason and will. It is not primarily an attitude directed *against* something, but *for* something: for man's capacity to see, to say what he sees, and to refuse to say what he does not see. To do so he does not need to be aggressive or rebellious; he needs to have his eyes open, to be fully awake, and willing to take the responsibility to open the eyes of those who are in danger of perishing because they are half asleep. (Fromm 1981, 48.)[11]

Fromm's idea of disobedience includes both the capability to affirm and to reject, and a disobedient individual is someone who "can say 'no' because he

[10] It should be noted that in some contexts disobedience refers to a conscious action between two individuals. For instance, Stanley Milgram (for the purposes of his electric shock experience) defines the act of obeying and disobeying as follows: "If Y follows the command of X we shall say that he has obeyed X; if he fails to carry out the command of X, we shall say that he has disobeyed X." (Milgram 1965, 58.) However, in this article, I follow Fromm's definition of disobedience. It is possible, for example, to obey or disobey certain socially shared general rules, ideas and expectations, so, the obeyed or disobeyed command does not need to come from a certain individual.

[11] Rebelling, Fromm claims, is resistance without any conviction. It is "as blind as its opposite, the conformist obedience which is incapable of saying 'no'." (Fromm 1981, 46.)

can affirm, who can disobey precisely because he can obey his conscience and the principles which he has chosen." (Fromm 1981, 46.) Here, Fromm links disobedience closely to value systems. In relation to humor, the central questions are, then, which social aspects certain humorists disobey, and what kinds of values they stand for (if any). Fromm emphasizes that often there are motives which may not be clear to the agent himself: "a person, even if he is subjectively sincere, may frequently be driven unconsciously by a motive that is different from the one he believes himself to be driven; that he may use one concept which logically implies a certain meaning and which to him, unconsciously, means something different" (Fromm 1941, 66—67.) The central idea is that different kinds of rationalizations should not necessarily be taken at face value; a humorist may well say that he is defending some high value, such as free speech, but his deeper motivation may be something different.

The idea about underlying motives also works the other way round: if a humorist shares an offensive or controversial joke, he may pursue some other goals than, for example, oppressing certain minorities via shaming and ridiculing. This notion leads to the observation that it is hard to categorize a singular joke to be, say, racist or sexist. However, this technical handicap does not prevent us from interpreting and understanding humor. As referred to in the beginning of this article, Dieudonné M'bala M'bala sings about pineapples, and if perceived just on the simplest technical level, it is relatively silly to condemn someone because he mentions fruits in his music; it is utterly pointless to demand that one should not joke about pineapples. However, it is possible to analyze what pineapples symbolize in certain contexts and the message behind the peel of the fruit. So, we have to be able to analyze the message of the joker, and also be critical towards the possible, for instance, anti-Semitic attitudes behind the jokes. As Fromm remarks, it is hard to evaluate whether the given explanation is a mere rationalization or a profound conviction "by determining the logicality of a person's statement as such, but we also must take into account the psychological motivations operating in a person. The decisive point is not *what* is thought but *how* it is thought." (Fromm 1941, 193.) This suggests that even though a humorist could give a logical explanation for his controversial joke (for instance, improving health via laughter), it does not guarantee that he actually aims to promote some universal good. Instead, there can be dismal motives behind the rationalization.

Fromm adds: “However unreasonable or immoral an action may be, man has an insuperable urge to rationalize it, that is, to prove to himself and to others that his action is determined by intelligence, common sense, or at least conventional morality.” (Fromm 1981, 11—12.) So, even though a humorist may personally believe that his humor is good and it offers some kind of redemption from social shackles, humor has to be evaluated from a wider perspective. For example, ridiculing the Jewish genocide is not the best way to develop or further current society. Thus, it is necessary to ponder the ideas and values on which humor is built. If there is hatred towards the other beyond jokes and laughter, or if fun springs from selfishness and is based on a wish to oppress certain minorities, it is possible to claim that this kind of humor is not as revolutionary as advertised. Offensive humor is often said to be critical and *liberating* (see Martin 1998, 41; Mindess 2011, 67—70); however, the claimed liberation needs to be taken under critical scrutiny – liberation from what? As Fromm points out: “we are fascinated by the growth of freedom from powers *outside* ourselves and are blinded to the fact of *inner* restraints, compulsions, and fears, which tend to undermine the meaning of the victories freedom has won against its traditional enemies.” (Fromm 1941, 105). Fromm links the idea of freedom to other human values, and from that combination it should be asked: What are the basic values from which the critical humor stems? What does it advocate? How does it treat humanity in general? What are the goals of humor?

Obviously, the previous questions are not easy to answer, and one cannot conclude from the mere words of a singular joke if it is “good” or “bad”. Humor is a dynamic phenomenon, and one humorous act can mean different things in different contexts. This does not mean, however, that one could not make any kind of analysis of contemporary humor. Instead, we need a deeper understanding of humor; and this understanding is closely related, at least in a Frommian framework, to the question of what it means to be a human being.

There have been some attempts to formulate certain moral principles of humor. For instance, Emily Toth has formulated the first rule of humane humor according to which one should never “make fun of what people cannot change, such as social handicaps, race, sex, or physical appearance” (Toth 1981, 783). These kinds of claims aim, generally, to good. It is possible to carry on this line formulating other rules, like, “Joke about your own gender or ethnic group, but no other”, or, “do not mock other’s sufferings”, or, “there has to be temporal and psychological distance before making fun of a tragedy”. Marie Collins Swabey (1961, 123—125) has argued that there is

plenty of cruel mockery and offensive joking that is far from funny, and according to her, this type of incongruity fails to be humor. Her basic claim is that humor must not invert values too strongly. Swabey defines incongruity in such a manner that different kinds of vulgarities are not considered to be humor, but instead, they belong under some other concept. However, Swabey confuses personal taste of humor with the general concept of sense of humor, and thus, does not respect the dynamic nature of humor. If an audience guffaws at, say, a controversial joke, it is hard to claim that the joke does not belong under the concept of humor.

Despite the possible ethical attitude behind the above mentioned moral principles of humor, they are problematic as they do not take into account the dynamic aspect of humor. I believe that there can be truly humanistic humor that might offend someone and target certain qualities that are quite unchangeable. Also, the most brilliant humorists are able to handle even "forbidden topics" in a humane manner. I propose that aggressive humor can actually be *cathartic* as it can challenge one to ask why one considered, say, a joke offensive. However, it cannot be concluded that offensive humor is always morally good.

3. Shock Value of Humor

Obviously, sometimes the very same humor offends one and amuses another, and as seen above, controversial humor is an ongoing topic in media and academic circles. Also, comedians themselves are eager to offer their opinion on the subject matter. For instance, British comedian John Cleese[12] shares in his autobiography a precept he got from David Attenborough: "Use shock sparingly" (Cleese 2014, 388). This is an interesting claim from a humorist who gave the following eulogy at the funeral of his fellow Monty Python member Graham Chapman:

> *Graham Chapman, co-author of the 'Parrot Sketch,' is no more.*
> *He has ceased to be, bereft of life, he rests in peace, he has kicked the bucket, hopped the twig, bit the dust, snuffed it, breathed his last, and gone to meet the Great Head of Light Entertainment in the sky, and I guess that we're all thinking how sad it is that a man of such talent, such capability and kindness, of such intelligence should now be so suddenly spirited away at the age of only forty-eight, before he'd*

[12] Cleese is best known as a member of the comedy troupe Monty Python.

> *achieved many of the things of which he was capable, and before he'd had enough fun.*
> *Well, I feel that I should say, 'Nonsense. Good riddance to him, the freeloading bastard! I hope he fries.'*
> *And the reason I think I should say this is, he would never forgive me if I didn't, if I threw away this opportunity to shock you all on his behalf. Anything for him but mindless good taste.* (Cleese 1989.)

In most funerals, a similar kind of eulogy would be considered vulgar. But, presumably in this occasion, Cleese's words were spot on despite the superficially harsh tone of the words. Cleese himself admits that he wanted to shock the people at the funeral. First of all, he gave a tribute to Chapman, whom he calls "the prince of bad taste", but this was not the only reason. Cleese clarifies: "the thing about shock... is not that it upsets some people, I think; I think that it gives others a momentary joy of liberation, as we realized in that instant that the social rules that constrict our lives so terribly are not actually very important." (Cleese 1989.)

Cleese shares here a critical principle of shocking: it is not about attacking particular people and their beliefs, but instead, it is critical towards certain shared ways of living. Still, Attenborough's guideline, to use shock sparingly, is valid. Humor cannot be just about shocking for the sake of shock. Thus, the important question is, why comedians want to shock and what is the genius of their humor. For instance, Cleese himself never grows tired of joking about religions. Of course, it is easy to mock organized religion, and Cleese admits that, but he also asks: "has it occurred to anyone to wonder *why* it's so easy?" (Cleese 2014, 76.) His answer is clear. Religion should be the most intriguing topic of all, as it discusses central problems of life: what happens after death, whether there is a purpose of living, how to love an enemy when it is as easy as levitating, and so forth. However, when a religion appears to focus on repeating empty chants and odd rituals, it is hard to see any connection between the religion and actual life. (Cleese 2014, 76—77.) Thus, Cleese criticizes the absurdity of official religions and how they are organized as well as ways of uncritical worshipping, but not necessarily the message of certain old religions.[13] In terms of obedience and disobedience,

[13] Fromm has formulated a very similar criticism, and he claims that modern versions of different religions appear to be only empty shells. Though, he does appreciate the meaning of rituals. For instance, the symbolic aspect of the Sabbath is important for him: "On the Sabbath, man ceases completely to be an animal whose main occupation is to fight for survival and to sustain his

Cleese in his humor evidently disobeys many cultural norms and codes. In the 1960s and 1970s, Monty Python's humor triggered many kinds of backlash, and they were repeatedly targeted and reproached by BBC censors (see Cleese 2014, 388; Chapman & al. 2014, 325—326, 427). However, Cleese (2014, 185) points out that the actual objects of the ridicule are stupidity, greed, vengefulness, and other least flattering sides of humanity.

If humor is designed to rattle the cage of morality and hypocrisy, the apparent question is: for what reason? Can there be a genuine productive element in controversial humor? Can shameful humor be cathartic? I suggest that in some – perhaps rare – occasions the answer is affirmative. St. Augustine touches on the topic in an interesting manner. At one point in his Confessions, Augustine mentions how shaming others is always a sin – be it by words or physical acts (Augustine, Confessione, 3.8—9). However, he also writes about his friend who was drawn to "madness of the Circus", and this friend happened to hear one of Augustine's lectures, which was "seasoned with biting mockery of those whom that madness had enthralled". The friend "took it wholly to himself, and thought that I said it simply for his sake. And whence another would have taken occasion of offence with me, that right-minded youth took as a ground of being offended at himself, and loving me more fervently." (Augustine, Confessione, 6.7—13.) For the purposes of this paper, the previous quotations demonstrate that it is possible to realize something about oneself and one's values as well as one's relationship to others via humor. This suggests that humor can, at least potentially, open our eyes. Thus, even offensive humor may have positive effects, though the actual situations that have this kinds of effect might be rare. Shocking humor may make us think.

4. Reacting to a Controversial Joke

Roughly put, there are two general stances towards offensive humor: 1) laugh and affirm, or 2) take offense and condemn. The first option is based on the idea that humor should be absolutely free, and we should be free to mock whatever we want to. The other stand claims that one cannot joke about, for

biological life. On the Sabbath, man is fully man, with no task other than to be human." (Fromm 1966, 217—218.) Fittingly enough, he defines himself as an atheistic Marxist who tries to do God's work with all his power (Fromm 1967).

example, rape or infanticide. [14] Both of these positions, I suggest, provide a seed for reflecting upon oneself, humor, and the surrounding society. Thus, there is a possibility to take a step (or several) further from the basic positions.

A CONTROVERSIAL JOKE

	AFFIRM: BE AMUSED	**CONDEMN: TAKE OFFENSE**
Step 1: reflection of values	I laugh and *laughter is good*: my amusement should not be judged.	The joke is offensive, and desecrating others is wrong, so belittling via *humor is wrong*.
Step 2: beyond own reaction	Realization: Others may be *profoundly disturbed and upset* via humor.	Observation: *Many people laugh* at seemingly crude jokes.
Step 3: own reaction in relation to others	Is the shocking justified? *Is my fun justified* alongside the shock?	Learning through the shock: *why does offensive humor shock me and amuse others?*

On what is my reaction based?

[14] There is, of course, the possibility that one does not consider humor as a matter worthy of reflecting upon. These persons are either not interested in humor, or not interested in reflecting upon their reactions.

The previous table sheds light on the question of humor and morality. It is not rare to hear that if someone does not laugh at, say, some racist jokes, he or she has a high moral sense but a lousy sense of humor. A very similar idea is already present in Plato's texts (humor is against reason), and in a similar spirit Henri Bergson claims that laughter demands certain kind of anesthesia of heart – that is, in the moment of laughter one cannot be sympathetic to the target of laughter: "Laughter cannot offer empathy or it would not fulfill its function" (Bergson 1913, 197). Ronald de Sousa examines the same idea from another viewpoint, and concludes that one cannot laugh at a racist joke if one is not a racist him- or herself (De Sousa 1987, 239—240). In opposition, my emphasis is on the idea that morality and funniness are not opposites but they intertwine. [15] Thus, it is fully possible that, for example, a seemingly demeaning joke can also be funny, and have positive consequences.

Let us take an example. Finnish stand-up comedian Matti Patronen, performing for *Suomen lyhytkasvuiset ry*. (Eng. *The Finnish society for short statured people*)[16], states in the early parts of his routine:

> *The lives of short statured people are full of challenges and problems: blah-blah-blah, and blah-blah-blah.*

At one point the comedian asks if any of the members of the audience would not be joining the society's autumn trip to Åland, and urges:

> *Raise your hand (if you are not going to Åland).* [short pause] *Shout when you have risen your hand.*

On the simplest level of words, the previous quotations can be considered offensive. On that level, Patronen belittles the challenges of short statured people, and mocks their bodily features. Thus, it is understandable how one might think that these remarks are obscene and not funny at all. On the other

[15] Socrates touches on the same topic when he argues to his drunken and passed out friends that the genius of tragedy and comedy is from the same root (Plato, Symposium, 223d).

