Two Tendencies
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When I consider my own reasons for doing philosophy, and also the set of philosophers that I find attractive and whose thoughts I wish to incorporate into my own, there seems to me a sort of dualism that I have not yet integrated. This document outlines the two tendencies, which thinkers I associate with which, and how they incline me to do philosophy.

Tendency 1: Basically Pleasant Bureaucrat

The first tendency is that which is most visible in my published work. Here the thought is that philosophy is a sort of public service work, a small part of the greater enterprise of generating knowledge that can be put to use in bettering our estate. The work is essentially service orientated (Dotson 2015) or Mohist in nature (Johnston 2010) — to work in this tendency one must be trying to find what combination of beliefs, technologies, and social practices will best foster flourishing (including, of course, refining the idea of "flourishing"). At a high level this will involve identifying and resolving social problems. These are cases wherein one finds "the failure of an organised social group to realise its group ideals, through the inability to adapt certain desired lines of action to conditions of life" (Du Bois 1898, 3). Upon finding these one must work out what needs to change — the ideals, the actions, the conditions of life, etc — and work out how these changes may be effected. However it turns out that doing this effectively requires a huge division of labour and so most of the time one will not work at that high level of abstraction, but rather on more specific technical puzzles. None the less, the essence of this tendency is to commit to this project of perpetual collaborative amelioration.

Many examples of this sort of work can be drawn from contemporary epistemology or philosophy of science. For instance we find philosophers pointing out that established methods of data aggregation are leading to faulty analyses (Roussos *et al* 2021, Ward 2022), that dogmas in statistics could lead to us ignoring relevant information (Gandenberger 2017), or that psychometric methods can be applied to show various testing regimes unfair (Heesen & Romeijn 2022). In all these cases one finds a group of scientists trying to achieve a task that they feel will ultimately rebound to the social good (so far as one believes good science will do this) and finding that their method of going about this is tripping them up. Work need not be so directly applied to count as valuable in this tendency — for instance philosophical work which tackles the use of game theory in theoretical ecology (Huttegger & Zollman 2013), the Price equation in social evolutionary theory (Birch 2017), or principles of causal inference quite broadly (Kinney 2021) can all count in despite their high level of generality. There is work to be done for a philosopher whose primary task is ameliorative at many levels of abstraction simply because wherever we go we fail and we falter and assistance will always be needed. That is not to say that these particular philosophers were consciously working in this tendency, which I take to be more of a commitment than merely having once produced a paper of a certain sort. But just to note that there is lots of work that is familiar and legible within contemporary professional philosophy which would be encouraged by one who wished to work in this tendency.

And the does not just go for technical work adjacent to the sciences. Plenty of work in ethics, from high level social engineering (e.g. Easwaran 2021, Van Basshuysen 2021) to reflections on the intimate struggles of daily life (e.g. Khader 2018, Davis 2019, ch.13) would fit comfortably in this tendency too. Likewise legal regimes (e.g. Crenshaw 1991, Beaton 2020, Ross 2021), core concepts of policy analysis (e.g. Burri 2021, Côté & Steuwer 2022, Thoma 2022), and key social institutions (e.g. Halliday 2018) can all be addressed by work in this mode. After all here too we can perfectly well identify social problems and propose means for their resolution, even if not always with quite the same level of precision. While specialisation, willingness to reach out across disciplines, and division of labour are required; these need not be deployed just for the sciences.

So this tendency works to produce a kind of well ordered science (Kitcher 2011). That is to say, through the work of this tendency our collective inquiry is adapted to the mediate aim of amelioration (Bright 2018). And the work goes on, for as our needs change so too we may continually update our understanding of what social problems need addressing and how inquiry may contribute to this (Currie 2019). What then does it take to work in this vein?

The Requirements

The requirements this places on me are various. First, it requires a certain sublimation of the individual to the greater purpose of the group, the ultimate success of which can be dizzyingly uncertain (Weber 1958 — I wrote about the comparison to philosophy here). The particular papers I personally will write can only ever be a tiny part of this broad project, and their impact (if any at all) is diffused and hard to track — the fulfilment of the project comes in the far downstream results of applied technical and social wisdom, and this is the work of generations that I may never see. In this regard philosophy in this tendency shares with many others of the projects that can make a life valuable (Scheffler 2013, Calhoun 2018). The is rendered inevitable by the Kuhnian division of labour in inquiry wherein any particular project is not that interesting and only gains its interest from the success of the broader paradigm it is embedded within. Or as Carnap more poetically put it:

