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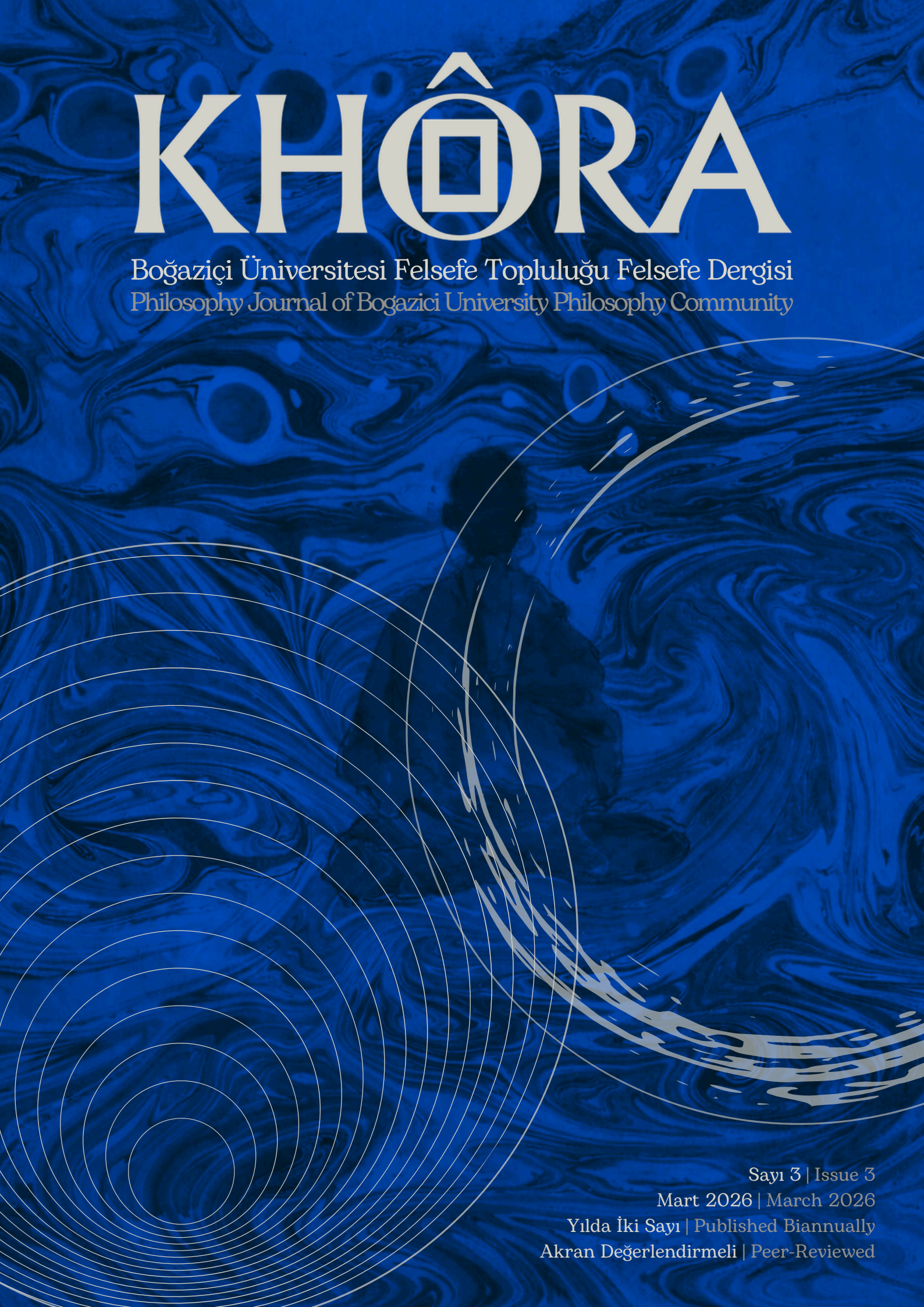

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Herkese merhabalar!

Boğaziçi Üniversitesi Felsefe Topluluğu'nun Felsefe Dergisi Khôra'nın üçüncü sayısını sizinle paylaşmaktan mutluluk duyuyoruz. Okulumuzda bir felsefe dergisi yayımlama fikriyle başlayan bu girişimin üçüncü sayısına ulaşması bizim için gurur verici.

Dergimizin bu sayısı, okulun lisans ve yüksek lisans öğrencilerinin yanı sıra mezunlarının yazılarıyla birlikte çok sesli bir seçki sunuyor. Önümüzdeki sayılarda sizlerin de katkısını büyük bir heyecanla bekleriz.

2020 yılından bu yana üniversitemizde yaşanan adaletsiz uygulamaların giderek artmaya devam ettiğine tanıklık ediyoruz. Dergimizi yayına hazırladığımız bu günlerde, Hamlin Hall'ün alt katında on yıllardır kulüplere ayrılan odaların boşaltılması da bu sürecin son örneklerinden biri oldu. Öğrenciler ve akademisyenler olarak, göz göre göre yapılan haksızlıkları normalleştirmeyecek ve usulsüzce gerçekleştirilen uygulamalara karşı bir araya gelerek bir duruş sergilemeye devam edeceğiz.

Geçen sayılarda olduğu gibi, dergimizin bu sayısıyla da Boğaziçi'nde özgürlüğün ve direnişin her zaman olduğu gibi devam edeceğini göstermiş olmayı umuyoruz. Adını Platon'un "oluşun mekânı" kavramından alan *Khôra*, fiziksel alanlarımızın daraltıldığı bu dönemde, özgür düşünce için kurduğumuz bir alan olarak varlığını sürdürmeye devam ediyor.

Üç yıldır içinde bulunduğumuz bu derginin üçüncü sayısının çıkmasına emek verenlerden olabildiğimiz için çok mutluyuz. Süreç boyunca neyi, nasıl yapmamız gerektiğini beraber öğrendiğimiz bütün ekip arkadaşlarımıza, özellikle de bir önceki genel yayın yönetmeni Zeynep Günal'a teşekkürlerimizi ve sevgilerimizi yolluyoruz.

Geçtiğimiz sayılarda bulunan ve aramıza yeni katılan arkadaşlarımızdan oluşan ekibimiz, herkesin katkısıyla ve farklı bölümlerden gelen üyelerimizin sağladığı çeşitlilik sayesinde çok yönlü bir yapı kazandı ve yeni fikirlerin ortaya çıkmasını, hayata geçirilmesini kolaylaştırdı. Yazarlarımıza, editörlerimize, tasarım ekibimize ve web sitemizi tasarlayan arkadaşımıza gönüllü bir şekilde bu denli güzel bir iş ortaya çıkardıkları için teşekkürlerimizi sunarız.

Dergimizin uzun ömürlü olması dileğiyle, nice sayılarda buluşmak umuduyla!

Greetings everyone!

We are pleased to share with you the third issue of Khôra, the philosophy journal of the Boğaziçi Philosophy Community. For us, it is a source of great pride that this initiative, which began with the idea of publishing a philosophy journal at our university, has now reached its third issue.

This issue of our journal offers a diverse, multi-voiced selection of writings by our university's undergraduate and graduate students, as well as its alumni. We warmly look forward to your contributions in future issues.

Since 2020, we have witnessed a steady increase in unjust practices at our university. As we were preparing this issue for publication, the evacuation of the club rooms that had occupied the lower floor of Hamlin Hall for decades became one of the latest examples of this ongoing process. As students and academics, we refuse to normalize injustices carried out in plain sight, and we will continue coming together to take a stand against unlawful practices.

As in our previous issues, with this issue we hope to show that the spirit of freedom and resistance at Boğaziçi persists. Khôra, named after Plato's notion of the 'space of becoming,' continues to exist as a space for free thought in a time when our physical spaces are increasingly being restricted.

We are grateful to have been among those who contributed to the publication of the third issue of this journal, of which we have been a part for the past three years. Throughout this process, we learned together what needed to be done and how to do it, and we would like to extend our sincere thanks to all our teammates, especially to our previous editor-in-chief, Zeynep Günal.

Our team, composed of members from previous issues as well as friends who have recently joined us, has gained versatility thanks to everyone's contributions and the diversity brought by members from different departments. This diversity has both enabled new ideas to emerge and made it easier to put them into practice. We would like to express our gratitude to our authors, editors, design team, and to the friend who designed our website for voluntarily contributing to the creation of such meaningful work.

With hopes for the long life of our journal, we look forward to meeting again in many future issues!

Elif KANIK-Ömer Şemsi TÜRK
Editors-in-Chief
Genel Yayın Yönetmenleri

“We are undone by each other. And if we’re not, we’re missing something.”

Judith Butler

Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence (2004)

Nelin Beste ERYILMAZ
Rüya / Vision

Dependently Generative Empty Stages Theory of Ontology of Dance-Work

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Abstract

This essay presents Dependently Generative Empty Stages (DGES) theory to explain the ontology of dance work as an artifact. This essay critiques the views within analytical ontology art works that treat repeatable works such as music and dance as fixed "types" or "space-time worms". Because these views maintain the art work integrity over time. This work argues that the bodily and fluid nature of dance art invalidates these continuity-based approaches. The essay primarily argues that the conservative views of Nicholas Wolterstorff, who defines artwork as a norm-based fixed type (Norm-Kind), and Nurbay Irmak, who defines it as a created abstract artifact, don't meet to explain the concrete and variable reality of dance. The essay also argues that the "Perdurantism" model proposed by Ben Caplan and Carl Matheson imposes an artificial ontological unity on radically different performances when applied to dance. In this context, the essay proposes a new model that synthesizes Theodore Sider's metaphysical "Stage Theory" (Exdurantism) with the Buddhist principle of "Dependent Co-Arising" (Pratītyasamutpāda). According to this model, the dance work is a decentralized, scattered cluster of generative stages. Each performance is ontologically autonomous but emerges causally dependent on the previous stage. Therefore, different performances are not parts of the "same" work. As David Lewis describes, different performances separated only by a "Counterpart Relation" and their identities are established through the viewer's gaze and convention.

Keywords: *ontology of dance, stage theory, exdurantism, perdurantism, space-time, somatic, generative, dependent co-arising, Pratītyasamutpāda, dependent empty stage*

Dependently Generative Empty Stages Theory of Ontology of Dance-Work

Understanding the ontology of the dance-work is a confrontation with the fluid, discontinuous, and somatic reality of the performing body. The embodied reality of the dance is in a constant state of flux; this nature makes a rigid identity impossible. Because of that I reject Nicholas Wolterstorff's Norm-Kinds and Nurbay Irmak's Abstract Artifacts views. Since dance, including choreographed classical works, is not an abstract idea but a concrete, bodily, and temporal event. In

the second section of the paper, I will explain and criticize Wolterstroff's and Irmak's theories. Wolterstorff defines works of art as Norm-Kinds that have conditions of correctness. According to him, for a performance to be considered a work of art, it must conform to predetermined criteria. This view treats the human body, which is the instrument of dance, as a stable object. However, since the body is constantly changing in dance (aging, injury, etc.), it is impossible to maintain a standard norm.

After moving beyond theories that could be considered conservative in the second section, in the third section I will address the perdurantism theory presented by Ben Caplan and Carl Matheson. In this section, I will explain and criticize the view that a work of art is a space-time worm which is a whole unfolding in time. However, I also find this view insufficient for explaining a work of art, as it speaks of a whole that has a beginning and emerges from its parts.

Instead of the views I discussed in previous sections, in the fourth section I will explain Theodore Sider's Exdurantism model. This view posits that each performance is ontologically a separate and autonomous stage. The connection between these stages is not identity, but merely a counterpart relationship. I also adopted this view while formulating my own thesis. I am expanding on Sider's Stage Theory model with the Buddhist principle of dependent co-arising.

Lastly, in the conclusion section I will emphasize my thesis. It is futile to seek a fixed essence in dance. Analytical ontologies (Wolterstorff, Irmak, Caplan & Matheson) attempt to salvage the work as a fixed substance or an integrated worm. However, this denies the impermanence of dance as artwork. I expand upon Sider's exdurantism theory with the Buddhist aspect of co-arising. The dance work is a decentralized, scattered cluster of generative stages. These stages are ontologically separate but emerge causally in a dependent manner.

I. The Necessity of Leaving Conservative Ontology Behind

The aim of this chapter is to examine the attempt of analytic ontology to attribute a fixed "essence" to the work and to show why this attempt falls short in the face of the somatic reality of dance work. To this end, I consider the views of Wolterstorff and Irmak.

I.I.I. Wolterstorff: Art-Work as Norm-Kind

The concept of 'Kinds' lies at the heart of Wolterstorff's ontology. According to him, works of art are universal genres with specific conditions of conformity. He classifies artworks like drama as Performance-works. He says, "*Performance-works and object-works are kinds (types, sorts)—kinds whose examples are the performances or objects of those works*". (Wolterstorff, 1975, p. 126)

Furthermore, the most defining characteristic of these works is their "Norm-Kind" nature; that is, for a performance to be considered a work of art, it must meet a specific set of "Correctness Conditions": "*For any predicate P which is*

acceptable with respect to W... if there is some property being P... such that it is impossible that something should be a correctly formed example of W and lack being P, then P is true off" (Wolterstorff, 1975, p. 125) The crucial point is that Wolterstorff conceives of the work as a Platonic 'Genre'. The work exists as a set of rules before and independently of its performances. Performances, in turn, are the reflections of these rules (norms) in the physical world. Therefore, for Wolterstorff, the identity of a work lies in its conformity to these norms. For a sequence of sounds or a movement to belong to that work, it must be correct, he says: "For a production of a sound-sequence to be an occurrence of a work W, it must be an occurrence of the sound-sequence of W which is correct".

Adapting Wolterstorff's approach to dance, a dance work, such as *The Dying Swan* Ballet is a movement sequence determined by the choreographer. The dancer's task is to "correctly" instantiate this abstract norm in the physical world.

I.I.II. Anti-Essentialist Criticism

Wolterstorff establishes the work with correctness conditions, which is the unchanging essence of the work. However, in dance, the body, as the instrument of artistic performance, is in constant flux and change. Wolterstorff considers the dancer's body like a piano, seemingly standard and unchanging. Yet every body is different at every moment; the same dancer will perform the same choreography differently when young, injured, or old. What Wolterstorff calls "norm" is an imaginary standard in the face of somatic reality. The movements of an aging body, for example, that of the famous dancer Maya Plisetskaya, may not conform to the "seemingly norms" of choreography, but this is the somatic evolution of the work.

Wolterstorff's theory codes bodily changes, like aging as a "deviation." I, however, argue that this change is the very nature of the work's existence. In my view, Maya Plisetskaya's 60-year-old *The Dying Swan* performance is not a "deficient" instance of the performance-work. Rather, I argue it's a completely new and autonomous stage. Wolterstorff's concept of "kind" remains like an artificial cage that attempts to freeze the fluidity of the body.

Wolterstorff, by viewing the work as an eternal "Genre", misses the historical and human dimension of dance. From his perspective, *The Dying Swan* existed as a possibility even before the choreographer Michel Fokine was born; Fokine merely 'discovered' it. This also fails to explain the somatic creativity of dance.

I.II.I. Irmak: Art-Work as a Created Abstract Artifact

Nurbay Irmak advocates for creationism and opposes Wolterstorff's Platonic implication that art-works are eternal entities. According to Irmak, works are created by humans. However, Irmak argues that this created thing is still an abstract artifact. Abstract artifacts are created, but once created, they are abstract objects that lack spatial

location (Irmak, 2020). Irmak takes a step further by historicizing the work. According to him, the work is a created entity ontologically dependent on the intention of its creator. However, for him, this entity is still an abstract object, detached from space-time.

Applying Irmak's view on dance, a dance work is an object created in the choreographer's mind and intention, becoming visible in the physical world as performance. The work comes into existence the moment the composer/choreographer creates it; yet, it still remains essentially abstract.

I.II.II. Criticism of Abstract Artifacts

While Irmak's theory addresses the problem of creation, namely genesis of the work, it falls short in the face of dance's nature of inherent concreteness and persistence.

Irmak claims that the work "lacks spatial location" (Irmak, 2020). However, dance is inherently a spatial and concrete art, embodied in the dancer's body. An abstract dance work cannot exist, independent of a dancer who sweats, resists gravity, and occupies space on stage. To define the work as an abstract artifact is to attribute to it a "ghostly self" essence, independent of the body, even if not Platonic.

Furthermore, Irmak assumes that the work is completed at the moment of its creation. However, in the "stage theory" and "dependent co-arising" model that I advocate, as I will explain later, the work is never truly complete. The work is ontologically dependent not only on its creator and the state in which it was created in the past, but also on the performer at that moment, on the present. The work is not an abstract object, as Irmak claims, but rather the concrete stages of performance itself. There is not any independent graspable essence of the art-work as it is.

Dance, by its very nature, is a concrete art. It consists of flesh, bone, sweat, and gravity. There is no abstract existence of the Dying Swan outside the space occupied by the dancer on stage. Irmak's definition of "abstract artifact" does not encompass the bodily materialism of dance. I argue that the dance-work is not an "idea," but an "event." When it comes to dance, Irmak's theory explains the "moment of birth" of the work, but it cannot explain its "life." Dance works must be "reborn" in every performance, even after the choreographer dies. The work is ontologically dependent not only on its creator but also on the dancer at that moment. Irmak's theory freezes the work as a completed object after it is created; whereas I argue that the work is an unfinished process that is recreated in each phase.

II. The Limits of the Standard Perdurantism

In the second section, I argued that dance cannot be an abstract artifact due to its embodied nature and raised the problem of concreteness. In analytical philosophy, one of the strongest alternatives that views the art-work as a concrete object is Ben Caplan and Carl Matheson's "musical

perdurantism" theory. This theory sees the work as a physical whole that extends over time. Caplan and Matheson's perdurantism (worm theory) view seems, at first glance, a perfect solution for dance because it sees the work as a concrete and temporal entity. While this theory solves the concreteness problem I mentioned in the second section of the paper, it raises a new error by attempting to unify the fragmented structure of dance. There is no such thing as the essence of the work, in other words, work itself. There are only a series of instantaneous events in the dance.

II.I Worm Theory

Caplan and Matheson view the musical work as a Space-Time Worm composed of a collection of performances. The work perdures through time: "*According to Perdurantism about Musical Works, musical works persist by perduring: that is, by having different temporal parts at every time at which they exist* " (Caplan & Matheson, 2006, p. 60). According to this view, performances are not instances of the work; rather, they are parts of the work.

Caplan and Matheson reject "type" theories. Because abstract types, like numbers or triangles, cannot be created; they have existed from eternity. To preserve our intuition that musical-works are created and concrete, they argue that they are "Four-Dimensional Objects". According to them, a musical work is a "Space-Time Worm" that extends through time, stretching from the past to the future. That is, a work consists of the fusion of all its performances.

Applying this to dance, to explain the "created" and embodied physical nature of dance, they define the work as a concrete whole with parts in time. For example, *The Dying Swan* ballet is not an abstract choreography, but a colossal, flesh-and-blood somatic worm composed of all *The Dying Swan* performances from 1877 to the present day. Anna Pavlova's performance is a temporal segment of this worm from 1905. The work is a tangible historical entity that grows over time as new performances are added.

II.II Criticism: Dance is Discontinuous

Caplan and Matheson posit that all the different performances merge to form a single work. Perdurantism takes a correct step by concretizing the work, but it attributes a unity to dance by the "worm" metaphor that implies an organic continuity and structural unity between the parts.

There is no structural connection strong enough to make the performances of different bodies parts of a single object in dance. The ontological chasm between Pavlova's performance and a modern avant-garde interpretation of the choreography is too vast to regard them as parts of the same "worm." It is to impose a forced identity on disconnected events. Caplan and Matheson's "worm" remains too unified for the chaotic nature of dance work. Dance performances are radically different and there are heaps of disconnected

moments, discontinuous events lacking a structural center. Performances occurring simultaneously in different parts of the world, in different bodies, form a decentralized "Scattered Cluster." There is no single worm; there is a network of events spread across space-time.

III. Dance as Stages: Exdurantism in Dance-Work

In the third section, I rejected the worm theory, which describes a whole composed of parts, because this theory does not fit the nature of dance, which is devoid of essence. And I now argue that the only model that explains the nature of dance is exdurantism. By adding the Buddhist metaphysics and the perspective of selflessness and intrinsic absence to this theory, I propose a new thesis on the ontology of dance.