[16] Humor is always bound to the context, and unfortunately I am not able to reconstruct the performance perfectly in a written form. The following analysis is based on the performance as seen on television (Yle: Naurun tasapaino, October 2015). However, in our personal correspondence, Patronen agreed with my interpretation, and stated that he has nothing to add to my analysis.

hand, for a different kind of personality, it might be deeply funny that certain minorities are ridiculed and desecrated because of their bodily features. I believe that these points of view are, however, relatively naïve ways to relate to Patronen's performance, and I propose an alternative way to reflect upon the routine.

First of all, Patronen avoids "attacking dwarfs" as well as "patronizing little people". Instead, he sees them as human beings and as a laughing audience who should not be treated in any different way than others – they are equals. The "blah-blah-blah" comment, I propose, points to the way in which so-called normal people so often react to others who are not considered to be normal. If one categorizes a person on the basis of his or her apparent deformity, one makes a prejudicial judgement (despite whether it is based on, say, pity or hatred). Instead, Patronen shows how *the problems of living are problems of human beings*, and not mainly challenges for someone who is different to what is considered normal. Societies are typically built for people of average height, but mere wailing is not the right answer to this social problem; wailing can easily be condescending. Obviously, Patronen is well aware that there are bodily differences between certain groups of people, as the "raise your hand" remark points out. However, this seemingly mocking notion is not directed against short statured people but, instead, it is a biting remark towards those who believe that some bodily differences actually matter when considering how one should treat other human beings. Through his routine Patronen plays with prejudices and, in essence, his humorous performance reflects the utter silliness of many kinds of prejudices. His humor does not mock short statured people for being of short stature, nor does it fall to any kind of condescending patronization.

To sum up, harsh humor is not necessarily "evil", and even if a humorous performance includes aggressive tones, it is not necessarily against, say, humanistic principles and respect for others. Fromm clarifies this aspect when he remarks in *The Anatomy of Human Destructiveness* that aggression can be both *benign* and *malignant*. Thus, aggression in itself is not always bad nor always good; so, neither is aggressive humor. In Fromm's analysis, the concept of benign aggression includes, among others, certain kinds of pseudo-aggression which can be called playful aggression. Malignant aggression, on the other hand, is cruel and destructive. (See Fromm 1973, 210—213, 300.)

So, even though the aforementioned jokes might be offensive and aggressive, simple aggressiveness does not consign them to being morally

wrong. In relation to humor, it is central to try to understand the principles on which humor is eventually based. Obviously, humor can be used to trample upon humanistic ideals, and it can be a tool for oppressing, for example, minorities (see Speier 1998, Lewis 2006). But then, aggressive humor can fight for humanistic ideals. In these cases, humor can be a means to improve life, and to stand against dehumanizing practices and authorities (see Scott 1985, Gouin 2004). Following Fromm, humor should be understood in relation to the prevailing character matrix, and according to Michael Maccoby (2009, 143) Fromm defines sense of humor as an emotional equivalent for the cognitive sense of reality. These notions are important clues if one is to analyze what can be found beyond jokes and laughter. Curiously, Cleese has made a similar observation. He admits in his autobiography that humor and laughter can be unkind and destructive. Humor and laughter cover all the manifestations of human behavior, from love to hate. He states: ”The latter produces nasty racial jokes and savage teasing; the former, warm and affectionate banter, and the kind of inclusive humour that says, 'Isn't the human condition absurd, but we're all in the same boat.'” (Cleese 2014, 104.) Cleese emphasizes that it is a delight if humor is absurd, but awfully dreadful if the reality and the whole way of living appear to be insane. The same concern is present in Fromm’s works: he points out how twisted common sense appears to be, and furthermore, how this common nonsense has taken over in our culture. (Fromm, 1963, 133.) [17]

5. Summary: How to Evaluate Humor?

In this article I have discussed how humor and morality intertwine, and how the concept of disobedience is of central importance if one wants to understand controversial humor. I argue that it is logically and practically possible to be amused by an immoral joke. Also, it has to be admitted that certain kinds of superficially offensive forms of humor do not necessarily violate moral values. Instead, this kind of humor might be critical and revolutionary, and it can make a person open his eyes and examine his own moral stances. However, one cannot conclude that if something appears to be funny according to his or her sense of humor, that something must be good (because “laughter *in itself* is good” is an untenable claim). The basic idea is this: neither amusement in itself nor taking offense in itself are the crucial

[17] According to Maccoby (2014), Fromm was not surprised why some people lose their minds. Instead, given the conditions of the absurd world, it is odd how anyone can remain sane. For him, the whole Western way of living appears to be quite insane (see Fromm 1955).

matters – instead the decisive factor is the basis on which these reactions are founded. For this, it is necessary to analyze the wider character matrix and the social setting. Thus, different kinds of general rules for humor, such as Toth's, may not be as applicable as one could hope for. For instance, Patronen clearly jokes about the problems of living of short statured people, but this does not automatically make his humor questionable.

It is possible to make critical black humor about, for instance, stupidity, anger, greed, nonsense, narrow-mindedness, overly bureaucratic customs, power, blind religiosity, hypocrisy... the list goes on. The common denominator is that all of these belong to the least flattering side of human life. In this sense, when these attributes are ridiculed – even in a harsh manner – a humorist disapproves them. At the same moment, he or she approves some other values.

So, how should one evaluate, for instance, Dieudonné M'bala M'bala's performances? There are two obvious preliminary observations: 1) There are plenty of people who are amused by his humor, and 2) M'bala M'bala violates basic moral principles (even human rights) with his comedy. On this basic level, one may conclude that he is both funny (even if his humor does not resemble a reader's personal taste of humor) and obscene. The comedian has defended his humor by stating that he fights for freedom of speech by mocking Jewish people. This claim is, however, problematic because the definition of freedom behind the claim is problematic and, in addition, there are probably much more effective and profound ways to progress humane freedom than mockery (see Hietalahti & al. 2016). Even though Dieudonné's defense is relatively weak, he nevertheless makes a valid point: if in France there is as he claims a tendency to fall silent about, for example, the various problems of its own colonial history as well as the war in Algeria, it is clearly problematic. However, it is unconvincing that this problem would be best solved by promoting anti-Semitic attitudes via one's humor. If the claimed morality is a mere hobby horse from which to mistreat certain minorities, we do not have to accept the humorist's argument.

The Frommian genius in relation to understanding controversial humor is to ask what harsh humor disobeys, and at the same moment, what it obeys. Following Fromm, the ultimate goal of humor cannot be the demolishing of all external restrictions on humor. In a Frommian framework, humor is a specific form of disobedience, but it cannot be about rebelling against everything. Instead, humor has to be based on something. For some, humor is founded on the ideal of freedom of speech, but as Fromm mentions: "we have

to gain a new kind of freedom, one which enables us to realize our own individual self, to have faith in this self and in life." (Fromm 1941, 106.) It has to be understood that both freedom and the self are socially constructed phenomena; so are humor and the freedom of humor.

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Splitting the Subject: Carnap, Heidegger, and the *Tractatus*

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Abstract
An oblique confrontation occurs, in 1931, between Rudolf Carnap and Martin Heidegger, within Carnap's essay "The Elimination of Metaphysics through the Logical Analysis of Language." Carnap and Heidegger's fundamental disagreement is here articulated in terms of competing answers to the following question: can metaphysics be excised from the practice of philosophy? Whereas Carnap insists that the statements of metaphysics can be delimited and eliminated from philosophy without loss, Heidegger maintains that philosophy and metaphysics belong to each other intrinsically. In what follows, I trace the indebtedness of this problematic to Ludwig Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*. I argue that, due to the remarks made in Wittgenstein's preface, Carnap is not unjustified in interpreting the *Tractatus* as an attempt to articulate criteria of sense and nonsense, by means of which a "strictly correct" philosophy might sharply delimit sensible propositions from metaphysical pseudo-propositions. However, I argue further, if the *Tractatus* is interpreted along Carnap's lines, as an attempt to definitively excise metaphysics from philosophy, it must be deemed a failure.

I. The Elimination of Metaphysics

Carnap's 1931 *Elimination* purports to carry out a decisive splitting within the subject of philosophy. This performative task requires 1) delimiting two distinct rhetorical communities operative in Europe, of which Wittgenstein and Heidegger are named for the first time as opposing representatives[1] and 2) delimiting legitimate propositions, which express a sense, from nonsensical pseudo-statements, which express nothing. In Carnap's essay, "metaphysics" is used to refer both to a rhetorical community, and "the slag

[1] Wittgenstein is first named one of the "leading representative[s]" of the Vienna Circle's "scientific conception of the world" by Neurath, Carnap, and Hahn in 1929. Carnap also names Heidegger as a paradigmatic "metaphysician" in his 1931 essay.

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of historical languages," or rather, the set of all pseudo-statements now vestigial to philosophical texts. Metaphysics, according to each usage of the word, is to be delimited and excised from philosophy by means of logical analysis.

Carnap maintains, following Wittgenstein, that logical analysis is not to be understood as a collection of assertions, but rather "only a method" (1959). Logical analysis is a way of comporting oneself towards the speech of another with questions and follow up questions, in order to determine whether or not he is speaking sense. Carnap lists several exemplar questions: Can the sentence in question be translated into logical notation, and manipulated according to the rules of logic? Can it be negated, and do we understand what its antithesis means? Under what conditions is the sentence in question true or false, and how can its truth or falsity be verified?

This very line of questioning, however, depends in obvious ways upon a fixed set of criteria intended to delimit sense from nonsense, which Carnap presents explicitly as "the sufficient and necessary conditions" for a sentence S(a) "being meaningful" (1959). Whereas Carnap is keen to emphasize that logical analysis is "only a method," as opposed to a set of claims, logical analysis is nevertheless a method that depends upon true assertions and successful criteria. In the passage below, Carnap respectfully credits Wittgenstein with an assertion that he reformulates and endorses.

> Wittgenstein has asserted that (2) "Under what conditions is S supposed to be true, and what conditions false?" expresses what philosophers mean by (4) "What is the meaning of S?" :
> *The meaning of a sentence consists in its truth-condition.* (Carnap, 1959)

This claim is foundational to the method of logical analysis, because it serves as a criterion for what counts as a meaningful sentence. It could be paraphrased as follows*: A sentence is meaningless (Unsinn) if its speaker cannot specify the empirical conditions under which such statement is true, and conversely the conditions under which such statement is false.*[2] This criterion plays a central role in Carnap's polemic, both in delimiting the

[2] Carnap lists a version of this statement as one of four of the "sufficient and necessary conditions" for sentence S(a) "being meaningful". He adds that each of the four criteria listed "ultimately say the same thing." In Carnap's exact words, "the truth conditions for S(a) must be fixed." (Carnap, 1959).

speech of two distinct rhetorical communities (the Vienna Circle's "scientific philosophy" and Heidegger's "metaphysics") and in delimiting legitimate, logically correct assertions from metaphysical nonsense.

Carnap goes on to demonstrate the manner in which Heidegger fails logical analysis. He attends to a string of sentences culled from Heidegger's 1929 Inaugural Lecture course "Was Ist Metaphysik?" most of which are questions.

> How do things stand with the Nothing? ...Where do we seek the Nothing?.. How do we know the Nothing? Anxiety reveals the Nothing.. That for which and because of which we were anxious, was 'really'- nothing. Indeed: the Nothing itself-as such- was present. (Carnap, 1959)

Logical analysis, Carnap's introduction suggests, might require an arduous process of questioning. Translatability of a sentence into logical notation is not a sufficient condition to establish whether or not a sentence is meaningful, merely a preliminary test. Given, however, Heidegger's outspoken unwillingness to translate the word "Nothing" into logical notation with an existential quantifier and a negation symbol, no further analysis is necessary to determine the nonsensicality of the sentences in which it appears.[3] The logical analyst could persist in asking more questions, e.g. "What conditions must adhere such that we can truthfully assert that anxiety reveals the Nothing? How might the presence of the Nothing be verified?" But to proceed in this way, Carnap suggests, would be a fool's errand.

As other scholars have noted,[4] there is little in Heidegger's original text that would suggest he would *contest* the results of logical analysis, leaving both parties in startling agreement. The unsatisfying quality of Carnap and Heidegger's exchange, and its relevance for contemporary philosophy, continues to incite scholarship and debate. In my research, I have encountered three different narratives of the confrontation that bring in the *Tractatus* as an interpretive element, each with a distinct account of what happened and what was at stake.

According to the first narrative, best put forward by Peter Luchte (2007), Carnap's diatribe betrays an utter disregard for context, thus missing ironies

[3] Carnap does not deny the possibility that a new meaning might be assigned to the word "Nothing," but he claims that Heidegger has not attempted to assign one. (1959).

[4] Friedman, M. and Luchte, P.

and anticipated arguments in Heidegger's lecture that render the results of logical analysis moot. In his defense of Heidegger against Carnap and the early Wittgenstein, Luchte illustrates the manner in which Heidegger is concerned with "another locus of truth, that of a primary topos of disclosure, prior to and more fundamental than empirical verifiability and logic." Luchte analyzes the exchange in question with thoroughness and care. His very discursive approach, however, illustrates a pressing predicament for continental philosophers attempting to engage the analytical community "in the wake of significant historical contestations," especially considering Luchte's claim that the very "task of philosophy" is here at stake. Given that it is Heidegger's *discourse itself* that is put into question by Carnap's analysis, and that Luchte's defense of Heidegger is presented in the very discourse that is on trial, it is unlikely that Luchte's historical analysis will be compelling to anyone not already convinced of Heidegger's merits and sense.

According to the second narrative, as told by Peter Hacker (1996), Carnap's *Elimination* is a notable, but not revolutionary, landmark in the history of analytic philosophy. Hacker treats and values Carnap primarily as one of Wittgenstein's earliest readers, contextualizing all of Carnap's work from 1931–1935 with discussion of the *Tractatus*. Hacker tacitly credits Carnap with first distinguishing, by use of Wittgenstein's method, "Analytic Philosophy" from "the obscurities of speculative metaphysicians, such as Hegel, Bradley, or Heidegger."[5] Although Hacker, following the later Wittgenstein, rejects the results of nearly all of Carnap's projects (verificationism, his protocol language, his systematic meta-logic) Hacker finds no fault with Carnap's diagnosis of Heidegger's speech, and claims further that any "difference between Carnap and Wittgenstein on this issue lies largely in the bedside manner." (Hacker, 2003). In short, Hacker rather uncritically recounts the exchange in question as a successful excision of metaphysics from the practice of analytic philosophy.