> "If we allot to the individual in philosophical work as in the special sciences only a particular task, then we can look with more confidence into the future: in slow careful construction insight after insight will be won. Each collaborator contributes only what he can endorse and justify before the whole body of his co-workers. Thus stone will be carefully added to stone and a safe building will be erected at which each following generation can continue to work (Carnap 1967 xvi)"

Our life work amounts to adding a few bricks, and the task needs to be taken up by future generations. Philosophy conceived of as la Sagrada Família. So under this conception of philosophy one seeks to advance a project which can only be achieved by a group whose full cooperation cannot be guaranteed since it extends into the indefinite future. All this induces what might be called alienation from the products of my own labour that I must accept — inquiry may well go better if what I produce not really reflect my inner convictions, and under those conditions I owe it to the group to orient my behaviour around its needs (Mayo-Wilson *et al* 2011, Fleisher 2018, Dang & Bright 2021, Mayo-Wilson & Saraf ms).

A second requirement it places upon me is that of some degree of specialised technical expertise. Even if one's contribution to this project as a philosopher is working in synthetic mode, working at a high level of abstraction by bringing together contributions from multiple areas not normally in communication and showing how they can fruitfully combine into an interesting perspective (Schliesser 2019), one will still need extensive technical knowledge. This because, first, you must understand the contributions of the first order workers whose results you are synthesising, and second, in order to actually render this contribution a viable part of the joint work of science one must be credible to scientific audiences. Philosophers can be pessimistic about such interactions, but it is demonstrably possible for philosophers to contribute to the joint enterprise of science in this way (Pradeau *et al* 2021) But when success cases are examined they turn out to involve the philosopher(s) in question having evident in depth knowledge of the first order science they wished to modify or link up with another field (Laplane *et al* 2019).

It might be thought this could be avoided if one focussed on issues of interpersonal ethics - these, typically touching on our every day lives with all their tangles and concerns, do not on their face require technical knowledge. After all, everyone manages to muddle through life, and if it required a PhD to do so then the species should have been extinct before it had time to invent the university. However, this appearance is deceptive. For one thing it is not enough to make a contribution that one writes about problems of real concern — one must do so in a way that has some added value to our attempts to deal with the problems of life. For that one will need knowledge not typically available; we do not need philosophers to repeat common sense to us. This will very often be technical knowledge; be it of literary theory, sociology, biology, or even just advanced ethical theory. In any case it will be something which specialisation has afforded you.

And for another thing many of the problems of our time concern new technologies. For instance, something as down-to-earth as the ethics of sharing on social media turns out to depend on how people interpret the assertive status of a share (see. Rini 2017), and that is quite complex socio-technical question whose answer we are only just making headway on (Lewandowsky *et al* 2020). It is thus no wonder that so much ethics in the vein of this tendency consists of reasoning about

how to deal with new technologies in medicine (e.g. Genin & Grote 2021, Birch *et al* 2022, Evans *et al* 2022), the workplace (e.g. Hitzig, Hu & Viljoen 2019, Creel & Hellman 2022, Vredenburgh 2022) and other spheres of life (e.g. Thau 2020, Morrow et al 2020, Lee 2021). It is inevitability within this tendency that the philosopher becomes more specialised, more niche.

Finally one needs a certain mindset, one that takes the world's problems to be solvable by intelligently performed collective action, and one that is dedicated to contributing to such solutions even when the task is difficult and the rewards far from apparent. That such problems are solvable and ought be solved is more or less the entire orientation of this tendency. That they may well be difficult comes from the inevitability of technical specialised expertise being required of the philosopher on this conception, and that they may not be apparently rewarding comes from the requirement that one accept alienating labour with uncertain chance of success.

Stoicism is a near ideal philosophical tool for inculcating and encouraging this habit. It valorises and provides intellectual tools for cultivating a space of inner strength from which one can assiduously make rational judgements and guide one's self towards better choices (Hadot 1998). Its classic works are eminently readable and can provide consolation and guidance during the inevitable down periods alienation induces (see e.g. Hammond 2006 or Dobbin 2008). Contrary to stereotype it does not endorse or require being unfeeling (Graver 2008) but it does encourage emotional attitudes conducive to harmonious cooperation (Táíwò 2020). To work in this tendency is to commit to being a kind of scholar activist, but one who carries this out via a dedication to finding and disseminating the truth (Bright 2022). Stoicism is a good foundation for the mental discipline this requires of participants in the tendency.

The Presuppositions

I thus require of myself when in this mode that I perform alienated labour, or at least sublimate my beliefs and desires to that of the inquiring group. That I learn a specialised skill in order to most effectively contribute to the group project. And that I take on a Stoic inner discipline that allows me to carry out the above tasks while retaining sufficient mental health to carry on. But in addition to making such personal demands there are philosophical presuppositions that underpin this tendency for me.