III.I. Sider's Exdurantism

Theodore Sider argues that objects are instantaneous stages. According to him, the past self or the future self is not "a part of me," but merely other objects related to me. According to Sider's theory of exdurantism or Stage view, objects are not enduring entities. Sider identifies the object with the instantaneous "stage" itself. He says:

> The Newtonian theory of enduring places is known as a theory of 'absolute position' because the notion of remaining in one and the same place over time is well-defined on the theory—it is simply continuing to be located at one and the same enduring place. The problem is that there is no empirical basis for assuming that absolute comparisons of position make any sense. (Sider, 2001, p.28)

There is no such thing as a vast, ever-extending entity called "The Dance-Work." There is only the performance taking place on stage at that moment. Because of that, Pavlova's dance is not a part of the dance-work called *"The Dying Swan"*. The performance is an entity in its own right. The same is true of Plisetskaya's or any other artist's dance. Therefore, Pavlova and Plisetskaya's performances are not parts of the same work, but independent entities in a "counterpart relation" with each other.

According to Sider, objects do not extend through time, they only exist as instantaneous Stages. So, "I" am not the sum of past and future parts; I am only the "present" stage. Given the radical variability of dance, Sider's "Stage Theory" (Exdurantism) offers a more suitable ontological foundation. According to Sider, persistence in time is not about an object extending through time, but about instantaneous phases and their counterparts: According to the stage view, persisting objects do not endure through time, nor do they perdure by having temporal parts. Rather, they exist at an instant (Sider, 2001).

III.II Looking through the lens of Buddhism: Conventional Truth

In this section, I will ground the metaphysical foundation of Sider's stage theory in the Buddhist philosophy's two truths doctrine and Nagarjuna's concept of emptiness (Śūnyatā). My aim is to

reconstruct the ontological status of the dance work through the concept of no-self.

As Mark Siderits details, the Buddhist philosopher Nagasena, in his dialogue with King Milinda, proposes two different levels of truth for understanding existence: "Conventional Truth" and "Ultimate Truth" (Siderits, 2007). The ultimate truth is that only momentary fragments (dharmas/skandhas) are real. Wholes, such as the self, the forest, or the car, do not actually exist. Beings lack an essence that would make them whole and permanent. Everything is in a state of flux and transience. Conventional truth is that, for practical reasons, we give names to masses of momentary fragments; for example, we call the sum of the parts "the car." This is a construct that does not reflect reality, but it is a convenient designator.

> …The conventional truth is that I am a person who has existed for some time. I experience this existence as involving there being a 'me' who is aware of the different experiences that this 'I' has. Right now I am aware of reading these words and thinking about these ideas. Earlier this same 'I' was aware of other experiences… (Siderits, 2007, p.63)

Applying this perspective to dance, like the car, *The Dying Swan* does not exist at the level of ultimate truth. It only exists in stages. The dance-work is merely a conventional label we give to this heap of stages.

However, the analysis doesn't end here. Nagasena's view that "there is no car, only parts" can still cause a dualist understanding (existence/non-existence duality). Therefore, Nagarjuna argues that the two truths are not mutually exclusive with his "Middle Way" view. He points out that dependent co-arising and emptiness are the same thing. In the Mūlamadhyamakakārikā, Nagarjuna points to the identity of emptiness:

> Whatever is dependently co-arisen / That is explained to be emptiness. / That, being a dependent designation, / Is itself the middle way (Nagarjuna, 1995, Chapter 24, Verse 18)

According to Nagarjuna, something being "empty" does not mean it does not exist; it means it lacks intrinsic nature (Svabhāva - independent essence). If a dance piece had a fixed essence, it could never be performed and could never exist again in another body, as it could never change. The dance-work can exist precisely because it is "empty of essence," and for this reason, it is destined to change in each performance. The dance work is "selfless." This selflessness is the dynamic potential of the work. Since *The Dying Swan* lacks a fixed essence, Pavlova can perform it as Pavlova in Pavlova's body, and Plisetskaya in Plisetskaya's body. Emptiness is the ground that allows the stages to emerge.

IV. Dependent Empty Stages: The Emptiness of the Dance-Work

Ultimately, when we combine stated Buddhist views with Stage Theory, the dance work ontologically consists only of momentary,

essenceless and interdependent, empty stages. Phenomenologically, the viewer, by calling this series of empty stages "dance-work", gives it a temporary identity as dependent designation. Thus by accepting its emptiness, an ontological space is opened up for the dance's endless flux.

IV.I The Mechanism: Generative Stages & Dependent Co-Arising

Sider's Stage theory establishes a logical and static relationship by pointing to the existence of different stages and their interrelationships. In my thesis, this structure becomes dynamic and productive with the addition of dependent co-arising from Buddhism.

Stages are productive and generative forces. One stage of a dance movement physically and intentionally gives rise to the next stage of movement. And each performer enriches the dance as they perform, adding something from their own world. In this context, Pavlova's performance and Plisetskaya's performance cannot be the same since they both generated their own version. However, Plisetskaya's performance "emerges dependently" from the historical and bodily chain initiated by Pavlova. The connection between them is not one of sameness, but rather a causal lineage.

The identity of the dance-work is an institutional counterparthood. It is not metaphysics but the audience that grants a temporary identity to a series of empty phases through dependent designation.

IV.II. Solving the Problem of Sameness: Subjective Similarity

With the Dependently Generative Empty Stages thesis I propose in this essay, each performance is freed from the burden of being an instance, a copy or a (temporal) part. Each performance is a complete, autonomous object proper in its own right.

In dance, the instruments of the art-work, bodies are so different that the similarity is entirely a subjective and contextual similarity left to the viewer's interpretation. It is the subjective bridge of the community that establishes the institutional counterparthood between different works. Audience, choreographer, performer… According to this view, all witnesses are components that decide what the performance is. This is not a metaphysical necessity but a conventional co-arising.

Conclusion

To view dance as an "created abstract artifact" or an "integrated worm" is to deny the chaos of the environment and the body. The most suitable model for the ontology of dance is Stage Theory since the dance-work is neither eternal nor abstract; it is a concrete, instantaneous, and constantly recreated "stage". There is no such thing as a "single" dance-work. However, in dance performance, there are only momentarily appearing and constantly changing bodily states. There are an infinite number of separated, unique and instantaneous artistic stages.

As I discussed in the beginning of the essay, the dance work is neither a fixed "genre" as Wolterstorff called it, nor a unified "worm" as Caplan & Matheson called it. In contrast, according to the principle of Pratītyasamutpāda, nothing, including abstract objects, can remain independent and static, unaffected by circumstances. The dance work is dependent generative stages that give rise to each other through the laws of dependent co-mergence, as understood in Sider's Stage Theory and Nagarjuna's Buddhist ontology, and are conventionally combined in the mind of the viewer. The work is empty of inherent existence, and it is precisely this emptiness that allows it to be reborn with infinite variations in each performance.

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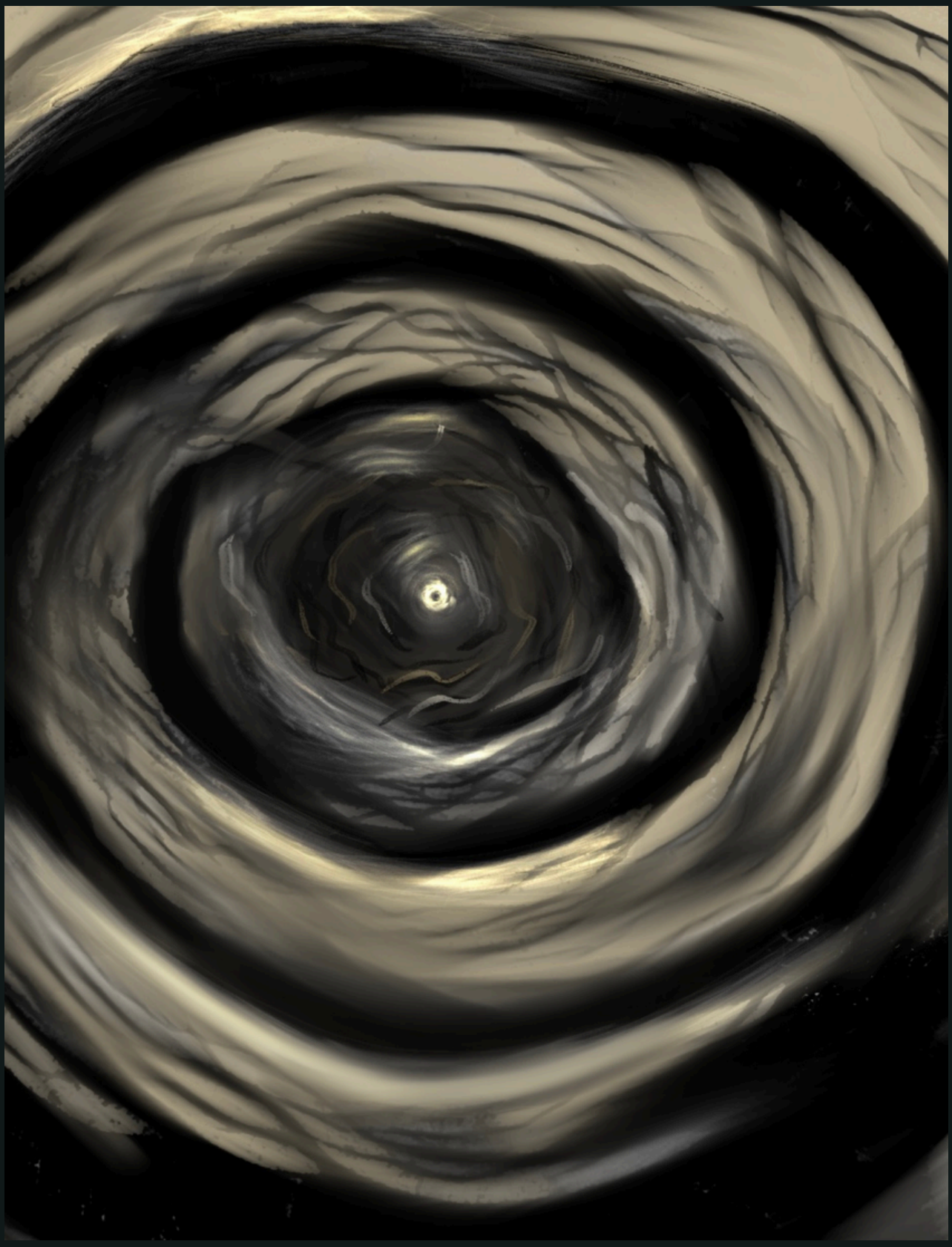

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Yaklaştıkça Uzak / The Closer, the Further

The Metaphoric Constitution of Temporal Thought and Linguistic Meaning in Philosophy of Language

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Abstract

This paper examines the relationship between metaphor, temporal cognition, and linguistic meaning within contemporary philosophy of language. Drawing on Elisabeth Camp's account of metaphor as imaginative construal, this study explores how metaphor can reorganize inferential and perspectival structures without necessarily altering truth-conditional content.

Temporality serves as the central case study. Time is not directly perceptible; its articulation relies extensively on systematic metaphorical mappings from embodied experience. Through analysis of recurrent schemas that organize inferential availability, modulate salience, and calibrate perspectival orientation, the paper traces how temporal discourse reflects structured cross-domain projections. Cross-linguistic findings from Aymara, Mandarin, Hebrew, and geocentric systems further indicate that temporal metaphors are neither incidental nor uniform. Rather, they are culturally sedimented yet cognitively consequential configurations that shape how temporal relations are apprehended and evaluated.

The paper concludes that metaphor functions as a condition of intelligibility for abstract thought. In the case of temporality, metaphor neither constitutes an alternative ontology nor a dispensable rhetorical device; instead, it provides the structured field within which temporal phenomena become conceptually accessible and linguistically articulable.

Keywords: *metaphor, temporality, philosophy of language, conceptual metaphor theory, imaginative construal, perspectival content, truth-conditional semantics, cross-linguistic variation, inferential structure*

Introduction

"Time is the substance I am made of. Time is a river that carries me away, but I am the river; it is a tiger that mangles me, but I am the tiger; it is a fire that consumes me, but I am the fire." (Borges 1966)

Philosophical inquiry has long been engrossed in the epistemic and semantic status of metaphor, particularly in its capacity to mediate between conceptual abstraction and linguistic articulation. The account of the phenomenon oscillates between the two polarized standpoints associated with some strands of continental and analytical philosophy.

Those who emphasize the importance of metaphoricity typically maintain that these expressions instantiate a mode of meaning that requires a categorically distinct cognitive operation. This classical rhetoric conventionally regarded metaphor as a sign of intellectual wit; Aristotle, writing in the Poetics, famously describes the capacity to generate metaphors as "...the greatest thing by far is to have a command of metaphor. This alone cannot be imparted by another; it is the mark of genius," (Aristotle, 1459) noting that it is a natural gift.

An apt metaphor can reorganize the way one sees a reality, exposing different layers of resemblances. This positive view of metaphor continued through later traditions. Quintilian (1920) deemed metaphor the most beautiful of tropes, able to "provide a name for everything" and enrich language immeasurably. In the twentieth century, this rhetorical tradition found renewed philosophical articulation in the work of thinkers such as Max Black and Paul Ricoeur. Black, in his interaction theory of metaphor, proposed that metaphors function by projecting the semantic field of one domain onto another, thereby generating new cognitive and interpretive possibilities. Ricoeur, approaching the topic from a hermeneutic standpoint, argued that metaphors enact semantic innovation. Literary theorist I. A. Richards (1936) asserted that "we cannot get through three sentences of ordinary discourse without metaphor", suggesting that metaphor is a constitutive principle of language use.

By contrast, some of the contemporary orientations have tended to deny any special cognitive role for metaphoricity. This view was especially influential in analytic philosophy and linguistic theory during the mid-20th century. Within the analytical framework, any content that metaphoricity appears to convey is assumed to be recoverable, in principle, by a suitably articulated literal formulation. This commitment often leads analytic philosophers to treat metaphor as philosophically irrelevant, as a phenomenon that introduces no autonomous explanatory demands and yields no exclusive semantics in linguistics. In this vein, philosopher Donald Davidson (1978) famously argued that metaphors mean only what the words literally mean, "and nothing more". Any further effects a metaphor has on thought are a matter of register, not meaning. Davidson analogized a metaphor as a joke or a bump on the head; while it can provoke a reaction or insight, it does not communicate propositions beyond its literal content. Attempting to state "what a metaphor means" in other words is a "bad question," Davidson argued, because there is no finite paraphrasable content, due to the recursive nature of language, "a picture is not worth a thousand words… Words are the wrong currency" for what a metaphor does. In his view, the listener "gets" a metaphor by experiencing this framing, not by decoding a message in the language. Similarly, John Searle's analysis of metaphor (1979) treated it as an exercise in pragmatics: the literal sentence is typically obviously false or incongruous, hence the hearer searches for an implicated meaning that the

speaker likely intended. That process relies on background knowledge and principles. Yet crucially, for Searle, this is a one-time pragmatic enrichment of meaning; It does not mean that the metaphorical sentence has a different semantics.

Other analytic approaches, such as Relevance Theory (Sperber & Wilson 1985, 1995, 1998, 2002, Wilson & Sperber 2002), continue in this pragmatic spirit. Wilson and Sperber argue that metaphor is just one end of a continuum of "loose" uses of language, differing in degree but not in kind from literal speech. They explicitly reject any unique mental faculty for metaphor: "Metaphorical interpretations are arrived at in exactly the same way as literal, loose and hyperbolic interpretations: there is no mechanism specific to metaphor" (Sperber & Wilson, 1985). On this account, understanding "Juliet is the sun" involves the same inferential comprehension processes as understanding any non-literal remark; metaphors do not require special semantic rules or represent a fundamentally distinct phenomenon. (Camp, 2025) The denouement of the analytic view is that metaphor contributes nothing essential to language. Metaphoricity can be explained away by standard semantic or pragmatic theories, and any appearance of a new meaning is illusory or, at best, a subjective mental event. In philosophical debates, this led some to regard metaphor as philosophically irrelevant. If a metaphor can always be paraphrased by literal language, or if it adds no truth-conditional content, then metaphor seems to pose no threat to a strictly literal theory of meaning or mind.

I. Metaphoricity and Meaning

Metaphor may not simply alter truth-conditions, but it can influence the conceptual structure and how truth-conditional content is conceived. Elisabeth Camp (2006) reanalyzes this semantic/pragmatic relationship by challenging the assumption that is prominent in Searle's (1979) account, that metaphor is ultimately eliminable in favor of a fully literal paraphrase. Camp argues that a metaphor's pragmatic status does not render it theoretically dispensable. While metaphor does not involve a sui generis semantic mechanism, the further inference that metaphor is therefore eliminable without cognitive loss rests on a mistaken conception of what metaphor contributes to understanding.

Camp (2009) suggests that a metaphor works by reconfiguring how we think about "what is so". She contrasts pretending, imagining something were true, with metaphorical construal, imagining something as something else. Pretense involves an imaginative manipulation of reality, whereas metaphor encompasses an imaginative reorientation toward reality by seeing the actual thing under a new aspect. Thus, "Time is a thief" is a statement that prompts a conceptual reconstruction of time itself as an agentive force capable of surreptitiously taking from us that which is finite and irreplaceable. Metaphorical imagination alters how the world appears by organizing it according to a new gestalt "as an inherent component of that imaginative activity itself" (Camp, 2009). Thus, the phrase "time is a thief" does not obscure the nature of time; it reveals one aspect of its experiential structure.

When temporality is framed metaphorically, whether as something that flows, approaches, or steals, the metaphor does not solicit a fictional stance toward time; it invites the subject to inhabit a coherent perspective on temporal reality as it is lived and apprehended. To understand time as flowing is not to posit literal motion, but to impose a conceptual organization that privileges continuity, directionality, and irreversibility, therefore, to understand time as a thief is to reconfigure temporal experience around loss, finitude, and the affective vulnerability. In each case, the metaphor institutes a gestalt that selectively brings certain dimensions of temporal experience into relief while allowing others to recede, thereby shaping how temporal facts are cognitively accessed.

In this light, it becomes imperative to ask to what extent our conceptual scheme is itself constructed through metaphorical projection. Among all domains of abstract cognition, temporality remains perhaps the most fertile ground for such inquiry. The experience of time, unlike that of space or substance, is not directly perceptible; it must be inferred. It is for this reason that temporal thought is so deeply connected with metaphor. Whether time is conceived as a sequential medium, a limited resource, a linear path, or a vanishing presence instantiates metaphorical models and these models, in turn, shape the architecture of thought and the semantics of linguistic expression (e.g., Boroditsky, 2001; Boroditsky & Ramscar, 2002; Núñez, Motz, & Teuscher, 2006; Núñez & Sweetser, 2006). To theorize time, then, is to trace the metaphors through which it becomes thinkable.

II. Temporality and Metaphors

Time, as an ontologically abstract and experientially elusive phenomenon, cannot be directly perceived or manipulated. Yet in virtually all languages, speakers refer to time as if it were spatial, material, quantifiable, or animate. These metaphorical projections are foundational, structuring the lexicon, grammar, and inferentiality of temporal discourse. As

Lakoff and Johnson (1980) first argued in their formulation of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT), abstract domains such as time acquire intelligibility through systematic mappings from more experientially grounded domains, including but not limited to space, motion, and containment. A substantial body of cognitive linguistic research has documented the prevalence of these mappings across languages, identifying recurrent metaphorical schemas that organize temporal reference (Evans, 2004; Duffy & Feist, 2023).

A. Time as Motion

One of the most pervasive metaphorical structures involves the conceptualization of time in terms of motion along a path. This mapping is instantiated in two principal variants. In the “moving ego” metaphor, the experiencer is construed as traveling through a temporal landscape (e.g., “We are approaching the deadline”). In the “moving time” metaphor, temporal events are imagined as entities moving toward the experiencer (e.g., “Christmas is coming soon”; “The week flew by”). Both variants presuppose a source-path-goal schema, with time

either traversed or traversing, oriented along a directional axis (Boroditsky, 2001; Evans, 2004).

B. Time as a Landscape

Temporal language also draws extensively on deictic spatial schemas, particularly the front-back axis. In many languages, the future is conventionally projected as "ahead" and the past as "behind" (e.g., "looking forward to the weekend," "that's all behind us now"). These metaphors align with the body's habitual orientation in space, vision, and locomotion directed forward and thus appear naturalized.

C. Time as Distance

Duration is frequently conceptualized through metaphors of linear distance. Temporal intervals are described as "long" or "short," events are said to "stretch," "drag on," or "fly by." These expressions derive from mappings that equate duration with measurable spatial extension. This metaphor is so deeply entrenched in colloquial and formal discourse that it often passes unnoticed. Studies by Bylund and Athanasopoulos (2017) revealed that speakers of languages favoring length-based metaphors (e.g., Swedish) judged durations based on spatial elongation, while speakers using volume-based metaphors (e.g., Spanish) were more attuned to quantity.

D. Time as a Containment Schema

Another salient metaphor construes temporal intervals as bounded spaces or containers. Phrases such as "in 2024," "throughout the month," or "the day was packed with meetings" rely on a schema, wherein units of time are imagined as enclosures within which events occur. This metaphor facilitates segmentation, enabling speakers to demarcate beginnings and ends, to locate phenomena "within" or "outside" a given temporal frame. As Evans (2004) has shown, such constructions reflect stable image-schematic structures embedded in the mental lexicon of temporal reference.

