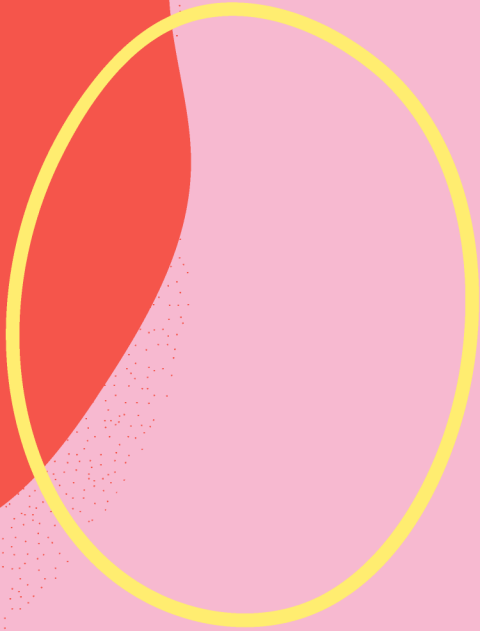
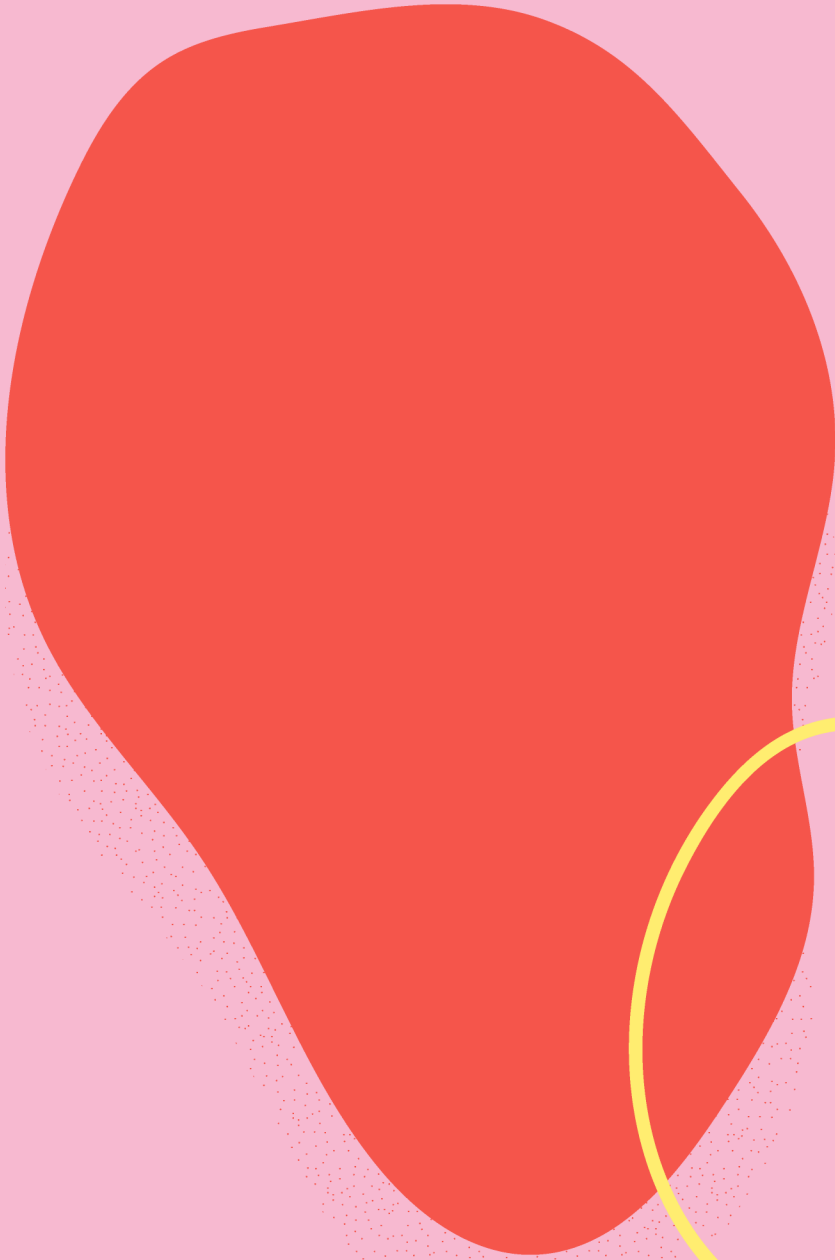


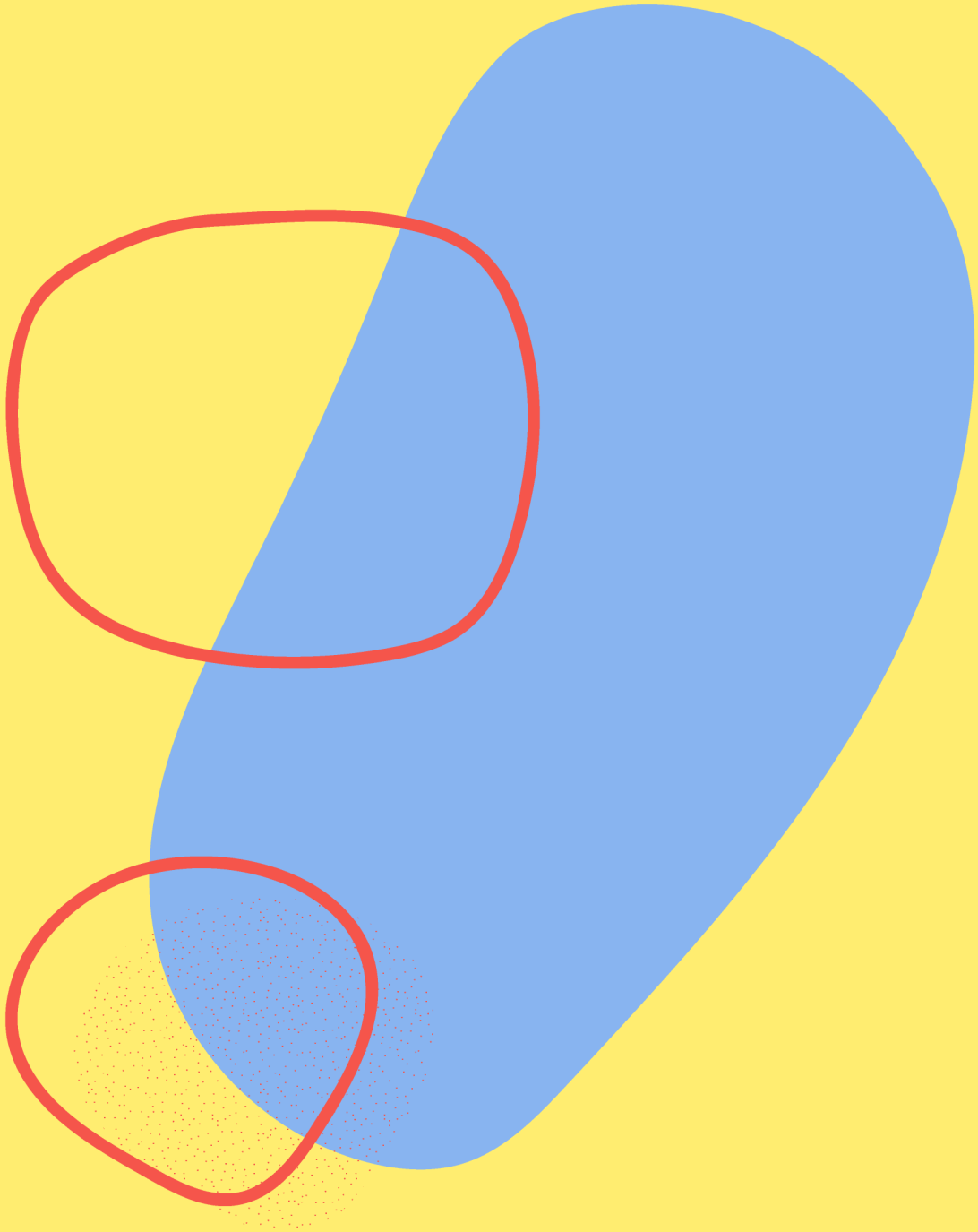
FRAGMENTS

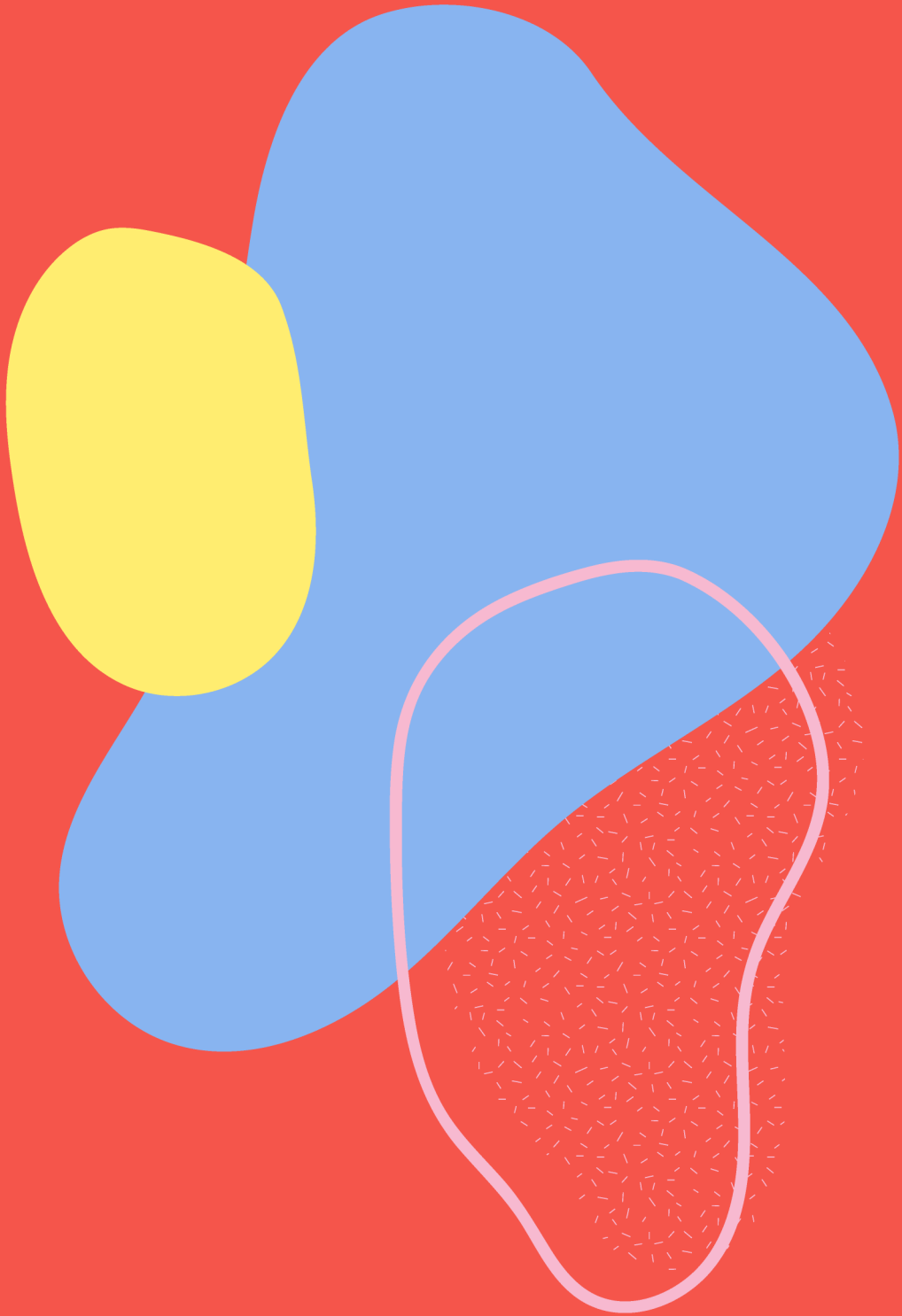
McGill Undergraduate Journal of Philosophy

Volume 30
2016









Unravelling the Mystery Behind the Lack of Female Achievement in Art History

11

Min Geon Kim

There have been no great women artists in the history of art. There may have been many who were very good and somewhat celebrated, but certainly none who are regarded as having been of the same calibre as Michelangelo, Leonardo da Vinci, or Van Gogh. In this essay, I will attempt to unravel, from both historical and philosophical points of view, why this has been the case. To do so, I will first define “Great Artist” as it is conventionally understood by aestheticians and the public. Second, I will highlight the important view that art is not a free activity, but very much a process bounded by social institutions and structures. Third, I will give historical evidence of how the institutional unavailability of nude models to women artists hindered any chance of their developing and establishing themselves as Greats of their time. Fourth, I will look into the social pressure and ideology that women artists had to face as factors that made their already difficult careers as artists all the more difficult. After that, accounts of the traditions of undemocratic structure of the artworld will be given as a way of addressing the issue from the philosophical perspective. Lastly, I shall further explain how the lack of feminist philosophizing about art conceded to women artists’ being continuously excluded in the artworld.