The first of these is the unity of science thesis (Carnap 2013), as least under my own idiosyncratic interpretation. What is important is the possibility of transferring insights across different sorts of inquiry and practical scenario. This goes even for transferring support between normative and descriptive areas of inquiry (Williamson 2019), though of course one must be cautious (Restall & Russell 2010). But with all due caution maintained, the fact is that if the world were so dappled that we simply could not use our science to reliably guide policy, or inquiry in one field (such as philosophy!) to improve another, then there would simply be no basis for any of the activity that characterises this tendency. We have experience of the difficulties of transferring lessons between zones of application (see Cartwright 2012). These are themselves the sort of thing that be discovered and discussed within the sphere of unified science — that is to say, we can study them by a wide variety of methods and transfer lessons about them between situations.

The question then becomes how this knowledge transfer to be achieved. Two elements are of especial interest to the philosopher. First, this is a relatively under-explored realm for a theory of induction or confirmation to contribute. Understanding how well confirmed something is in light of our total evidence is theoretically a corner stone of formal theories of induction (Carnap 1947, Good 1966). Even if one finds induction distasteful there are analogue projects about how hypotheses enjoy other epistemic virtues besides that of being well confirmed (e.g. Genin 2022). Yet with very few exceptions (e.g. de Jong 2019) there seems to be little which attempts to show how one can apply such theories to a body of evidence available for some applied problem. What exists is largely in statistics and hence by its nature only includes a subset of our total evidence for many problems wherein qualitative evidence is also available. But the whole purpose of this tendency is to work out how to bring to bear our total scientific knowledge upon our social problems. An open problem in facilitating knowledge transfer is thus how to genuinely survey our total evidence and decide what policy relevant hypotheses it favours. That something like this, or at least various approximations to it, is or are possible and desirable is a presupposition, and one that seems generally borne out by the success of statistics as a discipline.

Second knowledge transfer is achieved and aided by conceptual clarification. Exploring how it is concepts in one area relate to those in another is vital for helping us transfer results and ideas between disciplines. What is more, it is not a given that our concepts will in fact be adequate to our purposes, and hence we often encounter problems that require a "conceptual response" from us (Gyekye 1988, 3). So philosophers in this tendency (myself included, e.g. Bright *et al* 2016) are often engaged in conceptual development to explicate key ideas and facilitate such understanding transfer. A sufficiently flexible theory of concepts is hence necessary to underpin this (Carnap 1950, Leitgeb 2013, Dutilh-Novaes 2020). And just as we create so may we destroy. It is quite possible that proper conceptual analysis reveals cases where ideas do not really play a useful role, and either actively hindering knowledge (McSweeney 2022), ethically pernicious (Bright 2017) or wheels spinning without a purpose (Carnap 2021), concerned with things "undiscovered and undiscoverable" (Du Bois 2000, 42). In these cases our task consists of critique showing why we ought and how we may go on without troublesome conceptual baggage.

The unity of science presupposed then is the idea that it is at least possible that inquiry from all areas may turn out to be relevant to the problems that face us in life. Hence we are all contributing to a shared project, and may legitimately transfer ideas between spheres. To this end we presuppose that our total evidence will tend to support policy relevance hypotheses to a given degree, or at least permit comparisons. And we try to analyse and develop concepts that will aid in this and set aside notions that stand in our way. The unity of science is in the final analysis something we create as much as we presuppose.

The second presupposition is that of a particular political form. For this tendency to be doing work of value we must presuppose a society that can intelligently make use of information. And I share the opinion that the proper use of information requires democracy. It is not just that democracy is theoretically optimal at epistemic tasks, though it is (Landemore 2012, Goodin & Spiekerman 2018, Du Bois 2021). But even bare minimum decent government requires democratic rule for proper information use (Luxemburg 1961 §2, Sen 2001, Lewis 2013, 19; Khaldun 2015, ch.3). This tendency is hence intimately tied to democratic government.

How exactly we arrange ourselves to take advantage of this is a matter of reasonable disagreement. Of course not just any democracy will do - for instance parliamentary democracies have shown themselves highly susceptible to elite capture (Táíwò 2022b), in a manner which is explicable in light of the incentives for controlling and deploying information that they grant political insiders (Downs 1957). And indeed the historical experience of my own country's parliamentary democracy has largely been one of an incompetent political elite (see e.g. Taylor 1957) using parliamentary mechanisms to co-opt or defeat democratising movements (see e.g. Milliband 1972, Hill 2020). And the parliamentary betrayal of democracy is hardly a uniquely British phenomenon (e.g. Du Bois 2017, ch.16). I hence have some sympathy for democratic movements that stress extra parliamentary people's councils or movement democracy (e.g. Luxemburg 1985, Muldoon 2020, DuFord 2022), or sortition based methods of selecting leaders (James 1956, Guerrero 2014). In any case, we can learn the lessons of global history wherein people have for a long time been experimenting with social forms (Graeber & Wengrow 2021) and types of democracy in particular (e.g. Wiredu 1995, Busia 2018).