The third narrative is drawn from interpretive debates concerning the elucidating purposes of Tractatarian propositions, as put forward by James Conant. Conant's primary motive is not to provide a defense of Heidegger or of metaphysics per se, but rather to claim that logical analysis, as Carnap

[5] Although Hacker does not reference Carnap by name in the quote referenced here, he makes a clear allusion to Carnap's 1931 indictment of "speculative metaphysics." Hacker goes on to suggest that Carnap's original demarcation, while valid, must do "more work" than merely distinguish analytic philosophy from metaphysics if "Analytic Philosophy is to be useful as a classificatory term."

employs it against Heidegger, rests upon a fundamental misappropriation of the *Tractatus.* (Conant, 2001). Conant contests the idea that Wittgenstein intended to sharply demarcate philosophy, above all "scientific philosophy," from metaphysics. He furthermore opposes the assumption that Wittgenstein ever intended to develop a rigidly systematic method of logical analysis, or a set of criteria, for the purposes of demarcating meaningful discourse from nonsense. (Conant, 2001).

In what follows, I address the issue of criteria in the *Tractatus,* and examine Carnap's inheritance of Wittgenstein as the inheritance of a troubling and repetitive question: that of philosophy's relationship to its metaphysical origins. Whereas Carnap thinks that metaphysics can and should be eliminated from the practice of philosophy (and indeed that metaphysical questioning never occurs as what is to be called "thinking"), Heidegger maintains that philosophy and metaphysics are inseparable. I argue that the *Tractatus* raises, ambivalently and indecisively, the very question with regard to which Carnap and Heidegger are irreparably split. For this reason, I attend to Wittgenstein's *Tractatus* as a pertinent but inconclusive case study.

II. The Vanishing *Tractatus*

The reading of the *Tractatus* that I present here attempts to avoid any speculation regarding Wittgenstein's authorial intentions. I center my reading instead on the preface, in which Wittgenstein explicitly declares what the book to follow will *do*, and gives his readers clear standards by which to judge the success or failure of the text's attempted act.

Wittgenstein prefaces his text by declaring "this book will draw a limit to thinking, or rather- not to thinking, but to the expression of thoughts," specifying further, "it will only be in language that the limit can be drawn." (Wittgenstein, 1961). Wittgenstein's declared task is thus to demarcate what is to be called thinking- or rather, what is to be called a thought- from what is not to be called a thought. This demarcation can only be made "in language," by *articulating* the limit between a thought and its degenerative other, as yet to be defined. That which is not to be called a thought- "that which lies on the other side of the limit," Wittgenstein asserts "will simply be nonsense."

My central interpretive premise is that a promise to draw a limit within language is, unambiguously, a promise to articulate criteria. Given that Wittgenstein defines a "thought," quite rigidly, as "a proposition with a sense," and that the text's self-proclaimed task is that of drawing a limit to the

expression of thoughts, Carnap is hardly unjustified in taking these declarations seriously, and seeking out in the text that follows a criterion statement that delimits sense from nonsense. Wittgenstein goes so far as to provide readers with standards by which to judge whether or not the text succeeds in fulfilling its declared task. The preface states, "if this work has any value, it consists in two things," the first being that "thoughts are expressed in it" and the second being that "the truth of these thoughts" is "unassailable and definitive." (Wittgenstein, 1961). In other words, any criteria articulated within the text must, according to themselves, count as legitimate *propositions.*

Should it be shown that the text to follow does *not* contain legitimate propositions, Wittgenstein maintains that it will have *no value.* If the forth-coming criteria cannot themselves be said to count as propositions- if it is deemed that any sequence of words within the *Tractatus* does not express a sense- then said sequence of words expresses *nothing.* What will follow will thus either be a definitive success, in which case the text will articulate meaningful criteria with which "the final solution" to all the "problems of philosophy" will be demonstrated, or the text will fall short of expressing thoughts, in which case it will resoundingly fail.

What then, is to be called thinking? Wittgenstein delivers a series of numerical statements articulating necessary conditions of what is to be called a "thought."

4 A thought is a proposition with a sense.

4.023 A proposition is a description of a state of affairs.

4.03 A proposition states something only insofar as it is a picture.

4.06 A proposition can be true or false only in virtue of being a picture of reality.

2.18 What any picture…must have in common with reality, in order to be able to depict it, correctly or incorrectly- in any way at all, is logical form, i.e. the form of reality.

2.201 A picture depicts reality by representing a possibility of existence and non-existence of states of affairs.

4.2 The sense of a proposition is its agreement and disagreement with possibilities of existence and non-existence of states of affairs.

4.024 To understand a proposition means to know what is the case if it is true.

(Wittgenstein, 1961)

Carnap reformulates 4.2 and 4.024 as the assertion "the meaning of a sentence consists in its truth-condition," (1959) which might be reformulated in turn as the criterion statement *all sentences (x) are such that, if the truth conditions of x cannot be specified, then x is nonsense, and x does not constitute a thought.* 4.023 might be translated as the criterion statement *if a sentence does not describe a state of affairs, then it is nonsense,* or *all sentences (x) are such that, if x does not assert the existence of a state of affairs, then x does not constitute a thought.*

The penultimate sentence of the *Tractatus,* in which Wittgenstein declares all of his own statements to be nonsense, is well known. If however, according to the interpretive premise that I have adopted, these statements are understood as *criteria of nonsense*, the "only value" of which consists in that they express thoughts, consideration of the text is complicated in light of a strange paradox. Wittgenstein's propositions are not only "nonsensical," they are nonsensical *according to themselves.*

Criterion statements, by definition, do not describe contingent states of affairs, or assert that one of two bivalent possibilities is in fact the case. By definition, criteria do not have specifiable "truth conditions" in the same way that statements of empirical fact have truth conditions. Any criterion of nonsense that Wittgenstein delivers in the text is no exception. Statement 4.024 "to understand a proposition means to know what is the case if it is true" does not function to assert that a given contingent possibility is the case, as opposed to a mutually exclusive possibility. If statement 4.024 does indeed constitute a criterion that articulates the limits of sense, this criterion oversteps its own limits, and therefore must be "thrown away" as nonsense.

> 6.54 My propositions serve as elucidations in the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them- as steps- to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up it.) (Wittgenstein, 1961)

If Wittgenstein's "propositions" are understood as the *criteria* promised by the text's preface, the purpose of which is to delimit sense from nonsense, then serious interpretive problems arise. If Wittgenstein's criteria of nonsense do, as the preface claims, *express true thoughts*, then it must be concluded that these criteria are nonsense according to themselves. However, if these criteria are indeed *nonsense,* then they cannot be said to express thoughts (or

express anything) and thus cannot be used to delimit sense from nonsense, or for that matter, to "recognize" their *own* nonsensicality.

In its preface, the *Tractatus* promises both to delimit sense from nonsense, and to express true thoughts. It fails, by its own impossibly rigid standards, in doing both. Given that the criteria of nonsense within the *Tractatus* cannot survive their own expression, Carnap's 1931 *citation* of these very criteria does indeed, in a cursory examination, appear misguided. Contra Conant, however, I do not believe that Carnap's insistent inheritance of the *Tractatus* is the outcome of inattentive reading. On the contrary, Carnap is highly attuned to the internal collapse of Wittgenstein's text, and the central problematic that it raises, but ultimately fails to resolve. This problematic, concerning the relationship between philosophy and metaphysics, arises explicitly in the third to last entry of the *Tractatus*.

> 6.53 The correct method in philosophy would really be the following: to say nothing except what can be said: i.e. the propositions of natural science- i.e. something that has nothing to do with philosophy- and then, whenever someone else wanted to say something metaphysical, to demonstrate to him that he had failed to give a meaning to certain signs in his propositions. Although it would not be satisfying to the other person- he would not have the feeling that we were teaching him philosophy- *this* method would be the only strictly correct one. (Wittgenstein, 1961)

The above passage informs Carnap's desire for a "strictly correct" philosophy, from which metaphysics might be excised. Wittgenstein here conflates "metaphysical" speech with nonsense, and imagines a confrontation similar to the one that occurs in Carnap's *Elimination*, in which the philosopher takes it upon himself to demonstrate, by means of a "strictly correct method" (presumably logical analysis), the metaphysician's failure to express a sense. The failure of the *Tractatus,* however, lies in that it leaves the philosopher no language in might this demonstration might be sensibly made, given the nonsensical status of his criteria.

According to Wittgenstein, the questions, assertions and criteria of the logical analyst are just as nonsensical- just as metaphysical- as the speech of the metaphysician. If the *Tractatus* does indeed eliminate metaphysics, it does so only at the cost of condemning all philosophy to silence. The delimitation promised in the *Tractatus* occurs only as a self-destructive

vanishing act, an unmet promise that deprives its readers not only of its own metaphysical system (according to which "the world is all that is the case"), but also of a valid criterion by which this system might be dismissed. The *Tractatus* leaves its readers with *nothing.*

III. "But what, then, is left?"

Carnap responds to the collapse of the *Tractatus* with a question. "But what, then, is left over for philosophy, if all statements whatever that assert something are of an empirical nature and belong to factual science?" (1964). As previously discussed, Carnap maintains that "what remains is… only a *method*," albeit a method that depends upon criteria problematically inherited from and attributed to Wittgenstein. In the period 1929–1937, Carnap demonstrates hesitancy in using the word "philosophy" to classify his own anti-metaphysical activities, and wavers between adopting the terms "scientific philosophy," "logical analysis" and "the logic of science". (1964). Carnap remains unsettled, furthermore, by the closing injunction of the *Tractatus.*[6] In 1937, he finally states his grievances with Wittgenstein in print.

> According to [the Tractatus], the investigations of the logic of science contain no sentences, but merely more or less vague explanations which the reader must subsequently recognize as pseudo-sentences and abandon. Such an interpretation of the logic of science is certainly very unsatisfactory. (Carnap, 1964, 282)

As early as 1931, Carnap expresses the lingering anxiety that the "unsatisfactory" performative contradictions within the *Tractatus* will be repeated in his own work.[7] In the *Elimination,* directly in the wake his analysis of Heidegger, Carnap concedes that the diagnostic and criterion statements within his own critique remain questionable.

[6] See Tractatus 6.54. "What we cannot speak about we must pass over in silence." As Conant notes, Wittgenstein explicitly stated in a 1932 letter to Schlick that he believed Carnap to have "completely misunderstood" this injunction. (Conant, 2001).

[7] One cannot help but be reminded again of Tractatus 6.53 "Although it would not be satisfying to the other person- he would not have the feeling that we were teaching him philosophy- *this* method would be the only strictly correct one."

> The question regarding the logical character of the statements which we obtain as the result of a logical analysis, e.g. the statements occurring in this and other logical papers, can here be answered only tentatively: such statements are partly analytic, partly empirical. For these statements about statements and parts of statements belong in part to a pure metalogic (e.g. "a sequence consisting of the existence symbol and a noun, is not a sentence"), in part to descriptive metalogic (e.g. "the word sequence at such and such place in such and such a book is meaningless"). (Carnap, 1959, 78)

In the above passage, Carnap all but acknowledges that the exceptional status of the very diagnostic and criterion statements employed against Heidegger remains, as yet, unjustified and unexplained. Carnap's willingness to discuss the inconsistencies still riddling logical analysis, and his eagerness to resolve these inconsistencies (by means of a "metalogic," a logically correct language in which the analyst might construct "sentences about sentences") both marks a significant departure from Wittgenstein, and demonstrates Carnap's persistent belief that philosophy can survive the elimination of metaphysics. Whereas the *Tractutus* denies the philosopher or analyst the possibility of arriving at "philosophical propositions," from 1931–1937, Carnap understands his task to be that of "provid[ing] a system of concepts, a language, by the help of which the results of logical analysis will be exactly formulable." (1964).

> The fact that Wittgenstein does not believe in the possibility of the exact formulation of the sentences of the logic of science has as its consequence that he does not demand any scientific exactitude in his own formulations, and that he draws no sharp line of demarcation between the formulation of the logic of science and those of metaphysics. (Carnap, 1964)

Carnap ultimately deems the *Tractatus* to be a failed attempt in sharply demarcating philosophy from metaphysics. If Carnap and Heidegger's fundamental disagreement rests, as I have claimed, upon whether or not this demarcation can and should be made, then the *Tractatus* constitutes an important case study. Can metaphysics be excised from the practice of philosophy? To what degree is the contemporary philosophical community

still divided in its response to this question? How is this question understood, and what does it mean?

In contemporary analytic philosophy, many of Carnap's central projects, including the construction of a logically correct meta-language, have been largely discredited and abandoned. Full discussion of Carnap's metalogic, and analysis as to whether or not it overcomes the contradictions of the *Tractatus* would lie beyond the scope of this article. However it is reasonable to claim that many analytic philosophers, following the later Wittgenstein, lost interest in Carnap's efforts to salvage Wittgenstein's first text primarily because they came to reject the central task of the *Tractatus* itself, as it is declared in the text's preface. As Peter Hacker notes, Wittgenstein came to disavow the project of formulating a single, *universal* criterion by means of which sense and nonsense might be delimited, instead focusing his efforts upon disclosing mal-formed questions and statements on a case-by-case basis. (Hacker, 1987).[8]

A subtle inconsistency comes to light, however, when one considers that whereas Hacker (and "Analytic Philosophy" for which he portends to speak) has abandoned Carnap's *criteria of nonsense,* Hacker preserves Carnap's original delimitation between philosophy and metaphysics, according to which Heidegger is classified and dismissed as a "speculative metaphysician." (Hacker, 1996). Given that, in Carnap's *Elimination,* "metaphysics" is defined in terms of nonsense, and nonsense is defined in terms of the very criteria subsequently rejected by the analytic philosophical community, the question arises as to how "metaphysics" is now to be defined. If, for figures like Hacker, the Carnap–Heidegger exchange constitutes a kind of philosophical event, the consequences of which were the "elimination of metaphysics," the question arises: *what,* exactly, has been eliminated? What, potentially, has been lost?

IV. What is Metaphysics?

Heidegger's 1929 text, containing a string of statements and questions concerning "the Nothing" is not structured as a defense of metaphysics, but

[8] See also Wittgenstein's reflection, prior to writing the *Investigations*: "One asks: 'Where is the boundary between the meaningful and the meaningless?' As if one had the task of demarcating two realms from one another, while the real peculiarity of the question is that it can only be answered…from case to case… we are no longer tempted to suppose that there is, as it were, a continent of the meaningful which- with unknown boundaries- rises out of the sea of the meaningless: this imagery is created by misleading speech patterns." (Wittgenstein and Waismann, 2003).

as an *inquiry* into metaphysics. Indeed the "question concerning the Nothing" is posed performatively, not as a self-contained philosophical inquiry, but rather as a pedagogical demonstration. The question of the Nothing is posed only in service of another, more pressing inquiry.