Before one can make the claim that there has been no great women artists, it would be appropriate to consider some of the generally accepted suppositions surrounding the Great Artists. What the likes of Michelangelo, Raphael, Rembrandt, and Picasso all have in common is their being widely recognized as the creators of not just any good artworks, but of major artworks that have left a lasting mark on the history of art. Leaving aside the questions regarding the legitimacy and sources of this recognition for now, it must be acknowledged that much of art history was written in the nineteenth century based on determining of these masterpieces for which their authors were agreed upon as the Greats. Hence, for Peg Zegelin Brand, the entire history of art equates

to the history of the “great masters”, works of genius, and “masterpieces”¹. With this primary focus on the entities of the Great Artists, the social, economic situations and institutional structures encompassing these artists were naturally put aside as mere secondary. The over-emphasis on the extraordinary stories, such as the young Picasso passing all the examinations at the age of fifteen, and the young Michelangelo blowing his master’s mind with his god-given skills, are all repeatedly used as if to imply that they were born for greatness regardless of their social circumstances. This sort of mystifying about artistic achievement and supernatural talent “forms the unconscious or unquestioned assumptions of scholars” that the truly great artists will always prevail over their social surroundings.² It is within this framework of prodigy and prodigiousness that the notion of artistic genius and individual achievement have consequently become the most defining elements in the traditional discourse and understanding of the Great Artists.

Accepting the paradigm of the genius Great Artist would lead to the conclusion that “there are no great women artists because women are incapable of greatness”, to begin with.³ That is to say, women are innately not competent to produce extraordinary, game-changing artworks; if they were, their intrinsic brilliance would certainly have been powerful enough to force its way out and protrude from any social, economic, and political constraints, giving rise to the women equivalents for Michelangelo. Since this does not seem to have happened, is it really the case that no woman is ever born with artistic talent comparable to that of a male prodigy? For Nochlin, this kind of assumption involving artistic genius is a mistake.⁴ What is true of art is that it is “not a free, autonomous activity of a super-endowed individual” with mere vague and superficial social influences.⁵ In fact, “the total situation of art making” takes place in a social situation defined by the social structure and institutions any aspiring artist is inevitably a part of.⁶ This is not to dismiss the existence of innate individual genius altogether, but to treat it as secondary and social situation as primary in the valuation of an artwork. In other words, artistic genius is a “dynamic activity rather than a static essence” which only happens with the right kind of social nurturing and right amount of devotion and practices in relevant institutions.⁷ For example, Raphael and Picasso were able to establish themselves as major artists of their time because of the fact that their talents were

1 Peg Zegelin, “Glaring Omissions in Traditional Theories of Art,” in *Theories of Art Today*, ed. N. Carroll (Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 2000), 183.

2 Linda Nochlin, “Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?” in *Women, Art, and Power* (New York: Harper and Row, 1988), 155.

3 *Ibid.*, 147.

4 Nochlin, *Women, Art, and Power*

5 *Ibid.*

6 *Ibid.*

7 *Ibid.*, 158

nurtured through intensive trainings in the art academies after which they were supported within the patronage system. The fact that their fathers were artists themselves, providing for the right kind of social demands and expectations they were to meet, also reveals the importance of the social order into which the artists are born. The claim is further strengthened by the case that the aristocracy has never produced great artists despite its educational, economic, and “genetic” (for male aristocrats) advantages. “The amount of time necessarily devoted to social functions” for those born into the higher social class, Nochlin explains, “simply made devotion to professional art production ... unthinkable.”⁸

Having established what it really means to be great artists, as well as the fact that appropriate social forces are indispensable to their development, the question regarding the lack of major female accomplishments in art history can now be viewed in terms of social aspects, rather than individual genius. That is to say, there are ways in which women were socially denied the necessary routes to their career development as major artists. According to Nochlin, the complete unavailability of nude models to aspiring women artists precisely represents this kind of denial on a social, institutional level.⁹ Historically, namely from the Renaissance to as late as the end of the nineteenth century, it was generally accepted that any higher category of art, including History Painting, involves an unclothed human figure. This is due to the belief at the time that costume destroyed the “temporal universality and the classical idealization required by great art.”¹⁰ For this reason, it was crucial for any future great artists to be exposed to the opportunities to practise and master the drawing of nude figures at the stages of their artistic development. While these opportunities were largely provided by art academies, these were inaccessible to women for it was considered improper for women to participate in the studying, drawing, and sculpting of nude models. Lacking the essential training programs from public institutions and art schools, women were consequently “deprived of the possibility of creating major art works,” and were limited to “the fields of portraiture, genre, landscape, or still life” which art history remembers as “minor”.¹¹

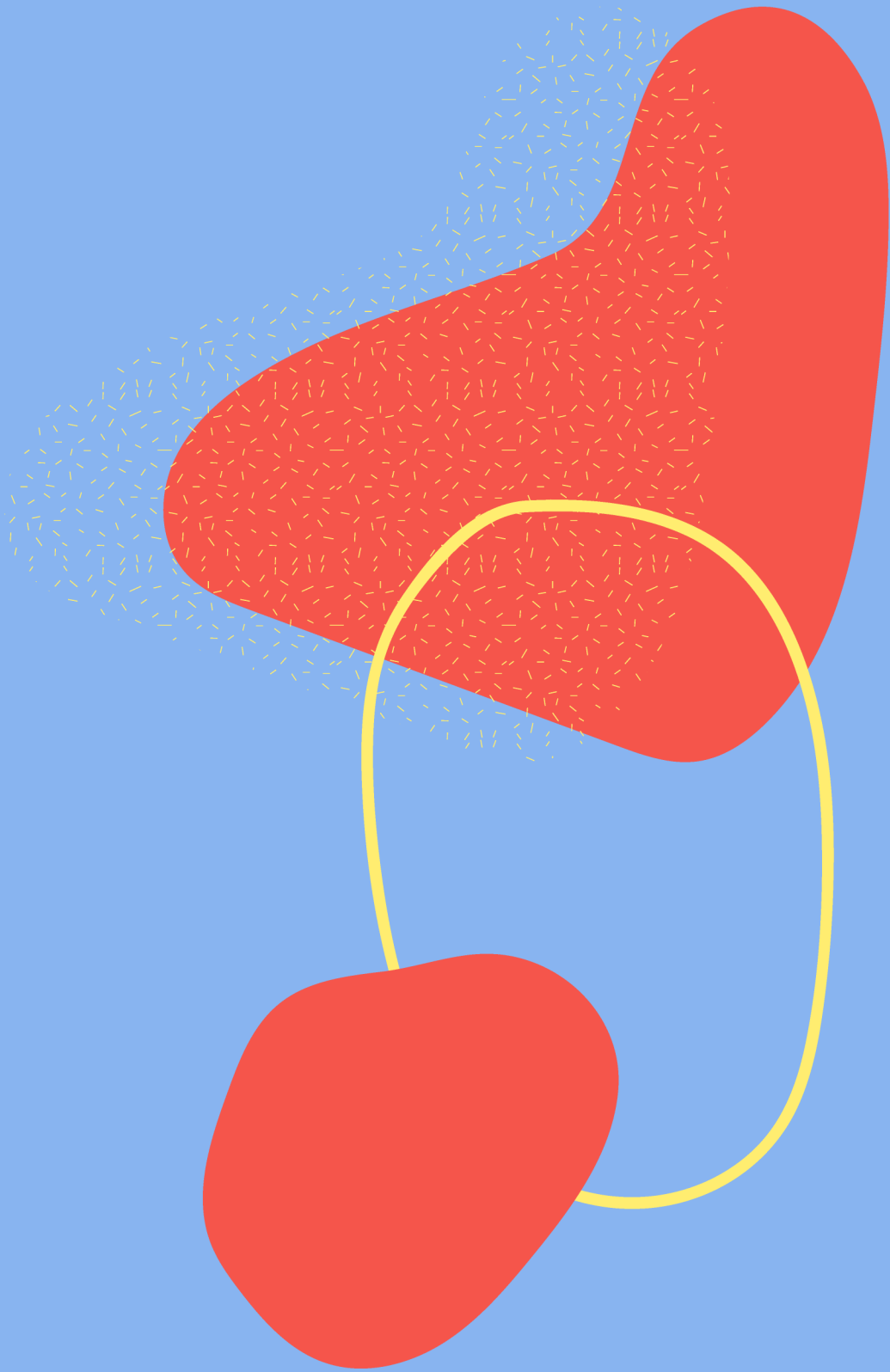
Alongside the institutional structure, there was the general social pressure which seriously impeded women’s artistic careers. Male or female, pursuing an art career was challenging in itself, given the aforementioned conditions of being born into the right social class and family, having access to, and the requisite talent to enter, the right institutions, as well as the tenacity and will to not just endure, but excel in

8 Ibid., 157

9 Nochlin, *Women, Art, and Power*

10 Ibid., 159.

11 Ibid., 160



the rigour of the provided trainings. For the select few women who still remarkably made it to the professional level, their experiences were undeniably more difficult than their male counterparts. For a successful career or later consideration as one of the greats, an artist must have the total commitment, ambition, and devotion to one's work. In reality, this was simply not a path that women could freely take in the nineteenth century and even beyond.¹² The social pressure and the dominant ideology about the conventional feminine role called for the ideal woman to be good at many things rather than excelling in one thing, to serve the family well, and be prepared to sacrifice any personal desires for her children and husband. Within this context, women artists had to choose between marriage or a career, and if the latter was the choice, the sense of guilt, self-doubt, and outer blame or accusation of being selfish and "unfeminine" were bound to torment them throughout their lives. In other words, they had to deal with a constant battle against the demands of the society. Nochlin uses the life of Rosa Bonheur, a prominent female artist of the nineteenth century who made a name for herself as an animal painting specialist, as a testament to this difficult fight.¹³ In addition to creating artwork, she had to resist the tradition and values of being a woman by giving up marriage, wearing masculine outfits, and earning the label of tomboy with her "show of persistence, stubbornness, and vigour".¹⁴ At the same time, despite her achievements, she felt the need to justify her measures and qualify herself against the disapproval of her father as well as her own conscience of not being an ideal woman. As Bonheur did, women artists always found themselves having to deal with the social pressure and inner struggle in a way their male rivals never had to, making what was already a difficult pursuit even more difficult.

While the lack of great women artists in the past can be understood through historical accounts, the question now arises as to why women artists still occupy only a small fraction of the contemporary discourse of the highest achievement and artistic greatness. In his paper, Brand attributes such propensity to the traditional philosophizing about art in general.¹⁵ What she argues is that the predominant theories of art are inherently flawed in their structures. It is true that many theories of art, precisely those following Wittgenstein's anti-essentialist account, claim to objectively take sociological and art-historical contexts as the necessary parameters in defining art. However, it must be noted that what is actually captured by these parameters is "the history of art in only the Western world" as perceived by certain privileged sub-population, namely, white males, who constitute and control the artworld

12 Nochlin, *Women, Art, and Power*, 167.

13 *Ibid.*

14 *Ibid.*, 171.

15 Brand, *Theories of Art Today*.

as artists, critics, philosophers, and historians.¹⁶ Thousands of years of this undemocratic domination denote that the so-called “experts” who confer the status of greatness upon art are inevitably limited by the narrow range of inherited paradigms—one of which, as we have discussed, is the paradigm of the “artistic genius”. One could argue that the very definition of these theories entails neutral, universal criteria, and hence the bias of the existing artworld should ideally be fixed itself, provided that the theories are properly used. For example, Danto’s theory argues for the “openness” of the artworld such that “everything is possible for artists.”¹⁷ The reality, according to Brand, is that the existing old norms of evaluation continue to exclude all kinds of human expressions—including those by women and persons of colour—as art, because the very undemocratic nature and inherited bias of the artworld are not being adequately questioned.¹⁸ That is, while it is the job of philosophers to question any problematic assumptions, namely, the undemocratic body of the artworld, they rarely argue for the conferring of arthood for a work that has not already been deemed to fit within a paradigm based on “antiquated versions of art history.”¹⁹ The consequence is thus, as has been the case historically, the omission of women.