E. Time as a Commodity

Temporal expressions are also permeated by economic metaphors. Time is treated as a resource, being scarce, quantifiable, or transferable. Idioms such as "saving time," "spending the afternoon," "investing hours," or "wasting time" instantiate a metaphorical framework in which time is conceptualized as a commodity. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) argue that this metaphor reflects both modern industrial temporal regimes and cognitive tendencies to analogize value across domains.

F. Time as an Animate Entity

In both colloquial and poetic language, time is frequently personified or imbued with agency. Expressions such as "time flies," "time caught up with him," or "the years stole her youth" assign dynamic qualities to time, casting it as an actor or antagonist. These metaphors encode existential orientations toward temporal passage. Such personifications are phenomenologically salient in capturing how time is experienced.

Collectively, these metaphorical schemas illustrate

the systematicity and depth with which temporal thought is organized. As Evans (2004) has demonstrated through extensive lexical analysis, the polysemy of temporal expressions, whether time is construed as a sequential continuum, a quantity, a bounded interval, or a cyclic phenomenon, is governed by a set of metaphorical patterns that recur across languages and cultures. These patterns are conceptually principled, reflecting mappings from spatial and social experience to the temporal domain.

III. How Temporal Metaphors Convey Meaning

If time is among the domains in which our access to salient properties is perspectival, affect-laden, and only partially formalizable, then temporal metaphor becomes a mechanism through which temporal reality becomes cognitively articulable at all. Yet, do metaphors merely function as instruments that allow individuals to talk about time, or do they fundamentally alter their experience of time?

In a truth-conditional picture, metaphors pose characteristic tension. Davidson (1978) denies that metaphors contribute sui generis propositions; rather, metaphors belong wholly to the domain of use, not meaning. On the other hand, Camp (2006; 2013) argues that metaphors enable “perspectival content” that reorganizes conceptual structures without introducing new truth conditions per se. Similarly, Hills (1997) and Stern (2000) contend that metaphors can affect conceptual reorientation while preserving literal meaning, suggesting that metaphors influence what is *thought* under a sentence without altering what is *said*. Temporal metaphors exhibit this transfiguration; once entrenched, metaphorical schemata such as *time as a resource* or *time as a moving object* generate systematic patterns of inferential availability, extending truth-evaluability into new practical domains. This, temporal cognition depending on metaphorically scaffolded inferential roles, raises a critical epistemological issue: if metaphor underwrites temporal thought to such an extent, what remains of a "literal" concept of time?

A plausible response is that literal temporality is indexed exclusively to the formal constructions of mathematical physics, wherein time is represented as a parameter or dimension; yet such abstractions bear limited correspondence to psychological temporality, the mode of time that conditions human experience. Psychological time is expected to be conceived as a hybrid construction; partially anchored in perceptual and neurocognitive rhythms, yet substantially organized through metaphorical and analogical projection.

Ultimately, metaphor constitutes the architecture through which temporal experience is apprehended. Descriptions such as "time flies" or "the hours crawled" are indicative of how time is subjectively structured. In this sense, the affective texture of temporality is rendered intelligible through metaphor. It is not that temporal experience begins in literal perception and is later adorned by metaphor; rather, metaphor is foundational to the way temporal phenomena are encountered and

made sense of.

IV. Cross-Linguistic Diversity of Temporal Metaphors

While it might seem intuitive to posit a universal set of temporal metaphors, rooted in the shared corporeal experiences of aging, motion, and the perception of sequences, crosslinguistic research has consistently revealed some variability in the way human communities conceptualize time and space. Early articulations of Conceptual Metaphor Theory (CMT) often leaned toward universalist assumptions. The body's front-back orientation, combined with the forward trajectory of vision and locomotion, was thought to naturally entail the metaphorical mapping of the future as "in front" and the past as "behind." However, cross-linguistic research has revealed both surprising commonalities and striking differences in temporal metaphors across cultures. Even if spacetime connections are psychologically real, they are insufficient to explain how particular metaphors are interpreted in actual linguistic practice; metaphorical construal emerges from the interaction between cross-domain connections and the semantics of the expressions that instantiate them and, crucially, from non-linguistic spatial practices such as gesture, writing conventions, and calendric formats. (Duffy & Feist, 2023) These differences reveal that cultural context, and language can channel metaphoric thinking along different paths. The result is a typology whose mapping is linguistically engineered, through deixis (how "now" anchors reference), grammatical packaging (tense/aspect systems, adpositions, case), lexical selection (orientation vs motion vocabulary), and culturally sedimented spatial routines that supply a default "mental timeline."

A paradigmatic counterexample is found in the Aymara language of the Andes. Núñez & Sweetser (2006) show that Aymara systematically maps past and future to the space in front of and behind the ego, respectively, but in a way that is notably non-dynamic: instead of privileging an ego-in-motion metaphor, Aymara relies on a relatively static front/back arrangement, including spontaneous gesture. Speakers gesture "future" backward and "past" forward, yielding a multimodal signature of the mapping. In Aymara, the term nayra, meaning both "eye" and "in front," is used to refer to the past, whereas qhipa, or "behind," denotes the future. This inversion arises from a logic that is at once intuitive and culturally contingent. The past is that which has been seen and thus known. It stands before one's eyes. The future, by contrast, remains unseen and unknowable, and therefore lies behind the speaker. Importantly, this linguistic mapping is accompanied by gestural conventions that reinforce the metaphor. Aymara speakers consistently gesture backward when referring to future events and forward when referencing the past. Two consequences matter philosophically. First, "embodiment" does not entail a single privileged geometry; the same human body can scaffold different, stable temporal orientations. Second, the mapping is not an ornamental overlay on a fully formed temporal concept; it functions as a cognitive discipline for "thinking-for-speaking,"

forcing attention to particular epistemic and perspectival contrasts when temporal reference is made. (Núñez & Sweetser, 2006)

English, like many Indo-European languages, relies predominantly on horizontal spatial metaphors: time progresses from left to right, or from behind to ahead. Mandarin Chinese, by contrast, exhibits both horizontal and vertical metaphors. While it employs forward-backward mappings analogous to English, Mandarin also utilizes vertical schemas wherein shàng (up) denotes earlier temporal points and xià (down) refers to later ones. The expressions shàng ge yuè ("last month") and xià ge yuè ("next month") exemplify this vertical metaphor. Crucially, such metaphorical structures are not merely linguistic but cognitive: experimental work by Boroditsky (2001) demonstrated that Mandarin speakers were significantly faster in processing temporal relationships when primed with vertical spatial cues, whereas English speakers responded more efficiently to horizontal cues. This indicates that the dominant metaphors in a given linguistic community not only structure linguistic expression but also calibrate pre-linguistic, nonverbal temporal cognition.

Writing systems and literacy practices further shape the metaphorization of temporal experience. Speakers of Hebrew and Arabic, languages written from right to left, tend to spatialize time according to this orientation. In experimental settings, Hebrew speakers have been shown to arrange temporal sequences from right to left, in contrast to English speakers, who habitually order them from left to right. Such biases persist even in nonlinguistic tasks, including response-time experiments, where participants demonstrate faster judgments when temporal ordering aligns with the directionality of their script. Moreover, bilingual individuals exhibit context-dependent shifts in their spatialization of time. Hebrew-English bilinguals, for instance, display flexible temporal mappings, adjusting the orientation of their mental timeline according to the language and writing direction in use at the moment. These findings reveal that what may appear to be basic cognitive schemas are in fact emergent properties of cultural and linguistic habits.

Even metaphors for temporal duration reveal cross-linguistic variability. English and other Germanic languages typically conceptualize duration as an extension in linear space: "a long time," "a short day," and so forth. By contrast, Romance languages such as Spanish often employ metaphors of quantity or fullness, while Greek may refer to a "small night" or a "big time" using metaphors of size and volume. Bylund and Athanasopoulos (2017) conducted experimental studies comparing Swedish and Spanish speakers and found that these divergent metaphoric systems corresponded with measurable cognitive effects. Swedish speakers, who habitually describe duration in terms of length, were more sensitive to linear expansions in animated stimuli when estimating elapsed time. Spanish speakers, who utilize volume-based metaphors, were more influenced by the visual fullness of containers in similar tasks. These findings suggest that metaphorical systems are not merely reflections of conceptual structure

but actively guide perceptual and cognitive judgments.

A further dimension of variation lies in the use of spatial reference frames. While many Western languages rely on egocentric coordinates, other languages utilize geocentric or absolute frames of reference. The Kuuk Thaayorre people of Aboriginal Australia, for example, employ cardinal directions (north, south, east, west) for spatial and temporal reference. Temporal sequences are accordingly organized along an east-west axis, reflecting the path of the sun, rather than being oriented relative to the body. This reinforces the insight that temporal conceptualization is not determined by biological constants but is filtered through environmental, cultural, and linguistic schemas.

Despite this striking diversity, certain cross-cultural convergences are evident. As Duffy and Feist (2023) emphasize, the tendency to structure time through spatial metaphor appears to be a near-universal solution to the abstractness of temporal reference. However, the precise configuration of spatial schemas, horizontal vs. vertical, ego-centric vs. geocentric, linear vs. volumetric, varies in accordance with cultural practices and representational systems. Their model foregrounds the multidimensionality of temporal metaphors, noting that "spatial schemas for time are the varied ways in which people draw on spatial experiences, as well as the broader variety of human experience."

Such findings challenge any notion that temporal metaphors are mere linguistic epiphenomena or that temporal concepts possess a context-independent, literal core. On the contrary, the semantics of temporal expressions are deeply bound to the metaphorical frameworks that render them intelligible within particular cultural and cognitive ecologies. Concepts such as "future," "earlier," or "duration" do not float above human embodiment and symbolic systems; they are forged within them. The mapping of time onto space is thus a culturally variable yet cognitively indispensable mechanism. Recognizing this complexity requires abandoning the residual essentialism that lingers in certain philosophical treatments of language, and embracing a view in which meaning, particularly in abstract domains such as time, is inseparable from the metaphorical processes that constitute it.

Conclusion

The journey through the metaphors of time reveals a complex picture. If metaphor can reorganize inferential architecture without altering propositional content, then its epistemic function operates not in offering new truths, but in structuring how truths are accessed and contextualized. In this sense, this paper advances a calibrated position, one that eschews both the eliminativist tendencies of reductive semantic theories and the ontological exuberance associated with continental treatments of metaphor. Drawing primarily on Camp's account of metaphor as imaginative construal, the analysis frames temporal metaphors as mechanisms of perspectival re-aspectualization. Metaphor enables temporal

phenomena to become intelligible under schematized configurations without necessitating any corresponding alteration to their underlying propositional content or truth-conditional status. It modulates attentional structures and foregrounds latent features of experience, thereby reorganizing the salience hierarchies through which time is apprehended and interpreted. While metaphor, in the domain of temporal cognition, neither generates a new ontology of time nor unlocks a novel epistemic access, its capacity to structure and calibrate how temporal experience becomes intelligible within the constraints of human cognition is prominent. As the foregoing analysis has shown, metaphors operate by reorganizing what is already conceptually available, foregrounding certain dimensions of experience while backgrounding others. In this sense, metaphor channels existing cognitive resources, such as spatial schematization, agency attribution, or resource modeling, into coherent frameworks that render time apprehensible. When one says "time is running out" or "we are approaching the deadline," one is not invoking a metaphysical claim but activating a network of inferential expectations and embodied orientations. Metaphor facilitates a kind of phenomenal reorganization that allows us to attend to what is already before us in newly salient ways. Applied to temporality, this means that metaphors of flow, containment, or distance each propose a different figural gestalt through which temporal relations are rendered tractable. Thinking clearly about metaphor, as Camp argues, forces us to confront the deeper fact that many of the operations associated with "figurative" language, selective emphasis, perspectival framing, and analogical mapping, are also operative in literal speech. The philosophical task, then, is not to praise metaphor, nor to dismiss it, but to understand how it operates within the forms of thought that make temporality itself sayable.

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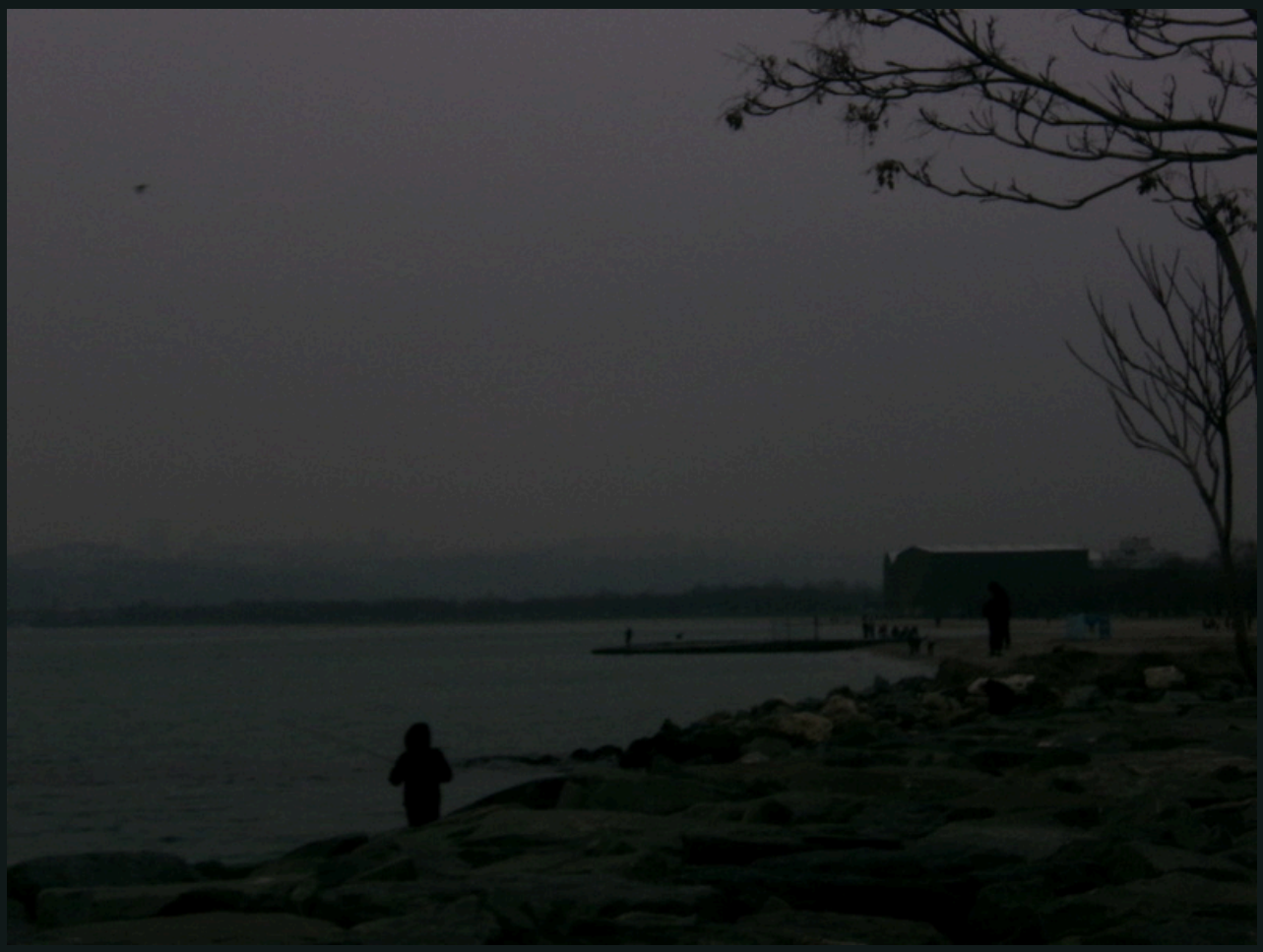

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Yalnızlık / Solitude

When the Flow is Disrupted: Desynchronized Being in Melancholic Depression

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Abstract

Contemporary psychiatry primarily utilizes biomedical models that categorize mental disorders through observable symptoms, which risks overlooking how these experiences are actually lived by individuals. This article examines melancholic depression through the lens of phenomenological psychopathology, arguing that it represents a radical, structural transformation of the subject's "being-in-the-world" rather than a mere intensification of ordinary depressive symptoms. The analysis details the disruption of lived experience across four interrelated existential dimensions. Temporality undergoes its most radical disruption, where lived time becomes static, the future is perceived as a locked door, and the past becomes a colossal weight of guilt. This temporal arrest is mirrored in embodiment, as the lived body (Leib) loses its transparency and resonance, transforming into a heavy, alienated, and objectified mass (Körper). Consequently, the subject's lived space contracts to their immediate surroundings, leading to a breakdown of social intercorporeality and a profound ontological isolation. At the heart of this collapse is a disruption of the minimal self or ipseity, which leaves the individual in a state of extreme existential vulnerability. The paper further bridges these phenomenological descriptions with contemporary neuroscientific findings, suggesting that the state of "desynchronization" corresponds to biological disruptions in brain rhythms and circuit communication. Ultimately, the article advocates for a human-centered psychiatry that integrates first-person experience to fully comprehend the existential disruption inherent in melancholia.

Keywords: *phenomenological psychopathology, melancholic depression, philosophy of psychiatry, embodiment*

Contemporary psychiatry is largely grounded in biomedical models that approach mental disorders through physiological explanations and identifiable symptoms. While this model has enabled important advances in diagnosis and treatment, it also tends to frame psychopathological experience as an aggregation of symptoms to be observed, classified, and managed. In doing so, it risks overlooking how these experiences are actually lived by individuals, reducing complex forms of suffering to measurable signs rather than meaningful transformations of existence.

Melancholic depression occupies an uneasy place within this landscape. Diagnostic frameworks often

frame melancholic depression as a subtype of major depressive disorder (MDD) and define it through observable features such as psychomotor disturbance, emotional non-reactivity, and anhedonia. However, when melancholia is primarily approached through criteria and specifiers, what tends to recede from view is the person who lives through it and the ways in which life itself becomes altered. The question is no longer only which symptoms are present, but what it means to exist under such conditions.

Phenomenological psychopathology begins precisely from this point. Rather than treating mental disorders as collections of internal states or measurable dysfunctions, it asks how experience is reorganized when one is ill. Psychopathology, from this perspective, is not something that merely happens *within* the subject, but something that reshapes how the subject stands in relation to time, body, others, and the world as a whole. What is at stake is not simply mood or behavior, but the conditions that make meaning, action, and connection possible in the first place. Through this perspective, melancholic depression no longer appears as an intensified version of ordinary sadness. Phenomenological descriptions instead point to a more radical disturbance. Lived time loses its forward movement, the body ceases to function as a transparent medium of engagement, space contracts rather than opens, and the sense of self becomes fragile and unfamiliar. The world continues to unfold but no longer does so *with* the subject. What emerges is a form of existential disconnection in which the shared rhythms of life can no longer be inhabited.

This article examines melancholic depression from within this phenomenological horizon. Rather than offering another diagnostic refinement, it seeks to describe how melancholia transforms lived experience across temporality, embodiment, selfhood, and world-relatedness. By following these experiential shifts, the paper aims to clarify why melancholic depression constitutes a qualitatively distinct way of being depressed. More broadly, it argues that without sustained attention to lived experience, neither psychiatric classification nor neuroscientific explanation can fully capture what is at stake for the person who suffers.

Phenomenological Foundations of Psychopathology

Phenomenology is both a philosophical tradition and a qualitative research method that examines how phenomena appear in the consciousness and how they are being experienced by the subject, primarily focusing on the concepts of lived experience, subjectivity and lifeworld (Davidsen, 2013; Fernandez & Køster 2018). The main aim of phenomenology is to uncover the essence and the meaning of a phenomenon through the perspective of the subject who is experiencing it (Tavakol & Sandars, 2014). Contrary to the positivist understanding, which assumes ‘one objective reality’, it takes the multi-layered and the contextual conditions into account. This approach does not

break the human experience into pieces, rather it addresses it as one holistic structure.

Phenomenological method practices this search for profound meaning with particular systematic steps. This process usually starts with the researcher's suspension of their *natural attitude*, meaning the presumptions regarding the external world, which is called *epoché* or *bracketing*. Thus, the phenomena can be approached with a fresh perspective, and this mode of investigation attempts to reach the invariant structures of experience by removing its accidental features through phenomenological reduction (Neubauer et al., 2019; Ramalho et al., 2024). The researcher collects data using methods such as in-depth (micro-phenomenological) interviews to enter the world of the participants and then subjects this data to descriptive or interpretive/hermeneutic analysis processes (Davidsen, 2013; Tavakol & Sandars, 2014). The fundamental aim is to describe the raw and unprocessed fabric of experience with philosophical rigor by returning to 'the things themselves'.