> "What is metaphysics?" The question awakens expectations of a discussion about metaphysics. This we will forgo. Instead we will take up a particular metaphysical question. In this way it seems we will let ourselves be transposed directly into metaphysics. Only in this way will we provide metaphysics a proper occasion to introduce itself. Our plan begins with the unfolding of a metaphysical inquiry, then tries to elaborate the question, and concludes by answering it. (Heidegger, 1977)

Metaphysics is given the most forceful occasion to arise and unfold, Heidegger provokingly continues, when science is compelled to articulate a philosophical account of itself. When we "researchers, teachers and students" pursue science, we both *act* confidently, according to our established methods for treating various "objects of inquiry," and *speak* confidently, by restricting our speech to material things and observable empirical processes. (1977). In pursuing science, we refer unproblematically to things that exist ("beings"), attribute properties to these existing things, and form predicates in accordance with "the rules of logic." When the scientist attempts to articulate his relation to the world, however, Heidegger suggests that this confident action must arrest itself, and this confident speech must deviate from its habitual referents and predicates. Heidegger delivers three caricatured statements, in the voice of the scientist, expressive of the scientific *Weltauffassung.*

> That to which the relation to the world refers are beings themselves- and nothing besides.That from which every attitude takes its guidance are beings themselves- and nothing further. That which the scientific confrontation in the irruption occurs are beings themselves- and beyond that nothing. (Heidegger, 1977)

These statements are naturally Heidegger's own, but their structure nonetheless echoes that of statements expressed or cited by Carnap himself.[9] They echo, furthermore, Wittgenstein's problematic injunction to "say nothing except what can be said, i.e. the propositions of the natural sciences." (Wittgenstein, 1961). In their very articulation, Heidegger notes, these repetitive restrictions to strictly empirical speech overstep their own bounds.

> What is remarkable is that, precisely in the way scientific man secures to himself what is most properly his, he speaks of something different… What about this nothing? The nothing is rejected precisely by science… Science wants to know nothing of the nothing. But even so it is certain that when science tries to express its proper essence it calls upon the nothing for help. It has recourse to what it rejects. What incongruous state of affairs reveals itself here? (Heidegger, 1977, 95)

The "question of the nothing" arises, within Heidegger's caricatured demonstration, when "scientific man" attempts to understand himself and his relation to the world. The emergence of this question, its imperfect articulation, and its irreverent pursuit, pedagogically demonstrates the occurrence of metaphysics. The questioner who persists in asking about the nothing, even in spite of her uncertainty regarding the "object" of her inquiry, demonstrates a distinctive questioning attitude, the cultivation of which Heidegger deems essential to the practice of philosophy itself. Philosophy, Heidegger asserts, demands of its practitioners a radical readiness for the possibility of failure.

> Metaphysics…stands in closest proximity to the constantly lurking possibility of the deepest error. For this reason, no amount of scientific rigor attains to the seriousness of metaphysics. Philosophy- what we call philosophy- is metaphysics getting under way, in which philosophy comes to itself and it its explicit tasks. (Heidegger, 1977.)

Metaphysics, as Heidegger understands it, is characterized not by its dogmatic rejection of logic or of science, but rather by its readiness for error

[9] The Vienna Circle declares, "neatness and clarity are striven for, and dark distances and unfathomable depths rejected. In science there are no 'depths'; there is surface everywhere: all experience forms a complex network… Everything is accessible to man; and man is the measure of all things" (Hahn, Neurath, Otto and Carnap, 2014).

and its persistence in questioning, even and especially when the meaning of the questions themselves remain to be worked out. The fundamental disagreement between Carnap and Heidegger, I have claimed, lies in their respective desires to eliminate and preserve metaphysics. How is this difference between them to be considered, however, given that the very *language* in which each respectively defines "metaphysics" reflects already a foregone conclusion, thereby precluding the possibility of considering the relationship between "philosophy" and "metaphysics" on neutral ground?

Carnap defines "metaphysics" as nothing more than "the slag of historical languages," the set of sentences vestigial to philosophy, to which no meaning has been assigned, and by means of which no sense is expressed, that still linger in philosophical texts like so many useless limbs. Heidegger defines "metaphysics" rather as the collected history of mankind's attempts and failures to articulate human existence in words, the collected history of failed formulations of the question of Being. These definitions foreclose their other's possibility. They cannot be reconciled, and yet, they both define "metaphysics" in terms of a profound *failure to say.*

I have here presented a reading of the *Tractatus* as a distinctively metaphysical failure, one that unfolds plainly and without apology. The distance between Carnap and Heidegger can be measured in terms of this failure. Whereas Carnap held that philosophy should do everything in its power to secure itself from the eventuality of performative contradiction, error, and indeterminacy of speech and sense, Heidegger understood aporia, anxiety, and the willingness to err as intrinsic, necessary conditions to philosophical questioning. It is challenging to articulate, in philosophical rather than political terms, what was at stake in Carnap–Heidegger exchange. I have claimed that their confrontation is best explained as a disagreement concerning two incompatible understandings of philosophy's relationship to failure.

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A Bergsonian Approach toward Phenomenal Externalism: Rendering Unity

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Abstract
Phenomenal Externalism (PE) is one proposed framework for resolving the problems associated with the intentional aspect of mental content. However, by privileging external objects over internal structure in identifying the characteristics of experience (qualia), PE is limited in its ability to explain the introspective (phenomenal) aspect of experience. This has become an Achilles' heel for PE, to which many of its opponents have formulated significant objections. In this paper, we consider some possible ways of modifying and equipping PE to answer these objections. It will be shown that a degree of subjectivity can be returned to the qualia conception within a PE framework. This will be achieved by following Bergson, who claims that perception is made *in* things and that, though not identical, pure perception and objective reality are united. To explain this unity, we propose a computer rendering analogy, according to which qualia look like the products of mental rendering, which raises the possibility of locating some phenomenal properties *in* things. On this modified view, on the one hand qualia turn out to be objective, in the sense that they are unified with external entities, and on the other hand they are subjective, since they are unified with the mind. To be "in" the thing in the sense discussed means being "united with" and "inseparable from" both the thing and the mind.

1. Introduction

The Mind-Body Problem is among the most controversial subjects in philosophy and science. Of the many proposed resolutions to the problem, Externalism is perhaps the most contentious. Externalism was first proposed as a way of identifying and individuating dispositional (intentional) mental

states, such as beliefs, not only in terms of intrinsic properties of the subject (as Internalists believe), but also in terms of features related to the environment that are external to the subject. Later, this was extended to encompass the qualitative character of experience in general, by way of a thesis known as Externalist Representationalism (ER) or Phenomenal Externalism (PE) (Shroer, 2009). In response, many objections to PE have been set out. Our focus in the present paper is on how PE can respond to these objections.

In attempting to resolve some of the difficulties involved in explaining phenomenal knowledge from a physicalistic point of view, PE proponents suggest, first, that all (Dretske, 1995), (Lycan 1996, 2001), (Byrne and Tye, 2006) or most (Kim, 2010) of the characteristic properties of experience (qualia) are representational and, second, that these properties should be identified with (or, in the strong sense, reduced to) a representational content that is somehow determined by or individuated with reference to the external object.

This account of the content of qualitative experience (qualia) has generated numerous controversies. The primary objection is that PE conflicts with our introspective intuitions about the phenomenality of experience (Schroer, 2009). In other words, PE cannot explain the subjectivity of experience by referring some or all of the qualitative properties of experience to the external object. To demonstrate this problem, several puzzles have been proposed, such as the Inverted Spectrum (Jaegwon Kim, 2010), Inverted Earth (Block, 1990), Far Star (Revonsuo, 2010), and the Dreaming Puzzles (Revonsuo, 2006). In each case, the problem is generated because the external object is supposed to be where qualia reside, thereby leaving no room for subjectivity. With the help of Bergson's theses, this paper shows how we might equip PE to deal with some of these objections and demonstrates that a degree of subjectivity can be returned to a "qualia" conception in a PE framework.

The next section introduces Bergson's theses. The discussion is based primarily on his *Matter and Memory* (1908). We then set out an account of how a modified version of these theses can help to resolve the problems associated with PE, especially the puzzles raised by its opponents. It is important to note that Bergson's views will be presented in a far more analytical manner than he presents in his own writings.

2. Bergson's Thesis on Mind and Matter: The General Scheme

Bergson's most significant claim is that pure perception[1] and objective reality (in Bergson's usage, "matter") are united. What exactly this unity amounts to is not clear, so in what follows we propose a clarification.

Bergson begins by criticizing the three mainstream philosophical traditions of his time: Materialism, Idealism and Dualism. He is inclined to accept the existence of both a mindful subject and a material object and their (mutually causal) interaction. Thus, he rejects matter as being secondary and/or dependent upon mind, and vice versa. Briefly, Bergson argues that for the materialist (or physicalist), every entity (or property) should be the result of states (position) and movements (momentum) of extended particles with dimensional properties (similar to Descartes). However, this leaves the emergence of subjective conscious experience, considered as a non-extended entity, as something miraculous and inexplicable. This is a problem many physicalists have struggled with, now known as "The Hard Problem" (Chalmers, 1995) or "The Explanatory Gap" (Levine, 1983).

On the other hand, according to Bergson, if we accept Idealism and suppose everything to be mental (dependent on, originating from, or existing in the mind), which for Bergson is non-extended and undetermined (relating to his belief in free will), then an explanation of mind-independent and determined material facts becomes impossible. Moreover, Bergson does not like the way science is accounted for in idealistic frameworks. He believes that the deterministic aspect of science is essential, since the gist of scientific theory is deterministic law. However, if the laws can be settled arbitrarily by mind, (empirical) science becomes accidental and undetermined. Thus, Bergson's account of science conflicts with the idealistic framework.[2] Having rejected Materialism and Idealism, Bergson tackles dualism in its Cartesian sense, namely, the positing of two distinct substances: the mental (immaterial) and the physical (material). For Bergson, the interaction between the two seems perplexing, and he thus rejects the Cartesian distinction.

Bergson accepts none of the above well-known hypotheses, and begins his own speculation with an eccentric rejection of a common intuition, with his statement that the "perception (of external objects and entities) does not

[1] It can be inferred from Bergson's writings that "pure perception" is the instantaneous impression occurring before the mind applies any interpretive or filtering process - an idea similar to Kant's immediate sensual impression or sensation (Giovanelli, 2011).

[2] This was well before the advent of non-deterministic quantum mechanics.

occur in our brain." According to Bergson, our perception is *in* the object we perceive, rather than in us: "Perception, in its pure state, is, then, in very truth, a part of things" (Bergson, 1908, p. 64). Furthermore, speaking of a luminous point P perception, he contends that "the truth is that the point P, the rays which it emits, the retina and the nervous elements affected, form a single whole; that the luminous point P is a part of this whole; and that it is really in P, and not elsewhere, that the image of P is formed and perceived" (Bergson, 1908, p. 43).

Counter-intuitively, Bergson removes perception from the brain and locates (or expands it) outside the body, ontologically linking (uniting) perception with the objects that are perceived. In doing so, he attempts to avoid the weaknesses of each of the standard theses discussed above. Since he accepts the independence of mind and matter, Bergson circumvents the problems with the Monism (whether Materialism or Idealism) and, by transferring perception to the object, he aims to show that the interaction problem between mind and matter can be resolved, albeit within a dualistic framework.

Bergson criticizes the view of matter common to both Materialism and Idealism, which both treat it as being distinct from its corresponding conscious cognition (perception). In Materialism, matter differs substantively from the non-extended (conscious) cognition that miraculously arises out of extended (material) particles. In Idealism, matter is similarly assumed to be an extended entity governed by deterministic laws, whereas mind is non-extended and undetermined. Thus, like the materialist, the idealist has a conception of matter as substantially different from mind. Even for Kant, the possible objective entity (the material world) presumed to be the cause[3] of perception is the unknowable *noumenon*. Again, this is dissimilar to the experienced perception.

Bergson rejects this conception, maintaining that things (matter in general) are what they seem, and are not independent of (or distinct from) perception. According to Bergson, pure perception and matter (or, more precisely, objective entities) are united, and perception is constructed out of pure perception as part of the objective entity. Therefore, how an object seems (i.e., the perception of it) is, in ontological terms, united with both pure perception and objective matter, not a distinct and uncertain representation of

[3] For now, we shall ignore the objection that causality cannot be assigned to non-spatiotemporal entities, namely, the *noumenon* in Kant's philosophy. Kant distinguishes two types of causation elsewhere. (See Kant's *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, section 30.)

the object. In other words, the perception of an object is a confined version of pure perception. Nevertheless, even if we grant this, how does Bergson explain the confinement process of pure perception?

2.1. Recognition and Memory

Bergson believes in a specific type of metaphysics, which he calls "positive metaphysics." This is a form of metaphysics based not only on personal abstraction, but also grounded in empirical fact (Gayon, 2005), which is now known as "experimental philosophy." Based on this belief, he considers memory and its role in cognition, viewing memory as the coincidence of matter and spirit (or mind). Bergson claims that recognition (perception) is the confinement of pure perception by the means of memory.

The key to understanding Bergson's epistemology is that he sees perception and cognition as active processes. He does not see them as the passive flow from object to brain from which a conscious experience arises. A Bergsonian cognitive process is not an outside-to-inside (centripetal) process or the moving from object to idea (or subject), but an inside-to-outside (centrifugal) process, which moves from idea to object.

For Bergson, all perceptive durations are present in pure memory in the form of planes of consciousness. For each perception, memory retrieves some of these planes from the past and grounds them in the present moment, so that "the concrete process by which we grasp the past in the present is recognition" (1908, p. 90). Indeed, memory can make a choice[4] according to the spirit's needs. This is a recursive process: permanent perception is synthesized from ultimate reality by means of planes of consciousness, and the process continues until what the spirit needs is constructed out of pure perception (united with objective reality or matter). Bergson explains the active role of the recognition[5] process as follows:

> In principle, the present supplants the past. But, just because the disappearance of former images[6] is due to their inhibition by our present attitude[7], those whose shape might fit into this [our present]

[4] To Bergson, this undetermined choice is the direct sign of the immateriality and spirituality of memory.