Within the context of the undemocratic, patriarchal domination of the artworld, the general ignoring, or lack, of feminist philosophizing about art can also be attributed to the omission of women artists. That is to say, gender, despite playing an integral role in both interpretation and evaluation of any art work, has largely been ignored in philosophical theorizing about art.²⁰ According to Brand, there have been numerous occurrences of what can be considered a “feminist art” in the sense that the subject matter and the intention of the work represents the perspective of women. Such works, among many, as “Woman from Willendorf” from the Old Europe of the matrilineal society, carved stone images of the Greek goddess Inanna, painters from the Renaissance including Lavinia Fontana and Judith Leyster, the emergence of a number of renowned twentieth century artists like Kollwitz and Hesse, all serve as examples of the role of women in the history of art, which as a whole “make up a continuum, a history” themselves.²¹ The fact that this history has largely been ignored or considered as minor until as late as the 1980s shows not just the closed nature of the paradigms reflected by existing conventional theories of art, but also the shortage of feminist theories of art. For Brand, it is critical that women artists’ goals of being recognized as artists on equal terms with men are not to be confused with the desires of being accepted on “white male terms” to the existing

16 Ibid., 177.

17 Ibid., 187.

18 Brand, *Theories of Art Today*.

19 Ibid., 184.

20 Ibid., 177.

21 Ibid., 180.

artworld.²² It would be a mistake to try to use, for example, the institutional theory just as it is laid out by Dickie. This theory relies upon the evaluative criteria with emphasis on well-established practices, which means that any artworks by women could potentially be rejected on the basis that women's works have never shared aesthetic properties with established artworks—an all-too-familiar story for women. Dickie could make the claim that “well-established practices” in his theory, in fact, include “quilts by American women, pottery by African natives, and aboriginal bark painting”, in an attempt to avoid the accusation of having sexist assumptions (Brand, 2000). To this, Brand argues that the fact that Dickie has not made this explicit in any of his work, despite the obviousness of the issue, probably makes the sexist accusation a fair one.²³ For this reason, it is crucial to realize that the feminist theorizing of art, which seeks to completely depart from the long-established theories reflecting the white male perspective, is required by women in order to end their continued omissions. In other words, the very lack of such feminist philosophizing about art, which captures the spirit and perspectives of numerous feminist artworks, can be blamed for the continued omission of women artists.

It is generally seen that there have been no great women artists who are considered pioneers and grand masters of their crafts. In accepting this, it is easy for anyone, to consciously or unconsciously, be led to think that women perhaps are less capable in the pursuit of highest art. In conclusion, this line of thinking is a mistaken one, and through historical and philosophical accounts, I have attempted to provide reasons behind the mystery of the non-existence of great women artists. It was shown that the general understanding of “Great Artist” is not as simple as one's intuition might have presumed. In a sense, we have been indoctrinated to assume that any “Great Artist” must have the characterization of the prodigal son who is destined to achieve great things regardless of his social bearings. In fact, this was simply not true given that art is far from being an autonomous, independently creative process, but is in large part a social dynamic between the artist and the surrounding social factors. The total making of art and the professional career as an artist were decidedly dependent on institutional dimension, and the institutional deprivation of nude models for women meant that they had no access to the necessary trainings and opportunities to develop themselves as major artists of their time. Even if they managed to pursue the “minor” fields of art, the social pressure and sexist ideology made what was already a difficult enterprise even more difficult. In addition to the historical conditions which consistently impeded women from major accomplishments, the undemocratic nature of the artworld represented by the predominant influences of the white, male

22 Brand, *Theories of Art Today*.

23 *Ibid.*, 188.

“experts”, made the subsequent evaluations all the more excluding of women artists. Furthermore, the shortage of feminist theorizing about art that should ideally serve to deconstruct the traditional art theories, meant that the continuous omissions of women in the making of art history were left largely unprevented.

Against Taking Aristotle's Geometric Proportion a Little Too Literally

Tiger Zheng

One of the first, and perennially relevant accounts of justice in the context of moral philosophy is developed in book V of Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics*. Here, Aristotle distinguishes between distributive and retributive justice, under the banner of particular justice, and provides strict action guidance on how to instantiate justice via mathematical ratios. This account, however, is especially odd given the ways in which the other virtues of character are discussed and must be explored in more detail if it is to be vindicated. In this paper, I will situate particular justice within the context of Aristotle's entire practical project and examine this "decision-theoretic" reading of Aristotle's discussion of justice, and juxtapose justice vis-à-vis the reciprocity of the virtues, *phronesis*, and the virtue of friendship to undermine the plausibility of this interpretation. Concluding, I suggest the passage is contextually motivated, and present a brief sketch of an alternative interpretation for future exploration based on *phronetic* capacities that ultimately cohere better with Aristotle's Practical Project

At first glance Aristotle's account of particular justice Book V of the *Nicomachean Ethics* appears prescriptive to the letter of the text, however several problems arise from such an interpretation. Aristotle notes that the geometric proportion prescribed for the distribution of goods is difficult in practice because we lack an adequate common point of comparison between the worth of agents and distributable goods. The relevance of how we should choose to take Aristotle is especially important vis-à-vis more contemporaneous work in distributive justice which has, in its more formalized iterations, depended on analogizable conception of justice. In contrast, if it can be shown that Aristotle did, indeed, mean something different than what is literally prescribed as a possible strict-decision theoretic for implementing, then we are offered a strong contender that calls into question the efficacy of the philosophic project of formal justice—or, at the very least, relegates it to a prag-

matic and necessarily imperfect project that must be couched within and justified by a broader account of justice. To examine the validity of the literal interpretation of Aristotle's account of particular justice, I will present an interpretation of particular justice that takes into account its context within Aristotle's entire practical project that suggests that we ought to abandon what I will call the decision-theoretic interpretation. Towards this end, the first section will briefly describe the context of particular justice in isolation with special emphasis given towards the decision-theoretic involved. Challenging the decision-theoretic interpretation of this prescription, the following sections will examine particular justice when juxtaposed with both general justice and phronesis, culminating in an examination of the conflict between justice and friendship to introduce a more plausible understanding of when we may apply the geometric proportion. Concluding, I suggest the relevant passages are not a faithful to Aristotle's views on justice proper, but rather contextually motivated.

Particular Justice— A Preliminary Overview and Context

Aristotle's discussion of justice begins with an investigation of common understandings of justice, which appears to refer to two categorizations, the lawful and the fair.¹ Justice, then, is divided into two categories: general justice as lawfulness and particular justice as a virtue of character and fairness. Of primary interest in this section is the latter of the two.

Particular justice is said to concern both the "distribution of honours or wealth or anything else that can be divided [...]" and "rectification in transactions."² In other words, Aristotle's discussions address separately justice in distribution and justice in retribution. This is not to bifurcate particular justice into two distinct subspecies but to emphasize two situations where justice is instantiated clearly. In both cases, justice, consistent with the remainder of the virtues, is an appropriate mean between an excess and deficiency: that is, unfairness can be instantiated by both overreaching and under-reaching for goods.³ As such we can characterize the virtue of justice as a mean between over and under allocation.⁴ Framed in this way, both justice in distribution and retribution fundamentally deal with the same thing—resource al-

1 EN 1129a33-b3.

2 EN 1130b30-a2.

3 EN 1106b15-29.

4 One challenge with this sort of interpretation is that over distribution of a finite good (i.e. if the distribution itself is a zero sum game) implies under distribution elsewhere, however, if we take these distributions as discrete acts, the agent both over and under distributes and it is clear that the distributing agent does not have a virtuous disposition towards justice. In other words, instantiating virtues cannot be thought of in consequentialist or additive terms, where exemplifying an excess of a trait is counteracted by exemplifying its deficiency.

location. They are demarcated only by the specific context in which the act of resource allocation occurs. Thus, if it can be shown that justice in distribution proper does not allow for a decision-theoretic then it follows that particular justice cannot either.

Aristotle's overarching claim that what constitutes justice in distribution is "equality for the people involved will be the same as for the things involved, since the relation between the people will be the same as the relation between things involved."⁵ More succinctly, justice is to treat equals equally, and unequals unequally: the just treat equally those things that are morally equivalent in merit, and should they be different, to treat them appropriately differently proportional to such differences. So far so good, but worth noting is the way in which Aristotle develops these proportions: namely that proportions, according to the letter of the text, refer explicitly to their mathematical meaning. That is, justice in distribution is to be accomplished via a geometric proportion: given the merit evaluations of two agents is A and B, respectively, and the value of goods they are to be distributed is C and D, respectively, the geometric ratio of A to B (that is, A/B) should be equal to the geometric ratio between their distributed goods, C and D (that is, C/D).⁶ The focal point of this paper is to consider the extent to which we ought to take seriously Aristotle's espoused geometric ratio as an actual decision-theoretic for instantiating justice, or, framed differently, whether the employment of a geometric ratio in distribution actually reflects the philosophical basis that justifies it.

General and Particular Justice

Having set out the decision-theoretic view, let us see if it can be reconciled with general justice. Contrasted with particular justice, Aristotle describes general justice as both (a) the whole of virtue and (b) equated with lawfulness insofar as law pertains to all things and aims at "the advantage of the community and its happiness (eudaimonia), and happiness as the ultimate good embraces all other goods."⁷ Aristotle takes as a premise (that is, qualifies what constitutes law) that what is just, and by extension, lawful, is "whatever produces and maintains happiness and its parts for a political community."⁸ As characterized here, the law coheres strongly in the legal moralist tradition: laws mandate virtuous action. General justice, however, is differentiated from virtue in that, though lawfulness requires act instantiation of all virtues of character, it does not, save indirectly through habituation,

5 EN 1131a21-24.

6 EN 1131b5-9.

7 Ronald Polansky, "Giving Justice Its Due," in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. Ronald Polansky (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 154-5.

8 EN 1129b15-19.

“concern passions, attitudes and opinions that do not become manifest in impact upon others.”⁹ In other words, general justice and lawfulness are complete virtue in that they consider all aspects of virtue in the relation to the others, but do not address what is internal to the agent.¹⁰

If it is the case that general justice and the laws cohere with the whole of justice, then what the law prescribes must capture the external results from the disposition of fair individuals. Aristotle captures this precise sentiment “[...] whatever is unfair is lawless, but not everything lawless is unfair.”¹¹ In practice, we can very well see how this is the case if we take a broader understanding of the lawful to illustrate the insufficiency of the strongly prescriptive reading of Aristotle’s justice in distribution.

Consider a law that mandates the sort of acts that instantiate generosity.¹² Here, legal codification might require distributing more to some disadvantaged group. If such a distribution were to be enacted via the decision-theoretic view, however, the disadvantaged individual who receives the benefit must merit more. However, distribution need not imply a difference in merit that is required by particular justice—in fact, allowing for this to be the case may result in claims that must feel a bit odd when suggested. For instance, suppose a genuinely vicious agent, through voluntary acts motivated by vicious desires, finds themselves in a place of financial need: while it may be the case that the state or individuals acting through generosity may have a moral obligation to alleviate their poverty, is it genuinely right to suggest that the vicious individual actually merits more?

The conflict here arises from that per the decision-theoretic interpretation, if there is no difference in merit, then it is not fair, per adherence to the proportion, to distribute this way. One response may be to suggest that this distribution, while distributive in name and action, lies beyond the scope of particular justice—that the justness, qua general justice, of the act derives from the virtue of generosity, and failure to abide derives from a deficiency of generosity—and so it need not be consistent with the geometric proportion. We may owe the vicious individual help just due to their mere humanity; it is not actually a case of distributing goods. The validity of such a claim, however, is unconvincing within an Aristotelian context due to its far-reaching distributive scope. That is, it is explicit that particular justice deals with distributions of honour thus invariably involves a sort of respect upon which something like gener-

9 Polansky, “Giving Justice Its Due,” 155.

10 EN 1129b27-30.

11 EN 1130b12-3.

12 The instantiation of generosity requires “giving to the right people, the right amounts, at the right time, and all the other things that are implied by correct giving” (EN 1120a24-26).

osity is developed. Consequently, injustice is instantiated by agents who capitalize upon their position of power and under distribute to others their deserved honours, however large or small.¹³ As such, it is perfectly consistent to interpret such issues as within the scope of justice. If general justice, as considering the whole of virtuous action, is to be considered as something internally consistent, it appears that applying a geometric proportion produces a contradiction.