Of course, saliently, we do not actually live in a democracy of the requisite sort. This is where this tendency comes closest to classical critical theory in its orientation (see especially Horkheimer 1972). By its own lights the full realisation and achievement of reason cannot be a purely theoretical affair, but must involve concrete changes in the material organisation of society. We do not fool ourselves into thinking tyranny flees before the might of argument — society can be arranged to systematically cut some people off from sources of knowledge (e.g. Du Bois 2013, Kinney & Bright 2021, Wu forthcoming). These unjust structures can be self-reinforcing and stable for long periods of time (e.g. Roemer 1982 ch.2, Mills 1997, Bright *et al* forthcoming) and do not necessarily require explicit endorsement to persist as such (Táíwò 2018). Changing to a more democratic mode of social-political life would often require drastic changes to our society's economic foundations (Wills 2018, Cicerchia 2022). This tendency thus requires more than just good ideas to fulfil its mission (Dotson & Sertler 2021); an activist component is a natural accompaniment. That some properly democratic governmental form is achievable and worth achieving is another presupposition of this tendency.

The final presupposition that I wish to highlight is that it is possible to sustain the individual level motivation required for this project. Of course, I do not think it is difficult to sustain the motivation to be an academic philosopher per se - it's an indoor job with no heavy lifting and the pay is alright as far as these things go. But it is easy to be an academic philosopher, even one apparently contributing to this project, while in fact having given in to cynicism and no longer really upholding the mission of this tendency. That is because whether one is doing what one thinks is best for the social mission or what one thinks is best for one's own career can be very difficult to distinguish observationally, even though they in fact have very different behavioural consequences. The information that one is sincere is, in some sense, private - and what seem like epistemically self-sacrificial behaviours can be, as noted above, required for workers in this tendency. I hence presuppose that one can induce in people an inner conviction that this project is worth carrying out that can motivate and sustain action even where external incentives cannot be wielded with any great precision.

The theory that I presently adopt to support this is essentially the classic enlightenment view of sentimentalism (Frazer 2010), itself akin to strains of classical Confucianism (van Norden 2008). The key idea here is twofold. First, we can identify the basis of our moral judgements through the analysis of our emotional states (Schlick 1939, Prinz 2007, Smith 2010) — and these emotional states are by their nature motivating, compelling action (Schliesser 2017, ch.4). Indeed it is in some sense unsurprising that these emotional states are motivating, because the deep connection between how we feel, how we evaluate, and how we act is reflected in our moral talk (Hare 1951) and colours our whole perception of the world (Carnap 2021 §7, Peterson & Samuel 2021). Second, these emotional states are malleable. Through art (Du Bois 1926, Schiller 2016) and ritual (Hutton 2014, ch.19) we can be educated into the requisite sympathy and habits of perspective taking necessary for proper moral motivation (de Grouchy 2019). This works because artistic and ritually charged activities tap into, and have the power to redirect, the same basic emotional drives that guide our moral behaviour (Santayana 1955, Whitehouse & Kavanagh 2022). Sentimentalism thus provides a basis for thinking we can motivate an inner conviction required for sincere acton so long as we can appropriately direct our own emotional energies.

If I wish to promote this tendency in myself and others then I ought, in essence, attempt to beautify it, make it appear awe inspiring. This might emotionally charged rituals involve paying honour to martyrs for this sort of philosophy (e.g. Luxemburg 1919), or it might involve taking time to heed works of beauty that themselves promote empathy for workers in this vein. For my part I am always inspired by Condorcet's last written words:

> And how admirably calculated is this view of the human race, emancipated from its chains, released alike from the dominion of chance, as well as from that of the enemies of its progress, and advancing with a firm and indeviate step in the paths of truth, to console the philosopher lamenting the errors, the flagrant acts of injustice, the crimes with which the earth is still polluted? It is the contemplation of this prospect that rewards him for all his efforts to assist the progress of reason and the establishment of liberty. He dares to regard these efforts as a part of the eternal chain of the destiny of mankind; and in this persuasion he finds the true delight of virtue, the pleasure of having performed a durable service, which no vicissitude will ever destroy in a fatal operation calculated to restore the reign of prejudice and slavery. This sentiment is the asylum into which he retires, and to which the memory of his persecutors cannot follow him: he unites himself in imagination with man restored to his rights, delivered from oppression, and proceeding with rapid strides in the path of happiness; he forgets his own misfortunes while his thoughts are thus employed; he lives no longer to adversity, calumny and malice, but becomes the associate of these wiser and more fortunate beings whose enviable condition he so earnestly contributed to produce. (Lukes & Urbinati 2012)