[5] Bergson's use of the term "recognition" in place of cognition is interesting.

[6] For Bergson, "image" is a technical term and will be explained later.

[7] "Attitude" here is almost synonymous with "need."

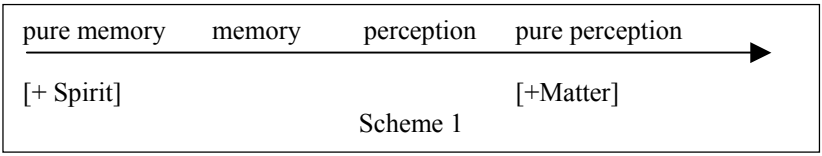
> attitude encounter less resistance than the others . . . It is the image most similar to the present perception that will actually do so (1908, p. 96).

Unfortunately, Bergson does not explain this process analytically or develop it in the form of a precise cognitive model. However, it is important to note that for Bergson, the process of recognition is not additive but reductive – that is, nothing will be added to the pure perception to build a new perception; rather some planes of consciousness are hindered (by memory), and so do not emerge in the perception because they do not match with the present need. In other words, what we perceive is cut from pure perception according to need. By way of illustration, we can imagine objective reality or pure perception as a piece of marble from which pure memory extracts the statue by removing all non-essential parts. More precisely, memory works as a filter, constraining the emergence of what is not adjusted to one's need. Bergson is now able to present the "hard problem" in a different form:

> *What you have to explain, then, is not how perception arises, but how it is limited, since it should be the image of the whole, and is in fact reduced to the image of that which interests you* (Bergson's italics) (1908, p. 40).

To better understand what Bergson means, it is important to note that he views things (entities) as "images" that are neither material nor ideal. Indeed, he calls all things images, since there is always a unified subjective (representational) aspect in their essence, in accordance with the limiting process explained above. This image-entitling will be explained later. However, the notion of an independent image is counterintuitive, since upon hearing the word "image," we might reasonably ask, "What is the image an image of?" Bergson does not give an unequivocal answer, saying only that the basis of the image is not the idea, since it is independent of the mind (1908, p. 10). Therefore, following Bergson, we can say that the image is constructed out of, and unified with, pure perception. Thus, there is still a need for a clearer understanding of his notion of an image, especially in relation to ideas, pure perception, body, and matter.

Bergson's theory may be represented as follows:



Scheme 1

The direction of the arrow indicates the flow of the active perception process from pure memory to pure perception. Perception is made out of the pure perception that resides in things (objects) based on the spirit's needs. On one side, pure perception is united with objective reality (or matter); on the other, pure memory is united with spirit.

In many respects, Bergson's theses about the unity of subjectivity and objectivity in things seem ambiguous, especially from an ontological perspective. However, for now, our purpose is not to assess or criticize Bergson's theory in detail. Rather, our purpose is the preliminary one of demonstrating how his ideas and premises may lead to productive debates about Phenomenal Externalism.

3. Comparison with PE

PE, in its strong sense, claims that the representational theory of qualia is wide, not narrow (Lycan, 2001); i.e., the quality of perception (representative content) lies outside the brain and *in* the external object. This is the idea of transparency (Herman, 1990) according to which only a sign (or pointer) of an object is present in the mind, and the experience of it should be identified and determined by the properties corresponding to the external environment (Kim, 2010). For advocates of PE, it is plausible to say that things are as they seem: "Qualia are, by definition, the way things seem, look, or appear to a conscious creature" (Kim, 2010, p. 255). Such an understanding of qualia amounts to the claim that "if things really are as they are represented in perception, they must have the properties they are represented to have" (Heiden, 2012, p. 99). Thus, in a sense, PE claims that qualia are objective or have some sense of objectivity, which is why Kim maintains that "Qualia […] are among the objective properties of external objects presented in

conscious experience" (2010, p. 256). This objective account of qualia is the main target of those who object to PE.

In making a comparison between Bergson's theses and PE, it is helpful to begin by acknowledging the similarities between them. Bergson implicitly accepts that things are as they seem to be, and that by recalling things as images, the qualitative aspect of experience is representational. Moreover, he claims that perception (qualia)[8] lies in the things (objects) themselves.

However, Bergson's claim that external perception resides *in* things differs from PE, insofar as qualia are not an objective property of external things; rather they are united with things, i.e., qualia are both objective and subjective in a way that is unified with the thing. More precisely, the perception of qualia is the product of the unification of subject (memory) and object (matter). Perception is the subjective construction of some objective reality *in* objective reality. This is a similar idea to PE, inasmuch as qualia reside in the object; however, unlike PE, Bergson's view retains a degree of subjectivity. This is a crucial point to PE's advantage. In the classic form of PE, for supposing qualia to be objective means that that qualia are identified with some objective aspect (property) of the external object (as for any other objective property such as charge or mass), there could not be another property (qualia) of the same type simultaneously corresponding to a single object. When one perceives a cup as green, according to classic PE, the greenness of cup experience resides in the cup. Therefore, the greenness is in the object and there could not be another color residing in the cup. When the quality of our experience extends to a single objective entity and somehow becomes identical with some aspect (property) of it, then that quality becomes objective. It cannot be dissimilar for different subjects. Therefore, different subjective perceptions of a single and unique entity become impossible. The identity hypothesis of qualia is where classic PE is most vulnerable. However, employing unity in place of identity leaves room for subjectivity. With the help of Bergson's theses, the subjectivity of the experience can be reconciled with its objectivity. If one understands perception as being united but not identical with some aspect of the external object, then it is legitimate to assert that the active mind (subject) constructs what it wants out of the external object *in* the object. It is thus possible that the perception of a single object will be different for different subjects. To return to the question of how Bergson's ideas can help with issues relevant to

[8] It might be asked, "What precisely does Bergson mean by perception?" For now, though, we will assume that what is meant is identical to qualia.

PE, in the next section we show how those ideas can help to resolve the puzzles advanced by PE's opponents.

4. How can Bergson's ideas help resolve the puzzles of PE?

One of the puzzles designed to refute PE is known as the "Inverted Spectrum" (Jaegwon Kim, 2010). This puzzle supposes that there are two people, where one sees an object as green and the other sees it as blue, but where both describe the object's color using the same term. In this case, if it is supposed that the qualia lie in (or are individuated by) the object, how can it be that two colors (or whatever it is that the representational content corresponds to) reside in the same object at the same time? How can they be different if there is no external difference?

With the help of Bergson's theses, this objection can be answered. One subject, according to his particular attitude, constructs the color green out of the object *in* the object, as the characteristic of his own perception, and the other subject constructs the color blue. Thus, the perception of different colors from the same object, even if one supposes that both color qualia resides in the same object, becomes possible. A problem occurs when it is supposed that qualia are identical to some objective aspects of the object, in which case the object cannot be both green and blue. However, when the claim is altered such that the qualia now represent the object under subjective manipulation (by the unified active process of memory), then the issue does not arise. Different unification processes produce different qualia in the same object.

Another problem with externalism is known as the "Inverted Earth" puzzle (Block, 1990, Kriegel, 2007), which imagines a planet which is identical to Earth, except that colors are inverted. There is, in addition, a subject who wears inverted glasses that inverts the colors observed. As these inversions cancel each other out, what the subject observes will be equivalent to what would observe on Earth without the glasses. Therefore, the subject experiences the same phenomena on Earth and on Inverted Earth. However, if external representational content is granted, it should not be possible to experience two unlike objects identically, since the contents (the two objects) are inverted insofar as color is concerned (on two separate planets). The phenomenal aspect of the experience is supposed to lie in the different objects, and so cannot be identical. As with the previous puzzle, this is only a problem if we grant that the qualia are identical with some aspect of the corresponding external object, but if qualia are supposed to be united and not

identical with some objective aspect (property) of the object, then it becomes conceivable that the two observations could have the same quality of experience from two dissimilar objects.

One of the most powerful objections to PE is raised by the case of observing a star that no longer exists. Revonsuo gives the example of Betelgeuse, a red giant 600 light-years away from Earth (Revonsuo, 2010), which does not currently exist, even though observers on Earth still see it. If the qualitative content of conscious experience lies in the object, how can it reside in a non-existent object?[9]

A preliminary answer is that, although there is no star to see, there is still some physical entity as a substratum of qualia construction: photons or electromagnetic waves (field), for instance. Though the star might be unknown by its nature, photons (light) are part of the physical realm, and are as "real" as any object. Thus, although there might be no star, there is still its residue, the corresponding light,[10] which is sufficient for the construction of the experience (qualia).

A second point, implicit in this objection, concerns the time relevant to the qualia or, more accurately, the temporal correspondence between the characteristic properties of the experience of an object and the object itself. This is, admittedly, a challenging objection, and it may be applicable not only to PE but to Representationalism in general, and extended to the qualia conception more generally. Does what we perceive as "now" correspond to a "now" in the physical world of which we are a part, and is there an absolute spatiotemporal framework which would allow us to compare them? According to special relativity, there is no such absolute framework. The measurement of space and time depend on the relative velocity of the frame of reference, and cannot be measured in isolation. However, even if we suppose that such a framework does exist, as Newton did, we would still have to find an answer to the objections of philosophers such as Dainton (2006) and Tye (2003) and the experimental evidences − coincidence limit (Ruhnau, 1995), "Phi phenomenon" (Kolers, 1976), and moving "dot-screen" (Paul, 2010) – which suggests that there is not a one-to-one correspondence between the supposed subjective 'nowness' and the objective 'now'. There is

[9] We can only suppose that the star does not exist, because information from Betelgeuse cannot travel faster than light, and light or another form of electromagnet wave is the only known means by which we can receive information from Betelgeuse.

[10] It is worth noting that we do not 'see' objects, but only the photons (or electromagnetic waves) emitted by or reflected from them.

always part of the past and part of the future in the perceived "now." In other words, "past and present and future will be [re]presented simultaneously" (Dainton, 2006, p. 132), otherwise we could not have the experience of transition and movement. Thus, to address the PE problem of temporal correspondence, there is no need to mention the case of Betelgeuse, for our everyday experiences have the same temporal complexity. Whatever the distances involved, there is always a delay between the transmission of information and its perception, due to the finite speed of light and the cognitive processing time. Therefore, all experience corresponds to past time: there is no 'now' that corresponds meaningfully to the present.

However, according to Bergson, this can be explained. The object's past state of affairs exists somewhere – namely, in memory. As Bergson explains, qualia arise from the process of perceptive construction and memory framework. Thus, a delayed construction would be possible. In the case of the non-existing star, memory can also aid the delayed mapping of perception of the light emitted by the star.

One other objection to PE is dreaming (Revonsuo, 2006). When dreaming, especially during REM[11] sleep (Rechtschaffen and Buchignani 1992), we experience entities that do not exist outside the brain. For PE adherents, explaining the existence of an experience without anchoring it in something external to the brain is problematic. Once again, the role of memory in recalling past experiences and in constructing a new representation can help. However, the following question remains: on which substratum will the qualia be established? However, while the problem posed by dream objects is challenging, it is surely less challenging than the problem of the distant star. Because dream objects are not supposed to be representative of objects outside the brain, they are internal representations, and can be plausibly considered to be constructed on the basis of the material − i.e., neurophysiological − foundation of the brain itself.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

The aforementioned examples, though only briefly examined, show that Bergson's theses offer possibilities that might help us to resolve problems and puzzles for PE. However, some serious difficulties remain, and these are addressed below.

The first major problem lies in the nature of the unity of mind (pure perception) and matter (objective reality), out of which Bergson claims

[11] Rapid Eye Movement.

perception or cognition is constructed. How is this unity of subjectivity and objectivity possible? From a substantive dualistic perspective, it is difficult to unify the nature of the two, and makes sense only if property dualism is presupposed. In principle, a unity between two different properties of the same substance is conceivable, though in practice the exact process requires further clarification. Even so, granting this unity provides a veneer of subjectivity from the brain on, or in, every entity. Everything conceived of as an object has some phenomenal properties, and so may in some sense be said to be subjectively constituted. Therefore, if we accept that phenomenal characteristics of a perceived object, such as color, shape, and rigidity, reside ontologically *in* things, there should also be some sort of subjectivity (phenomenality) *in* them. Accordingly, the threshold of subjectivity should be extended beyond the head into external things, i.e., into whatever we perceive. This idea might be aligned with the claims of those who believe in an "extended mind," and who use the term 'coupling' (Clark and Chalmers, 1998). The focus of Clark's and Chalmers's thesis is on the extension of a bodily vehicle to other external tools (e.g., a pen and paper or a notebook), rather than on an ontologically motivated extension to the brain (mind). On their view, external reality helps the brain (or body) in the formation of an experiences or in the accomplishment of mental tasks (such as mapping and navigation). However, Bergsonian unity, in a stronger sense, imply a realization of mind *in* the external objective world in a stronger sense.

The rendering process that is used in computer graphics is a useful example for the purpose of clarifying the unity thesis. Modelers in computer graphics (animations, games, etc.) begin by making a non-covered model, which consists of lines that represent polygons joint together to form a mesh. Then, by rendering this mesh of polygons, the object can be visualized (represented) on screen as a 2D or 3D object, with colors, materials, textures and other visual effects overlaying the mesh. How the object ultimately appears depends on the selected method of rendering (2D or 3D). Before rendering, the modeled object consists only of lines, and only after rendering does it look like a 'real' − that is, familiar − object. The rendering process causes certain visual aspects to be mapped *in* the object. Similarly, some phenomenal aspects might be construed as being represented, as with rendering, *in* the thing. In this way, qualia can be considered to be a product of the mental rendering of things, which results in locating some phenomenal properties *in* things.

However, an additional problem arises, which is the location of subjectivity "in" the object (thing). Suppose, for example, that an objective (absolute) space-time exists, and that it is independent of mind. If so, there should be an objective entity (the thing) "where" the qualia reside. If "in" is construed spatiotemporally, there should be a spatiotemporal location or region which is occupied by the corresponding "qualia" – and yet this is implausible, since it implies that qualia could be withdrawn from the thing and located elsewhere.