This issue is exacerbated by Aristotle's goal of state stability which suggests that "merit" is constituted by something strongly codified within the constitution, known to all and which, in effect, shapes state structure: "supporters say it is free citizenship, some supporters of oligarchy say it is wealth, others good birth, while supporters of aristocracy say it is virtue."¹⁴ Given these very specific conceptions and entrenched evaluations of merit, it follows that, so long as we need a strong conception of merit to apply a geometric proportion, the extent to which we can make claims based on fairness is greatly restricted to the extent we can codify "merit" cardinally. Taken alone, this may not seem like a daunting task. In an oligarchy, for instance, where personal worth is determined based on holdings, the geometric distribution associated with justice in distribution can be applied to, for example, the economic net worth of moral agents. The problem with such an account, however, is that one might be inclined to question how such a distribution would actually be intuitively just. There is something fundamentally morally problematic about distributing more to the rich, especially if the legitimacy of the agents' starting point is under question, or if such distributions might entrench a harmful status quo vis-à-vis other moral concerns. This is because justice, if it is to be taken as a virtue and intrinsically good, must take into account its position in relation to the whole of virtue and assign merit free from contradiction. In this instance, there are two interrelated challenges to the employment of the decision-theoretic view: namely, that the evaluation of merit must be both clear enough to be operationalized, and morally justifiable. Compounded with the problem of distribution contra merit, that we are absent an account of merit that is both justifiable and cardinal should give us pause for thought before attempting to employ the decision-theoretic understanding of Aristotle's account of justice.

Particular Justice as a Virtue of Character

Moreover, if particular justice is a virtue of character (that is, a predis-

¹³ For a more detailed discussion of the relation between justice and vulnerability that supports this broad scope of justice, c.f. John Hacker-Wright's "Moral Status in Virtue Ethics." Briefly, it is suggested that justice can be interpreted from the grounds of vulnerability, wherein an unjust act is a vicious exercise of over a vulnerable entity.

¹⁴ EN 1131a27-30.

position within the agent in a certain way), then our understanding of particular justice ought to take into account the way that the virtues of character interact; and, more saliently, whether the decision-theoretic reading of the instantiation of particular justice can be reconciled with the other virtues. Of primary importance is the unity of the virtues, or reciprocity thesis—“that every virtue requires possession of all the virtues.”¹⁵ According to Russell’s interpretation of Aristotle, this derives from two key claims: that phronesis requires all the virtues; and, that phronesis results in the same decision in the case of every virtue.¹⁶ Phronesis refers to practical reasoning involved in virtue instantiation: it is the component of virtue that differentiates virtue proper from actions incidentally arising from inconsistent or natural states. Phronesis is necessary for “apprehending what is appropriate [for each virtue] through right reason,” and for consistency of virtue as “something deep about the person’s character” as related to the sort of affective dispositions, desires, and ends that are deliberated upon and chosen.¹⁷ The focus on phronesis indicates that the virtues involve “certain patterns of practical reasoning and choice, ways of responding to reasons to act and to feel.”¹⁸

Framed as such, understanding the proportion as action guiding runs into great difficulty. If phronesis reaches the same action for every virtue, and justice is instantiated by both the employment of the geometric proportion and phronesis, then virtuous action in every situation, for every virtue, can be understood as involving, in some way, the geometric proportion. This is questionable in practice insofar as considerations of virtue instantiation cannot be wholly removed from implicitly considering the others: if the decision-theoretic view were adequate, it would have to encapsulate or at least converge upon the same responses as deliberation from the point of view of the other virtues while strictly employing a geometric ratio account.

Framed in another way, the reciprocity thesis suggests that the different virtues provide agents with different perspectives, or modes of examination, of moral dilemmas, where the consideration of every other virtue is subsumed under a primary virtue that is being discussed. While this is not a strong refutation of applying the geometric distribution to all cases, thinking in terms of the geometric distribution in moral deliberation requires the presumption of a certain degree of accuracy and strong quantifiability that is error-prone and subject to criticism as it assumes the potential of applying cardinal commensurable terminology

15 Daniel C. Russell, “Phronesis and the Virtues (NE vi 12–13),” in *The Cambridge Companion to Aristotle’s Nicomachean Ethics*, ed. Ronald Polansky (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2014), 213.

16 EN 1144a29-b1, b14-17, b20-28, b30-32 ; Russell, “Phronesis and the Virtues,” 213.

17 Russell, “Phronesis and the Virtues,” 206-12.

18 *Ibid.*, 203.

strongly to different things.¹⁹

Moreover, the alleged possibility of moral deliberation under such terms contradicts that the mediation between the virtues, generally, is far from easily codifiable into such a neat algorithm; to point, Aristotle considers the virtues in isolation. Hursthouse articulates this rejection of the codifiability thesis; an implicit assumption of alternative moral theories that suggests that we can formulate a set of rules or principles in such a way that: “(a) They would amount to a decision procedure for determining what the right action was in any particular case; (b) they would be stated in such terms that any non-virtuous person could understand and apply them correctly.”²⁰ The geometric proportion in conjunction with the reciprocity thesis satisfies the first condition, but where Hursthouse’s v-rules avoid the second, strongly prescribing the proportion upholds the codifiability thesis.²¹

Moreover, if it is the case that justice finds its place amongst many virtues, it is odd that Aristotle seems to speak of particular justice from a dispassionate point of view following its explicit differentiation from general justice and lawfulness due its internal involvement with the agent. The connection between justice as a virtue and disposition and justice spoken in act-based terms, however, is clear — “justice is a disposition to which people are capable of doing and do just actions and wish for the just things [...]”²² That is, justice as a disposition results in just actions. In this way, prescribing the instantiation of justice as a matter of mean illustrates the scope of the instantiation of justice as a virtue in an isolated case barring other considerations; the geometric proportion is a pedagogical tool to provide a basic and simple account of the virtue. Thus, situating justice as a virtue of character appears to give us a very different story of the role of the geometric ratio—it is not a decision procedure, but rather an inchoate account of the virtue and the beginning of the actual development of the virtue.

19 Even if we restrict evaluations of merit to one sort of virtue, the demands of strong commensurability required for precisely applying the geometric proportion is near, if not outright, impossible. To point, one might ask what it means for an agent to be twice as brave as another. If there is any meaningful answer, it must take into account several lenses of comparison (such as number of instantiations or qualitative context of instantiation) for merit-evaluation—none of which are alone sufficient. Further examination might also problematize whether such instantiations, as external to the agent, are even sufficient grounds for considering merit as an intensional property. Again, this does not wholly preclude the possibility of such evaluations: the oligarchy can easily consider merit on the basis of holdings at some moment in time. Though it is beyond the scope of this paper, I am prepared to defend, however, that such conceptions still fail with regards to some other component of justice.

20 Rosalind Hursthouse, *On Virtue Ethics* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), 39–40.

21 While perhaps invoking Hursthouse’s characterization here results in an anachronistic account of what constitutes a property of Aristotle’s own virtue ethic, were it not the case, one could question why Aristotle wrote about the other virtues at all.

22 Polansky, “Giving Justice Its Due,” 153.

Justice and Friendship

The conflict between the justice as a virtue may be expressed in contrast to friendship, a virtue with which justice has often conflicted in the philosophic canon. Comparing the two, Aristotle writes, “if people are friends, they have no need for justice, but if they are just they need friendship in addition; and the justice that is most just seems to belong to friendship.”^{23 24} This passage indicates a single-direction conditional: while justice may be instantiated without friendship, friendship is necessarily just. This is not a prioritization of friendship over justice, rather, insofar as friendships constitute an exchange, there is an existent justice between friends that supersedes particular justice as previously described. This is consistent with Aristotle’s claim of the impossibility of friendship between greatly unequal agents. A man cannot be friends with his slave qua a slave or his child qua a child, because the exchange in these sorts of relationships cannot be fair in terms of distribution of goods. If they are to be friends, it is for some exchange with the other as an individual, removed from the greatly unequal relationship where one is objectified by the other—friendship equalizes. The back-benching of justice, here, is not to suggest an abandonment of justice in friendship altogether, but a deviation from a strict adherence to quantified particular justice that is endorsed by the direct decision-procedure reading.

Still, a problem remains: if justice and friendship deal with the same sort of things, differing only in focus on equality quantitatively or qualitatively, that friendship co-instantiates justice suggests that the latter is superfluous.²⁵ This is resolved via the proximity and mutually acknowledged goodwill condition of friendship.²⁶ There is an affective component—friends arouse pleasures and desires. Even if it is the case that friendship is, ontologically, a sort of exchange, it is neither necessarily the case, nor is it intuitive that the agents engaged in friendship conceive of it like a dispassionate market exchange. This is especially true of the complete friendship between virtuous agents, where insofar as it is the site of the best instantiation of the virtue of friendship, the best sort of justice is also instantiated. In contrast, that the distributing legislator, in practice, lacks such close relationships, constitutes a limit for the sort of justice that can realistically be instantiated. This suggests that the geometric proportion is not to be employed in an unqualified

23 EN 1155a27-29.

24 A point of note before this examination, however, is that Aristotle never refers specifically to general or particular justice in the discussion of friendship—however, insofar as what constitutes general justice is addressed in more detail in the politics, I take it plausible to interpret these discussions as relating friendship to particular justice. Moreover, the close relationship between these two virtues derive from that both deal with some sort of exchange, and by extension, have strong political implications.

25 EN 1158b33-1159a2.

26 EN 115b27-34.

sense, but rather that, considering the distance between the agents, its application depends on what is actually possible—the decision-theoretic interpretation is purely pragmatic. Particular justice does not, and ought not, end with proportional considerations. Rather, the geometric ratio is a rule of thumb—a method for considering how the just would act without intimate knowledge of the targets of the act.²⁷ That the just requires something more for the sort of justice in friendship suggests that applying a proportion algorithmically misses the point: the literal prescription is meant as a satisficing recommendation in the absence of friendship or other knowledge, for which more qualitative considerations are required in deliberation.

Conclusion:

A Tentative Explanation for Aristotle's Oddly Precise Prescription

Why then, might have Aristotle proposed what appears to be a strongly action guiding procedure in his discussion of particular justice? Contextually, if we are to understand justice as a virtue of character, there is a disparity between how Aristotle speaks of the other virtues. Elsewhere, the virtues are spoken of primarily in explanatory terms: while these descriptions offer insights into the development of virtue, precise prescriptions regarding instantiations are absent.²⁸

A plausible response might be surmised from context the *Nicomachean Ethics*. To point, Smith suggests that Aristotle's audience was comprised of some agents "who value virtue-as-equity, while others were led to pursue virtue-as-virility" both of whom "were attracted to a life of noble action," but have internalized imperfect conceptions.²⁹ Aristotle's audience is deficient in some way: "Aristotle is seeking to make his audience good—perhaps to redefine and revalue what a noble activity is."³⁰ If particular virtue and its application is not codifiable strongly, then to act in accordance with it requires existent and developed phronesis that ex hypothesi is absent in the audience who, in part, sought instrumental value from Aristotle's teachings.

27 To point, Aristotle astutely notes that legislators often seem more focused on friendship than justice inasmuch as an absence of the latter is what results in state insecurity (EN 1153a23-29). Justice is a sphere of consideration that, as noted earlier, is best demonstrated in considerations of fair distribution; but insofar as this sort of distribution does not constitute justice itself holistically, we ought to avoid strongly adhering to it

28 Even on bravery, where Aristotle explicitly suggests that the best of which is instantiated in wartime, he does not explicitly speak of how we are to be brave. His claims are predominantly negative in describing what is not bravery; or just generally descriptive rather than normative.

29 Thomas W. Smith, "The Audience of *Nicomachean Ethics*," *The Journal of Politics* 62 (2000): 184.

30 *Ibid.*

Given this audience, if Aristotle had presented justice in less strict terms, one can imagine a risk of legislators mistaking their account of the good as the good, consequently acting wrongly from their hubris. The employment of a procedure is instrumental; it enforces some kind of critical reflection of the worth of agents and distribution, rather than prescribing the treatment of agents appropriately according to their merit. This sort of pragmatism is very consistent given Aristotle's approach in his *Politics*, where it is suggested that his primary project is to provide the best sort of prescriptions for a specific state.³¹

At the same time, it is plausible to suggest that Aristotle himself cautions against literal readings by the sheer number of qualifiers he places on the interpretation of particular justice.³² This is to suggest the incompleteness of taking particular justice too literally. Arguably, these qualifiers only highlight an incomplete list of considerations, but, without existent practical wisdom, such an approach is generally preferable to blind alternatives that allege to be acting in accordance with the virtue of justice. Such an interpretation is, moreover, extremely characteristic of Aristotle, generally, in how close of a resemblance it bears to Aristotle's ultimate espousal of a democracy: to prevent the best of all possible state of affairs being easily degradable to the worst due to their identical structures. A rehabilitation of what is prescribed by the geometric proportion, then, rests on its interpretation as a rough guideline. Aristotle does something similar to Hursthouse's reconciliation deontological claims: that such principles derive their efficacy and are useful for the movement towards aretaic excellence, but are hypothetical and premised on the state of character of the agent.³³ The talk of acts of distribution and retribution are indicative of the disposition of the agent; the development of which must remain the primary focal point of normative approaches to justice. In short, what actually constitutes particular justice is better summed up by Aristotle's discussion of particular justice prior to his explicit algorithmatization of the concept: namely, that justice is to treat equals equally, unequals unequally; and to treat both appropriately. To do this requires not blind adherence to decision procedures, but habituation of moral excellence.