They convey both the promise of generational progress inherent to this tendency, and also the possibility of using empathetic identification with those benefited by our efforts to come to share in their joy. What is more there is something stoic in his retreat to an inner citadel, further bolstering my faith in the practices of mental discipline I try to adopt.

We now have a picture of the first tendency. Here my basic drive is to the betterment of sentient beings' condition, with myself and other intelligentsia workers contributing to this by identifying social problems and making information pertinent to their resolution available to the demos. Working in this tendency requires sublimating individual interests and beliefs to this greater goal, taking time to develop technical skills necessary for interdisciplinary collaboration, and the mental discipline necessary to accept these tasks even where they are contrary to my own inclinations. I presupposes a world wherein our collective intellectual efforts could be brought to bear on any of our social problems, given time and ingenuity. A world where we make use of information intelligently, which its to say democratically — and I must prepared to fight to achieve that world. And even where we cannot directly reward all the behaviour that is required, I assume the love of fellow creatures and empathy for their avoidable sufferings can motivate intellectual efforts that are, if not heroic, then dedicated, conscientious, and humane in the best sense of the term.

Tendency 2: Sexy Murder Poet

The second tendency is centrally concerned with a wholly different sort of problem, and is of its nature far less legible in contemporary philosophy. The central goal of this tendency is transcending the self, or overcoming the barriers to my full integration in the world. The great difficulty of explaining this tendency is that I think that in order for it to be comprehensible one must have felt a certain sort of puzzlement, and there is no particular reason to think it will strike everybody. Even if it global still perhaps it does not strike everybody in the same way. None the less, I shall try to give an indication of the sort of philosophical work it inspires.

First, I think there is the project to try and develop in detail the idea of a perspective, a particular vantage point upon the world. For the world as I experience it has a centre. Not an objective centre (which if it existed may well be nowhere near me), but a location from which it seems all else is "outward". For me this centre is in some sense my entire world; I do not doubt that there are things outward and that I may interact with them in all sorts of interesting ways, but it seems they will always be outward, there will always be mediated by whatever means are used to connect inner and outer.

Making sense of this idea, including in order to debunk it, occupies much philosophical attention. But when I am working from within this tendency the fact of this centre and its distinction from the outer seems to me so certain that no debunking could ever be as well established as the datum of all my life's experience. And once such a centre point is accepted then it seems to me pertinent for the metaphysics of time (Augustine 1993 ch.11, Hare 2009), the epistemology of inference (Wiredu 1973, 1975; Kvanig 2014, de Canson ms) and even being and truth (Wittgenstein 1921, §5.62-5.641; Wiredu 1980 chs.7-8; Thomasson 2020 ch.6 §3). Which is to say, its consequences are not limited to some special sphere, but there is cross over to the concerns of the other tendency. Were it not for this I might happily persist in a dualistic fashion.

But there is a complication to all this. The character of the world, the whole mode under which the centre interacts with the outer, is malleable. This is not a fixed and independent world in which I am an epiphenomenon. It would be bad faith (in the technical sense of de Beauvoir 2015) for me to simply work on characterising this zone and charting out the consequences of that characterisation. There is a very important sense in which I can change it, in which the world is subject to my will (here I have some sympathy with Schopenhauer 2012). And it seems to me there is a particular mode of experience for which I ought strive. This has been characterised as "pure experience" in philosophical-meditative traditions (e.g. Nishida 1992) - it represents the best we can do to characterise experience on its own terms, to approximate the raw data pre processed by the centre. And those who have had pure experience have tended to characterise it as a higher, or at least markedly different, state of consciousness (Whiteley 2022 §4), and one which reveals the character of everyday experience as delusive (a good expression of this found in *(It appears crooked, that half-submerged)* in Novick 2023).

Pure experience eliminates the sense of boundary between inner and outer (Nishida 1992, ch.8). Those who have achieved it report that there is some perspective from which it seems that "Heaven and earth are born together with me, and the ten thousand things and I are one" (Ziporyn 2020, 17). At a first approximation the point of this tendency then is just this: I want, very much, for my world to be characterised by such unity, for the centre to encompass the whole.