Within the clinical applications of phenomenological method, while clinical phenomenology and phenomenological psychopathology are related, they differ in their emphasis. Clinical phenomenology is an empathetic and descriptive tool that focuses more on clinical interviewing practice, enabling clinicians to understand the patient's subjective world; rather than diagnosing, it seeks to understand what the symptoms experienced by the patient mean to that individual (Dey et al., 2020). On the other hand, phenomenological psychopathology is a more theoretical and systematic discipline that analyzes the fundamental structures of psychiatric disorders with philosophical depth (Fuchs, 2013; Tamelini & Messas, 2019). These two fields take a stand against the reductionist approach of modern psychiatry based on a list of symptoms presented by DSM (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders). The goal is to reposition the patient not merely as a *case*, but as a *subject* who finds meaning in their own world (Brencio et al., 2023).

These disciplines move beyond the traditional medical model when evaluating psychopathology. Within this framework, mental disorders are not merely a biochemical imbalance in the brain or a set of dysfunctional behaviors; rather, they represent a structural transformation of the individual's lifeworld, that is, their way of being in the world (Messas et al., 2023). As Stanghellini et al. (2018, p.4) emphasize, "We should remember that we, as clinical psychiatrists, do not usually sit in front of a broken brain, we sit in front of a suffering person." From this perspective, symptoms are not externally observed anomalies but rather signs of the individual's struggle to survive in a collapsing world. Thus, the phenomenological approach, when evaluating psychopathology, seeks to understand the qualitative transformation of experience and how this transformation permeates the individual's entire existence, rather than relying solely on quantitative data. Through this phenomenological framework, melancholic depression is taken up to

explore how disruptions of lived experience manifest within a concrete psychopathological condition.

Melancholic Depression as a Case Study

It is necessary to clarify the distinction between the classification mentality of modern psychiatry and the in-depth description that has been presented by the phenomenological approach before examining melancholic depression as a case study. DSM-5, which is the predominant framework in contemporary clinical practice, categorizes melancholic depression as a subgroup or a specifier of major depressive disorder (MDD) with melancholic features. In this model, diagnosis is made based on externally observable symptoms such as anhedonia (inability to experience pleasure), emotional unresponsiveness, morning gloom, loss of appetite, and psychomotor retardation or agitation (Parker et al., 2010; Kavosh, 2024). However, at this point, the question of whether the concept of *melancholia* represents only a 'difference in severity' or a 'difference in type' from major depression becomes critically important, both in the internal discussions of the DSM and in the phenomenological literature. This classificatory perspective, however, remains limited to externally observable features and leaves open the question of how melancholia is actually lived from within.

Historically, melancholia possesses a lineage far more extensive and deep-rooted than that of major depression. As Kendler (2020) emphasizes, whereas melancholia served as the conceptual cornerstone of mental suffering from antiquity through the 19th century, *depression* is largely a modern construct, a heterogeneous umbrella term that has subsequently subsumed melancholia within its broader scope. According to DSM, the most concrete difference between melancholic and non-melancholic depression lies at the biological vs. reactive divergence. While non-melancholic depression can often develop as a reaction to life events and symptoms may fluctuate according to interaction with the environment, melancholic depression exhibits an autonomous and biologically based structure independent of the external world (Parker, 2007; Fletcher et al., 2015). Psychomotor disturbance lies at the heart of this distinction; in melancholia, this disturbance is not a symptom but the distinctive motor signature of the disease (Parker, 2007). From a phenomenological standpoint, this distinction cannot be fully captured by diagnostic criteria alone, as it concerns a more fundamental transformation in the subject's mode of being-in-the-world.

From a phenomenological perspective though, melancholia is more than a list of symptoms or a subgroup of major depression; it is a structural collapse of the subject's primary connection with the world, that is, the form of 'being-in-the-world'. In major depression, the individual distances themselves from the world through feelings of unhappiness or inadequacy, while in melancholia, this distance transforms into an absolute detachment and the evaporation of the world's

meaning structure. Examining this collapse through the relationships with time, body, self, and others requires considering each dimension as an existential crisis (Stanghellini et al., 2016; Fregna et al., 2020). The melancholic experience is a unique state of *desynchronization* in which the individual disconnects from the shared rhythm of the world.

The fundamental difference here is this: in a non-melancholic major depression case, the subject still feels somewhat 'articulated' within the temporal and social flow of the world; whereas in melancholia, temporality and intersubjectivity are so radically disrupted that the individual finds themselves in a bubble, ontologically isolated from the world of the living. Melancholia, in this sense, is not an emotion, but it is a change of existential situatedness. Parker et al. (2010) point precisely to this qualitative difference when they argue that melancholic depression should be removed from its subtype status in DSM-5 and classified as a separate disorder. Melancholia, with its unique treatment responses (e.g., strong response to ECT) and biological markers, is too specific a phenomenon to be absorbed into the heterogeneous structure of major depression. In phenomenological analysis, this uniqueness is explained by the total transformation of the lifeworld. While in major depression the subject sees the world as 'gray', in melancholia the world 'disappears' or becomes completely alien. For the melancholic subject, melancholia is not merely a state of depression, but the extinguishing of conative-affective energy, the most fundamental engine of existence. Consequently, melancholia, both as a clinical subtype (DSM) and as a world-experience (phenomenology), is a radical alienation, a transcendence that hurls the individual outside of time and space, exceeding the boundaries of the standard depressive experience. This disruption can be examined through four interrelated existential dimensions, temporality, embodiment, selfhood, and world-relatedness, that shape melancholic experience.

- **The Frozen Time and the Closure of the Future**

Temporality is the structure of lived experience in which the melancholic experience undergoes its most radical disruption. In an ordinary existence, time is in a fluid state that constantly carries us to the future, opportunities and potentials. However, as Fuchs (2013) and Valinskaité (2020) highlighted through their Husserlian perspective, in the melancholic subject, this fluidity gets disturbed and leaves its place to a temporally static state. In Husserlian terms, this disruption signifies the collapse of the 'intentional arc' that binds the subject to the world. Specifically, the mechanism of *protention*, the pre-reflective anticipation of the next moment, is paralyzed.

The main issue here is the stagnation of the conative-affective dimension. The future is not an "openness" or a "promise" anymore, rather it is a locked door. For the melancholic subject, the future means nothing more than an endless repetition of present suffering; therefore, the ability to plan,

hope, or to project oneself into the next moment is completely lost. This loss of 'temporal reaching out' means that the subject can no longer 'pre-intend' a field of possibilities. Since the affective drive is extinguished, the future ceases to exist as a category of action and becomes a mere continuation of a stagnant 'now'.

The past, on the other hand, is not merely a collection of finished memories; rather, it becomes a colossal weight that crushes the subject, weighing down on the present with intense feelings of guilt and regret experienced today (Hughes, 2020). This creates a state where the retentional tail of past failures dominates the present, preventing any new experience from emerging. This phenomenological *desynchronization* causes the subject to detach from the world's social time. While the world continues to flow, people change and events unfold, the melancholic subject remains imprisoned within a frozen time, haunted by the sense of having been left behind by everyone. This is not just a 'slowing down', but it is the rhythmic rupture of existence. As Micali (2009) argued, this temporal disruption is so profound that one may feel pushed outside of time, like a *living dead*. The present moment ceases to be a dynamic space and transforms into a static point that compresses the individual from all sides. This collapse of lived temporality does not remain confined to time alone, but is immediately embodied, reshaping how the subject inhabits and experiences their own body.

- **The Loss of Bodily Resonance**

Phenomenology conceptualizes the body as the *lived body*, through which the subject experiences the world firsthand. This approach is based on the distinction proposed by Husserl between *Leib* (lived body) and *Körper* (physical body). *Körper* occupies space as an objective reality and observable from the outside as a 'thing', while *Leib* represents the 'feeling body' that senses, acts and interacts with the world (Matthews, 2018). In a healthy existence, our body is in perfect harmony with the world at a pre-reflective level. During our daily actions, such as taking a step or reaching for an object, we don't perceive our physical presence as a barrier to be overcome; rather, the body seems to become transparent and withdrawn while serving our intentions in the world.

However, in melancholic depression, this embodiment is radically reversed. As emphasized by Fuchs (2013) and Rønberg (2018), the balance between *Leib* and *Körper* is disrupted in the melancholic subject. The body ceases to be a transparent medium filtering the world and transforms into a pure object that becomes heavy, solidified, and a 'burden' for the subject. Bizzari (2023) explains this situation with the concept of *chrematization*, meaning the body loses all its potential and flexibility and becomes an object. While Rønberg (2018) describes this as 'out-of-tune embodiment', Bizzari (2023) draws attention to the phenomenon of 'hyper-embodiment', where the

body is perceived by the subject excessively, but only as an obstacle.

The body, at this stage, ceases to be a space full of potentials where the subject actualizes themselves, and becomes an *alienated mass*, in which consciousness is imprisoned. The melancholic subject begins to experience their body not as something felt from within, but as a heavy object observed from the outside (objectification). This loss of bodily resonance also severs the sensory connection the individual has with their environment; the coolness of the wind or the warmth of a touch no longer resonates within the subject's inner world. Micali (2013) describes this as the extinguishing of that primal 'vibration' that the body establishes with the world. According to Bizzari (2023), this loss of bodily orientation leads to the individual's isolation not only from the physical world, but also from the world of bodily resonance and intersubjectivity with other people.

This alienation in embodiment makes the world distant and inaccessible. Reality can no longer pass through the bodily filter and reach the subject; because that filter is no longer permeable, but a barricade. The individual lives like a stranger within their own flesh (*Leib*), surrounded by their body (*Körper*). Since the body has lost its capacity as an instrument of action, the lived space is narrowed to only the individual's immediate surroundings (Bizzari, 2023). As Matthews (2018) also points out, this situation leads the melancholic not only to spiritual suffering but also to an ontological captivity in which the body is experienced as a prison. As bodily resonance is lost, the world itself correspondingly withdraws, no longer offering space as a field of action, meaning, or encounter.

- **Constricted Space and an Alienated World**

In their studies, Kavosh (2024) and Bloc et al. (2016) describe how lived space of the subject shrinks and loses its meaning in melancholic depression. Even though the subject's environment is physically present, it might be felt like it is emotionally and existentially far away. The world is no longer a field of possibilities waiting to be explored, but rather a cage that surrounds and imprisons. This situation represents the collapse of the action potentials that objects offer to the subject, that is, the 'affordance' structures; objects are no longer tools, but alien masses devoid of meaning. According to Bizzari (2023), since the body has lost its capacity as a tool for actions, the lived space physically and existentially shrinks to only the individual's immediate surroundings: to their bed or room. Space is no longer an openness, but a boundary sealed by the loss of bodily capacity for action.

This spatial alienation reaches its peak in the relationship with others (intersubjectivity). In the melancholic experience, there is a disruption of *intercorporeality*, that is, the silent, bodily and emotional flow between subjects (Micali, 2013). The melancholic subject cannot grasp the meaning

in the gaze of others, the joy in their voices, or the rhythm of social interaction.

Other people appear like actors behind a glass partition; making any real contact with them becomes impossible. The gaze of another is no longer an invitation or a bridge of communication, but a frozen element that objectifies the subject and prevents them from reaching it (Micali, 2013). Kavosh (2024) compares this situation to the reactivity in atypical depression, noting that the 'situatedness' in melancholia exhibits an absolute solidification. The melancholic individual falls into a profound ontological loneliness because they have lost the ability to *attune* between their social existence and the world. Communication channels such as gaze and expression cease to function, leading to an isolation that severs the individual from the commonality of humanity. The connection with the other is no longer a bridge, but an insurmountable chasm formed by the radical contraction of the lived space.

- **Disrupted Selfhood and Existential Vulnerability**

At the heart of all these radical processes lies the erosion of the fundamental structure of the self. The melancholic subject can no longer experience their own existence as a whole. Pre-reflective unity is broken. Stanghellini et al. (2018) describe this as a disruption at the level of the *minimal self* or *ipseity*, the most fundamental layer of the self; that is, the quiet and primal familiarity with one's own experience is lost. The self feels like a fragment of consciousness suspended in a void, detached from the world and the body. The subject enters a process of 'self-objectification', no longer a fluid source of their own actions and thoughts, but an outsider observing their own suffering and frozen existence from the outside.

This existential rift makes the individual extremely vulnerable. Vulnerability in melancholia is not merely an openness to ordinary sadness; it is an absolute defenselessness against the collapse of the world's meaning structure. This experience is so profound that the individual is trapped between the inability to live and the inability to die, in what Hughes (2020) calls "a limbo between two worlds." No emotion or action flows spontaneously anymore; everything becomes a futile struggle against a vast emptiness (Fregna et al., 2020).

For the melancholic subject, existence is no longer a spontaneously continuing process, but a structure that could collapse at any moment. Deprived of the possibility of self-realization, the subject wanders among the remnants of their own self. Consequently, melancholia is the individual's refuge in their own home, an irreparable severance of their rhythmic connection with the world (Fregna et al., 2020). This is not simply a *mental* disorder, but a 'loss of lifeworld' and a structural destruction of the ability to 'be in the world'; the subject is no longer a part of the world, but a stranger trapped within their own self and the world. While phenomenological analysis allows us to describe

these disruptions as a collapse of lived experience, it also opens the question of how such profound alterations might be reflected beyond experience itself, at the level of our neurobiology.

Neuroscientific Perspectives on Lived Experience

Phenomenological analysis of melancholic depression and recent neuroscientific findings appear to support one another, allowing for an explanatory bridge between subjective experience and neurobiological processes. This convergence makes it possible to approach psychopathology within a biopsychosocial framework rather than through isolated levels of explanation. In particular, studies have compellingly demonstrated how the state of *desynchronization* corresponds to disruptions in communication between emotional and motor circuits in the brain (Kavosh, 2024; Mosley et al., 2024).

As researchers like Northoff (2023) highlight, the translation crisis experienced by contemporary psychiatry can be overcome by synthesizing phenomenological observations with spatiotemporal neuroscience data. The feeling of 'time standing still' observed in melancholic depression is not merely a psychological metaphor; rather, it is a reflection of the disruption of synchronization between the brain's internal rhythms and the rhythmic stimuli of the external world. Research by Mosley et al. (2024) revealed that the brain state synchrony in response to natural stimuli in individuals with melancholic depression differs sharply from that of the non-melancholic depression group. This provides biological evidence for why the subject experiences the world as distant, lifeless and rhythmless.

In addition, the body becoming a burden in melancholia and the loss of pre-reflective level bodily resonance are supported by microstructural disruptions between the subcortical and cortical structures of the brain. A study by Mertse et al. (2022) found significant correlations between anterior cingulate thickness and cingulum bundle microstructure and the severity of melancholia. Changes in these regions, which are closely related to emotional regulation and motor planning, biologically ground the 'out-of-tune embodiment' and paralysis of the ability to act (conative-affective dimension) described in phenomenology.

The brain's flexibility and ability to synchronize with others (as it has been mentioned as *intercorporeality*), which it should exhibit during social interaction, encounters a neurobiological resistance in the melancholic subject (Mosley et al., 2024). This explains why the individual cannot resonate with the gaze or joy of another in their own body, because the brain's circuits responsible for social and temporal attunement have become desensitized to the rhythmic flow from the external world. Consequently, neuroscientific research, instead of reducing phenomenological descriptions, concretizes them and grounds the philosophical claim that defines melancholia as 'a structural

erosion of lived experience' on a biological basis. This interdisciplinary harmony allows us to redefine the profound 'existential alienation' experienced by the melancholic subject as both a spiritual collapse and a systemic biological *desynchronization*.

Conclusion

Melancholic depression, when examined phenomenologically, emerges not as a quantitative intensification of depressive symptoms but as a qualitative disruption of lived experience. Across this analysis, melancholia has been described as a form of desynchronized being in which the ordinary coordinates that orient human existence lose their mutual coherence. What is affected is not only how the individual feels, but how life itself is encountered and sustained.

The disturbance of lived time stands at the center of this transformation. In melancholia, the future no longer opens as a horizon of possibility, the present loses its vitality, and the past weighs heavily on experience. This temporal arrest is inseparable from changes in embodiment, as the lived body ceases to function as a medium of engagement and becomes heavy and resistant. As bodily resonance fades lived space contracts, the world withdraws from meaningful reach, and intersubjective attunement becomes increasingly fragile. Hence, the sense of self loses its pre-reflective unity, giving rise to experiences of guilt, depersonalization, and existential vulnerability. Together, these alterations form a coherent experiential pattern rather than a collection of isolated deficits.

Approached in this way, melancholic depression cannot be fully understood through symptom-based descriptions alone. While diagnostic frameworks such as the DSM provide valuable clinical structure, they remain limited in capturing how melancholia reorganizes existence from within. Phenomenological analysis reveals that what is at stake is not simply mood disturbance, but a breakdown in the subject's capacity to remain attuned to the shared rhythms of time, body, and world. This helps explain why melancholia often resists standard explanatory models and demands forms of understanding that attend to experience as it is lived.

From a broader perspective, this analysis underscores the importance of applying a human-centered phenomenological approach within psychiatry. Phenomenology does not seek to replace biomedical or neuroscientific models, but to complement them by restoring attention to the person behind the diagnosis. The consistency between phenomenological analyses and contemporary neuroscientific findings further supports this approach, suggesting that first-person descriptions of lived experience and biological investigations often converge rather than conflict. By taking lived experience seriously, phenomenological psychopathology allows psychiatry to move beyond treating mental illness as a set of symptoms and toward understanding it as

a meaningful disruption of a human life. In this sense, phenomenology offers not only a deeper account of melancholic depression, but also a reminder that psychiatric knowledge remains incomplete unless it remains grounded in how suffering is actually lived by those who endure it.

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harFler vesaiRe

Bir siyah ekran ve gelişigüzel dağılmış olsa da
yerlerine alıştığım harfler
Ve çoktan ölmüş olan filozoflar
Boş bir sayfa ve güzel bir kalem
Ay ışığının da yardımı olabilirdi belki ama
duvarlar ve yüksek ışıklar...

Fikirler, onları ortaya saçan zihinden
bağımsız bir ağ oluştururmuş
Sıradan bir günde kendini ağlarda bulmuş
tüm o balıkları düşünüyorum
Ve bu düşünce ağlarına ne zaman ve neden
düştüğümü hatırlamıyorum
Belki zaten bu ağların içine doğmuştum

Nelin Beste Eryılmaz,
25 Eylül 2025

Aesthetics of Impermanence: Ryuichi Sakamoto's Async and Coda through Desmond's Otherness and Schopenhauer's Will

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Abstract

This paper explores the sonic framing of our being-towards-death and the ontological scarcity of the singular moment in Ryuichi Sakamoto's 2017 album async and its companion documentary Coda, in which he fundamentally transforms his approach to sound and time. Following the Fukushima nuclear disaster and a cancer diagnosis, Sakamoto abandoned the strict mathematical control and synthesizer mastery that defined his early electronic music and instead shifted towards a sound of natural decay and environmental noise. This paper interprets Sakamoto's aesthetic evolution as a direct challenge to Arthur Schopenhauer's philosophy of music. While Schopenhauer argued that aesthetic contemplation offers a necessary and temporary escape from the inherent suffering of the world (the Will), Sakamoto's async refuses to adhere to this aesthetic quietism by forcing the listener to dwell within the world's materiality. Drawing also on William Desmond's concept of the metaxu, the intermediate space where the self and the "Other" meet, I argue that Sakamoto turns the reality of physical decay into a relationship of radical receptivity toward the world and provides the ground for an aesthetic encounter. By embracing the instrument's decay as an active expression of its own impermanence, and by allowing notes to naturally fade into the environment, and giving them the space and time to exist, async radically reframes mortality and the fleeting nature of sound. Rather than approaching entropy, death and decay as tragic phenomena that necessitate control or resolution through artistic intervention, Sakamoto affirms impermanence as a fundamental gift that opens the listener up to the porosity of being.

Keywords: *Ryuichi Sakamoto, asynchronism, impermanence, Arthur Schopenhauer, Metaxu, phenomenology of sound*

Introduction: The Asynchrony of Time and Eternity

> *""Time" is part of Sakamoto's ongoing exploration of "asynchronism," music arranged outside traditional time structures. Introduced on his 2017 album "async", the concept was conceived as he recovered from his first bout with cancer — an experience that he has said newly honed his ear to the beauty of everyday sounds, both natural and man-made, sun showers and singing bowls."*
>
> *(Starnes, 2021)*

When Ryuichi Sakamoto bowed the strings of a tsunami-wrecked piano in his documentary *Coda* (2017), he did more than record an instrument's last gasp; he revealed a metaphysics of sound. A central metaphor for the film and his 2017 album *async*, Sakamoto's exploration of metaphysical concepts such as decay, mortality, and the haunting beauty of impermanence proves to be a radical aesthetic experiment. Having to liberate music from time's linearity ("asynchronism") and to confront the "Otherness" of existence, whether in the eternal resonance of a singing bowl or the fractured silence of Fukushima. *async*, his post-cancer album, and *Coda,* its visual counterpart, explore the notion of both perpetual and impermanent sound. The former represents a sound that won't dissipate over time, revealing its nature as a metaphor for eternity, and the latter represents a sound that fades away, encapsulating the finite nature of existence. With a concept album such as *async* and its documentary counterpart , Sakamoto searches for the traces of sound, whether in the eternal resonance of a singing bowl or in the fractured silence of Fukushima.