31 Pol. 1288b10-21.

32 In the same section alone, Aristotle acknowledges the difficulty of the measure of worth, the discontinuity of the geometric proportion in practice, and the challenge of comparing agents and goods within the same unit (EN 1131a25-29; 1131b15-17).

33 Hursthouse, "On Virtue Ethics," 94–99.

Care of the Self and the Limits of Embeddedness

Arthur van Havre

This paper presents an analysis of Foucault's care of the self and explains the importance of prefigurative empowerment. By explaining how creativity affects both the ends and means of empowerment, this paper presents the role of embeddedness within emancipation. The limits of embeddedness are then highlighted through exemplification of cooptive embeddedness; while abiding norms can enable the empowerment of some, it can also subjectify others. This idea is illustrated in this paper through Saba Mahmood's work on Islamist feminism in Egypt and through Glen Coulthard and Dale Turner's respective account of indigenous empowerment in Canada. Assessing the limits of empowerment ultimately leads this paper to present the primacy of prefigurative means of empowerment in order to prevent the subjectifying cooption of Foucauldian care of the self.

The later work of Michel Foucault presents the idea of care of the self. Through this concept, Foucault explains how one could achieve emancipation through training and expertise. Work induced self-development could in this idea lead one to utilize all possibilities available to them in a way enabling the performance of their freedom. He points to the telos of such training and portrays the virtue of creative askesis as enabling such empowerment of the self. Numerous thinkers have developed Foucault's idea of care of the self, defining it as a framework for emancipation. However, multiple iterations of such a framework have been proven to be rather inefficient as they were based on an exacerbated account of embeddedness within norms. This paper therefore aims to define the limits of care of the self by assessing the reach of embeddedness. I will start by defining Foucault's account of care of the self and to frame the role of creativity and embeddedness within it. In order to point to the limits of embeddedness, I will after present a comparative analysis of two scholarly accounts of indigenous emancipation in Canada offered by Glen Coulthard and Dale Turner. Such analysis will permit to exemplify the limits of embeddedness and to portray the cooption inherent to its exacerbated account. Afterwards, I will also present the active immanence of freedom in care of the self in order to assess the potentially transcendental accounts of authenticity in care of the self. I will finally present the primacy of prefigurative means of empowerment within care of the self in order to demonstrate their virtue as a tool of emancipation.

Foucauldian Care of the Self

Foucault presents a specific account of power as capillary. According to Foucault, power is enacted in a bottom-up dynamic and encompasses all aspects of life. In this sense, he brings about the idea that power can be manifested through technologies disciplining life. In the same way that Marx imagined wage-labour as an instance of power, Foucault explains how the design of a public gym or the silhouette of a model on the cover of *Vogue Magazine* can be understood as technologies of power endowed with manifold effects on existence. Foucault thus advances a theory where power is defined as immanently present all around us¹ and accordingly accounts of resistance as potentially multi-directional.² In *History of Sexuality*, Foucault explains how the focuses of resistance are distributed over time and space in an irregular manner. Resistance for Foucault thus represents a wide set of potential actions inherent to the possibilities available to the agent.³ The immanence of Foucault's account of resistance renders it closely linked to technologies of power disciplining agencies. Resistance is thus tailored to the power through which the agent is subjugated.

Foucault's account of power leads him to define care of the self as a tool of empowerment inherently linked to the conditions of possibilities available to someone. In lectures he gave at the Collège de France in 1982, Foucault defines the care of the self through the platonic example of Alcibiades. In this dialogue, Alcibiades, a young Athenian man, discusses his political abilities with Socrates. Socrates underlines Alcibiades' current lack of skills necessary to political ruling and emphasizes the young man's need for proper training and education.⁴ Through this example, Foucault explains the need for self-cultivation. By presenting Socrates' advocacy for self-knowledge and self-care, he emphasizes the possibility for development to be considered as a means of empowerment.⁵ In Alcibiades, Socrates assesses the young man's need for self-training and defines the development of Alcibiades' virtue as a diachronic process uniting his soul to the city. Furthermore, Socrates accounts of the training of Alcibiades' soul as an endeavour lasting for the whole of his life. In this sense, Foucault frames the endless character of care of the self as inherent to the immanent need for cultivation of the soul.⁶ The immanence of the diachronic nature of the care of the self can be related to Foucault's account of power and resist-

1 Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality*. New York: Pantheon, 1978. Print. 98.

2 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 96.

3 Michel Foucault, *The History of Sexuality*, 157.

4 Ellis, Walter M. *Alcibiades*. London: Routledge, 1989. Print. 180.

5 Foucault, Michel, Frédéric Gros, François Ewald, and Alessandro Fontana. *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1981–1982*. New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2005. Print. 6.

6 Michel Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the subject*, 37.

ance; the physically and temporally scattered character of resistance enables a need for constant training of the self. In this example, the ethical development of Alcibiades will enable a more ethical ruling of the city in function of the inherent relation between the soul and the city.⁷

Foucault here presents the soul as the subject of care of the self⁸ and shows ruling as its object of training. He explains how Alcibiades' development should take up the whole of his life and explains how mastery will permit him to develop the ethical abilities necessary for ruling.⁹ Foucault's account of Alcibiades' development permits to lay out the conceptual framework proper to care of the self. Foucault defines four characteristic elements of care of the self. The Ethical Substance represents the agent undergoing care of the self, the Mode of Subjection lies in the reason for such change, the Askesis represents the training inherent to care of the self, and the Telos represents the practical goal proper to a care of the self. All these elements form the gestalt of care of the self as a tool enabling individuals to redirect power.

Creativity, Embeddedness and Care of the Self

Creativity plays a key role in care of the self as it acts as a motor to emancipation. Care of the self lies on the edge between structuralism and liberalism and thus permits the pursuit of individuality within a given system. It balances the influence of one's environment with one's own will and is thus enabled by the creative mastery of one's given range of possibilities giving way to empowerment. Within this equilibrium, creativity influences both the goal of askesis and the means enabling its achievement. As such, creativity enables the diachronic refinement of the telos of care of the self. Foucault explains how one's telos is influenced by the range of possibilities available to them. As one is fundamentally part of a world, the conditions inherent to such world inevitably frame the potentiality proper to one's life. In this sense, the goal pursued by individuals undergoing care of the self will inevitably be framed their environment. The definition of such telos is thus the result of the enactment of the will within a defined set of perceived possibilities. For example, if a voguing black man from New York undergoes training in the hope of becoming a legendary voguer, such telos represents the enactment of his own will in function of his environment.

Nevertheless, as care of the self induces the development of the ethical subject, it can be understood that one's available set of possibilities is bound to change through askesis. Consequently, the telos of a care of the self is bound to evolve through training. Creativity thus enables the

7 Michel Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the subject*, 33.

8 Michel Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the subject*, 58.

9 Michel Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the subject*, 129.

redefinition of the goal of care of the self as induced by a change in one's ethos. Such creative development of one's telos is inherent to the immanent character of Foucauldian ethics. Rather than presenting care of the self as the transcendent pursuit of a defined goal, Foucault frames it as inherent to one's actuality and explains how the finality of care of the self is unknown to the subject.¹⁰ The voguer undergoing askesis within the voguing community has thus for instance no idea of the reach of his transformation. Even though it is possible that he started out with a specific goal in mind, his goal will have inevitably evolved through his implication within the community. It's for example possible that he, at first, only wanted to meet people going through the same struggle as him and that he now desires to become the mother of his own voguing house. He creatively changed the goal of his care of the self in function of the immanent development of the range of his perceived possibilities.

The role of creativity within care of the self is, moreover, prominent within creation of means of empowerment. Saba Mahmood, a Foucauldian anthropologist, effectively describes the role of creativity within askesis in her book *Politics of Piety* describing the effects of the Islamic revival on Islamic feminism in Egypt. Mahmood describes how Egyptian women were able to find creative ways of self-expression through the mastery of Islamic norms.¹¹ She for example explains how female figures of the Islamic revival trained themselves to find tools of empowerment within Islamic law.¹² This example portrays the effectiveness of creativity within care of the self. As Foucault's work defines care of the self as standing between structuralism and libertarianism, one can see how the creative use of structural boundaries enables the individual to master their environment and to consequently redirect power to their advantage. In this sense, creativity stands as an integrating part of care of the self, both framing its goal and its means.

Creative means in care of the self are inherent to the teleological embeddedness of the individual within their environment. Teleological embeddedness represents the subscription to the structure within which one evolves in the aim of achieving emancipatory goals. While embeddedness is defended to different extents within Foucauldian literature, Mahmood presents the empowering effectiveness of embeddedness within care of the self. She presents the subscription of Egyptian women to Islam as a tool of empowerment enabling them to integrate modern ideas to their traditional landscape. Mahmood explains how total embeddedness is compatible with authenticity as it permits the

10 Michel Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the subject*, 19.

11 Mahmood, Saba. *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2005. Print. 162.

12 Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*, 89.

effective redirection of power through the achievement of one's goals.¹³ She, furthermore, explains the way through which Islamic feminism is, for certain Egyptian women, fundamentally tied to the performance of specific norms.¹⁴ The fundamentality of such norms is defined by Mahmood as influencing both the telos and the means available to an individual undergoing care of the self. In the same way that creativity enables one to actualize the goal of their emancipation, embeddedness enables changes in the structural elements proper to one's ethos. Mahmood for example explains how veiling and praying act as core elements influencing transformation. She explains how Muslim rituals work as medium of change rather than representational tools¹⁵ and thus portrays how embeddedness is source of actualization of the ethical substance of care of the self. In this sense, Mahmood portrays the subscription to norms as a tool enabling creative reiteration of norms. Mahmood builds from Butler's assessment of the necessary actualization of norms through reiteration. She presents the feminist performance of norms undergone as a mean fostering greater accordance with their self.

Such ideas of embeddedness as tool of actualization of one's ethos and one's self can be linked to Foucault's account of expertise. Foucault indeed presents the development of the self as enabling creative self-actualization through the masterful use of possibilities available to the agent.¹⁶ Embeddedness within norms could therefore permit to develop the skills contingent upon empowerment. Foucault for instance presents how one can master the condition of their own body and consequently achieve to reach new levels of self-development.¹⁷ This idea is restated by Mahmood which presents the efficiency of embeddedness within Islamic law and doctrine. She for instance illustrates how the mastery of Islamic law by female *Dawa* figures enables the advocacy of women rights within the Islamic legal apparatus.¹⁸

Nevertheless, important limits of embeddedness can be inferred from Mahmood's book. While she describes how embeddedness in Islamic norms has enabled empowerment for a number of women, it remains that it was not as emancipatory for all women. In *Politics of Piety*, one can see how numerous women are rather subjugated through subscription to norms. For example, while some women find ways of legitimizing their higher education through Islamic law, they are still denied the right of looking males in the eyes at University.¹⁹ The taboo of eye-con-

13 Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*, 162.

14 Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*, 164.

15 Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*, 166.

16 Halperin, David M. "Saint Foucault." *Saint Foucault* (1997): 3–14. Web. 96.

17 David Halperin, *Saint Foucault*, 97.

18 Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*, 89.

19 Saba Mahmood, *Politics of Piety*, 101.

tact accounts for the limits that are inherent to embeddedness. In this sense, one can see how greater embeddedness could lead to greater subjectification of the self and sabotage greater emancipation by capitalizing on small gains of empowerment. In other words, even if it seems empowering that a woman who was previously denied access to university is now able to attend it, it remains that it only furthers the discipline enabled over her agency, and consequently hinders the potential for her greater empowerment. One can thus see limits the virtue of embeddedness in care of the self. I will further describe such limits in the next sections of the paper.

Indigenous Emancipation, a Compared Analysis

The creative actualization of one's goal and means through the subscription to norms has the risk of inducing pernicious effects toward one's empowerment. The cooption of means of emancipation as well as the discipline of one's agency can limit the developmental efficacy of care of the self. If embeddedness becomes too great, it inhibits development by subjugating agency to norms. In order to account of such risk, I will advance a comparative analysis of the work of two Canadian Indigenous scholars surrounding Indigenous empowerment in Canada (This is not a peace pipe by Dale Turner and Red skins, white masks by Glen Coulthard). While both authors aim for Indigenous emancipation, they propose very different operational accounts leading to such empowerment. While Turner advances the need for teleological embeddedness within colonial institutions, Coulthard rather defends the idea of prefigurative means of empowerment independent from such institutions.