The Requirements

Achieving pure experience requires identifying the causes of one's various modes of interaction with the world and shifting those causes until they generate the outcome in question (Śāntideva 1998, ch.9). Since some of what gets in the way of pure experience is bad theory there is work here for argumentative philosophy. It is important to realise that there is something conventional and illusionary about how things at first glance appear separate and distinct from us, and philosophical argument can achieve that (e.g. Garfield 1995, Priest 2014, Della Rocca 2020) as well as draw out consequences of these realisations (e.g. Harrop 2022). But there is an additional requirement on me if I am to take part in this tendency, and that is one of skilful introspection.

For there is something peculiar and specific to be observed and intervened upon here. Life and my activities therein are typically experienced as interaction between the centre and its outer. What exceptions there are take place only in rare moments of genuinely unselfconscious play (which alone make ordinary life bearable - Schlick 1927). Here one is immersed in the outward. But what is needed here is distinct from either; for, at least sometimes, the causal forces I must intervene on lie in the operations performed by the centre itself. To identify such cases I must be skilled at seeing what is contributed to experience by the experiencer, and introspection is one of the best tools we have for this. This turns out to be no easy task and there are plenty of tempting mistakes I have made along the way. Taking the guidance of experts who have attempted this and identified pitfalls (e.g. Husserl 2017 §1 ch.2) is vital to anyone who would develop the pertinent skillset. Even here, masters of the craft like Descartes in his *Meditations* (1641) were tempted into fallacious inferences re the existence of the self. Introspective acuity must be carefully cultivated.

Here are two common factors I have identified in the guidance of past experts in how to cultivate acuity. They have thus far been verified in my own experience. First, there is an element of personalism or relativity here. Different techniques are differentially effective for different people. The pertinence of this is that one cannot simply follow the advice of past experts in a naive or cookbook esque fashion. One must experiment and adapt practices to suit your own sensibilities. Second, at a high enough level of abstraction all have involved solitary meditative practices. Some ability to render striking and focus upon one's inner world is needed.

It is through solitary encounters with nature that I am best able to withdraw inwards and investigate what I find therein. I have read other philosophers report a similar experience (e.g. Cooper 2012, Wu Yubi 2013) but I am not fully satisfied with their explanations for this fact. My present best guess as to why this is effective is twofold, with one mundane and one somewhat deeper reason behind this. The mundane reason (noted in Yacob 1974) is the presence of less distraction; there is simply less noise, less light, somewhat less malodorous substances, in the natural as opposed to urban environment. This is why Bashō makes the otherwise puzzling choice of rendering restfulness a pervasive theme in a travelogue. As he penetrates the deep interior his environment no longer forces itself upon him, here he may simply exist— "making the coolness / my abode, here I lie / completely at ease" (Bashō 1996, 95). In that more restful state, no longer harried or made anxious by the simple act of being, one may come to better understand oneself.

The deeper reason is that what seems natural (even where this is deceptive) gives less appearance of artificiality, renders more obvious the role of myself as centre in grafting meaning upon it. Take, for instance, *Under The Sea-Wind*'s conclusion. A reflection on the life cycle of eels suddenly breaks into the following:

> "And as the eels lay offshore in the March sea, waiting for the time when they should enter the waters of the land, the sea, too, lay restless, awaiting the time when once more it should encroach upon the coastal plain, and deep up the sides of the foothills, and lap at the bases of the mountain ranges. As the waiting of the eels off the mouth of the bay was only an interlude in a long life filled with constant change, so the relation of sea and coast and mountain ranges was that of a moment in geologic time. For once more the mountains would be worn away by the endless erosion of water and carried in silt to the sea, and once more all the coast would be water again, and the places of its cities and towns would belong to the sea (Carson 2007, 162)"

Carson's reflection is somehow both necessary yet entirely idiosyncratic. The eel's lifecycle, the vista of the shore, no wise forced that particular conclusion on Carson. But her keen observations of the natural world none the less made this the natural upshot of her studies.

One sees this even more subtly in Sei Shōnagon, in her many curt descriptions of pleasing things. For instance take:

> A dilapidated house with a garden overgrown with trailing weeds and knee-deep in wormwood, flooded with moonlight from a brilliant rising moon. The moonlight that seeps in through cracks in the decaying boards of such a house. The sound of wind, as long as it isn't fierce. (Sei Shōnagon 2006)

The beauty in the moment she captured lies precisely in the fact that as nature reclaims this place one has considerable freedom in how one responds to it. There is an obvious possibility of melancholy inherent to the scene. But providing there is not something so sensorily overwhelming as a heavy wind to distract her creative intellect is able to make blissful serenity of it.