The other option is to claim that things are as they seem. One way of understanding this is to say that how things look is what they look *like*, which is tautological. There might be something more to the object existing outside of perception beyond the seeing or observing realm. In other words, mental (qualia) properties, which we might call "rendered," are aspects of the thing identical to what the thing looks like to the observer. Things are rendered by the mind, and this process makes them appear as they do. It is important to note that to be rendered is not a locally distinct *part* of a thing, but is an *aspect* of the thing. Admittedly, this view departs from Bergson's account, since he considers perception to be part of the thing, insofar as the "part" should not be understood as a spatiotemporal part but as an aspect of the thing, its rendered aspect. According to this view, qualia would be the product of the interaction (unification) of the ultimate mind (spirit, pure memory) and objectivity; an interaction that does not occur at a distance from the thing but is instead united with it.

By modifying the rendering analogy, the argument can be clarified. When a computer model is made, for example, it consists of ordered or structured codes in a program in the computer's memory. Through rendering, this data is visualized as a recognizable object on the screen. Such data can be rendered (realized, visualized) as 2D or 3D objects or simply as a mesh of polygons. On-screen objects are what they seem, nothing more and nothing less. Similarly, if we review all the observable properties of external objects, such as color, rigidity, heat, shape or continuity, these are in some sense mental. They are mentally rendered as the visualized properties of a thing. They are produced by the unity of mind and material, which makes the thing look as if it exists where and how it exists; that is, these observable properties have aspects of both subjectivity and objectivity. The unity thesis entails that there are no qualia without an object (or a mind independent substratum), and no qualia without a subject. The qualia are the products of (and are determined by) the unification of mind and matter.

There remain questions about what the "thing" is, and where and how unity occurs. If the thing is as it appears to be, what about its unobservable aspects? To return to the rendering example, what is the object? There is, indeed, programming code 'behind' the rendered object, which is unobservable to the user (residing inside the memory), but is the object identical to what is visualized on the screen, what is represented in the user's mind, or what resides as programming code in the computer's memory? It might be claimed, of course, that the code is the unobservable aspect of the thing and the screen is where the unification occurs, and that what is known as an observable or visualized property is constructed there. Accordingly, the rendering process might be said to be the unity process. This is indeed a plausible analogy. Nevertheless, according to this view, objects or things are not as they seem; they exist principally beyond observability, entailing that the observed aspect of the object (on the screen) is located somewhere other than the main substratum of the thing. One might even claim that the screen exists within the mind, which would undermine the entire edifice of PE.

However, returning to the rendering process, the visualized part could not be separated from the code or the processes that run parallel to the monitor's illumination. Similarly, the visualized object cannot be an object without a mindful observer observing it. Technically, there is no constant image or moving object on the screen at each instant. To cover and illuminate the screen, a point (electron beam) sweeps the screen through diagonal lines and, at each moment only one pixel is excited with a specific color. This process is repeated periodically in a specific temporal framework (frequency). Thus, there is no specific image on the screen at any instant, and nor is there a moving object. There is only an illuminated dot, observed by a mindful observer as a scene full of moving objects. It is the latency in our visual cognitive system which creates moving objects out of dots. Thus, the visualized object is neither separable from the observer nor from the programming code and the computer. The object is created from the whole interaction between mind and the programming code running within the computer. This could be construed as the meaning of unity in Bergson's framework.

In a similar manner, things cannot be separated from mind or from the ultimate unobservable objective reality. The thing is constructed from the unified interaction of mind and matter. In other words, a thing cannot be considered independently of mind and matter, since both are actively engaged in its construction. At this point, it is worth citing Bergson's discussion of the

formation of perception of a luminous point P: "The truth is that the point P, the rays which it emits, the retina and the nervous elements affected, form a single whole" (Bergson, p. 102).This *single whole* is what we should consider as object or thing. Therefore, the representational content is not merely in the thing, but rather "united" with the whole system from mind (brain) to the thing. One should attribute the qualia to the whole path containing the brain, sensors, photons and the thing. According to this approach, the qualia could be different for a single state of affairs in the ultimate reality (Spectrum Inversion puzzle) or, conversely, be the same for different state of affairs (Inverted Earth puzzle). Under this unified whole conception, the subjective object makes sense. On the one hand, qualia − or how the thing appears − are objective or individuated externally based on objective reality, inasmuch as they are unified with ultimate reality. On the other hand, qualia are subjective, since they are unified (rendered) with the mind. It should now be clear why Bergson uses the term "images." In using this term, he seeks to emphasis the subjective aspect of the thing, like the image represented on the TV screen. Following Bergson's tenet that perception is reductively constructed on the basis of needs, we can state that qualia are constructed from the ontological unity of mind and matter and are inseparable from either the thing or the mind. Thus, qualia may be supposed to be determined by both mind and matter in a unified manner and confined to neither. That is, neither Internalism, which holds that qualia are identified and determined *only* by internal (mental) features of subject, nor Externalism, which holds that qualia are identified and determined *only* by external objective features, reveals the whole truth about qualia. This account of "objecthood" as inseparable from and united with mind and matter can be aligned with the earliest versions of Representationalism, most notably Brentano's conception of *Intentional Inexistence*: "Every mental phenomenon," Brentano says, "includes something as object within itself" (1874, pp. 88-89). Thus, according to the proposed interpretation, "within" can be construed as "united with" and "inseparable from."

It is worth noting that this approach, in which both external object and mind (mental states) are considered to determine (the content of) experience in a unified way, is not unique to Bergson. *Russellian acquaintance* (1917), described by Russell as having "*a direct cognitive relation to that object,*" has some similarities with Bergsonian unity. More recently, Langsam (2011) has considered 'phenomenal property' to be determined both by an act of consciousness and the observable properties in external objects. Thus, there

are philosophers who sympathize with the approach outlined in the present paper. Moreover, the puzzles and problems we have discussed illustrate that there is potential in the proposed interpretation of Bergson's philosophy which we have here described as "rendering unity." This approach is worth considering as to a response to some recent controversies surrounding PE. While there are undeniably challenging problems in Bergson's theses, especially as regards his arguments concerning the object's referent and the question of subject-object unity, in this paper we have tried to clarify some central issues in Bergson's philosophy and to suggest some ways in which it may be usefully applied to what remains, by broad consensus, "the hard problem" in philosophy.

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Søren Kierkegaard's The Seducer's Diary: The Socratic Seduction of a Young Woman

Vanessa Bowns Poulsen

Abstract
In this paper I will present and discuss what I consider to be a new interpretation of Søren Kierkegaard's "The Seducer's Diary". I will demonstrate how the Socratic "maieutic" method isn't only implemented in Kierkegaard's method as the indirect message to the reader, but also to the main character's seduction of the young woman Cordelia. With support from historical literature on 19th century society, I argue that Kierkegaard, with the help of the Socratic method, indirectly points out the exclusion of women from intellectual matters and encourages a discussion hereof. I haven't found an interpretation which specifically combines the conception of the female gender in 19th century with the use of the Socratic method exercised by Johannes the Seducer. As far as I know, this interpretation is new and contributes significantly to our understanding of "The Seducer's Diary".

Introduction
"The Seducer's Diary"[1] is a part of *Either/Or*[2] (1987) [1843] (the original Danish version will be referred to as SV2), Kierkegaard's first pseudonymous work. Throughout the paper, the main character's seduction of Cordelia will be at the centre of our attention. With the support of Kierkegaard's *The Concept of Irony*[3] (1989) [1841] (the original version will be referred to as SV1), I put forth his use of Socrates' "maieutic" method, also known as "midwifery". This inspiration has already been examined to some extent in the secondary literature[4]. In *The Point of View of my Work as an Author*

[1]Orig. title: "Forførerens Dagbog".
[2] Orig. title: *Enten-Eller.*
[3] Orig. title: *Om Begrebet Ironi.*
[4] See for instance the articles "Kierkegaard's Seductions: The Ethics of Authorship" (Berthold 2005), "Kierkegaard on Indirect Communication" (Broudy 1961) and the books *Svimmelhedens Etik* (Søltoft 2000) and *Søren Kierkegaard's Inspirationskilder* (Bertung 2013). Bertung points out that Socrates appears throughout the authorship, from the beginning to the end (2013: 14).

(1962) [1859][5] (the original version will be referred to as SV18), Kierkegaard directly proclaimed his use of the Socratic method. I will demonstrate how this method, and Kierkegaard's interpretation of Socrates, is strongly reflected in Johannes' character and method of seduction[6].

In "The Seducer's Diary", the object of seduction is the young woman, as opposed to the young man in the case of Socrates. In addition to the common interpretation, I add the argument that Cordelia's defeat can be regarded, not only as the natural consequence of a woman's lack of ability to independent reflection – a common view at the time[7] – but also as the lack of society's will to let her reflect, even if she gained this ability. I demonstrate how the maieutic seduction can be regarded as Kierkegaard's indirect exposure of dominant gender standards of 19th century society[8]. Johannes' characterizations of Cordelia, and of women in general, seem to be somewhat double faced. Sometimes they appear rather misogynistic[9], agreeing with, and even exaggerating, the contemporary notion of women. At other times, the characterizations suggest an emancipatory perspective and a more egalitarian view on genders. Thus Johannes puts forward capabilities which were commonly linked to the man. Is it possible for the "pupil" to reach redemption, if the pupil is a woman? By taking the gender standards at the time into account, I aim to facilitate new considerations on Kierkegaard's purpose with "The Seducer's Diary".

1. The indirect message and the many interpretations

In his pseudonymous works, Kierkegaard doesn't offer clear and straightforward answers to what his intentions are. Johannes Sløk maintains that even the obviously authentic writings, including the journals, the religious works and the retrospective writings on his own authorship are not necessarily as authentic as assumed (Sløk 2013: 13). In "Public Confession"[10] (1842) (references will be made to the original version as

[5] Orig. title: *Synspunktet for min Forfatter-virksomhed.*

[6] This argument is well known in the secondary literature. For instance, Berthold (2005) and Søltoft (2000) both point to the use of Socratic irony in Johannes' seduction of Cordelia.

[7] I will illustrate this throughout the paper.

[8] My argument differs from for instance Bertung (1987), who claims Johannes to be the extreme example under which a woman *can* be regarded by the man, and further more claims that this type of view is specifically tied to the aesthete.

[9] The article "Kierkegaard and the Feminine Self" (Howe 1994) makes a counter argument against the view on Kierkegaard and his writings as fundamentally misogynistic.

[10] Orig. title: "Aabenbart Skriftemaal" in *Bladartikler, der står i forhold til „Forfatterskabet"*

SV18), Kierkegaard makes it clear that he, in spite of public assumptions, isn't the rightful author of a number of particular publications (SV18: 9). He pleads the public to avoid associating him with any writings that don't bear his name (Ibid.: 11). "Public Confession" takes on an increasingly humorous fashion by referring ironically to Hegel's "system" and the conviction of his contemporary time as complete (Ibid.: 14). The use of irony gives the impression that the whole writing could be an expression of irony. Kierkegaard later admitted that no one but himself had ever claimed the authorship of the writings in question (Kierkegaard 1848 NB6: 16,13). Hence the confession possibly served merely to confuse the reader about the authenticity of authorship. This is a particularly good example of Kierkegaard's intended confusion of the reader.

In the pseudonymous writings, not least *Either/Or*, the deliberate lack of explanation is particularly dominant. This has led to a variety of creative, and often contrasting, interpretations. The continuous irony adds to the variety. As Carl Henrik Koch underlines, Kierkegaard's pseudonymous authorship is generally based on irony (Koch 1992: 108). Johannes is an outstanding example of how Kierkegaard incorporates the ironical approach in his characters. Thus, the reader can neither be sure if the work implies a certain opinion, nor whether this opinion reflects Kierkegaard's own.

Even if Kierkegaard's final aim (the importance of true Christianity) isn't the main subject of this paper, a short illumination is beneficial to the understanding of Kierkegaard's method and obscured intentions. In spite of the acknowledgment that none of Kierkegaard's writings are necessarily fully authentic, the intentions, which he makes clear in his retrospective writings, will be taken into account in what follows.

In *The Point of View of my Work as an Author*, Kierkegaard emphasizes his religious aim from the beginning and throughout the authorship. He declares his discontent with what he regarded as a misunderstood Christianity in Denmark (SV18: 81). He saw it as a general conceit in the people and he held the opinion, according to the retrospective writings, that a conceit could only be met with an initial deceit. As he had already clarified in his early religious work, *Two Upbuilding Discourses* (1844)[11] (references will be made to the original version as SV4), published immediately after *Either/Or*, he chose to hide his intentions, based on the conviction that faith cannot be passed from one person to another (SV4.: 19). As each individual must find

(1962) [1842].

[11] Orig. title: *To Opbyggelige Taler* (1963) [1843].

his own path to God, so does the understanding of the pseudonymous writings lie in the mind of each individual reader. As I mentioned earlier, Kierkegaard's indirect message and the "maieutic" method are inspired by Socrates. For Kierkegaard it is clear that Socrates is his teacher whereas his faith is with Jesus Christ (SV18.: 106). Kierkegaard maintained that all of his pseudonymous writings are "maieutic" (Ibid.: 65), that is, meant to create self-reflection in the reader and eventually an acknowledgment of the true nature of faith.

2. Either/Or

The following introduction to *Either/Or* serves the purpose of showing the context in which "The Seducer's Diary" is placed.

The famous work *Either/Or* holds an aesthetic part, consisting of eight passages of a considerable variety, and an ethical part, consisting of two long letters and a sermon. In the preface of *Either/Or,* we meet the pseudonym Victor Eremita. Eremita appears to be the author of the preface only, in which he enlightens us on his acquaintance with the writings as well as introducing us to the contents and themes of the book. Because of their striking difference in content and appearance, he categorizes the writings in an aesthetic part and an ethical part, written by two different people (SV2: 12). The name of the aesthetic writer doesn't appear. Eremita names him "A". He finds out that the ethicist is a former court judge named William[12]. He names him "B". One of the aesthetic writings is "The Seducer's Diary", which A claims only to be the publisher of. The author of the diary is an aesthete called Johannes. B addresses the letters to his "young friend", and Eremita assumes the friend to be A. However, he suspects Johannes of being a pseudonym of A:

> Here we meet new difficulties, inasmuch as A does not declare himself the author but only the editor. This is an old literary device to which I would not have much to object if it did not further complicate my own position, since one author becomes enclosed within the other like the boxes in a Chinese puzzle. (Kierkegaard 1987, I: 8).[13]

[12] Orig. name and title: Assessor Wilhelm.

[13] Orig. quote: "Her møde nye Vanskeligheder, idet A ikke erklærer sig for Forfatter, men kun for Udgiver. Det er et gammelt Novellist-Kneb" (SV2: 14).