This is not a piece pipe by Dale Turner assesses the issue of Indigenous empowerment in Canada. Turner presents the shortcomings of Indigenous integration in Canadian society and acknowledges the limits to Indigenous advocacy within state institutions.²⁰ In order to assess of Indigenous underrepresentation, Turner promotes further embeddedness within Canadian institutions in the aim of changing the way Indigenous ideas are understood and treated. In the face of deficient academic involvement of first nations, he presents the concept of Word Warriors, which he defines as Indigenous scholars acting as intellectual leaders and political advocates.²¹ Word warriors, explains Turner, will consist of Indigenous PHD's and professors, working in Western universities and institutions of research. Turner presents the need to foster greater scholarly interest and self-investment among Indigenous communities and explains how word warriors, through their research and publications, could efficiently enable Indigenous voices to

20 Turner, Dale A. *This Is Not a Peace Pipe: Towards a Critical Indigenous Philosophy*. Toronto: U of Toronto, 2006. Print. 43.

21 Dale Turner, *This is not a peace pipe*, 74.

be heard.²² He therefore advances the need for Indigenous peoples to engage with European philosophy in order to defend their rights from “within Canada”.²³ Greater embeddedness, to Turner, would not entail a loss of authenticity of Indigenous claims, but would rather enable for such claims to be better portrayed and assessed within the state.²⁴

Indigenous embeddedness within Canadian institutions is however vehemently critiqued by Glen Coulthard in his book *Red skin, white mask*. Coulthard indeed depicts the same Indigenous underrepresentation which Turner’s book denounces, but advocates for different means of empowerment. Instead of favoring greater embeddedness in Canadian institutions, Coulthard defends the incompatibility of such institutions with Indigenous empowerment. He consequently denies the legitimacy of Canadian Indigenous recognition politics and illustrates the primary importance of framing advocacy outside of the Canadian state.²⁵ Coulthard presents the need to focus Indigenous efforts within prefigurative means of empowerment. By prefigurative, he entails the need to define such means as fundamentally compatible with their aim. He is therefore opposed to teleological embeddedness and Coulthard explicitly denies legitimacy to Turner’s account of engagement with the Canadian state, explaining how such engagement would obligatorily subjugate Indigenous claims to Canadian colonialism.²⁶ Instead, Coulthard illustrates the need for an inward reactualization of Indigenous legal and political culture, enabling Indigenous communities to reappropriate their rights and to anchor their emancipation within their political roots and identity.²⁷ Coulthard’s skepticism flows from a Fanonian tradition of post-colonial work centering emancipation as based upon the idea of struggle. Coulthard explains how emancipation can only be achieved against the gaze of the colonizer and presents the need for an actional affirmation of identity (based in self-affirmation as opposed to recognition by the other).²⁸ In the quest for Foucauldian redirection of power, one can thus see how Coulthard is highly critical of teleological embeddedness. His account of prefigurative empowerment and his refusal of recognition as a tool of emancipation assesses of his account of the self as the basis of progress.

Comparing the work of Glen Coulthard and Dale Turner permits to highlight the fundamental differences proper to their respective conception of the relation between the self and one’s environment. While

22 Dale Turner, *This is not a peace pipe*, 120.

23 Dale Turner, *This is not a peace pipe*, 96.

24 Dale Turner, *This is not a peace pipe*, 106.

25 Coulthard, Glen Sean. *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 2014. Print.

26 Glen Coulthard, *Red Skins White Masks*, 152.

27 Glen Coulthard, *Red Skins White Masks*, 179

28 Glen Coulthard, *Red Skins White Masks*, 36.

Turner presents word warriors as effective agents of Indigenous empowerment, Coulthard advances the necessity for prefigurative means of emancipation. Nevertheless, Coulthard's assessment of historical colonial oppression of Indigenous communities in Canada permits to understand he denounces teleological embeddedness. Coulthard explains the fundamental subjectification of collaborative Indigenous advocacy by presenting the way through which Indigenous claims are structurally subjugated to Canadian norms. He indeed explains how Indigenous agency within colonial institutions, rather than enabling empowerment, presupposes the primacy and legitimacy of the Canadian framework to thus circumscribes talks of recognition.²⁹ Turner's account, by presenting emancipation as possible within Canadian institutions, therefore accepts a fundamental subscription to Canadian thought. Coulthard explains how, since fundamental elements of both Canadian and Indigenous cultures are incompatible (e.g. adherence to capitalism), decolonization as imagined by Turner will thus never be total.³⁰ Coulthard illustrates this idea through various examples assessing land and economic issues, portraying the way through which the Canadian state is structurally endowed with the bigger end of the stick, enabling structural Indigenous subscription to colonial institution.³¹

Coulthard furthermore explains how such embeddedness induces a cooption of Indigenous goals as it subjugates self-actualization to norms. He portrays how, by subscribing to Canadian institution, Indigenous goals are alienated by the norms by which they abide. He for instance presents the way through which the state and corporations are able to coopt emancipatory language in order to perverse Indigenous goals of emancipation.³² The term "sustainability" is for example used by corporations to describe the construction of pipelines in Northern Canada. Sustainability, however, as an Indigenous principle, is endowed with a meaning fundamentally incompatible with the construction of a pipeline. This example illustrates the way through which embeddedness within Canadian institutions and corporations gives way to denaturation of Indigenous claims. Coulthard is therefore highly critical of Turner's assessment of embeddedness as compatible with authenticity. The cooptive actualization of Indigenous emancipatory struggle is therefore closely tied to embeddedness as it gives way to normative appropriation by the colonizer. Coulthard illustrates the need of prefigurative empowerment as well as his refusal of teleological subjugation by assessing of the Indigenous need to "build their own house rather than dismantle their master's".³³

29 Glen Coulthard, *Red Skins White Masks*, 41.

30 Glen Coulthard, *Red Skins White Masks*, 156.

31 Glen Coulthard, *Red Skins White Masks*, 57.

32 Glen Coulthard, *Red Skins White Masks*, 78.

33 Glen Coulthard, *Red Skins White Masks*, 148.

Embeddedness and Prefigurative Empowerment

Coulthard's critique of Turner illustrates the limits of embeddedness in care of the self. Such ideas regarding cooption of emancipatory aims and means can be linked to the work of other Foucauldian scholars like Cressida Heyes. In her book *Self-Transformation*, Heyes assesses the limits of body normalization to underline the pernicious effects of exacerbated embeddedness on self-transformation and empowerment. Like Mahmood, Heyes envisions the body as constitutive of inner experience.³⁴ However, instead of portraying the normalization of bodily behaviour as an immanent source of self-actualization, Heyes emphasizes the risk of docile cooption inherent to such normalization. She is critical of the normalizing pressure coopting self-transformation and explains how it renders agency mere subscription to norms rather than empowerment.³⁵ For example, she presents weight watchers as a highly efficient technology of power coopting the will for change of women. The weight-loss program indeed lays out a micro-managerial program overarching transformative agency.³⁶ Women who wish to lose weight in order to free themselves from bodily subjectification are, through weight watchers, brought to subscribe to norms of public confession, calorie count and precise behavioral rules. The women's will for change is thus coopted in the sense that their embeddedness within a system supposed to foster their empowerment only results in their greater subjugation to theirs and the other's gaze upon their body. Rather than being empowered, they are further disciplined. The work of Heyes consequently echoes Coulthard's critique of Indigenous politics of recognition by underlining the limits and danger inherent to teleological embeddedness within care of the self.

Understanding the limits of teleological embeddedness permits to acknowledge the need to refine the scope of care of the self through prefigurative means of empowerment. By centering *askesis* on the identity and aspirations of the self, training makes way for emancipation of greater authenticity. This idea can be inferred from Foucault's work portraying desires as enabling the creative life.³⁷ For instance, by explaining how homosexuals don't have to discover their homosexuality, but should rather create a gay life, Foucault situates self-development as an immanent inward actualization of the subject. In other words, agency should not be tailored to norms but should rather present itself as directly linked to the subject's freedom. Embeddedness would thus

34 Heyes, Cressida J. *Self Transformations: Foucault, Ethics, and Normalized Bodies*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007. Print. 125.

35 Cressida Heyes, *Self Transformation*, 129.

36 Cressida Heyes, *Self Transformation*, 72.

37 Gallagher, Bob, and Alexander Wilson. Michel Foucault, an Interview: Sex, Power, and the Politics of Identity. Vol. 400. Los Angeles: Here Media, 1984. Print. Advocate Magazine., 164.

only be legitimate insofar as it permits the expression of the authentic self, rather than its subjectified version. Through American gay narratives, Foucault exemplifies this concept by highlighting how creating a gay culture was only possible outside of disciplined setting and explains how appropriation of certain environment like saunas enabled the immanent development of gay identity.³⁸ Foucault explains how subscription to norms can be invasive to the self-definition of the individual. Too great embeddedness could disable one's ability for self-actualization. Foucault explains how, by conforming to ethical norms, one becomes normal and consequently loses themselves in the crowd.³⁹ Therefore, even though such practice could in some case yield empowering consequences, it remains that, as it is shown in Coulthard's and Heyes' work, it can perverse agency, rendering it subjectifying.

Understanding the limits of embeddedness and the inherent primacy of prefigurative empowerment could lead to questions about the immanence of authenticity in care of the self. The important focus put on authenticity in askesis could indeed entail a transcendental account of freedom. If one has to refer to a specific assessment of will or aims, one would thus have to consider it as prior to self-actualization. If cooption for example separates Indigenous figures from their true will, such will would have to be understood as fundamental and its development would have to be transcendental.

Nevertheless, the focus of authenticity in care of the self is based on a conception of freedom as an action rather than a state.⁴⁰ Authenticity is thus defined as anchored in the free development of the individual. Since the caring self is constantly actualized through askesis, its development remains authentically immanent insofar as it is anchored in the practice of freedom. Analyzing the cooption of Indigenous struggle would therefore not explain how Indigenous advocacy is distanced from its true telos, but rather presents how it was developed in an un-free way. Cooption, in this sense does not entail perversion of emancipatory fundamental will, but rather the discipline of its development. Freedom in care of the self stems from the immanent development of the individual and thus consists of a practice.⁴¹

Centering care of the self around prefigurative means of empowerment would thus not hinder its immanent essence. Furthermore, as Glen Coulthard presents in *Red Skin, White Masks*, consistency between means and ends of development would permit to actively practise free-

38 David Halperin, *Saint Foucault*, 93.

39 David Halperin, *Saint Foucault*, 109.

40 Koopman, Colin. *Genealogy as Critique: Foucault and the Problems of Modernity*. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana UP, 2013. Print.208.

41 Colin Koopman, *Genealogy as Critique*, 209

dom through emancipatory self-actualization.⁴² Coulthard exemplifies this idea by assessing the inclusion of women and sexual minorities in Indigenous politics. He explains how such inclusion, as a mean of empowerment, would enable a resurgent reactualization of Indigenous struggles based on indigenous identity.⁴³ Prefigurative means thus permit the effective redirection of power through self-actualization since they are elaborated independently from norms. As they are anchored in the practice of freedom and account for the transformative virtue of goals, they are fully compatible with the immanent character of care of the self. Prefigurative means of empowerment provide resurgent changes in one's environment and thus affect the array of available possibilities. They entail the ability for self-actualization to be developed in accord with one's freedom. Resurgence in askesis is therefore fundamental to the emancipatory character of care of the self.

Conclusion

Care of the self, as advanced by Michel Foucault, presents the possibility for an individual to reach empowerment through self-development. Foucault's account of care of the self flows from his conception of power as immanent discipline. As power is located all around us, developing expertise and regaining control of all available possibilities could lead to empowerment. The concept of care of the self finds its echo in the work of numerous scholars analyzing power and the development of the individual. Numerous works present norms as tools to master in order to achieve empowerment. In this sense, teleological embeddedness within norms would create opportunities to reach emancipation. Nevertheless, serious concerns regarding the dangers inherent to embeddedness jeopardize the legitimacy of such practice. As embeddedness easily gives way to the cooption of emancipatory struggle, one can see how it could be understood as a powerful technology of power forfeiting its redirection. Consequently, one can understand the need to favour prefigurative means of empowerment where means and ends of empowerment are compatible in their essence and freely developed. In this sense, prefigurative emancipation enables the free actualization of the self and induces immanent redirection of power. The virtue of embeddedness within care of the self is thus to be understood as highly limited in function of its cooptive character and prefigurative means of emancipation are consequently to be conceived as more genuinely empowering.