This duality mirrors the tension at the heart of William Desmond's *metaxological* threshold. Here, art exists between Schopenhauer's suffering "will" (the impermanent sound as an emblem of life's fragility) and the transcendent "otherness" Desmond identifies in *Art, Origins, Otherness* (the eternal sound as a glimpse of the ungraspable). This neologism of Desmond's refers to a *logos*— word, discourse, account—of the *metaxu*—the between, the middle, the intermediate (Simpson, 2018). Sakamoto's *async* and his documentary *Coda* reflect the line between metaphysics and art, where we see art negotiating with immanence and transcendence. Against Hegel's teleological *Absolute*, Sakamoto's work dwells in the threshold, where sound is neither mastered nor erased, but listened to, an act of artistic hospitality to what resists human control. This paper argues that Sakamoto's *async* constitutes a phenomenological refutation of Schopenhauer's pessimism. While Schopenhauer infers that music is a direct copy of the Will –and thus a confrontation with inherent suffering that requires some 'escape' through aesthetic contemplation– Sakamoto's late style proves that dwelling within that decay or impermanence is not suffering but an ethical encounter with "Otherness". By analyzing *async* through William Desmond's concept of *metaxu* (the between), I contend that Sakamoto transforms the Schopenhauerian struggle into a gift that redefines sonic decay not as a loss of the self, but as a hospitality to the porosity of being.

From Mastery to Porosity: The Phenomenological Turn

> *"Even in today's world of amusing ourselves to death, taking pleasure in ugliness and being rampant with impetuosity and desire, there is such an old man who is able to listen to the sound (social voice, natural sound) and create music with pure feelings" (Guo, 2019).*

Arguably one of the most influential and well-known Japanese artists, Ryuichi Sakamoto, started his career in the early 1970s with his

collaboration with Haruomi Hosono and Yukihiro Takahashi. This collaboration led to the formation of their electronic band called Yellow Magic Orchestra, in 1978. Even though he was still part of the trio, Sakamoto released his first solo album, *Thousand Knives of Ryuichi Sakamoto,* in mid-1978. Each of *Thousand Knives*' six pieces swerves with a deft touch through complex arrangements, playful voicings, and cheeky key changes, says Daniel Martin-McCornick (2019). This first album reveals an enduring fascination with nature's fragile complexity, where crystalline sonic architecture mirrors ecosystems, and industrial tones seek uneasy reconciliation with what remains organic. When Sakamoto started recording his first solo album, China was only two years removed from the end of the three-decade reign of Mao Zedong (Pedersen, 2019). The album starts with Sakamoto reading a poem from 1928 by Mao, describing his first experience with this theory of guerrilla warfare. Sakamoto's decision to start the album with Mao's poem reflects the intrinsic nature of having to face an overwhelming force. Having to find temporary respite in aesthetic experience and the persistent engagement with external pressures and internal states emerges as a fundamental and evolving theme throughout Sakamoto's artistic life and career. Exploring the tension arising from the unfolding, often challenging reality of the work and his endeavor to find shelter in the personal, internalized resolution lays the groundwork, especially in his magnum opus *async*. Evidently, it can be inferred from Sakamoto's decision to start his first album with the line "the foe encircles us thousands strong,", which encapsulates a struggle to harmonize with external forces. This adversarial relationship with the world mirrors Schopenhauer's depiction of the Will, which posits that the innermost nature of existence is not peace, but a restless, opposing drive:

> "Thus a constant struggle is carried on between life and death, the main result whereof is the resistance by which that striving, which constitutes the innermost nature of everything, is everywhere impeded. It presses and urges in vain; yet, by reason of its inner nature, it cannot cease." (Schopenhauer, 1818/1966).

In this passage, Schopenhauer identifies the ground of existence not as a rational order, but as a blind, irrational striving. If the "innermost nature" of the world is characterized by this chaotic force pressing forward "in vain", then the artist's role becomes an attempt to impose form onto that chaos. This framework illuminates Sakamoto's early reliance on the synthesizer. Unlike acoustic instruments, which are bound by the material resistance and natural decay Schopenhauer describes, the synthesizer offers the possibility of total regulation. It is what allows the artist to superimpose a mathematical schema onto the Will, effectively attempting to negate the material resistance of nature by replacing it with a purely rational, controlled form.

Reflecting this metaphysical tension, the initial album encapsulates the juxtaposition of two conflicting impulses: the external clamor of a world in discord and the internal yearning for transient

harmony. This rupture in this philosophy of control occurs through the dual crises of the Fukushima nuclear disaster and Sakamoto's diagnosis with oropharyngeal cancer in 2014, causing him to take a year-long break from music and any artistic endeavor. This biological and environmental collapse forces a movement away from a culture of distraction to a confrontation with the "social voice and natural sound" (Guo, 2019). The cancer diagnosis, which later returned in 2021, strips Sakamoto's illusion of physical permanence. His subsequent work, including *The Revenant* (2015) and his activism regarding Fukushima, moves beyond the simple binary of man versus nature. Instead of warning that "keeping silent after Fukushima is barbaric" (Yamaguchi & Kageyama, 2023) solely as a political statement, Sakamoto began to embody this lack of silence in his soundscapes. He transitioned from the synthesizer – an instrument of infinite sustains and control – to the tsunami wrecked piano, an instrument defined by its brokenness.

This late aesthetic turn creates the framework for analyzing *async* (2017). It represents a departure from the synchronicity of his early pop-electronic work, which sought to master time, toward and asynchronism that allows the Otherness of nature to speak. By the time of his death in 2023, Sakamoto had moved from the mathematical structures of *Thousand Knives* to a living dialogue between art and existence. Thus, Sakamoto's legacy remains a rich one, resonating with profound meditation on the human condition. A career that not only sticks to music but tries to transcend its boundaries to become a living dialogue between art and existence. From his albums and film scores to immersive exhibitions and avant-garde operas, Sakamoto crafts a phenomenology of immersion. Interrogating temporal decay and the subject's position within the natural world, his work does not seek to transcend time but to re-inhabit it. This shift lays the groundwork for challenging Schopenhauer's pessimism: rather than escaping the Will, the late Sakamoto dwells within the traces of the world, finding in the impermanent body not a source of suffering, but a site of porosity. As for Schopenhauer, the aesthetic experience is predicated on a negation of the Will, which serves as a momentary cessation of the blind striving that characterizes existence. In this view, art serves as a form of asceticism, allowing the subject to step out of the stream of time to avoid suffering. Sakamoto's late work, however, rejects this escapism. He locates the aesthetic moment not in the suspension of time, but in the affirmation of entropy. This turn toward entropy is not just a concept but the structural engine of his late style, manifesting directly in two works that systematically dismantle our desire for order.

async (2017) and Coda (2017) as Case Studies: Embodying Impermanence and Letting Go

async is Sakamoto's nineteenth solo studio album, released in 2017. The album's main idea was to explore the comfort that human nature finds in synchronicity. In a 2017 interview after the release of the album, Sakamoto explains:

> "That's why I wanted to create untraditional music that doesn't synchronize, [because it's like] speaking in a language that doesn't exist." (art/research, 2017).

His whole ambition during the totality of his career was to break the stereotypical prejudice paradigm and boundaries and learn how to see things upside down (Saxelby, 2016). Even though all the sounds make up a whole, they never create a proper sense of harmony. The album opens with *andata.* A hauntingly beautiful track that introduces us to the first strokes of the piano. Wrapped in sheets of reverb and plucked tones, the entirety of the track incorporates the piano's sound that turns into an organ melody bristling with distortion. It also introduces the soundscape, which is marked by deliberate gaps between the notes. Then comes a disruptive and loud soundscape marked by the organ. The melody gets disrupted by the other tracks of the album, such as *disintegration* and *tri*. Marked by their dissonance, they evoke a sense of rupture while still maintaining a sense of ambient sound in the background. *Solari,* the third track of the album, invites comparison with *Solaris,* Andrei Tarkovsky's 1972 masterpiece. Near the center of the album, Sakamoto confronts mortality itself. *Life, Life,* and *fullmoon*, represent the gentle movement of death and impermanence. With poems read by David Sylvian and Paul Bowles, both these tracks encapsulate our eternal conflict with what remains to be the heaviest of all, death. In *fullmoon,* we hear Paul Bowles, one of the greatest 20th-century American novelists, cite a poem from Bernardo Bertolucci's *The Sheltering Sky*. The score of the movie was originally composed primarily by Sakamoto. At the end of the movie, Bowles himself narrated an excerpt of the novel, and Sakamoto used this narration:

> "Because we don't know when we will die. We get to think of life as an inexhaustible well. Yet everything happens only a certain number of times. And a very small number, really. How many more times will you remember a certain afternoon of your childhood. Some afternoon that is so deeply a part of your being that you can't even conceive your life without it? Perhaps four or five times more. Perhaps not even that. How many more times will you watch the full moon rise. Perhaps twenty, and yet it all seems limitless." *(Sakamoto, 2017)*

This narration functions as a sonic *memento mori*, which strips away the illusion of the "inexhaustible well" to expose the ontological scarcity of the singular moment. Whereas Schopenhauer's Will is characterized by a blind and infinite striving that disregards the individual, Bowles' text and Sakamoto's sonic framing of it enact a limit and force a confrontation with the finite nature of "being-towards-death". The question "how many more times?" dissolves the abstraction of time, which renders each remaining moment not as a repetition but as a singular and vanishing gift. For Sakamoto, writing in the shadow of his diagnosis, this passage transforms the listener's experience from passive hearing to an urgent, ethical attentiveness to the present and reframes time here

not as an open horizon but as a finite series of irreversible events. To amplify this universality, Sakamoto adds ten different languages, all reciting the same extract. He expresses that even though what is being recited is the same, holding the same meaning, we hear ten different sounds. Paul Bowles' voice is set against a backdrop of sinewaves, bowed cymbal, and spare piano as other voices gather around it (坂本龍一*(Ryuichi Sakamoto)* – *Fullmoon*, 2017). *Life, Life*, on the other hand, has David Sylvian reading a poem written by Arseny Tarkovsky, the father of Andrei Tarkovsky. "And all will be repeated, all be re-embodied/You will dream everything I have seen in dream," Sylvian narrates, "Dreams, reality, death, on wave after wave." This album is the representation of the inexhaustible well of existentialism. We see the remnants of death as compositional grammar. With *fullmoon*'s poem, there is a sonic memento mori "How many more times will you watch the full moon rise?", asking us to remember that we have to die. A Heideggerian approach, the soundscape of *async* reflects our being-towards-death, and sounds out its shape. The spare piano and bowed cymbal in *fullmoon* represent emptiness as presence and death's shadow in sound (see Figure 1).

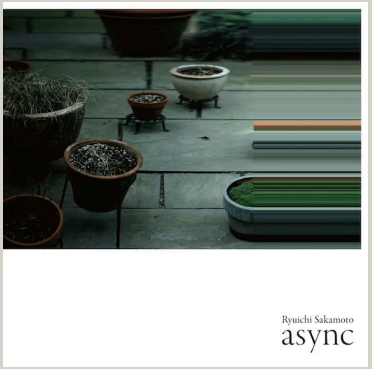

Figure 1

Album cover of async (2017)

The documentary film *Ryuichi Sakamoto: CODA*, directed by Stephen Nomura Schible, was released in Japan in November 2017. The documentary was shot and edited in a span of five years, from 2012 to 2017. A thorough representation of Sakamoto's life and works, and his battle and reconciliation with getting diagnosed with cancer. The documentary maps out Sakamoto's intentions in creating his 2017 album *async*. He explains in the documentary that there are countless sounds in the world, but we do not perceive these sounds as music, claiming that he has a strong desire to combine these sounds with his own work. However, in reality, these sounds have their own musical resonance. We learn that Sakamoto's endeavor is to create a sound order by combining them with instruments. A blend of sounds that has the characteristic of disorder as well as unity. The documentary opens with Sakamoto visiting the restricted contamination zone in Fukushima, recording and playing the piano wrecked by the tsunami. A combination of what used to be and what will be. During the documentary, we see Sakamoto's creative journey

and artistic practice. He plays with sounds, singing bowls, recording rain sounds, and using instruments in various ways to find the sound of the album. While walking through the forest and the remains of Fukushima, Sakamoto records his footsteps, later becoming the fifth song on the album, *walker*. An insight into his creative process and his battle with cancer, *Coda* gives us a sonic testament to the courage of fragility. This cinematic and sonic evidence prepares the ground for rigorous philosophical interrogation. If Coda visualizes the artist's surrender to the sounds of the world, to the tsunami, cancer, and the rain, it simultaneously challenges the dominant 19th-century metaphysical framework for understanding music: Schopenhauer's pessimism. While Schopenhauer argued that music is the direct copy of the Will's suffering, requiring the listener to transcend the physical world, Sakamoto's method suggests the opposite. The courage of fragility witnessed in Coda demands that we do not transcend the material world but descend further into it.

The Will's Resonance – Schopenhauer in Async and Coda (Sound as Suffering)

How does Sakamoto's *async* come into play as a counterexample to Schopenhauer's musical metaphysics? *async* can be regarded as a rupture in traditional musical metaphysics, laying the groundwork that the Will can be grounded in material decay and temporal fragility, thus transforming aesthetic contemplation into an encounter with impermanence. Schopenhauer established art as a form of knowledge where aesthetic perception bypasses ordinary, suffering-laden experience to attend to the permanent Platonic Ideas, or, in the case of music, the Will itself. Music, being the highest art form, provides a temporary release from the incessant pain associated with the unfulfilled desires of the Will, offering access to a will-less and timeless subject of knowledge. It is in the *World as Will and Representation* that Schopenhauer posits that aesthetic contemplation provides a temporary release from the suffering of the everyday world and the demands of the individual will. Borrowing from Kant, Schopenhauer establishes that all things have will as their essential nature. This nature, as we've previously mentioned, results in the lack of fulfillment, incorporating a telos in our nature that needs to transcend ordinary forms of perception. In light of this suffering, as Dale Jacquette underlines, the pleasure of aesthetic contemplation is a relief from the incessant pain of the inevitably unfulfilled desires associated with ordinary consciousness of the manifold particulars of quotidian experience (Jacquette, 2003). Aesthetic contemplation allows a move towards a will-less and timeless subject of knowledge, as Schopenhauer puts it, and access to Platonic Ideas, escaping the Will's demands and losing ourselves in art and nature. This aesthetic rescue is made possible because art reveals the hierarchy of the Will's objectification, bridging the gap between blind striving and intelligible form. Desmond articulates this structural function of art, noting that:

> "Will in itself is not a static substance but a dynamic power that objectifies itself at

> different grades that, he tells us, correspond to different Platonic Ideas. The Artwork serves to lift the mind to the contemplation of the Platonic Ideas" (Desmond, 2018).

As Demond interprets, Schopenhauer's aesthetics represent an escape from immanence, because this aesthetic contemplation offers a temporary release from the transient reality of the Will and the phenomenal world by ascending to the realm of timeless, permanent Ideas. The temporary release from suffering is best put into action by music, which is the highest form, according to Schopenhauer. He argues that music is not merely a copy of the Ideas but rather is a direct copy or immediate objectification of the Will itself. Music speaks of the "essence" of the world, embodying the Will's most secret history, including states like suffering, sorrow, and pain. The world of nature, as the immediate representation of the thing-in-itself, represents the immediate affirmation of certain states in which we feel sorrow, joy, or any other feeling that we experience when we hear Beethoven's symphony, for example. There is no intermediary in the sense that we experience conceptual mediation. Music becomes reality's revelation, confronting the raw pulse of existence. As Jacquette also states, this internal friction grants the subject a unique form of access to the Will, distinguishing the immediate, felt experience of pain from the detached observation of external objects:

> "Suffering is nonrepresentational, according to Schopenhauer, in the sense that it does not depict the phenomenal world. When we suffer pain or frustrations of desire, the experience of suffering by itself, unlike perception, is not a representation of the phenomenal world. To suffer is therefore to experience nonrepresentational reality as intimately as possible within the confines of empirical psychology" (Jacquette, 2003).

Consequently, if suffering is the only experience that bypasses the filter of representation, then music, which is Schopenhauer's copy of the Will itself, functions as its sonic equivalent. Unlike the visual arts, which offer the safety distance of an object to contemplate, music dissolves the gap between subject and object. It does not depict pain but enacts it. Music then forces the listener into an immediate, unprotected confrontation with the Will, mirroring the non-representational immediacy of suffering itself.

Comparing Ryuichi Sakamoto's album a*sync* to Schopenhauer's Will, the album's restless melodies and unresolved tensions become aural metaphors for the Will's "constant struggle," where even moments of repose (a fragile piano phrase, a suspended chord) are haunted by the knowledge of their impermanence. However, in this work, Sakamoto diverges from Schopenhauer's pessimism. His music does not merely lament the struggle; rather, it orchestrates it, transforming discord into a compositional principle. In this manner, the artist's inaugural work foreshadows the existential themes of *async*, where the decay of the tsunami piano, the howl of Fukushima's winds, and

the silence between notes would later articulate a lifetime's meditation on resistance, resilience, and the fleeting beauty of equilibrium. Even though Schopenhauer's aesthetic contemplation offers release from the Will's striving, Sakamoto's *async* forces us to dwell in the Will's materiality.

Music Beyond Representation

What is then the musician's specific role in expressing the Will? For Schopenhauer, the musician possesses the terrifying power of immediate knowledge. While other arts speak only of appearances (shadows) of the world, music speaks of the essence (the Will itself). However, this immediacy comes at a cost, as the aesthetic genius suffers precisely because their sensitivity makes them transparent to the Will's torment. As Jacquette (2003) argues, "The artist's heroism lies in the persistence of such action in the face of such content: he himself bears the cost of producing that play; he himself is the will objectifying itself and remaining in constant suffering". In this framework, the musician is a tragic hero who imposes aesthetic form upon the chaotic, suffering Will. It is also worth noting that this tension also mirrors Kant's own anxiety regarding the wildness of the genius. In *The Critique the Power of Judgment*, Kant defines genius as:

> "Genius is the talent (natural gift) that gives the rule to art. Since the talent, as an inborn productive faculty of the artist, itself belongs to nature, this could also be expressed thus: Genius is the inborn predisposition of the mind (ingenium) through which nature gives the rule to art." (Kant, 1790/2000, p. 186 [5:307])

Meaning that the genius acts as an intermediary for an originating power that rational concepts cannot fully grasp. Yet Kant feared the darkness of this "originating nature" (Kant, 1790/2000, p. 186 [5:307]), famously warning that genius threatens to degenerate into "nothing but a madness" without the "discipline" of taste to clip its wings (p. 197 [5:319]). For Kant, the terror of the sublime is ultimately resolved through subreption; that is, attributing the power of the object to the subject, thereby affirming the moral subject's superiority over nature. Schopenhauer, however, strips this Enlightenment optimism away. He leaves the musician to bear the terror of the Will without conquering it. Sakamoto's async locates itself there: not in the Kantian mastery of the will, but in the madness of the untamed piano.

There are various ways in which musicians and artists decide to represent what needs to be represented. With *async*, Sakamoto dismantles the heroic narrative and instead of imposing order upon the Will, he engages in a phenomenological surrender to it. This surrender manifests not only as a metaphysical stance but as a concrete attentiveness to the fragile material world that sustains us. Sakamoto, a huge advocate for climate change and against nuclear power, finds his inspiration in the everyday. However, besides the beauty in everyday life, music can also reflect historical and cultural experiences of suffering, such as the history of the Fukushima disaster.

Sakamoto's music, particularly in conjunction with other arts like tragedy, can bring subjects face-to-face with the realities of life and the suffering inherent in existence. This shift is most vividly embodied in his use of the tsunami piano:

> "I went to see one of those pianos drowned in tsunami water near Fukushima, and recorded it," he said. "Of course, it was totally out of tune, but I thought it was beautiful. I thought: 'Nature tuned it.'" Parts of these sounds are on "async"" (Beta, 2017).