All this is to say that observing the natural world renders it inevitable that one's own turn of mind asserts itself. Given a canvas on which to paint the mind will go to work, and by observing how exactly it gives meaning to a world without why one learns important facts about its native operations. This is, I take it, very similar in spirit to Schiller's theory about the educative function of aesthetics (Schiller 2016). One gets a sense of the mind's constitution and capabilities by deploying its free hand in giving principles and judgements unto itself in the aesthetic sphere.

In addition to introspective acuity I must also practice benevolence. It might seem odd for a moral virtue to be required for a philosophical perspective, but in this case it is essential. Recall that the goal is to live within pure experience, to transcend inner and outer, and experience the most valuable states of consciousness. The Mahāyāna are quite right to emphasise that achieving this requires a universal compassion (Garfield 1995 ch.24, Śāntideva 1998, Hanh 2020); for to do any otherwise would be to draw a distinction between self and other and prioritise self. But such a distinction is precisely antithetical to attaining pure experience. As such a kind of benevolence is not just a logical consequence but a practical necessity for this tendency.

This benevolence must consist in giving to each just that which is good from its perspective. There is a faith in the possibility of harmony here, and a faith that we could with effort render ourselves to be the kind of agents who promote that harmony. This shall be discussed below. But taking it on board for now, the point is that the benevolence cannot consist in a certain fixed vision of what is good and attempts to supply that to all and sundry. This too divides self from other and prioritises self, even if the self thus prioritised works tirelessly for the good of others as they see it. The point is just: this requires a distinctive perspective, a good seen by the self, which is being favoured over that of others. Rather, the benevolence this tendency must embody is that which embraces a kind of relativism (Locke 1991, ch.3, Herder 2002, 374-379, Wong 2009), equalises all things by giving to each perspective that which is good for and from it (Ziporyn 2020, ch. 3). Perhaps best embodied by the narrator in Camus' novel *The Plague* (1947), achieving this sort of benevolence would not involving seeing oneself as having a duty to do good so much as simply seeing loving kindness as the only response available in this world. For advancing the good of each, tending to their suffering, simply seems like the only response to the world. The doctor no longer experiences himself as having an independent centre of value that he must prioritise. The world simply calls out for the harmonising of its perspectives; or, rather, each perspective calls out to make its contribution to the great harmony.

However, caution is called for even in benevolence. There is danger even here, for until one has reached the stage of Camus' doctor it is inevitable that in deciding even to be benevolent in this way one must exercise the will (Murray & Buchak 2019). But this too is a force of separation, since it requires a notion of a world discordant with one's sense of how it ought to be. And where before I emphasised the moral emotions as a guide to life, when working in this tendency I am struck far more by how what guides my volition can be deceptive (e.g. Webster 2021), how moral commitments can become snares alienating us from others (Venkatesh 2022), and how the highest ideals that moved so many can be founded on quicksand (e.g. Cassirer 1947). So benevolence, containing as it does the seeds of will and volition, must be checked in its turn.

The tradition, fortunately, provides tools for this too. And here lies the final requirement of me. In addition to cultivating both introspective acuity and benevolence, I must also cultivate dispassion. There is a way of giving the will its due while understanding it as passive (Amo 2020). And so too there is an ethical ideal which cultivates distance even while allowing for action (Carey 2018, Voorhoeve 2022). Even more fortunately, the methods of achieving this dispassion or tranquility are not dissimilar from those which aid in cultivating introspective acuity. It thus seems possible to develop all those qualities required of me in order to philosophise within this tendency.

The Presuppositions

If that is what I must make of myself to carry through this tendency, what then is presupposed? Most immediately it presupposes that there is no self in the technical sense of the philosophers (Garfield 1991, Hume 2007 - see Gopnik 2015 for their connection). Our subjectivity is not a "thing" with its own determinate structure and identity, carved out and distinct in a world among other things. Rather there is a mere succession of mental phenomena (Deleuze 1991 ch.5). What evidence there is for this beyond the introspective and analytic arguments referenced above can also be seen in the character of extraordinary experiences. Tragedy can render the mental succession discontinuous (Brison 2002 ch. 4), and religious experience render it entirely anew (e.g. Winstanley 2010, Coppe 2014, ch.3). It does not seem that there is something fixed and distinct that is the self, instead it seems we by a certain narrative link our experiences (Brison 2002 ch.6) and thus through our actions bodily and mental constitute ourselves (Korsgaard 2009). This tendency presupposes that just as we may constitute ourselves, so too may we dissolve ourselves; vanish into things, disappear within the undifferentiated equality of pure experience.