42 Glen Coulthard, *Red Skins White Masks*, 158.

43 Glen Coulthard, *Red Skins White Masks*, 159.

Bibliography

Coulthard, Glen Sean. *Red Skin, White Masks: Rejecting the Colonial Politics of Recognition*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota, 2014. Print.

Ellis, Walter M. *Alcibiades*. London: Routledge, 1989. Print. 180.

Foucault, Michel, Frédéric Gros, François Ewald, and Alessandro Fontana. *The Hermeneutics of the Subject: Lectures at the Collège De France, 1981–1982*. New York: Palgrave-Macmillan, 2005. Print. 6.

Foucault, Michel. *The History of Sexuality*. New York: Pantheon, 1978. Print. 98.

Gallagher, Bob, and Alexander Wilson. Michel Foucault, an Interview: Sex, Power, and the Politics of Identity. Vol. 400. Los Angeles: Here Media, 1984. Print. *Advocate Magazine*, 164.

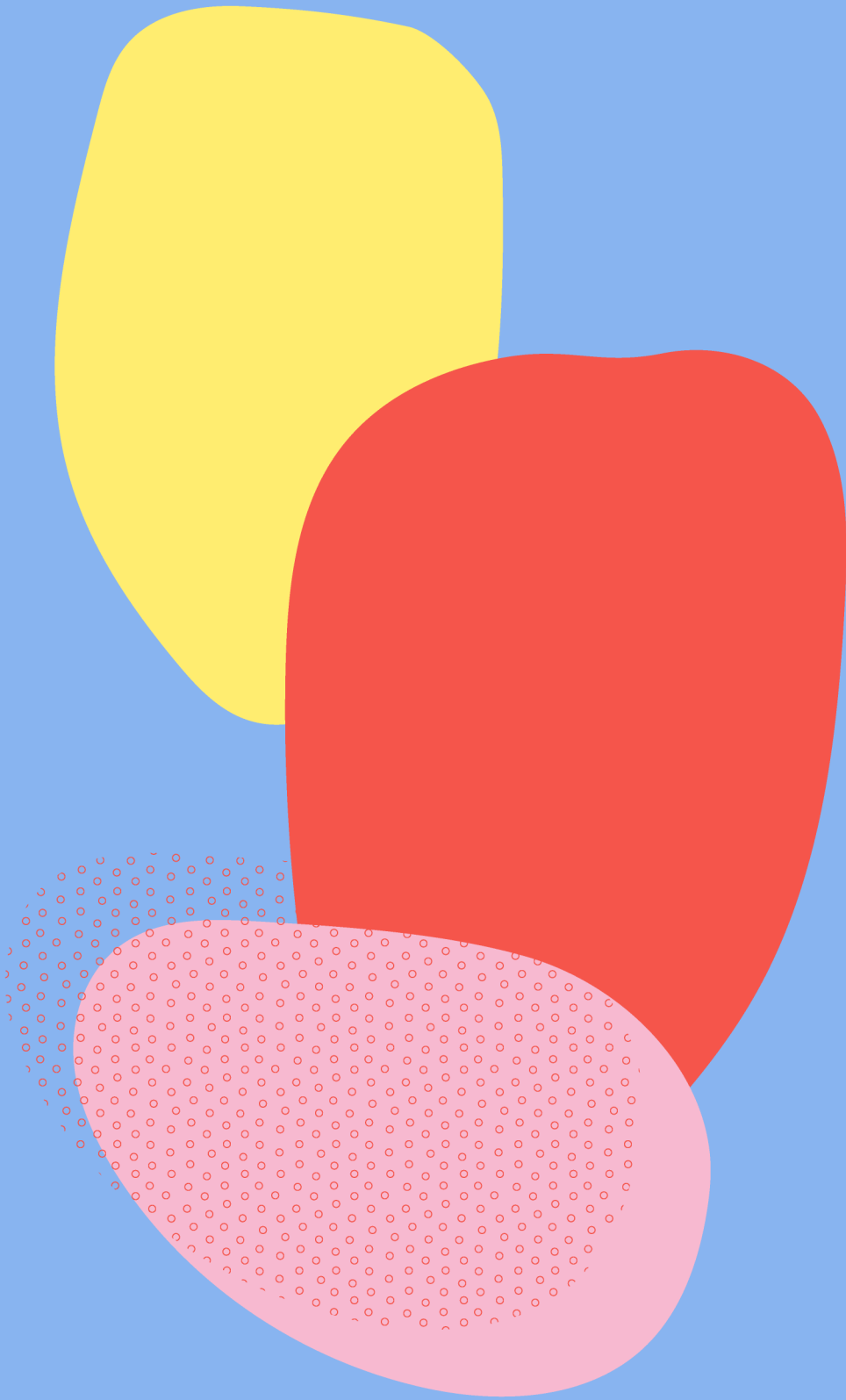
Halperin, David M. "Saint Foucault." *Saint Foucault* (1997): 3–14. Web. 96.

Heyes, Cressida J. *Self Transformations: Foucault, Ethics, and Normalized Bodies*. Oxford: Oxford UP, 2007. Print. 125.

Koopman, Colin. *Genealogy as Critique: Foucault and the Problems of Modernity*. Bloomington, Ind.: Indiana UP, 2013. Print. 208.

Mahmood, Saba. *Politics of Piety: The Islamic Revival and the Feminist Subject*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2005. Print. 162.

Turner, Dale A. *This Is Not a Peace Pipe: Towards a Critical Indigenous Philosophy*. Toronto: U of Toronto, 2006. Print. 43.



Jackson's Decision-Theoretic Consequentialism and the Demandingness Objection

Alexandra Sakellariou

Consequentialism is both a celebrated and controversial moral theory that believes right and wrong are a function of the consequences of an action. An action is right if and only if it has the best consequences of all possible alternatives, as assessed from an impartial standpoint (Shaw, 5). However, one of the main objections against this theory is that it is overly demanding. Critics say it is incompatible with maintaining deep, enduring devotion to one's personal projects and attachments. Therefore, it cannot be an acceptable moral theory. This paper explores the strength of the demandingness objection against consequentialism. Based on the work of Frank Jackson, I argue that we should adopt the notion of decision-theoretic consequentialism, which considers the subjective probability function of an action in evaluating its deontic status. I compare and contrast Jackson's decision-theoretic consequentialism against two opposing theories of consequentialism as given by Peter Railton and Alastair Norcross, in order to demonstrate the superiority of Jackson's approach. I then go on to evaluate the extent to which Jackson effectively responds to the demandingness objection and conclude that his approach serves to resolve the contentions of the objection. I conclude that understanding consequentialism through Jackson's approach— as decision-theoretic consequentialism—ensures the plausibility of this theory and its ability to serve as a leading moral theory in ethics.

Consequentialism is a moral theory that believes right and wrong are a function of the consequences of the action. It says an action is right if and only if it has the best consequences of all available alternatives, as assessed from an impartial standpoint (Shaw, 5). We are morally required to perform the action that has the best consequences from an impartial view. Consequentialism is a maximizing doctrine; it rejects the notion that there are degrees of rightness or wrongness (Shaw, 6). One of the main objections to consequentialism is that it is overly demanding. Critics say it is incompatible with maintaining deep, enduring devotion to one's personal projects and attachments. Therefore, it cannot be an acceptable moral theory. In this paper, I will explore this objection. I will explain a response given by Frank Jackson that suggests we adopt decision-theoretic consequentialism, which considers

the subjective probability function of an action in evaluating its deontic status. Furthermore, I will compare and contrast Jackson's response against two given by Railton and Norcross in order to demonstrate the promise of decision-theoretic consequentialism. Finally, I will evaluate the extent to which Jackson effectively responds to the demandingness objection. I will conclude we should adopt his understanding of consequentialism based on its resolve of the objection and resilience as a consequentialist theory.

The objection we are exploring states that consequentialism is overly demanding and does not leave an agent room to pursue personal projects and attachments. We will refer to this as the "demandingness objection". First, let us see how consequentialism prevents an agent from pursuing personal projects. Consequentialism morally requires us to perform the action with the best outcome. This seems to conflict with the intuitive idea of supererogatory actions, that some actions, while morally admirable, are optional (Timmons, 146). Consequentialism requires we always perform the action with the best outcome as assessed from an impartial view. But this requirement seems to place extreme demands on the agent. For example, one of your favourite things to do may be to play piano. Based on your partiality concerns, you have a reason to play piano in your spare time. But you could also spend that time volunteering at a local soup kitchen. According to consequentialism, the right action would be to volunteer at the soup kitchen. More good would be done from serving the homeless food, compared to you playing piano. In fact, in most everyday scenarios we can think of alternative things we could be doing that would have better outcomes. Consequentialism says we are wrong in pursuing something out of our partialist concerns because there is always something more beneficial we could be doing. Unless we are continually maximizing the good, we are doing something wrong. Consequentialism seems to turn supererogatory actions into morally required ones, conflicting with our intuitive moral beliefs.

The other part of the demandingness objection states that consequentialism does not allow agents to maintain personal relationships and obligations. Consequentialism requires actions be assessed from an impartial view to ensure everyone's welfare is weighted equally (Timmons, 148). This means we have to be "agent-neutral" so we do not treat anyone as more important (Nagel, 151). This, however, conflicts with our "agent-relative" nature where we instinctively give certain people special consideration (Nagel, 151). For instance, you may save enough money to send your averagely intelligent daughter to University. But, you could use the money to send her classmate to University whose parents cannot afford to. Generally, we would concede you have

enough reason to spend the money on your daughter, as she is your child. However, consequentialism requires that you do not give special consideration to her. You must consider your daughter and her classmate as equals. Since the classmate is more intelligent, consequentialism requires you to send her to University over your daughter. Through its agent-neutrality, consequentialism prevents the agent from giving special consideration to anyone regardless of his or her relation to you. It seems troubling that it does not regard agent-relative reasons. Since consequentialism conflicts with our intuitive moral beliefs, we have good reason to reject it as a plausible moral theory.

Frank Jackson offers decision-theoretic consequentialism as a way to resolve the demandingness objection. He explains that consequentialists assign a value function to the outcome of each possible action available to an agent (462). The value function determines which action is evaluated as the best of the alternatives and thus the right action (Jackson, 462). Instead of associating an action with one outcome, he says we need to consider a range of outcomes. Through decision-theoretic consequentialism, he explains, we must not only will consider the value of the possible outcome, but the probability of it as well (463). By multiplying the value function by the subjective probability function, the sum tells us the total value of the outcome. Consequentialism “enjoins the maximization of expected moral utility” (Jackson, 464). Jackson explains this is the best way to think about consequentialism because we generally do not know what the best consequences are. Most people interpret consequentialism as aiming for the best consequences “in the sense of trying to select the option with the best consequences”, even though they lack knowledge (Jackson, 168). Jackson explains that most of the time it is better selecting an option we know for sure does not have the best consequences than risking the alternatives (168). He writes “the right option is to select a ‘play safe’ one chosen in knowledge that it does not have the best consequences than in ignorance of which option does have the best consequences” (468).

Jackson offers an example in order to demonstrate how we can apply decision-theoretic consequentialism by considering the subjective probability against the value function of an outcome. He writes that;

[J]ill is a physician who has to decide on the correct treatment for her patient, John, who has a minor but not trivial skin complaint. She has three drugs to choose from: drug A, drug B, and drug C... Drug A is very likely to relieve the condition but will not completely cure it. One of the drugs B and C will completely cure the condition; the other though will kill the patient, and there is no way that she can tell which of the two is the perfect cure and which the killer drug. What should Jill do? (462–463).

He explains that it's easy to rank the possible outcomes; a complete cure is best, then a partial cure, and death is the worst (463). Consequentialism would have us choose the best outcome and, since the best outcome is a complete cure, we would have to choose between drug B or C. But decision-theoretic consequentialism asks us to go beyond a ranking and actually evaluate the probability of each possible outcome. We must multiply the value of each outcome by its subjective probability in order to see which action has the greatest sum and thus expected moral utility. Although drugs B and C offer the best potential outcome, the probability that either of those will produce the desired outcome is a fifty percent chance. However, we know for a fact that drug A will definitely offer a partial cure. The subjective probability is greater than that of the two other drugs. Therefore, by considering both the outcome and probability, we can conclude that choosing drug A has the greatest sum and is thus the right action to perform (Jackson, 463). Though it may not have the best consequences, it has the best probability outcome and thus expected moral utility.