This statement marks a radical departure from Schopenhauer. As Schopenhauer views the Will as a constant struggle that must be quieted by aesthetic contemplation, Sakamoto views the tsunami's destruction of the piano's industrial tuning not as damage, but as a "retuning" by the natural work. This dissonance is no longer a representation of human suffering; it is exactly the infra-ordinary sound of the world returning to its elemental state. Specifically, in *async*, Sakamoto embraces noise, glitches, and environmental sounds. It destabilizes the very idea of musical "purity." Embodying the vernacular beauty and environmental noises, Sakamoto does not shy away from confronting us with sound *as sound,* stripping Schopenhauer's biases. Vernacular, everyday beauty can be expressed as something that we no longer see. It is *par essence* what functions in the background, a structure of our life that we do not notice. We often pay attention to the opposite of the *infra-ordinaire* and focus on the *extra-ordinaire*. Sakamoto defies that and makes it so that the inexhaustible beauty of the everyday does not lose its capacity to reveal deeper truths about decay and the haunting beauty of impermanence, its power to challenge conventional notions of musical purity and aesthetic hierarchy, or its inherent significance when approached through attentive, unbiased listening, allowing us to encounter sound for itself. This is also explored in George Perec's conception of art and aesthetics. His call to action is to explore environmental aesthetics, to notice our surroundings, as there are things that have not been considered in accordance with aesthetics.

This philosophical commitment also extended beyond the studio. Sakamoto speaks of nature and our governance over it in his documentary, and this fascination with sonic decay extended specifically beyond the tsunami piano's history. In 2019, Sakamoto placed a piano in his New York backyard to weather the elements, documenting its gradual return to nature. This experiment, like the tsunami piano, rejects the teleology of the instrument (which is designed to hold a specific pitch) in favor of the entropy of the environment. In doing so, Sakamoto suggests that the suffering of the Will is only suffering if we insist on mastering it. If we accept the nature tuning, per se, the struggle dissolves into a vernacular beauty. This piano is also integrated into the poster of an exhibition, following the format of his album *async* (see Figure 2).

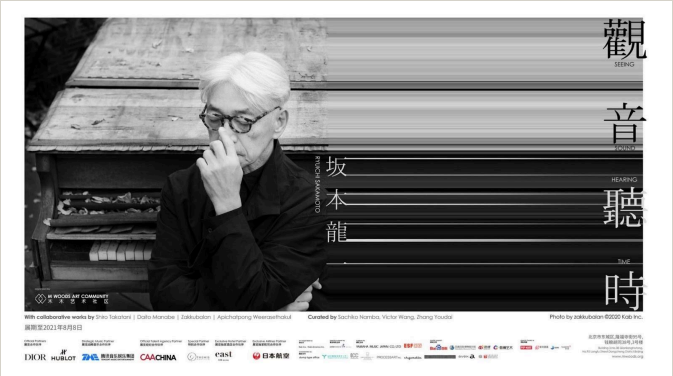

Figure 2

Exhibition poster for Ryuichi Sakamoto | seeing sound, hearing time

Note. From Wang (n.d.), https://viktorwang.com/Ryuichi-Sakamoto

The Perpetual Sound Paradox

"I think of music from the perspective of the piano. The piano does not keep the note long. When we let go, the sound dilutes and disappears. You can still hear a very small amount. But the noise around you drowns it out. The thought of a voice that remains constant puts me under its spell. A sound that time cannot destroy" (Schible, 2017).

Sakamoto's lament, a yearning for a sound that time cannot destroy. A longing for a voice that remains constant amid entropy. An impossible desire that reveals certain tensions. His own compositions on *async* unveil mirroring concepts such as decay, yet we see Sakamoto yearning for permanence. The very idea of the paradox of the perpetual sound can be fully illustrated with *fullmoon*. The poem recited by Bowles, "How many more times," reflects time's scarcity composed into sound. This quote evokes the theme of finite time, with "perhaps twenty", contrasted with the perception or feeling of limitlessness or eternity, with the line "And yet it all seems limitless." The perpetual sound that Sakamoto seeks is nevertheless not immortality; he comes to terms with his own mortality in the documentary but desires what Desmond calls "the gift of hearing time itself, an echo that persists precisely because it fades." Async represents that echo; it lets its sound be its own ruin.

Ars longa, vita brevis, art is long, time is short, represents the core paradox explored by Sakamoto in *async*. His lament about the piano note's decay represents the "*vita brevis*" aspect, the inherent impermanence of sound and of individual existence, and the temporal world. The sire for a "voice that remains constant" is the yearning for "*ars longa*", a sound or creation that defies time and entropy. Even the act of placing a piano outdoors to succumb to the elements highlights Sakamoto's direct engagement with impermanence. After contemplating his documentary Coda, it is clear that his illness and contemplation of mortality further underscored the transient nature of life and led him to embrace aesthetics like wabi-sabi, finding beauty in simplicity and focusing on the weight of each sound.

The contradiction in Schopenhauer's aesthetics is clear here. As music is the purest objectification of the Will, a direct and timeless expression, why does Sakamoto's longing for a sound that time cannot destroy feel so urgent? Schopenhauer's timeless

Ideas render impermanence irrelevant, while Sakamoto's work depends on it. The perpetual sound that Sakamoto desires is nevertheless impossible; however, that very impossibility becomes the art. However, if the will-less aesthetic experience allows access to the Platonic Ideas, revealing these enduring Ideas or directly embodying the Will without its suffering, offers a glimpse of something akin to "*ars longa*" amidst the fleeting pain of "*vita brevis."*

Threshold of Otherness – Desmond's Gift in Sakamoto's Sound (Impermanence as Gift)

Examining Sakamoto's *async*, we can see how sound is employed to navigate complex notions and thresholds, embodying a dialogue with the "Otherness" of existence. As aesthetics are not simply just a matter of distinctive and autonomous concern but have a leak in the whole of human existence, Desmond's *metaxu* (the "between"), the space where self and other meet, transforms impermanence from scarcity into generosity. This also manifests itself in Sakamoto's *aysnc*, with the decaying pianos and field recordings. Sakamoto allures us with the beauty of the tsunami piano's dissonance, turning it into a gift of attention.

According to Desmond, the notion of beauty has *par essence,* a gift character; so much so that we are struck by it. It opens us up before we open ourselves up. It establishes an element of rapport between ourselves and what is other, and we are taken outside of ourselves by the very first encounter that we have with the beautiful. The notion of gift is crucial is both Desmond's philosophy and Sakamoto's intentions in his music. What strikes as the distinguishing element in Desmond's philosophy is the "Impermanence as Gift." Unlike beliefs that might consider impermanence as only decay or ugliness, Desmond puts it into a framework that allows for perceiving value and beauty in the transient, just like Sakamoto.

> **"**…music is perhaps the most powerful art to return us to the porosity, while at the same time moving a *passio essendi*, prior to any rationalization of the movement of desire, and exceeding complete self-determination of it. We do not first move, we are moved" (Desmond, 2018).

With music, we are plunged into a variety of experiences, whether it be temporal or metaphysical. A certain recollection of eternity in time, the secret relation between death is offered to us. As previously touched upon, Desmond talks about the "porosity" power that music has, a unique power to return us to a fundamental state. This is an original openness of being that exceeds rational control. An ontological condition in which we are first moved by the world before we have any sense of rationalizing it. Sakamoto's sound in *async* can be interpreted as engaging this *passio essendi* with its focus on decay and environmental noise. Sakamoto tries to resonate with the elemental experience of existence, without trying to overcome or rationalize it. As we've previously examined, the

decaying piano in *andata* or the Fukushima field recordings are not conventionally beautiful, but they do strike us with their raw presence. Sakamoto offers us a gift of sound *as sound*.

Metaxu of Decay: Sakamoto's Piano as Threshold

The transition from suffering to gift is physically embodied in the instrument of the piano. In Desmond's philosophy, the *metaxu* is the between, the intermediate space where the self and the Other meet. The tsunami piano serves as the ultimate *metaxu* in Sakamoto's oeuvre.

From a Schopenhauerian perspective, the piano's brokenness is a testament to the violence of the Will – a struggle where nature crushes artifice. However, through Desmond, the piano's destruction renders it porous. Meaning that the tsunami stripped the instrument of its industrial autonomy (its ability to hold a fixed, man-made pitch) and forced it into a dialogue with nature. When Sakamoto plays this instrument, he is not mastering a tool; he is, in fact, collaborating with a ruin. The dissonance that strikes the listener is what Desmond calls the gift character of beauty; it opens us up before we open ourselves up.

The shock of the out-of-tune string in async bypasses our rational expectation for harmony, returning us to a fundamental state of listening. In this specific metaxu of decay, the boundary between the artist and the disaster dissolves. The gift that Sakamoto offers is not a polished melody but rather the raw presence of the "Other" residing in the instrument. By allowing the piano to speak its own ruin, Sakamoto turns the terror of the sublime that Kant refers to and the suffering of the Will into an act of gratitude for the fragile, fleeting "miracle of the is that is given" (Desmond, 2003). He shows that to be broken is not to be destroyed, but rather to be opened.

Spatializing the Metaxu: The Quest for Perpetual Sound

A counterpart to Sakamoto's album and documentary, the exhibition "Ryuichi Sakamoto |seeing sound, hearing time" was held at the Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo until March 2025. One of the most prominent imageries in Sakamoto's works, the piano recovered from a school devastated by the 2011 Great East Japan Earthquake tsunami can be seen in the photograph above. The imagery of the decaying piano remains to be one of the most concrete examples in Sakamoto's attempts to portray the impermanence of sound and life:

"It was the piano in the ruins that was the clue throughout the themes of this documentary: anti-nuclear energy development, reverence for original music of nature, unyieldingness during the anti-cancer period, and love for music"(Guo, 2019).

This meditation on material fragility is further spatialized in his partnership with Shiro Takatani, where the solitary object of the piano is expanded into an immersive environment that interrogates the nature of time (see Figure 3).

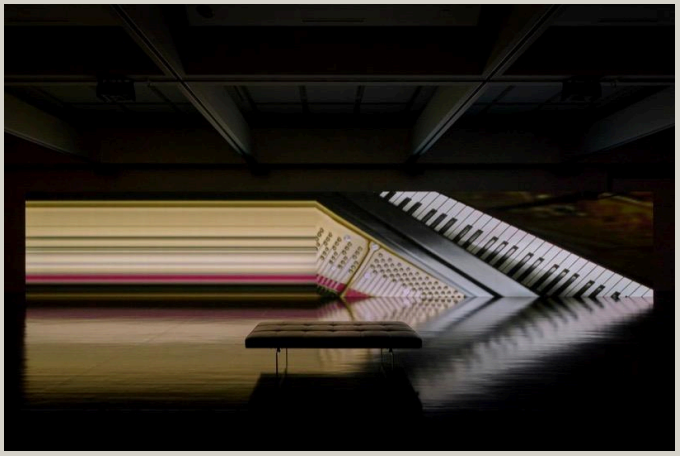

Figure 3

Installation view of async–immersion tokyo (2024), Ryuichi Sakamoto & Shiro Takatani, Museum of Contemporary Art Tokyo

Note. Photograph by Takeshi Asano.

After his 2017 album *Async*, Sakamoto presented it at an exhibition at Tokyo's Watari Museum of Contemporary Art. Sakamoto himself called it "installation music" in an interview with Bijutsu Techo magazine, expressing that his aim was to immerse people in the sounds in an environment that is the same as the one he had while listening and creating. The exhibition integrated space and visual elements, allowing visitors to experience how sound resonates and transforms within space. The exhibition being centered around his 2017 album *async*, Sakamoto transforms music's medium. Highlighting the difference between listening to an album and experiencing it. Incorporating audio-visual installations such as *LIFE – fluid, invisible, inaudible (2007/2021)*, "the work contains two important sub-currents: the breaking of the unilateral experience opera, here achieved through the recreating and deconstructing of Sakamoto's 1999 opera LIFE. And secondly, the integration of technology, image, and nature to achieve what Sakamoto calls the 'interstices of sound and image', here configured by the experience of walking through a Japanese garden" (Wang, n.d.; see Figure 4).

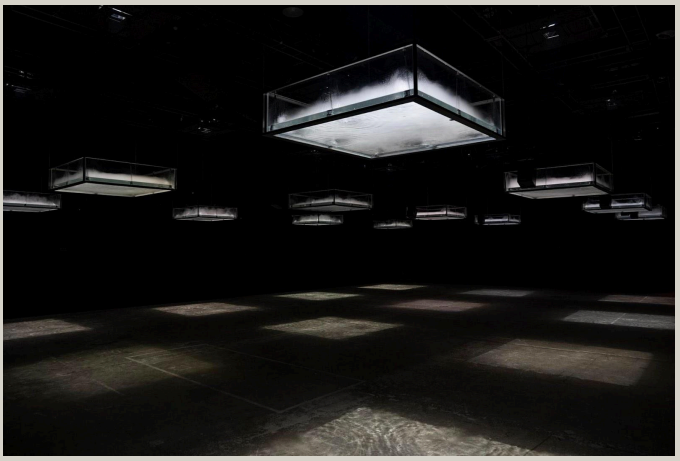

Figure 4

LIFE – fluid, invisible, inaudible… (2007/2021), installation view, by Ryuichi Sakamoto & Shiro Takatani, M WOODS Hutong, Beijing.

Where *async* sonically captures impermanence through decaying tones, and *Coda* frames the disaster's aftermath, the outdoor piano becomes a living installation. The string, warped by rain and frost and resonating unpredictably with the wind, captures nature's music. Embodying the dichotomy between human artifice and natural entropy. Sakamoto's work literalized Hegel's doctrines concerning art. Wanting art to be for itself and yet knowing that art cannot continue to live only by itself. "If it is to be great it must have an openness

that makes home for all the major importances of the human being" (Desmond, 2003). Even though Desmond tries to capture Hegel's theories about architecture and purpose here, we see Sakamoto also trying to establish a harmonious existence between space and sound, between the abstract and the concrete. "The singular harmonious wholeness of a great work", underlines Desmond. Prominent imagery of nature is used by Sakamoto to create atmospheric textures, whether it be in his installations or his compositions. The piano, being one of the strongest metaphors for eternity, beams in his album *async*. Echoing, reverberating, and gradually fading into the surrounding environment, the piano symbolizes eternity. "Observing the piano's transient nature, with its sound gradually fading into the surrounding environment, Sakamoto felt a longing, admiring instruments like the guitar or violin for their ability to sustain sound. Motivated by this, he committed to the quest for the perpetual sound, complementing the flow of film and adding a touch of vibrancy" (Venzheha, 2025).

Conclusion

> *"We hear it calling too with the works of great musicians, like Mozart, when they disappear in the sounding of the music itself. No God need be named, but some music is so mysteriously intimate with the porosity of being that we are awakened beyond ourselves, as if released into a kind of praying." (Desmond, 2003).*

Sakamoto's most striking image, the decay of the piano's sound, grapples with the transient nature of things. The sound merges with its surroundings, highlighting the sonic impermanence inherent in the instrument's existence in time. The Japanese idiom "Mono no Aware" (物寂し) resonates deeply with the awareness of impermanence. The deep, gentle sadness associated with the passing and changing nature of all things is a key element in understanding Japanese aesthetics, just as it is central to understanding music's role in grappling with concepts such as time and eternity. Reflecting simplicity, imperfection, and the transient nature of existence. Sakamoto's exploration of sound, from its inevitable decay to the aspiration for its perpetuation, provides a modern artistic lens through which to view the age-old paradox of Ars longa, vita brevis. His work does not resolve this tension but inhabits it, finding beauty in impermanence and glimpsing eternity within the transient. By embracing decay and seeking perpetual sound, drawing on philosophical insights into the nature of Will, Otherness, and the porous "between," Sakamoto leaves behind a powerful meditation on life, death, and the enduring, transcendent capacity of art. Speaking near the end of his life, reflecting on his mortality and his creative drive, Sakamoto articulated this tension himself:

> "I honestly don't know how many years I have left. It could be 20 years, 10 years, or a relapse reduces it to just one. I am not taking anything for granted. But I know that I want to make more music. Music that I won't be ashamed to leave behind — meaningful work." (Starnes, 2021).

Ultimately, this meaningful work serves as his final act of porosity; a sonic proof that by ceasing to fight the constant struggle of the Will, the artists does not disappear into silence, but is released, as Desmond suggests, into the enduring prayer of the music itself.

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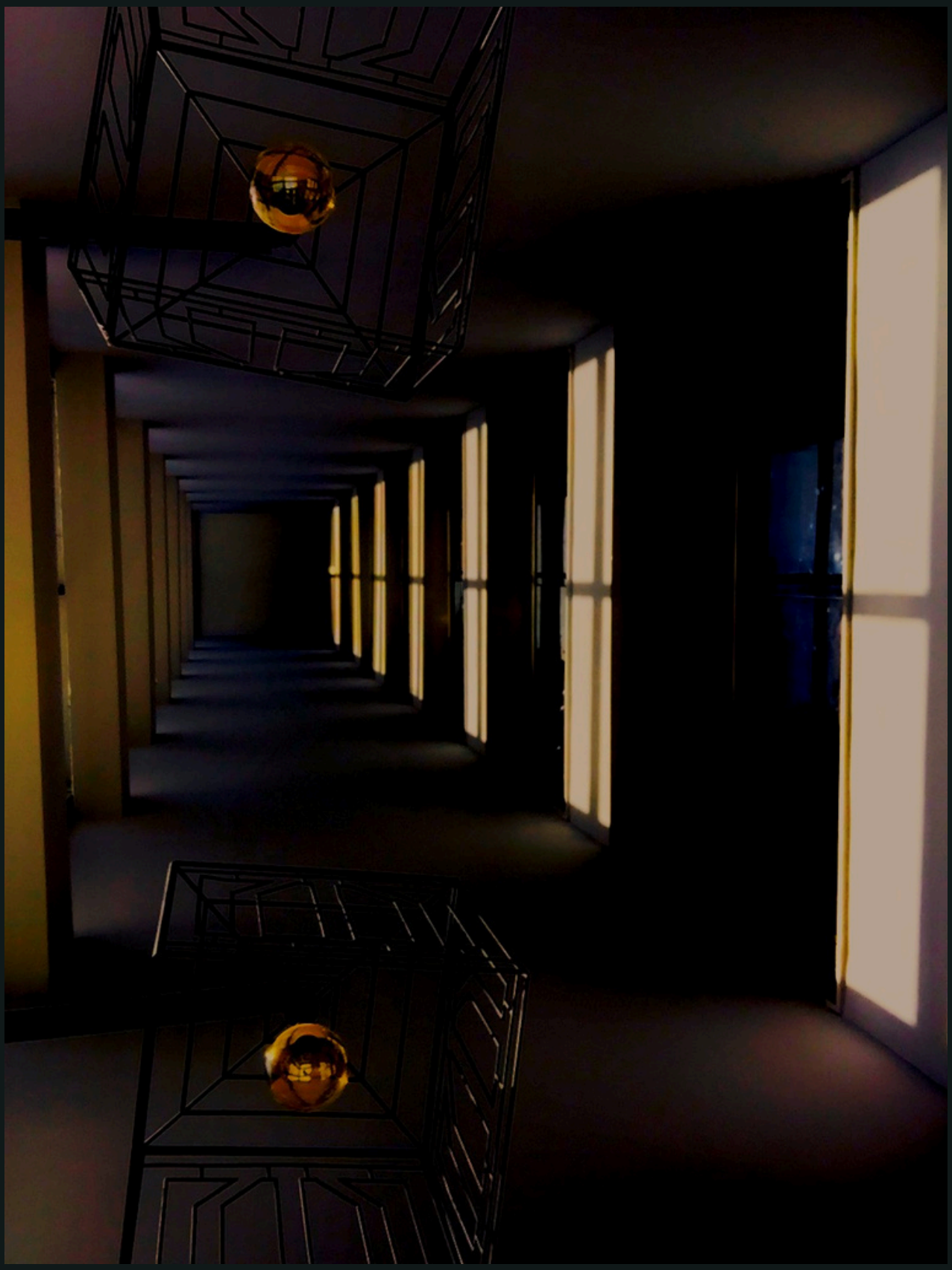

Elif KANIK
Antreden Yukarı / Entrance and Up

The Limits of Temporal Representation

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Abstract

This paper argues for a new way of approaching metaphysical problems of time by reexamining the concept of time through the lens of the representational theory of mind and Kantian epistemology. As an example of such problems, it examines the historical debate over whether time is discrete or continuous by drawing parallels between Zeno's paradoxes and Kant's antinomies. I argue that there are good reasons to treat certain properties of time as projections of the mind, supported by insights from both cognitive science and phenomenology. Building on this foundation, I introduce the term specious event to designate what exists in our representational world as ontological constituents. I further argue that examining different forms of representation reveals a hierarchical structure in the contents of the world, allowing a clear distinction between three categories of representation: first-level, second-level, and higher-level representations. From this perspective, moments of time are shown to be higher-level representations; they are not constituents of the world but interpretive tools projected onto it. The question "Is time continuous or discrete?" is therefore a category mistake, reflecting the limits of our representational framework rather than a genuine metaphysical property of time.