Of course it is not just being presupposed that this is possible. It has also become a goal, the end to an entire tendency of my thought that itself occupies much of my time. Why then is this goal supposed valuable, why is it worth this often difficult process of personal transformation?

Put simply: I strive for self-annihilation in response to a melancholy world. This tendency has taken as its goal pure experience, the transcendence of the self, as a response to Camus' one serious question in all philosophy (Camus 2013). This world is experienced as a lonely place in which I am an unwanted guest (Renner 2000, Laing 2016), I fear its capricious indifference (Rosa 2020), it was shaped by blood and crime (Táíwò 2022a) and the collectives that once lent solace, solidarity, and consolation have not survived into my lifetime (Lyotard 1979, Rodgers 2012). Efforts to change it for the better seem naive (Geuss 2008, More 2014, bk.1), or sometimes even tawdry and despoiling in their own way (Locke 1928), and I can scarce conceive of what it would be for them to be victorious (Fisher 2009, Ratcliffe 2014 ch.2). To exist apart one must be able to find some shelter within this maelstrom. It simply does not seem feasible.

And the problems are not entirely external. When I look within I find an incoherent mess of voices each shameful in their own way (Bright 2021). This is no doubt a result of clinical depression colouring my entire experience of everything, in some sense constituting a total way of being (Whiteley 2021). And most especially distorting my sense of time (Ratcliffe 2014 ch.7). At its worst my world can feel Lightman's "place where time stands still" (1993, 53). He describes a traveller gong towards the centre, the timeless point from which time radiates out, and as the traveller "approaches this place from any direction, he moves more and more slowly. His heartbeats grow farther apart, his breathing slackens, his temperature drops, his thoughts diminish, until he reaches dead centre and stops" (53-54). That centre is sometimes me, I am frozen time, and there is no change nor any possibility of change, no intellectual life at all; simply and ceaselessly misery for its own sake, unchanging unending misery. Not eternal in the sense of lasting forever — the moment passes. But timeless, cut off from the possibility of time. In those moments of feverish depression one lacks even the wherewithal to draw up the terror one knows this prospect should induce. Without me a maelstrom, within me a deadening nothingness.

But for all that, for all the melancholy which this tendency is founded upon, it remains fundamentally a vision of hope. Without shrinking from any of the above this tendency presupposes the world is a fundamentally beautiful place (Cochrane 2021), to be one with which is joy itself. It does not cede that we must be trapped or hunkered down weathering a storm. It says we can be connected, at peace, loving and beloved. It holds out the possibility of something

better even as it knows the things of this world so frequently disappoint (in this regard I am inspired by Augustine's *City of God*). When in this tendency I must believe that from our crooked stuff something beautiful can be wrought that would resolve all discordance and generate a real harmony among all sentient beings (Hutton 2014, ch.23). This tendency is thus founded on hope amidst melancholy.

This hope is perhaps best termed a faith. For what evidence I have for this hope's possibility of fulfilment is simply the tradition affirming as much. I place my faith in that tradition (Buchak forthcoming-a) and hope that in so doing I have been rational (Buchak forthcoming-b). But ultimately this faith, this hope, must remain ungrounded, and will always be experienced as self-justifying against all contrary evidence (Kierkegaard 2013).I take comfort in drawing on St. Gregory's teaching (1979, 81-84). I remind myself that even if the total perfection of pure experience is a hypothetical object, a faith whose fullness I shall never see, there is good to be had in working continually towards that. For it is in approaching pure experience, brief moments approximating to transcendence, feeling truly akin with all the world's beauty — it is then I know that all shall be well and all shall be well and all manner of things shall be well (Julian 1998).

This then is the second tendency. It is the philosophical pursuit of valuable state of consciousness, pure experience. Part of what must be done is developing and reflecting upon those metaphysical, epistemological, psychological, etc, theses which would characterise, support, and let me act in accordance with what pure experience. I must develop character traits and skills - introspective acuity, benevolence, and dispassion - which enable philosophical insight, and also make it possible to act upon what is gained by the intellect. This presupposes that the character of my experience is malleable, not fixed upon a self that must forever remain cut off from the world. And it supposes that though the world as I now live it, what is at the centre from which all radiates out, is presently characterised by miserable wretchedness, it is quite possible that transcendent joy and a felt global harmony could be achieved.

Concluding Thoughts

There are many points of contrast between the two tendencies. One is public where the other is private. One is much more naturally pursued via the medium of articles and books which the profession valorises. One is founded upon reason seeking to realise compassion, whereas the other dispassionately attempts to annihilate the very perspective from which it would make sense to think of oneself having compassion for another. Both of these tendencies are dear to me and express my deepest convictions. I do not know how to reconcile them.

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