Jackson goes on to explain that using subjective probability is what allows decision-theoretic consequentialism to resolve the demandingness objection. He asks us to consider a scenario. In this situation, a police squad needs to control a large crowd during a soccer game (Jackson, 473). They have a choice between two plans; the scatter plan and the sector plan. In the scatter plan, the squad must "roam through the crowd doing whatever good wherever he or she can among as widely distributed a group of spectators as possible" (Jackson, 473). Alternatively, in the sector plan, each member is given the responsibility of overseeing a single section of the crowd (Jackson, 473). They are allowed to help in another section during a chaotic situation, if the transfer of attention can be justified. Jackson explains that the sector plan is similar to how we live our daily lives (473). We focus on our friends, family and immediate circle. There are circumstances where we can neglect them if we can justifiably make a difference somewhere else. It is natural for us to devote our attention towards a small group, not to try and help everyone in the world equally. Jackson explains we need to apply a sector plan to consequentialist thought and this is where decision-theoretic consequentialism comes in (473).

Paying attention to our immediate circle and personal attachments is not wrong. Jackson argues that actions with a personal connection will have the highest probability of resulting in a good outcome. There are two reasons for this. First, it is because we are more motivated to perform actions we feel an attachment to (Jackson, 475). Because we have a personal stake in a specific outcome, we will be more motivated to ensure the outcome is good. We would not necessarily put the same effort

into something we did not feel attachment towards. Secondly, Jackson explains actions with a personal connection are superior because they give us more knowledge about the situation (475). If we are more aware of the details, chances are we will be more capable of ensuring the outcome will be good. If we are both more aware of the details and have reasons to perform it, the action will most likely have a high probability for a good outcome. Since it has a highly subjective probability, decision-theoretic consequentialism would require us to perform the action in line with our personal interests. In this way, decision-theoretic consequentialism does allow us to pursue our personal interests and attachments, effectively overcoming the demandingness objection.

In order to demonstrate the promise of Jackson's decision-theoretic consequentialism, let us compare it with the alternative responses Peter Railton and Alastair Norcross give to the demandingness objection. Railton proposes a form of consequentialism he refers to as objective consequentialism. Objective consequentialism does, in fact, state that the right action is the one that would have the best consequences from among all the alternatives (Railton, 113). However, Railton argues that sometimes actions with the best consequences are those that are in line with our personal interests and attachments. He explains an agent is not psychologically capable of not being affected by their partiality interests (111). We cannot separate nor rid ourselves from all of our personal attachments (Railton, 113). People need to pursue some partiality interests to avoid burning out or losing touch (Railton, 111). Though an action that is not in line with personal interests may seem like it has the best outcome, if it results in the agent burning out then it is not the best action. It is necessary, in some scenarios, for the agent to pursue their personal interests. Thus, objective consequentialism is supposedly compatible with one's personal projects and attachments.

While Railton's objective consequentialism may be able to resolve the conflict, there are two reasons why this theory does not work. First, as Jackson explains, objective consequentialism is unhelpful, as it does not give one a proper guide to action (466). The agent lacks enough information to know whether an action in line with personal interests will have the best consequences over one that does not. It is not clear when performing an action not inline with personal interests would result in the agent burning out or losing touch. In Jackson's drug example, the physician did not have enough information to know which course of action would have the best outcome (Jackson, 466). As Jackson concludes, "the fact that a course to action would have the best results is not itself a guide to action, for a guide to action must in some appropriate sense be present to the agent's mind" (466–467). Even if we can be satisfied with Railton's vague criterion of right action, ob-

jective consequentialism gives the wrong recommendations. Like Jackson's decision-theoretic consequentialism, objective consequentialism is maximizing, as it requires the agent to produce the most good. However, it only looks at the value of the outcome, which can give the wrong answers. When given the choice between drugs A, B, and C, we have concluded that, if not through decision-theoretic consequentialism then by our own intuition, we should choose drug A. After all, drug A may not completely cure the disease, but it will improve it. However, objective consequentialism would not agree with this. Since drug A would not in fact bring about the best outcomes, it cannot be the right option. Objective consequentialism would say we must choose drug B or C because one of those would in fact bring about the best outcome. We have already determined this is the wrong answer; therefore objective consequentialism is not a plausible moral theory.

Alastair Norcross, on the other hand, proposes scalar utilitarianism to resolve the demandingness problem. He explains that consequentialist theories are best understood as comparative (38). He believes that consequentialism is best seen as giving reasons, without evaluating their deontic status (38). Contrary to traditional consequentialism and decision-theoretical consequentialism, Norcross says rightness and wrongness should be regarded as a matter of degree (41). He reasons that we naturally think of rightness and wrongness in terms of degrees, so it is only expected we would apply the same to our moral theory (41). Norcross explains that consequentialism needs to be "treated as a theory of the goodness and badness of states of affairs and of the comparative value of actions, which rates alternative possible actions in comparison with each other" (43). He writes that "good" and "bad" are both scalar terms; some things are better than others and some things are worse than others (42). By acknowledging them as scalar concepts, consequentialism would be able to explain which alternatives are better and by how much (Norcross, 42). This would allow rightness and wrongness to be expressed as matters of degree. In this way, Norcross explains scalar consequentialism would not issue any demands (44). It simply suggests which actions are better to perform. Therefore, the demandingness objection is inapplicable.

However, by assigning comparative value to the actions, Norcross' scalar consequentialism does not fit the proper definition of a consequentialism theory. Unlike decision-theoretic consequentialism, scalar consequentialism is not a maximizing theory at all. Recall, one of the key features of consequentialism is that it is maximizing. Since Norcross emphasizes that scalar consequentialism does not make any demands on the agent to do one action over another—thereby bypassing the demandingness objection because no one is under obligation to

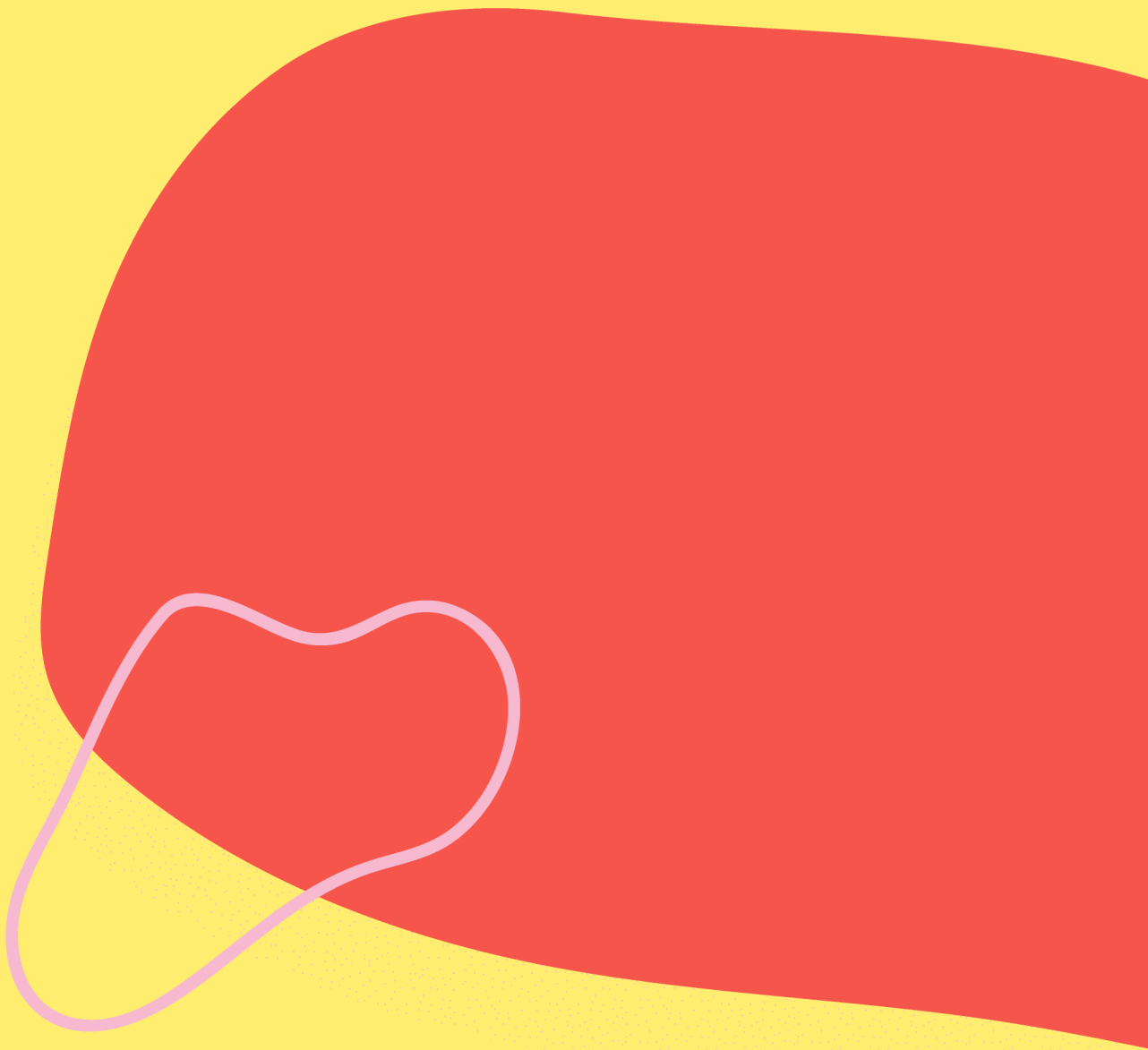
ignore their partiality interests—it does not require the agent to maximize the good. If it does not require the agent to maximize the good, then it is not a consequentialist theory at all. Furthermore, a moral theory cannot be of a merely suggestive nature. It seems to defeat the purpose of having a moral theory if an agent is not required to do what is deemed the right action. Scalar consequentialism is not a promising theory because it cannot meet the basic standards of consequentialism and, arguably, even the standards of an adequate moral theory. Scalar consequentialism's ability to bypass the demandingness objection is irrelevant because it is not a coherent consequentialist theory.

I will now provide an overall evaluation of how well Jackson's decision-theoretic consequentialism responds to the demandingness objection and explain why we should adopt it. First, we have already seen how decision-theoretic consequentialism is able to allow for both agent-neutral and agent-relative perspectives. When we assign a value function to an action, it calls for the impartial perspective, or agent-neutral view, that is essential to consequentialism. By introducing the subjective probability function it also allows for an agent-relative perspective, as the probability of an action will vary between persons. Decision-theoretic consequentialism has demonstrated to be compatible with the agent-relative, partialist interests that influence our everyday lives and which is missing from traditional consequentialism. This allows a version of consequentialism to be compatible with our personal projects and attachments. We have seen how promising this concept is in comparison to the alternative responses of Railton and Norcross. It gives us a distinctive guide to evaluate actions by and its answers are in line with our moral intuitions, unlike objective consequentialism. Jackson's response is also not of a suggestive nature as it allows us to assign deontic concepts to an action, unlike scalar consequentialism.

Furthermore, decision-theoretic consequentialism meets the three fundamental characteristics of a consequentialist theory. First, it allows for an action to be assessed from an impartial standpoint, as we have already discussed. Secondly, as previously mentioned, decision-theoretic consequentialism is a maximizing theory. It allows for the determination of the right action based on the best outcome and morally requires the agent to perform that right action. Finally, decision-theoretic consequentialism is teleological, meaning the action is evaluated based on its outcomes. Both the value function and subjective probability functions are based on the possible outcome of the action. Thus, the expected moral utility has been determined based on the possible outcome of the action. It meets the three key features of consequentialism. Along with its previously discussed features, I conclude there is no reasonable motive to reject Jacksons' decision-theoretic consequen-

tialism. It is plausible as a consequentialist theory in itself and is able to resolve the demandingness objection. I believe we should adopt this understanding of consequentialism in order to make consequentialism a more realistic, explanatory moral theory.

In conclusion, we have explored the criticism that consequentialism is overly demanding and is not compatible with deep, enduring devotion to personal projects and attachments. We can now understand how Jackson's decision-theoretic consequentialism serves as a response to resolve the demandingness theory. Furthermore, we can see the promise of Jackson's proposal in comparison to the responses proposed by both Railton and Norcross. Finally, we are now able to understand the potential of decision-theoretic consequentialism as a plausible, explanatory moral theory and the reasons behind why we should adopt this understanding of consequentialism. If we want to overcome the demandingness objection and make consequentialism a realistic, explanatory moral theory then we should adopt Jackson's decision-theoretic consequentialism. Unless we do, the demandingness objection will still hold consequentialism back from its full potential as the most conceivable moral theory.





FRAGMENTS

McGill Undergraduate Journal of Philosophy

Volume 30 2016