Keywords: *Philosophy of Time, Temporal Representation, Projectivism, Specious Present, Event, Antinomies, Kant, Zeno's Paradoxes*

Introduction

The question of whether time is continuous or composed of imperceptibly small discrete parts has long perplexed thinkers. On the one hand, time is experienced as continuous; on the other hand, thinking of time as an infinitely divisible substance is hard to conceptualize. This tension is not a product of modern physics alone (for example with limiting scales such as the Planck time), but has its origins in Presocratic philosophy. This paper argues that this ancient dilemma and its recurring modern paradoxes arise from a category error: the confusion of abstract conceptual tools with the constituents of reality. From the perspective of Kantian transcendental idealism, treating time as a mind-independent substance or a *time-in-itself* fails to account for the epistemological gap between human representations and the represented reality itself. By analyzing the concept of *atomic time* from a representational standpoint, I propose that time is best understood as a structural feature of representation. The paper first clarifies the structure of our representational world and how time as a

representation fits in. It will then propose a model of the represented world, considering structures of time perception. On a representational account of time, our reality consists of specious events, and the supposed 'moments' of time are not constituents of it, but abstract relational markers that cannot, in themselves, compose a coherent representation of the world.

To see how this ancient dilemma has generally been framed, it is necessary to understand Zeno's paradoxes. Zeno of Elea argued that, if time consists of distinct instants, motion and change become impossible, a problem famously shown in his *Arrow Paradox* as reported in Aristotle's Physics (VI.9, 239b5–7, 239b30). Yet the opposing view appears no less problematic: If time is continuous, that means infinite potential subdivisions, illustrated in Zeno's *Achilles and the Tortoise Paradox* (VI.9, 239b15–25). Thus, Zeno's inquiries into time generate a deeper level of difficulty; that is, given these two paradoxes of Zeno, by exercising reason, we can accept neither time is continuous nor that it consists of discrete instants. Considering there seems to be no middle position (time is partly continuous, partly discrete), the results of these 2 paradoxes contradict each other.

These contradictions illustrated by Zeno's paradoxes resemble what Kant later describes as *antinomies*. Antinomy is a contradiction between two conclusions of reason, which seem equally justified. It is "*...conflict of laws of pure reason.*" (*Critique of Pure Reason*, A407). Kant uses these antinomies to illustrate the shortcomings of using pure reason in the field of metaphysics. When reason attempts to inquire about things beyond our experience, such as mind-independent time, *time-in-itself*, it leads to unsolvable contradictions. Kant's resolution of this problem views time as *transcendentally ideal*. That means time is a necessary form of human intuition; it is not a thing out there in the noumenal world.

Kant's own second antinomy shows this same problematic structure with a striking parallel to Zeno's dilemma. Its thesis argues that every composite substance is made up of simple, indivisible parts; its antithesis argues that no composite thing is made up of simple parts, and nothing simple exists in the world. This conflict over the composition of reality from simple atoms versus infinite divisibility is the metaphysical counterpart to the temporal dilemma of discrete instants versus continuous flow. For Kant, both sides of this antinomy, like Zeno's paradoxes, arise from the same mistake; that is, applying the categories of the understanding (like wholeness and part) to the world as a thing-in-itself, beyond the conditions of possible experience.

This view challenges other metaphysical inquiries into the nature of time, such as McTaggart's (1908) arguments for the unreality of time. From the standpoint of transcendental idealism, it is no surprise that metaphysical properties attributed to time beyond experience, like A-Theory and B-Theory of time, encounter theoretical difficulties; not necessarily because time is wholly

mind-dependent, but because time is fundamental to our experience, such that it cannot coherently be conceptualized in abstraction from the conditions of possible experience. As Rukgaber (2010) explains, "Rather than agreeing with McTaggart that time is unreal, Kant claims that time is the ground and structure of what is real" (p.182). On this Kantian reading, inquiries ranging from Zeno's paradoxes to McTaggart's arguments for the impossibility of time, like Kant's antinomies, reveal only the limits of human understanding when time is conceived as existing independently of our representations.

Building on Kantian insights while developing a distinct representational framework of temporal experience, I will argue that these paradoxes are not genuine puzzles about the nature of time itself. In fact, they only reflect our incorrect metaphysical framing. The dilemma of continuity versus discreteness dissolves once understood that it is a result of misapplication of our conceptual tools to a transcendent reality to which we lack epistemic access. Instead, these paradoxes only show the limits of what can be meaningfully said about time beyond the subjective conditions of experience.

The Projection of Time

Although our everyday experience of time appears straightforward, the philosophical debates around it are remarkably intricate. It is often assumed that the properties of the A-Theory of time are fundamental to human perception of time, most notably *temporal passage* and *privileged present*. Temporal passage is defined as events elapsing by becoming present and then becoming past. By looking at this definition alone, this notion seems unproblematic since it aligns closely with pre-theoretic intuitions. Moreover, it has been argued that this feeling of passage is so self-evident that it suggests temporal passage is an objective property of time itself, independent of the mind (Norton, 2010). However, this argument has been widely contested. Some philosophers, such as Power (2021), question whether our phenomenal experience actually includes any genuine sense of passage at all. Others, including Le Poidevin (2007), argue that even if we do experience something resembling passage, it cannot correspond to an objective property of time itself, but only to the mind's representational mode. From this projectionist perspective, the apparent movement of time does not show the nature of time-in-itself, but the structure of our temporal representation of events. Thus, the assumption that temporal passage is an objective feature of time is far from secure.

According to the *Projectivist* view of time, the feeling of passage is not a direct perception of an external temporal flow, but rather, it is a result of the mind's interpretive process. There is a fundamental structure to experience; it is not merely a passive perceiving of the external world. The mind actively organizes perceptual input in accordance with this structure, which shapes how reality appears to us. The feeling of passage, for instance in the experience of listening to music, does not merely consist in perception of the present note followed by the succession of other notes as they become present. Instead, it is a unified experience of a sequence of notes, forming a

melody. This unique feeling arises from the mind's conjunction of present perception with very recent memories. This provides a clear example of projection: we do not simply register sensory inputs but actively construct a world with a certain temporal structure. Le Poidevin (2007) writes:

> "The datum of experience, that we experience motion, is … no mere passive reception of an objective phenomenon, but one that arises, in part, from the active interpretation of the mind. It is, at least in some cases, a projection."
>
> (Le Poidevin 2007, p. 93)

A more radical view rejects the very idea that temporal passage is part of human experience. This view, defended by Power (2021), claims that what we directly perceive is not the flow or passage of time, but merely *change in things*. Our primary experience, according to Power, consists of sensing change and variation, for example objects moving, sounds fading, or lights dimming. However, such experiences do not entail that time itself is flowing. On this account, we do not even experience temporal passage at all, since the mere impression of "things changing" is not enough, for genuine passage would require that *events* themselves undergo change. Referring to the experience of temporal flow, Power writes:

> "Yet, no matter how this experience is explained, it is not as immediate an experience as the immediately perceived change. This change in events themselves, or in the present in relation to these events, is not a kind that anyone can have as present. It is of a past event becoming more past."
>
> (Power 2021, p. 168)

This position leaves no place for temporal passage within experience itself, except as a conceptual projection onto the world. However, one might object: "If there is no experience of temporal passage, why do so many people report having one?" Power's view denies not only the objective passage of external time but also the existence of any immediate subjective experience of such passage. The answer lies not in perception itself but in the way our conception of time is generated from perceptual and cognitive processes. Although raw perception does not include a sense of passage, our interpretation of phenomenological data gives rise to higher-level concepts and beliefs that depend on the mind's representational capacities. These representations need not correspond either to external reality as it is in itself or to the content of immediate experience. As evolutionary beings, our cognitive faculties produce representations not to mirror reality as it truly is, but to promote adaptive success (see Papineau 1987). If the belief in temporal passage offers practical and evolutionary advantages, and it is plausible that it does, then it is not a mystery that such a belief is widespread, even without any corresponding experiential datum. Yet the exact mechanisms that cause our belief in passage are undoubtedly complex and should be explained by referring to psychological and neurological structures, especially memory. A detailed account of these mechanisms is beyond the scope of this paper; see Mellor (1981, 1995) and Dennett (1991) for further discussion.

We do not have a dedicated sense organ for time as we do for vision or smell. If, as the projectivist view holds, temporal passage is not a fundamental part of our direct experience but rather a mental projection, then the notion of passage must be constructed from experienced events and the mind's interpretive processes. Once temporal passage is removed from our account of time, other allegedly *experiential properties* of A-theoretic time lose coherence: the "now" cannot move, persist, or be privileged since there is no flow of the present moments. Hence, if temporal passage is a conceptual projection, not an object of experience, then it follows naturally that the temporal structure of experience itself must be understood representationally. This conclusion raises a further question that will guide the next stage of the inquiry: What are the structures and limits of our representational framework that generate the experience of temporality?

The World as Event

There are different abstraction layers in how we represent perceptual experiences. Seeing a cat in a tree is one thing; forming relational concepts like "on top of" or "north of" is another. The most immediate representation, emerging directly from raw perception, may be called *phenomenal* or *first-level representation*. At this level, experience is pre-individuated and non-objectual: a continuous flux of perceptual content that has not yet been carved into discrete unities. It provides the experiential field within which the world can appear, though not yet as meaningful or conceptualized.

Second-level representations arise when stable unities are abstracted from this perceptual flux, which makes it possible to conceptualize objects and change. Although these representations are shaped by mental processes, they belong to the world as it is represented and function as its basic constituents. A cat in my field of vision as an enduring object is an example of a second-level representation. By contrast, concepts like "on top of" are neither in our raw phenomenal representation nor in my world as an object. Unlike first and second-level representations, higher-level representations serve as tools for organizing and interpreting experience rather than as contents of the world itself. These levels of representation can be summarized as follows:

I. First-level Representations: Pre-objectual raw sensory content. In Kantian terms, it corresponds to the *matter of intuition*.

II. Second-level Representations: Objectual and event-like unities abstracted from phenomenal content. World-constituting and can be *pointed to* within experience (e.g., a melody, a cat standing in my field of vision).

III. Higher-level Representations: Conceptual, propositional, and relational structures, not constituents of the world but interpretive tools (e.g., "on top of", "before").

Here, it is important to distinguish between different *modes of representation* and different

levels of representation. It is doubtful that any theory developed to account for perceptual representation can straightforwardly ground mental representations or thoughts as well. While some philosophers (McDowell, 1994) have maintained that perceptual experiences and beliefs share a common kind of content, a more compelling account treats perceptual representation as differing from thought, in virtue of the nature of its content. Perceptual experience represents the world through distinct sensory modes such as seeing and hearing, each of which presents items as standing in certain relations. The representational world thus consists of harmony across these different modes.

On the other hand, different levels of representations differ in their nature or format. While second-level representations are world-constituting and directly available within experience (pointable elements of the world), higher-level representations do not introduce new constituents into the world. Rather, they articulate, in propositional form, what is already given at a more basic experiential level. It is at this propositional level, Wittgenstein famously claimed, "The world is the totality of facts, not of things." That is, the world consists of states of affairs involving things in relation, not of isolated objects. For example, seeing a cat on a mat is not merely registering 'cat' and 'mat' separately; it is the immediate representation of the relational fact 'the cat is on the mat' as a unified content of experience. It is important to note that Wittgenstein is characterizing the logical form under which the world can be *described* in thought and language, not the structure of perceptual experience itself.

But there is a critical divergence. Wittgenstein's logical facts are static; the perceptual world, however, is not given as a static totality of facts at all. We don't have a snapshot of facts about the world in the present. What we call the "present moment" is not a cross-section like an image; rather, it is an experience that contains succession within itself. This notion is known as the *specious present.* The specious present explains why we have the perceived changes that seem to be happening *now*. We see the trees swaying directly instead of their frozen positions; we hear our name as a single utterance instead of discrete sounds of individual letters. Bergson's account of the lived time (la durée) draws a similar picture. To illustrate how we experience time, he writes:

> "When we listen to a melody, we have the purest impression of succession we could possibly have, — an impression as far removed as possible from that of simultaneity, — and yet it is the very continuity of the melody and the impossibility of breaking it up which make that impression upon us."
>
> (Bergson 2007, 124)

Following Bergson and advocates of the specious present, our perception should be understood as *temporally extended*, that is, as having a duration. If the present is not a point in time but a temporal field, then it is the container within which the events occur. It is within this field that the world is given to us. We don't have direct access to the

future or past except insofar as they are represented within the present. In this sense, the extent of my present determines the extent of my world. Whatever is represented as perceptually or conceptually is represented in the present, and the events we perceive, we perceive in the present. The present is, therefore, the entirety of the experienced reality. This is not to say that the past and future are unreal, but rather that there is an epistemic gap between my world and other times. The past and future exist within the present as designs. Memory does not retrieve the representations from the past; it retrieves them within the present. Similarly, our anticipation of the future also occurs within the present.

If the content of our representations is intrinsically durational, then it cannot be exhaustively described as a set of atemporal facts. This suggests that, rather than a totality of facts, the world is best understood as a totality of what I will call *"specious events."* Specious events are durational, dynamic facts in the world as we represent them. "Hearing the sound of rain" or "Seeing an apple standing" as they are experienced in the specious present, can be everyday examples of these events. They are "specious" not because they are illusory, but because they are content of the world within the specious present. These dynamical events include both the factual structure and the duration. Since specious events are objectual and carved out of the flux of raw perception, they differ fundamentally from higher-level representations. Unlike conceptual relations and logical forms, specious events belong to the represented world itself. They are second-level representations that are constituents of the world, not merely interpretive tools. In this sense, specious events are in the world.

The present cannot have boundaries, just as our field of vision does not have boundaries. I might believe that my field of vision does not encompass everything, still, I cannot perceive its boundaries. To perceive boundaries, I also need to perceive what lies beyond them; that is, outside of them. As Wittgenstein puts it, "The subject does not belong to the world: rather, it is a limit of the world." (*Tractatus*, 5.632), the subject cannot draw the boundary of its world from the inside. Likewise, I may believe that the present moment does not encompass all of time (past and future), but to draw its boundary, I would have to be (or know about) outside it. However, this is impossible since the present moment is all I have. The difference between the past, future and the present is that past and future are represented within the present as temporal designs, whereas the present itself is the total field in which anything can be given. A specious event is, then, an event experienced in the present. Its duration, however, can only be determined retrospectively: while a specious event is being represented in the world, it encompasses all the experienced reality without borders. Its beginning and end become available only through memory.

This retrospective articulation becomes especially clear in linguistic representation. Let us consider the sentence "Bird is on a branch (at the present)".

While as an atemporal fact it might be correct, it is not an accurate depiction of the world. The world consists of specious events, not static facts. So instead, "Bird is landing on a branch," or "Bird is persisting on the branch," captures a continuous profile of the perceptual content with both factual relations and irreducible temporal extent, even though it is not possible to assess the duration within experience. This raises a further question: If specious events are the correct depictions of the world, why do we have atemporal facts as our concepts? After all, we do not experience the world as atemporal bits. What, then, are the properties of atemporal designs and in what way do they differ from the designs of the world itself (if they differ at all)? Above all, what is *moment*?

Figure 1. *Two modes of representing the same perceptual situation.*

Problem of Moment

If the world is composed of inherently durational specious events, then the notion of a durationless "moment" functions only as a higher-level conceptual tool. That is, moments are useful idealizations imposed on durational content, not the content of the world itself. Just like "north of" and "on top of", moment is a conceptual tool; a logical form that plays a role inside our representational world rather than being an element of it. While the abstractions like "north of" and "earlier than" are directional markers, which means they represent the spatial and temporal ordering and relations, a moment is a point marker. The most fitting spatial analogue to the moment, in this sense, would be the geometric point: a location with zero volume, a pure position without any spatial extensions. Similarly, a moment is a temporal location with zero duration, a pure "when" without temporal thickness. But just as nothing in the world can occupy a volumeless point, no perceptual representation can inhabit a durationless moment. Both are useful fictions in our representational schema necessary for measurement, mathematics and physics, yet equally unreal as constituents of the world we live in. Rather, they are the abstract gridlines we project retrospectively over the continuous canvas of specious events.

One might object that moments, even if not directly perceived, might still be derivable from events in the world since events are composed of such moments. If this were correct, a specious event could be atomized into the distinct moments that compose it. Similarly, some may argue that this *atom* of time might not necessarily be durationless. Therefore, the problem "How durationless moments can add up into something with duration?" can be resolved. The answer to these objections lies in the fundamental nature of the representations. Representations in the world are always grasped as complete and irreducible unities. While the number of their properties can be reduced, the

representation itself cannot be proportionally minimized or divided into identical constituent parts without losing its identity.

Consider the mental representation of a "pink elephant standing." Different people may imagine it with different details, perhaps without a trunk or in the style of a cartoon, yet these designs would still be complete and meaningful representations. What would it mean to imagine half of this thought, or two identical halves combining to form one? Such a notion is unintelligible. The same holds for specious events. As second-level representations that constitute the world, they cannot be broken into pieces. They cannot be restructured into a composite whole made of multiple parts. The idea of a real moment presupposes an impossible atomization of duration. It does not refer to anything in the world as represented, but functions solely as a conceptual tool imposed on it.

Ehrenfels describes a melody apprehended by consciousness as a “tonal Gestalt”, a unified whole that is given at once, rather than as a mere sequence of isolated tones. He introduces this notion precisely to explain why a melody can remain the same even when all of its individual tones change (Ehrenfels, 1988). Gestalt theory takes this idea further to other modes of representation, supporting a strong claim of representational irreducibility. At its core, Gestaltism argues that the qualities of perceptual and conceptual wholes cannot be explained by merely summing isolated parts. A melody, a face, or an embodied event has a form that only emerges through organization as a whole. Because the supposed parts of a representation are available only through such abstraction, they cannot serve as its ontological constituents. In this sense, representations are Gestalts for their unity is given prior to any identification of parts. Consequently, the idea of a smallest “moment-atom” from which longer stretches of experience are composed becomes unintelligible. By the same logic, a specious event functions as a temporal Gestalt. Any attempt to reduce this fluid, durationally thick experience into a sequence of static, durationless moments is to destroy the very phenomenon one seeks to explain.

In this sense, the world of representations is qualitative, not quantitative. Representational designs are not items that can be divided, counted, and recombined. This claim does not rule out the metaphysical possibility that physical time, independent of mind, might consist of time-atoms with very short durations. Yet in lived time experience, we neither sense such units nor inhabit a representational world built from them. Rather, it marks an important distinction: even if such temporal atoms exist at the level of physical theory, they play no role in the structure of lived temporal experience. This points to an epistemic gap between metaphysical time and experienced time. The structural properties of the two need not correspond, and there is no reason to expect that they should. Although the concept of a moment functions within our temporal framework, it is not a constituent of the world as experienced. It functions not as a depiction of reality but as a relational marker, a point of reference in time. I can locate

events *relative* to moments, but I cannot coherently conceive of events as being built from them.

Consequently, the representational world is not composed of discrete instants or identical atoms. The world as represented does not contain dimensionless moments; rather, moments function solely as conceptual tools that enhance our interaction with the world. What is in the world as constituents instead are specious events. Specious events fill the horizon of the world in the *present;* they exhaust what can be meaningfully said about the temporal structure of the experienced world. Whether time-in-itself is continuous or not is not an answerable question since we lack access to the noumenal world. At best, this transcendent time differs radically from our conception; at worst, it may not exist independently of mind at all. While physical theories may posit discrete or quantized structures for time, there is no reason to expect such structures to map to lived or represented time. The representational world is not built out of whatever entities physical theory posits at its most fundamental level. Our knowledge ends with the structure of our own representations.

Conclusion

The apparent paradox of whether time is continuous or discrete, at its core, is not a problem of the mind-independent time-in-itself, but about the limits of our representation of it. From Zeno's paradoxes to Kant's first antinomy, reason falls into contradictions when it attempts to grasp time-in-itself as a metaphysical substance with determinate intrinsic properties. Time-in-itself (if it exists) cannot be represented, for all representation within the world already presupposes temporality as its form.

When treated as representations, what we encounter in the world is not a sequence of moments but specious events given in lived duration. The world is not given to us as temporal atoms but of temporally thick, qualitative unities that fill the *present.* The present is not a moment among others, but the horizon within which anything can be represented as real at all. What lies beyond (past or future) is not another region of time but another representation within the same horizon. Specious events are second-level representations, the constituents of the represented world, and as such they are irreducible: they cannot be reduced to momentary atoms without destroying the phenomenon they are meant to explain.

The notion of moment, therefore, is a higher-level representation; it is not a constituent of the world, but an interpretive tool, a logical form, projected onto the world. In this way, it is similar to a geometric point in space; it functions as a relational marker in the conceptual schema, not as an element of it. Consequently, the question "Is time continuous or discrete?" is revealed as a category mistake. Continuity and discreteness apply only within our conceptual projections, not to time as a condition of representation. While the represented world is composed of continuous qualitative events, the time-in-itself cannot be said to be discrete or continuous. On the projectivist account developed here, temporality is the condition under which the

world consists of events. The continuity we attribute to time is our form of representation itself, not a feature of the metaphysical substance of time. Beyond this representation of time, reason can only be silent.