The quote could indicate that A is trying to hide his problematic thoughts and actions behind the pseudonym[14]. Whereas the aesthetic life emphasizes pleasure, the ethical life emphasizes an obligation. His letters seem to be a consideration of A's aesthetic outlook and an ethical appeal to A.

3. The Seducer's Diary

"The Seducer's Diary" is the final tale of the aesthetic part of *Either/Or*. The reader of the diary becomes acquainted with Johannes' character and his reflections. As an aesthete, he emphasizes a life of pleasure. He is a seducer, but, contrary to Don Juan, a selective one. His favourite targets of seduction are young virgins, and his favourite occupation is the erotic prelude with the individual girl. Johannes is always aware of possibilities of erotic observation and reflections thereupon.

However, it is the young Cordelia Wahl who, throughout the diary, is the main target of seduction. Johannes meets Cordelia by coincidence. He notices her in the street, is immediately attracted to her and maps out the long and cunning strategy of seduction. Through her aunt, and the young admirer Edward[15], Johannes gains access to Cordelia, and with his eloquence and twisting powers he succeeds, with the aunt's acceptance, at winning Cordelia's hand in engagement. The engagement lasts five months and three weeks which approximately corresponds to Johannes' opinion about the duration of love: "(…) that no love affair should last more than a half year at most and that any relationship is over as soon as one has enjoyed the ultimate" (Kierkegaard 1987, I: 368)[16]. Johannes is a highly reflective person whose inner world stays unknown to others. He creates an infatuation in the girl he intends to seduce by convincing her of his own infatuation[17]. He reveals to the diary that he will stay a riddle to Cordelia who shall never grasp his real intentions (SV2: 324). The ultimate aim of the seduction is Cordelia's full submission and the climax combining sexual conquest and mental transformation. Within this synthesis of contrasts lies the notion of the "interesting"[18] which is what Johannes strives for: "The more devotedness one can bring to erotic love, the more interesting" (Kierkegaard 1987, I:

[14] An interpretation supported by Nathanial Kramer (2015: 161).
[15] Orig. name: Edvard.
[16] Orig. quote: "(...) at enhver Kjærlighedshistorie i det Høieste varer et halvt Aar, og at ethvert Forhold er forbi, saasnart man har nydt det Sidste" (SV2: 341).
[17] An interpretation supported by Søltoft, P. (2014: 124).
[18] For Kierkegaard's orig. conception of "det interessante", see in particular: SV2: 320.

342)[19]. The engagement is used as a means to push the erotic to its limit and to let Cordelia acknowledge and finally break the confined limits of love that engagement suggests. After full submission, Cordelia is abandoned.

While the tale gained popularity in its time, it was also met with indignation. It can be perceived as mainly a story of a cruel and calculating seducer who deceives a young girl and/or as a critical work which analyses and confronts philosophical concepts and social standards. Like Kierkegaard's pseudonymous works in general, "The Seducer's Diary" holds a number of direct and indirect references[20]. Some interpreters regard the diary as primarily an ironic reference to Hegel,[21] whereas others emphasize a reference to Goethe and a distortion of his stories and characters, founded on the romantic idealization of nature[22]. As already mentioned, Kierkegaard's reference to Socrates is well-known. In the following section, I will go further into this subject, with the overall purpose of understanding Johannes and the seduction.

4. The Socratic reference

4.1. The irony

Johannes is characterized by a fundamentally ironic approach to the world. In "The Aesthetic Validity of Marriage"[23], which is part of the ethical writings in *Either/Or*, Judge William confronts the aesthete's irony:

> That is, you are no enemy of marriage, but you misuse your ironic look and your sarcastic taunting to ridicule it. In this connection, I concede that you are not shadow-boxing, that you land some solid blows, and that you are keenly observant, but I also want to say that this is perhaps your error. Your life will amount to nothing but tentative efforts at living. (Kierkegaard 1987, II: 6–7)[24]

[19] Orig. quote: "Jo mere Hengivelse man kan bringe ind i Elskoven, jo interessantere" (SV2: 316).
[20] Among these are for instance Hegel, Goethe, Plato and Socrates.
[21] See Koch, C.H. (1992: 105).
[22] See Roos, C. (1955: 31) and Hultberg, H. (1998: 48–49).
[23] Orig. title: "Ægteskabets æsthetiske Gyldighed".
[24] Orig. quote: "Du er saaledes ingen Fjende af Ægteskabet, men Du misbruger Dit ironiske Blik og Din sarkastiske Spydighed til at spotte det. Jeg vil i den Henseende gjerne indrømme Dig, at Du ikke fægter i Luften, at Du rammer sikkert, og at Du har megen Observation, men jeg vil tillige sige, at dette maaskee er Din Feil. Dit Liv vil gaae op i lutter Tilløb til at leve" (SV3: 12–13).

Thus William acknowledges the ability to reflect and analyse, but he also reveals his rejection of the aesthete's ironic, distanced observation and lack of decision. There is a parallel between William's analysis of the aesthete and Kierkegaard's analysis of Socrates. According to Kierkegaard, we should understand Socrates' sentence "know yourself" as "separate yourself from the other" (Kierkegaard 1989: 177)[25]. This underlines the importance of individual subjectivity, but also points out the risk of isolation for the individual who relies on absolute irony. Kierkegaard addresses the difficulty of reconstructing the existence of the ironist, whose outer appearance doesn't reflect his inner world (SV1: 71). He also emphasizes how the secrecy that accompanied Socrates made it difficult to form retrospective judgments on his actions (SV1: 71).

Kierkegaard stresses the indifference with which Socrates meets the established institutions. A marker of this is the idea of an inner voice – the abstract "daimon" – opposed to the established religion and the concrete individualities of the gods (SV1: 193). Furthermore, the daimon has a warning appearance rather than a commanding one. This gives rise to negativity, rather than positivity, as it creates scepticism and distance instead of action (SV1: 194). Johannes has, in a similar manner, chosen the distant, ironical and sceptical position towards society. He listens only to himself, and the "divinely" becomes an internal matter. Likewise, the viewpoint of Socrates is characterized by subjectivity and an inner thinking world reflecting on itself (SV1: 196).

The ironist tears down established standards, but offers nothing in their place. In Kierkegaard's view, Socrates wasn't there to save the world, but to judge it (SV1: 204). The ironist's relationships are characterized by an unbalance because he simulates ignorance and never unfolds himself. According to Kierkegaard, Socrates seeks the random encounter with anyone on whom his irony can be exercised (SV1: 211). His relationships are momentary and move dialectically between attraction and repulsion. Kierkegaard points out how Socrates, by avoiding commitments, maintains his freedom (SV1: 212). Since his real intentions are not being directly expressed, the ironist is untouchable. The following quote exemplifies the same kind of characteristics in Johannes. The irony is clear:

> I am honest and reliable, have never deceived anyone who has confided in me. It goes without saying that there is always a little

[25] Orig. words: "kjend dig selv" and "adskil dig selv fra Andet" (SV1: 208).

> joking, but that, after all, is a legitimate perquisite. And why do I enjoy this confidence? Because I know Latin and do my homework, and because I always keep my little stories to myself. And do I not deserve this confidence? After all, I never abuse it. (Kierkegaard 1987, I: 373)[26]

The Socratic method and its associated irony will be further exposed in the following, when we take a look at the seduction of Cordelia.

4.2. The seduction and the deceit

Crucial to the ironist's notion of love is infatuation and conquest. As Kierkegaard points out, the relationship of the ironist is characterized as "the beginning of love". For Socrates, as well as for Johannes, love ends as soon as it reaches a point where the other person rightfully expects a commitment. There is no interest in possessing the other person. As Johannes emphasizes, he wants to enjoy Cordelia as one enjoys a piece of art (SV2: 344). Like Socrates, Johannes has a preference for the youth:

> (…) I continually seek my prey among young girls, not among young women. A woman is less natural, more coquettish; a relationship with her is not beautiful, not interesting; it is piquant, and the piquant is always the last. (Kierkegaard 1987, I: 324)[27]

Johannes seeks the virgin and the erotic charm she possesses "without her knowing". This was a desirable characteristic of the 19th century unmarried young woman – a subject which will be dealt with in section 5. Johannes goes a step further. His interest is only awoken if the girl has the potential of developing the contrasting masculine reflection. Johannes helps Cordelia develop it with the use of the maieutic method. In *The Concept of Irony,* Kierkegaard unfolds this Socratic method (SV1: 219). Socrates guided the individual to intellectual redemption. Just as the young men were in need of

[26] Orig. quote: "Jeg er ærlig og paalidelig, har aldrig bedraget Nogen, der har betroet sig til mig. Lidt Gjækkeri falder der altid af, naa det er jo lovlige Sportler. Og hvorfor nyder jeg denne Tiltro, fordi jeg kan Latin og passer mine Studier, og fordi jeg altid holder mine Smaa-Historier for mig selv. Og fortjener jeg ikke denne Tiltro? jeg misbruger den jo aldrig" (SV2: 345).

[27] Orig. quote: "(...) jeg bestandig søger mit Bytte blandt de unge Piger, ikke blandt de unge Koner. En Kone har mindre Natur, mere Coquetteri, Forholdet til hende er ikke skjønt, ikke interessant, det er pikant, og det Pikante er altid det Sidste" (SV2: 300–301).

Socrates' guiding, so is Cordelia in need of Johannes' guiding, since she is not able to reach redemption by herself. At least according to Johannes:

> When it comes to the labyrinth of her heart, every young girl is an Ariadne; she holds the thread by which one can find the way through – but she possesses it in such a way that she herself does not know how to use it (Kierkegaard 1987, I: 400–401).[28]

The interpretation of the quote will be expanded in section 5.3, particularly with regard to the female gender.

Johannes claims to want nothing which isn't the gift of freedom (SV2: 340). Both Socrates and Johannes want the youth to gain the same kind of negative freedom which they themselves enjoy. The maieutic method is supposed to help the person letting go of established standards and face a new and unknown life, in a freedom without specific directions. However, within this action lies the paradox that the young people aren't necessarily able to enjoy this freedom. Kierkegaard points out the possible consequences: "(…) but the freedom he personally enjoyed in ironic satisfaction the others could not enjoy, and thus it developed in them a longing and a yearning" (Kierkegaard 1989: 176)[29]. Socrates freed the young men from what they had hitherto found sufficient (SV1: 205). In a similar way, Johannes frees Cordelia from the social standards. He lets her "realize" that her breaking up the engagement is favourable for their true love in freedom (SV2: 340). By holding Cordelia responsible, Johannes keeps his freedom intact and is liberated from further responsibility. When Johannes discloses the dangerous consequences of love, and advances the claim that love is only found once (SV2: 334), it can be understood as a reference to the romantic conduct implying the notion of "the one and only".

After obtaining Cordelia's interest, Johannes gradually, and with intentional rationality, resigns from the relationship: "As long as I am with her, she enjoys listening to me; after I am gone, she perceives very well that she is being deceived, that I am different. In this way one withdraws one's

[28] Orig. quote: "Enhver ung Pige er i Forhold til sit Hjertes Labyrinth en Ariadne, hun eier den Traad, ved hvilken man kan finde Veien derigjennem, men hun eier den saaledes, at hun ikke selv veed at bruge den" (SV2: 370).

[29] Orig. quote: "(…) den Frihed han selv nød i ironisk Tilfredshed, kunde de Andre ikke nyde, og den udviklede derfor i dem Længsel og Forlængsel" (SV1: 206).

shares of stock" (Kierkegaard 1987, I: 423)[30]. Johannes abandons Cordelia like Socrates abandoned the young men. Kierkegaard strains Socrates' lack of ethical responsibility with respect to the future lives of the disciples[31]. He points out that the irony and negativity isn't ethically justifiable in itself, but he endorses it as a stepping stone towards an awareness of something better. Hence, in *The Concept of Irony,* he emphasizes how Jesus, by introducing Christianity, presented a new positivity to people, unlike Socrates who only showed the way to negative freedom (SV1: 217). Even if Kierkegaard's own overall idea of the "better" was the true Christian faith, this isn't the immediate issue of Johannes' character. In fact, the religious aim doesn't directly appear in the aesthetic writings.

5. The exposure of gender standards

We've seen how the seduction and deceit is a reference to Socrates. On the basis of the Socratic seduction and deceit, this analysis can be taken a step further when we take into account that the object of seduction is a young woman.

5.1. Erotic indications as a part of the interaction

In the book *Seduction* (2001) [1979][32], the French sociologist and philosopher Jean Baudrillard presents an interpretation of Johannes' seduction of Cordelia. According to Baudrillard's hypothesis, Johannes defends himself against the seductive power of the woman's ornament. His defence lies in the strategic calculation (Baudrillard 1990: 104). Baudrillard writes: "(...) like God she possesses a matchless vantage – As a result, because naturally endowed with all seduction, she becomes the object of a savage challenge and must be destroyed" (Baudrillard 1990: 98).

When consulting historical literature that unfolds gender standards, love, marriage and sexuality in 19th century Western society, the woman was supposed to seduce the man with her implicit erotic signs. Baudrillard is onto something here. But is the woman's capability of seducing the man into marriage the only question at play?

[30] Orig. quote: "Saalænge jeg er hos hende, finder hun Nydelse i at høre paa mig; naar jeg er gaaet, mærker hun vel, at hun er bedragen, at jeg er forandret. Paa den Maade trækker man sine Actier ud" (SV2: 390).

[31] An interpretation which is supported by Søltoft, P. (2000: 123).

[32] Orig. title: *De la Séduction.*

The woman's restrained erotic signs played an essential role in 19th century society as an invitation to the man's marriage proposal. The standards of gender and sexuality required certain rituals and protocols on how the genders were supposed to express their interests in one another. The erotic signs became an important part of the introductory phase and they appear throughout "The Seducer's Diary". According to literary historian Jens Hougaard, 19th century society was dominated by the conception of woman's nature as a harmonious synthesis of body and soul. This harmony was broken if reflection intervened (Hougaard 2008, III: 218). According to Hougaard, the conception presupposes ignorance, often presented as innocence. A woman had to appear as if she wasn't aware of her own sexuality. The erotic can be described as the outer expression of restraint sexuality, as if the body isn't supposed to appear immediately sexual. The resistance was displayed as the boundary of chastity and served as an element in the erotic interaction between the genders, placing the erotic on the dangerous border of sexuality. Hougaard points out that eroticism, and its restrained sexuality, served the purpose of creating an acceptable contact. As an underlying tacit phenomenon, it was used as a means of contact. In the following section, the commonly held conception of the "true being" of man and woman will be unfolded.

5.2. Complementary genders and sexual restraint

In *Marriage, a History* (2005), historian Stephanie Coontz unfolds the history of marriage in Western culture. Changes in the understanding of love and sexuality, through various ages, are brought to light. According to Coontz, the increased secularization, and focus on civil rights in 18th century, contributed to the acknowledgment of a marriage based on love. This broke with the traditional marriage where love was a secondary aspect. Unattended company between young unmarried men and women was gradually tolerated (Coontz 2005: 157). One of the consequences was an increase in children born out of wedlock. The middle class and the upper class were worried about the development; the individualistic values embedded in the ideals of freedom, together with the idea of romantic love, was considered a threat to the stability of society (Ibid.: 157). Male restraint and female virtue became strong values for especially the middle class (Ibid.: 159) and sexual restraint for both sexes became a common value (Ibid.: 171). In contrast with earlier times, where the husband was the dominator of the family, a new configuration, with a subtler kind of dominance, evolved: Man and woman

became complementary (Ibid.: 154). As historian Kai Aalbæk-Nielsen writes in *Kærlighed i det 19. – 20. Århundrede* (translatable to: *Love in the 19th – 20th Century*) (2003), the public space, where the man operated, was considered dangerous and immoral which required the moral and neutralizing effect of the housewife (Aalbæk-Nielsen 2003: 90). Man and woman attained separate domains. The woman was responsible for upholding morality (Ibid.: 168) and out of respect for her supposedly gentle nature, she was kept out of politics and economy (Coontz 2005: 153). The man became the role of the protective breadwinner (Ibid.: 162) who was rational and dynamic, while she was passive and compassionate. The contrasts of the genders were considered a strength when combined (Ibid.: 156). A common assumption in 19th century was the frigidity of the woman. The female gender was considered passive and non-sexual, but still supposed to awaken a desire and interest in the man. This contradictory structure, which has been difficult to balance, is, directly and indirectly, unfolded in "The Seducer's Diary".

5.3. The diary's exposure of the conception of woman

Johannes reveals a considerable insight about women and the commonly held standards of contact between the genders. His thorough characterizations of women as well as his actions are, however, somewhat double faced. A fair amount of the quotes can simultaneously be interpreted as devaluing and emancipatory. The following quote from the diary emphasizes 19th century's typical idea of a synthesis between the earthly body and the divine soul and is loaded with erotic indications.

> (…) the cheerful smile, the roguish glance, the yearning eye, the tilted head, the frolicsome disposition, the quiet sadness, the profound presentiment, the ominous depression, the earthly homesickness, the unshriven emotions, the beckoning brow, the questioning lips, the secretive forehead, the alluring curls, the concealing eyelashes, the heavenly pride, the earthly modesty, the angelic purity, the secret blush, the light step, the lovely buoyancy, the languorous posture, the longing dreaminess, the unaccountable sighing, the slender figure, the soft curves, the opulent bosom, the curving hips, the tiny feet, the elegant hands. (Kierkegaard 1987, I: 428–429)[33]

[33] Orig. quote: "(...) det muntre Smiil; det skjelmske Blik; det attraaende Øie; det hængende Hoved; det overgivne Sind; det stille Veemod; den dybe Ahnen; det varslende Tungsind; den jordiske Hjemvee; de uskriftede Rørelser; de vinkende Bryn; de spørgende Læber; den

Johannes explains how he, by resigning, leaves the erotic seduction to Cordelia: "When the turn is made and I begin to pull back in earnest, then she will summon up everything in order really to take me captive" (Kierkegaard 1987, I: 411)[34]. According to Johannes, Cordelia has no other means than the erotic (SV2: 380). The word "captive" could be understood in at least two ways; as the attainment of someone's heart and as imprisonment in the literal sense – a possible reference to the prison of marriage, which Johannes deliberately avoids.

As brought up earlier, the following quote can be regarded as a reference to Socrates and the maieutic method, but in addition it can be understood a reference to the common conception of the female gender: "When it comes to the labyrinth of her heart, every young girl is an Ariadne; she holds the thread by which one can find the way through – but she possesses it in such a way that she herself does not know how to use it"[35]. This possibly refers to a girl's sexual and intellectual limitations and capabilities.

If the woman appeared obviously conscious of her own sexuality the harmony between body and soul was broken and the woman's social value decreased. The view on gender and the social standards of proposal is illustrated in the following:

> (…) woman is substance, man is reflection. Therefore, she does not choose without further ado; rather, man proposes, she chooses. But man's proposal is a questioning; her choosing is actually an answer to a question. In a certain sense, man is more than woman, in another sense infinitely much less. (Kierkegaard 1987, I: 431–432)[36]

The quote also underlines the idea of the reflecting man and the sensuous passive woman. The typical conception of woman is further emphasized

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hemmelighedsfulde Pande; de besnærende Lokker; det skjulende Øienhaar; den himmelske Stolthed; den jordiske Blufærdighed; den englelige Reenhed; den lønlige Rødmen; den lette Gang; den yndige Svæven; den smægtende Holdning; den længselsfulde Drømmen; de uforklarede Sukke; den slanke Vext; de bløde Former; den yppige Barm; de svulmende Hofter; den lille Fod; den nydelige Haand" (SV2: 395).

[34] Orig. quote: "Naar nu Vendingen er gjort, og jeg begynder for Alvor at trække mig tilbage, da vil hun opdrive Alt for virkeligt at fængsle mig" (SV2: 380).

[35] See page 11.

[36] Orig. quote: "Qvinden er nemlig Substants, Manden er Reflexion. Hun vælger derfor heller ikke uden Videre, men Manden frier, hun vælger. Men Mandens Frien er en Spørgen, hendes Vælgen egentlig kun Svar paa et Spørgsmaal. I en vis Forstand er Manden Mere end Qvinden, i en anden Forstand uendelig meget Mindre" (SV2: 398).

when Johannes states: "Cordelia hates and fears me. What does a young girl fear? Intellect [*Aand*]. Why? Because intellect constitutes the negation of her entire womanly existence" (Kierkegaard 1987, I: 362)[37]. In the following quote, another example of exposure of the common gender standards is expressed:

> Our relationship is not the tender and trusting embrace of understanding, not one of attraction; it is the repulsion of misunderstanding. There is actually nothing at all in my relationship with her; it is purely intellectual, which for a young girl is naturally nothing at all. (Kierkegaard 1987, I: 351)[38]

With the knowledge of 19th century's common understanding of man and woman, I believe that the exposure on Kierkegaard's part doesn't only serve to address the aesthetic type, but seeks to address common views present in his contemporary society.

5.4. The risk of "falling"

From the end of the 18th century, and especially throughout the 19th, a sharp distinction between the virtuous and the "fallen" woman was withheld: "A woman who slipped briefly off the pedestal got no second chance", as Coontz puts it (Coontz.: 169). Sexual intercourse before marriage could cause serious problems for the woman's reputation (Ibid.: 169). In the German middle class, a man could even refuse to marry a woman, if she had permitted him sexual intercourse before their marriage. The young unmarried man and woman had to be physically segregated. Only a few parts of the body were allowed to be accessible to physical touch and the erotic indications could be expressed with the aid of clothing and accessories. A large part of the body was covered, while some parts were on the edge of coverage and could serve as a means to erotic indication. The veil and the fan are typical examples of this (Hougaard 2008, III: 120). In "The Seducer's Diary", both coverage and semi-coverage serve as erotic indications. The erotic function of the veil is present in the diary:

[37] Orig. quote: "Cordelia hader og frygter mig. Hvad frygter en ung Pige? Aand. Hvorfor? fordi Aand udgjør Negationen af hele hendes qvindelige Existents" (SV2: 335).

[38] Orig. quote: "Vort Forhold er ikke Forstaaelsens ømme og trofaste Omfavnelser, ikke Attractioner, det er Misforstaaelsens Repulsioner. Mit Forhold til hende er egentlig slet Intet; det er et reent aandeligt, hvilket naturligviis er slet Intet i Forhold til en ung Pige" (SV2: 325).

> If you tilt your head a little, it might be possible to penetrate up under this veil or this piece of lace. Be careful; such a glance from below is more dangerous than one that is *gerade aus* [direct]! (…) Watch out! There comes a man – drop your veil; do not let his profane glance defile you. (Kierkegaard 1987, I: 318–319)[39]

The quote illustrates the daily risk for a woman in this period and the responsibility she held for preserving a good reputation.

5.5. Johannes' acknowledgment of Cordelia's masculine traits

If Johannes was convinced by the common idea of woman, why would he seek to develop both her sexual and intellectual capacities? On the one hand, he sharply points out the contrast between man and woman. On the other hand, he attempts to combine the feminine, restraint sexuality with masculine reflection. The contradictory behaviour of Johannes is somewhat illustrated in his thoughts on Diana, the virginal Roman goddess of hunting. Diana holds a masculine character and therefore doesn't capture Johannes' erotic interest. However, he expresses a desire to meet her on intellectual terms (SV2: 402). Johannes has an interesting point about Diana's virginity: "She knew, namely, that her game in life is bound up with her virginity; therefore it is preserved" (Kierkegaard 1987, I: 436)[40]. The quote thus emphasizes how a woman's power is linked to her virginity. When losing interest in Cordelia, after taking her virginity, there is a parallel between his view on Diana and his own behaviour. Johannes' intellectual midwifery would be superfluous with Diana who is already a reflective being and thereby not interesting to Johannes. The underlying thought is that it is impossible for a woman to be, at the same time, an intellectual and a sexual individual.

Johannes imagines Cordelia's ideals to be somewhat masculine: "Her soul is still nourished by the divine ambrosia of ideals. But the ideal hovering before her is certainly not a shepherdess or a heroine in a novel, a mistress,

[39] Orig. quote: "Naar man bøier Hovedet lidt til Siden, var det vel muligt at trænge op under dette Slør eller denne Blonde. Tag Dem iagt, et saadant Blik fra neden er farligere end et gerade aus (…) Tag Dem iagt; der kommer et Menneske hist, slaa Sløret ned, lad ikke hans profane Blik besmitte Dem" (SV2: 295).

[40] Orig. quote: "Hun vidste nemlig, at hendes Spil i Livet ligger i hendes Jomfruelighed, derfor bevares den" (SV2: 402).

but a Joan of Arc or something like that" (Kierkegaard 1987, I: 344–345)[41]. Johannes suggests that Cordelia envies the man and wishes to be one herself (SV2: 317). He even expresses a desire to turn her into a man, if he had the divine abilities to do so (SV2: 410). Through the diary he serves as the midwife of Cordelia's "masculine" capabilities, and, in a sense, tries to follow through with this desire.

6. Does the Socratic method fail if the object of seduction is a woman?

6.1 Johannes as the guide to emancipation

How should we interpret Johannes' endeavour to develop Cordelia's intellectual abilities? Can it be regarded as an acknowledgment of woman's intellectual capacities? In that case, does he encourage these to develop?

Johannes and Socrates don't submit to anyone, but they develop the mental reflection in the other person, which can lead him or her to freedom, even if it's of a negative sort. Johannes presents this freedom as an opposition to the life with a faithful husband: "What good would it have been if this girl had fallen into the clumsy oaf of a faithful husband. What would have become of her? Nothing" (Kierkegaard 1987, I: 385)[42]. By referring to the married woman as "nothing", Johannes character stresses the passive role of the woman as "being for the other", as Kierkegaard calls it, and thereby being nothing in herself. A more substantial conception of the female gender is a possibility. Thus an acknowledgment of a woman's subjective reflection is in play.

We can interpret the following statement as a reference to Kierkegaard's declared deceit of the reader for a higher purpose; a false submission as a means to the other person's enlightenment: "My dear Cordelia! I am defrauding you of something beautiful, but it cannot be otherwise, and I shall give you all the compensation I can" (Kierkegaard 1987, I: 372)[43]. This interpretation emphasizes "The Seducer's" Diary" and the Socratic deceit as emancipatory.

[41] Orig. quote: "Hendes Sjæl næres endnu af Idealers guddommelige Ambrosia. Men det Ideal, der foresvæver hende, er vel just ikke en Hyrdinde eller en Heltinde i en Roman, en Elskerinde, men en Jeanne d'Arc eller noget Saadant" (SV2.: 319).

[42] Orig. quote: "Hvad hjalp det denne Pige, om hun var falden i Hænderne paa en Klodrian af en trofast Ægtemand? Hvad var der blevet af hende? Intet" (SV2: 356).

[43] Orig. quote: "Min elskværdige Cordelia! jeg bedrager Dig for noget Skjønt, men det kan ikke være anderledes, og jeg skal give Dig "alt det Vederlag, jeg formaaer" (SV2.: 344).

6.2. Society's problem with a woman's mental capabilities

After letting Cordelia tear down her standards and set herself free, Johannes offers her nowhere to go. Like Socrates' disciples, she is abandoned in an empty space. Furthermore, her value as a woman in society's eyes is decreased. She has lost her innocence (in a physical and intellectual sense). The lost female virtue, which accompanies the entrance of mental reflexion, reveals how an emancipation could turn out to be fatal for the woman's reputation and life. Even if Cordelia reaches intellectual redemption, it will be of no value to her because she is a woman.

When the woman is described as an Ariadne who owns the thread which leads through the labyrinth – but a thread she doesn't know how to use – it can be viewed as the picture of a life excluded from intellectual matters and from independent thinking.

7. Conclusion

I have throughout this paper suggested what I consider to be an original interpretation of "The Seducer's Diary". I have put forth how Kierkegaard's use of the Socratic, maieutic method is being exercised with Johannes and the seduction of Cordelia and that Kierkegaard points out and encourages discussion of the commonly held conception of woman in 19th century. I argue that the Socratic deceit can be regarded as an acknowledgment of a woman's capability of independent thinking. Whether or not Johannes, and "The Seducer's Diary", is of a repressive or emancipatory character is, because of the irony, not clear. As stated in section 1, the reader cannot be sure that the work implies a certain opinion or if this opinion reflects Kierkegaard's own. However, I suggest that Johannes' characterizations of women is an exaggerated picture of the common conception hereof. "The Seducer's Diary" not only acknowledges a woman's intellectual abilities. It also reveals a society which excluded women from intellectual matters. The presented interpretation emphasizes "The Seducer's" diary" as emancipatory in the sense that it brings the common standards and conceptions to discussion.

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