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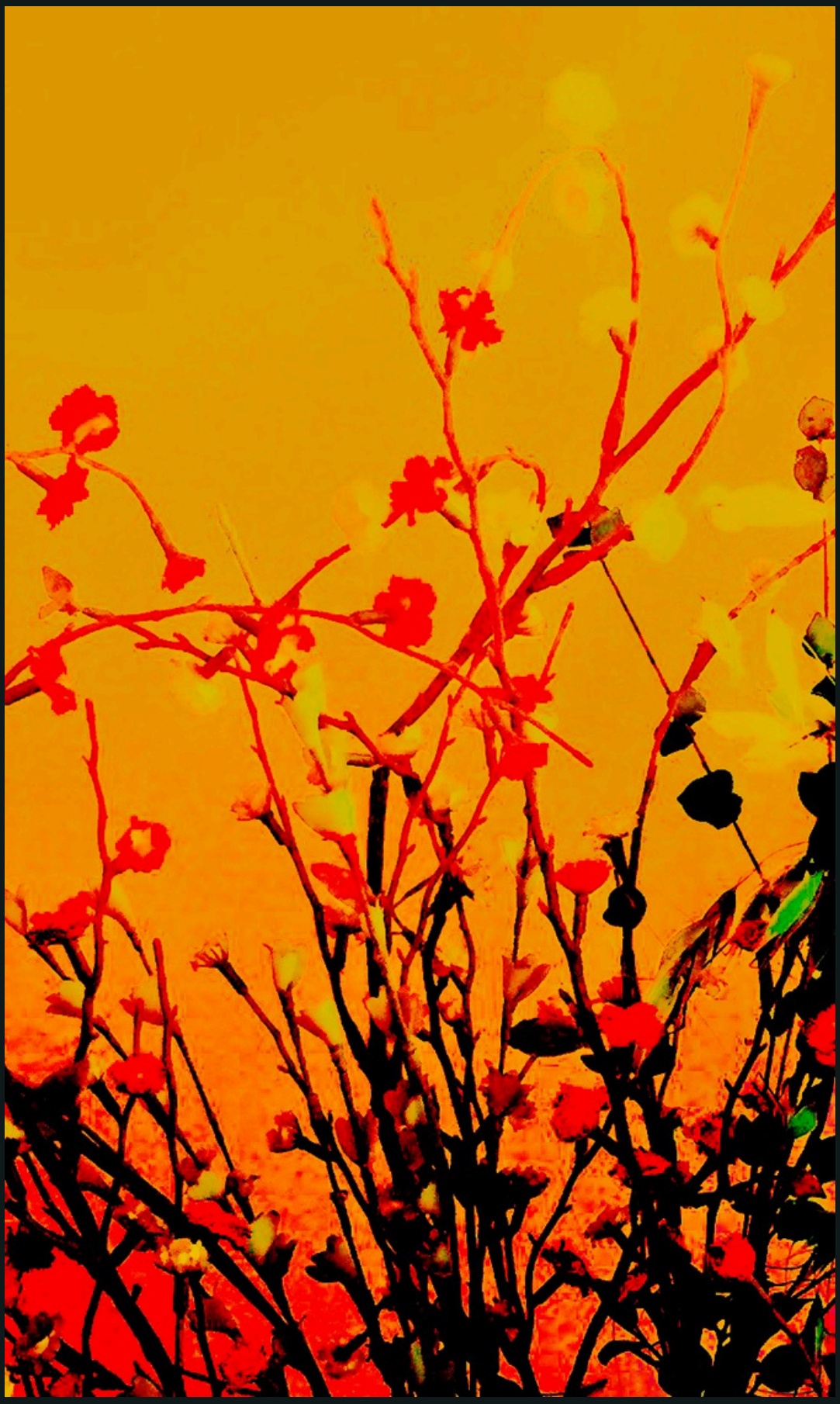

Elif KANIK
Yapay Çiçek Yapay Işık / Artificial Flower Artificial Light

A Metaethical Review In Defense of the Divine Command Theory

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Abstract

The metaethical review presented in this essay provides a deductive defense of the Divine Command Theory through the examination of ontological requirements for moral realism. Utilising Hume's Law, it is argued that descriptive "is" statements which imply facts, cannot yield prescriptive "ought" statements of which the content is value-based. The text also contends that naturalist metaethical theories, which are predominant in atheistic frameworks, necessarily entail moral relativism because they lack a transcendent grounding for binding moral duties. At the core of the proposed argument lies the idea that if God does not exist, objective moral values do not exist and therefore atheistic moral frameworks are incompatible with morally realist perceptions. Through one additional claim, the argument also becomes a theistic argument: Since the existence of objective moral values are more evident than the argumentative methods that are utilised to object to them, a divine source as a prescriber must exist. A non-naturalist atheistic moral framework named Platonic atheism has also been criticized via various arguments. In addition to the defenses for the premises of the argument, a critical analysis on scientific approaches is also put forward. The review concludes that only a framework involving an ontologically superior being can resolve the "is-ought" gap and rationalize moral behavior at the individual level to eliminate the bindingness problem in all scenarios.

Keywords: Hume's law, command theory, metaethics, divine, moral realism, platonic atheism

Introduction

The discussions on moral philosophy, particularly when addressed to a broader audience, require several conceptual and intentional clarifications due to their highly delicate nature. Indeed, even those who have spent a significant amount of their time reading on this very subject may not be able to avoid the most obvious errors of thought due to the lack of conceptual clarity. Thus, I have decided to begin with brief but vitally significant explanations about the sub-branches of moral philosophy. Then, in order not to be misunderstood, the implication of the argument to be formulated in the following pages will be elaborated upon.

In the analytic tradition, ethics is divided into three main branches. Namely, these are metaethics, normative ethics, and applied ethics. Metaethics is a

field of study that focuses on the theories that aim to provide plausible explanations for the origins of morality. Questions such as "Is morality objective?" or "On what basis do we ground our understanding of morality?" are examined under metaethics. Therefore, the realism and anti-realism discussion, which we will discuss later, as well as the epistemic validity and valuation of moral propositions, are also metaethics-related issues.

For the sake of our purpose here, we can reduce the metaethical positions to two:

1. Naturalist Theories
2. Divine Command Theories

Normative ethics, on the other hand, is a field that aims at exploring the constituents of moral actions. Fundamentally, it is about how we distinguish between right and wrong (it might be based on rationality or the combined utilities of the society). As its name indicates, normative ethics examines the general principles of how one *ought to act* to be a morally good agent. To prevent any misconception, normative ethics has nothing to say on the source(s) of the aforementioned moral principles and focuses on what makes an action right or wrong from an ethical perspective. In order to better understand, we have to take a look at the normative ethical positions and their compatibility with contradicting metaethical positions so that the two branches are distinguished from one another with due clarity. Here are the three positions of normative ethics:

1. Deontological (Kantian) Ethics
2. Consequentialist Ethics
3. Virtue Ethics

My claim is that there can be two individuals who are both in support of consequentialism, where one of them is an atheist who believes in a naturalist metaethical theory, and the other is a faithful classical theist who grounds his ethical position on a God-sent revelation. In this regard, this study will be, mostly if not wholly, about metaethics. That is to say, other irrelevant discussions will be disregarded.

Before the formulation of our argument, it is necessary to state what we are n*ot* going to advocate for in this study. An analogy might help us at this point: Some theists claim that God designed our eyes, either directly or through the evolutionary process. Obviously, this claim does not make such an implication that theists see better than atheists or that atheists are blind. Similarly, the claim that our moral perceptions are given by God and that the origin of morality lies in God's character and nature does not imply that atheists are less moral agents (Doko, 2020). Clearly, there are basic moral intuitions that enable us all to act morally. What is going to be claimed in this argument is that if God with certain attributes does not exist, those intuitions are doomed to be subjective. In other words, an atheistic metaethical position entails the rejection of moral realism.

To be a morally acting agent is notably different from providing an ontological basis for moral propositions. For instance, assume that there is an absolutely talented basketball player who knows about and abides by the rules of this sport. In this context, the said player can be regarded as a good player. However, this player most certainly would know and, without any hesitation, admit that these rules are determined by the human mind. Thus, to be a good basketball player does not necessitate the belief that those rules possess objective value. Similarly, there is no such prerequisite of approving the objectivity of morality to be a moral agent. Therefore, when we argue that if atheism is true, then there are no objectively valid moral propositions, we obviously do not claim that atheists are immoral witches.

Hume's Law: Deriving an *ought* from an *is*

It is necessary to provide explanatory and defensive analysis about the content of the premises before putting our argument into a logical form. Since Hume's law is at the core of the whole argument, we shall begin by analyzing it.

The underlying distinction of Hume's Law is the distinction between factual propositions and axiological propositions. Factual propositions correspond to the "is" part of the title above, whereas axiological ones correspond to the "ought" part. Factual propositions, as it might be inferred from the naming, simply describe the facts out there in the universe. Thus, they possess a pretty descriptive nature, whereas any statement about morality is inherently prescriptive. The best examples of factual propositions are scientific propositions. Generally speaking, the content of factual propositions is empirically observable. Surely observation is not necessarily the only way to test the accuracy of factual propositions. If there are entities such as abstract concepts of numbers or supernatural beings, they are not observable; however, propositions that describe them are also factual.

Hume's law indicates that one "can not derive an ought from an is" or, more decently, that purely descriptive premises never entail normative conclusions (Russell, 2010). Accordingly, if your argument consists of only factual premises, then the concluding premise will necessarily have to be factual.

Since we have used both the term "premise" and the term "proposition", some might get confused. Although there is not a huge difference between them, premise is technically utilized for steps that are put forward in logical argumentations, whereas proposition is a declarative sentence which is evaluated in terms of truthfulness. With that being stated, let us go back to our argument.

Another significant distinction is between moral realism and moral anti-realism. Moral realism is a philosophical view that claims that at least one moral proposition, as a subcategory of axiological

propositions, is true or false. It is important to remember that in this context, truth implies objective validity. Therefore, these moral propositions must be true or false regardless of the time, place, or society in which we live. Social and cultural norms are of no significance. For instance, even if all human beings agree upon the idea that the act of rape is morally acceptable, rape will remain evil. And indeed, there are societies, either actively living or lived in the past, where we observe such instances that are "indisputably" immoral, yet practiced by the consensus of that particular society.

It is no secret that the crimes perpetrated against humanity in the past (the Nazi Holocaust, for instance) were largely adhered to by large masses. In addition to that, in some ancient societies, when the ruler died, his wives/servants, etc., would be killed because of the distorted belief in the afterlife. We can increase the number of samples by mentioning societies where human sacrifice is observed as a commonly practiced custom. Moral anti-realism, on the other hand, refuses to attribute any intrinsic value to morality. Moral rules are nothing more than the sum of particular value judgements and do not imply any objectively valid truth.

Formation of the Argument

First and foremost, we will claim that if an ontologically superior entity in the role of a God by whom at least one moral rule is prescribed does not exist, then all meaningful propositions are confined to being factual and thus can not constitute a normative and prescriptive nature. Besides, considering Hume's law as a logical necessity, we will aim to demonstrate that in a Godless world, one can not infer objectively valid axiological propositions since we can not derive an axiological proposition if all fundamental propositions are factual.

P1. If there are objectively valid axiological propositions, then they must be either deduced from fundamental laws (which makes them derived laws) or taken as fundamental laws from which all sorts of propositions are deduced.

P2. If God does not exist, all fundamental laws are necessarily natural laws.

P3. All natural laws are factual (descriptive).

P4. One cannot derive an axiological proposition from factual propositions.

P5. At least one axiological proposition is either true or false.

Conclusion: Therefore, God exists.

If all of the premises above are true, then the conclusion is inevitably going to be true. Surely, I presume the laws of logic as the starting point in producing knowledge. Without them, we can not even talk about an argument in the very beginning. It is also important to note that this moral argument is at the intersection of both moral philosophy and philosophy of religion. We just make one addition to the claim in favor of divine command theory and

provide defenses against morally nihilistic perceptions. Through this addition, the argument also becomes a theistic argument for the existence of God. Now, we will try to give defenses for each of the five premises and respond to potential objections that might be raised against them.

The first premise is true by logical necessity. Once a person affirms the basic principles of logic, this premise can not be objected to. The Aristotelian law of excluded middle must be refuted for it to be regarded as inaccurate. Since we already presumed the principles of logic to be accurate as a starting point, no further defense is needed for the first premise.

The second premise refers to the most popular view among atheists. It is the naturalist thesis that rejects the existence of any supernatural entity. Accordingly, the strongest explanatory power for the existence of the universe in which we live (or some other potential universes) is embedded in a naturalist interpretation of it. In this naturalist framework, one can not talk about ontological beings other than the laws of nature and material existents, which are transformed, subjected to change, generated, or dissolved by those laws. The wording "by the laws of nature" does not imply any attribution of willpower to those laws. They are simply described as the generalized statements of the regularities in the natural world.

According to the naturalist view, one can not talk about a God, at least in the classical sense of the term. By the classical sense of the term, obviously, we imply a transcendent God who is not bounded by time and space. My claim is that if naturalism is true and thus such a God does not exist, all fundamental laws are natural laws which constitute factuality. Thus, the second premise is true. However, some might object to the naturalist thesis and still internalise an atheistic philosophical position. There is no logical contradiction, for instance, between a belief in the existence of supernatural beings such as Jinn or demons and the disbelief in the existence of a Creator. However, one might also believe in a God who is a physical being bound by the Natural World as well. Although there is no problem in following such views in terms of logic, it is demonstrable that internalising such views is simply unreasonable. That is, for a view to be depicted as inaccurate, it does not have to be illogical necessarily.

Yet, some can criticize our defense above by arguing that it is actually fighting the ghost and that there are alternative forms of atheism which are not as radical and unreasonable as the stated examples. At this point, Platonic atheism is worthy of examination.

Critique of Platonic Atheism

The only serious attempt for a non-physicalist form of atheism in the literature is Platonic atheism. This position is an objection to our second premise, and it seems to be the only form of atheism that meets the necessities for compatibility with moral realism. It is an

alternative to both theism and morally nihilistic forms of atheism (Steinhart, 2023). The reason why it is called "platonic" is its evocative nature to the Platonist theory of ideas. Accordingly, moral concepts such as justice and mercy do exist as beings transcendent of time and space. To better understand this view, it might be helpful to take a look at the ontological perceptions of mathematical objects. One of the most popular views about the ontology of mathematics among mathematicians is Platonism. For instance, if we think of geometric objects, there is no such thing as a perfect triangle or a circle in the natural world. The question is, should we consider them as fabricated products of our minds, or are they entities existing in some other realm? The application of the same question to moral concepts instead of the mathematical ones, and a response in favor of the latter view, is where the Platonic perception of morality comes from.

This view can be criticized in terms of several aspects. If Platonic atheism is true, then morality would exist even if there were no morally active agents like humans. To clarify, non-human natural beings with no willpower to comprehend moral concepts are regarded as morally passive agents. On reasonable ground, nobody can accuse a mother cat of killing its own babies. Morally passive agents are included in moral discussions only in the case of a potential interaction with morally active agents. Thus, morality seems to be meaningful as long as there are conscious human beings around. Then, how could it be the case that moral concepts exist in a realm where there is no morally active agent?

Another problem with this view is about the bindingness of morality. No natural being, as far as ordinary humans experience and make sense of the world, can act in contradiction with mathematical facts. Some might deny the existence of mathematical objects, but their application in engineering or other natural science-related fields is objectively validated. To put it more simply, a person who denies the existence of numbers can not escape from them while shopping in a marketplace. However, this situation does not apply to moral objects. Our actions can be contradictory to what might be called “moral rules” since moral propositions and conceptions are prescriptive. A human being possesses the capability to act against the prescribed rules of morality even if he or she approves the objective validity of those rules. For example, let us assume that the following propositions correspond to a truth:

P1. To be merciful is good

P2. To be selfish is evil

The fact that these propositions are true does not imply any prescription for humans to act in accordance with their contents, nor does it rationalise such actions. Therefore, Platonic atheism is incapable of providing objective responses to the question of “why ought I to act morally?”

In addition to these problems, one more epistemological critique can be cited. This critique is also applicable in the context of the Platonist view on mathematics. At the center of this critique lies the idea that to know something (whatever it is), one must go through a causal interaction with the object of this process. Since moral objects are transcendent of time and space, which implies that they do not engage in causal relations, there is no possibility for humans to be able to acquire knowledge about them. This counter-argument is very hard to defend coherently from a theistic perspective. Indeed, the means by which humans acquire knowledge about God also becomes questionable since God himself is characterised as transcendent of time and space in classical theism.

The third premise is based on the fact-value distinction. Even though there are some philosophers, such as Hilary Putnam who reject the distinction between fact and value, the predominant opinion among naturalist philosophers is that natural laws are factual. And in fact, the rejection of this distinction still does not imply the rejection of the fact that natural laws are factual. What is denied is rather the exclusiveness of facts and values, not the existence of facts and values.

The fourth premise has already been clarified, and an explanation in defense of it is provided above, where we presented Hume's Law. And indeed, there are no philosophers, at least to our knowledge, who reject the factuality of natural laws. However, metaphysical or, as some call it, 'ontological' naturalists usually tend to reject the fact-value distinction. Therefore, an elaboration upon Hume's law is needed since one might aim to challenge it by arguing for the possibility of such a logical derivation. In this regard, we will now defend the fourth premise and try to suggest responses to hypothetical objections.

Hume's law is one of the basic laws of deductive reasoning. Accordingly, it is not contingent to derive an axiological proposition from factual propositions. In order to better understand this, we have to take a look at the fundamental features of deductive reasoning and its implications. The semantic approach, which the analytic tradition internalises, argues that an argument is valid if there is no alternative interpretation of the argument left, whereas its premises are all true, yet the conclusion is false. The famous example of it is the following;

P1. All humans are mortal

P2. Socrates is a human

Conclusion: Socrates is mortal

This is an example of valid deductive reasoning. At the core of this type of reasoning, there lies the idea that the conclusion is embedded in the premises. If the premises are true, the conclusion is true by logical necessity. One of the most significant differences of the analytic tradition is the utilisation of such reasoning by philosophers in their argumentations. Their purpose is to provide

coherent premises and a conclusion that is based on them. If one wants to object to the conclusion, they are obliged to demonstrate the inaccuracy of at least one premise or object to the deductiveness of the reasoning itself. This method enables the philosophers to discuss philosophical problems in a more coherent manner. And indeed, our argument as a whole is based on such deductive reasoning, and the defense which we will provide in favor of our fourth premise is going to be based on such argumentation. Let us begin and try to put forward an argument in which we derive an 'ought' from an 'is' and examine its possibility from a logical perspective.

P1. Yusuf killed Ali

P2. Killing Ali makes Ali suffer

P3. Ahmet did not make anybody suffer

Conclusion: Yusuf ought not to have killed Ahmet

All of the premises above are factual premises. Yet, the conclusion is axiological. Even if the conclusion is true -it might not be- this type of argument is invalid in the sense that it is incapable of meeting the requisites of what is described above as deductive reasoning. In fact, one can accept the three premises above and still be in denial of the conclusion. There is no logical obstacle for someone to deny the conclusion without the rejection of at least one premise. The person who objects to the conclusion can be accused of unscrupulousness, but not of being ignorant about logic.

In order to derive a logically valid conclusion, one must add an axiological proposition to the premises.

P1. We ought not to kill innocent human beings

P2. Ali was an innocent human being

Conclusion: Ali ought not to have been killed

Given this set of premises, the conclusion derived from them is undeniably accurate since the acceptance of two premises logically necessitates the conclusion. This is a valid example of deductive reasoning, and as it is obvious, the first premise is axiological just like the conclusion. To conclude our defense in favor of the fourth premise, it is impossible to logically demonstrate the necessity of an axiological conclusion by means of utilising only factual premises. Therefore, Hume's law seems to be accurate.

So far, we have demonstrated the incompatibility of atheism with a morally realistic framework. However, an atheist can consistently internalise a morally anti-realistic framework without objecting to the four premises for which we have provided defenses.

Therefore, one more defense against moral anti-realism is needed to complete our argument. Yet, we see the benefit in evaluating the evolutionary views as potential "scientistic"

objections to our argument. Especially those who regard themselves as the advocates of science may argue for a scientific explanation to ground objective morality. In fact, with the rise of scientism, plenty of neo-atheist scientists became popular among the public. One of those popular names is the famous neuroscientist Sam Harris, who claims in his book "The Moral Landscape" to explain and ground morality by purely scientific means (Harris, 2010). He argues against moral relativism and challenges the distinction between facts and values, stating that the values are a specific type of facts about the well-being of conscious creatures. His opinions are not seen as eligible by most naturalist philosophers; nonetheless, he was exceedingly popular, especially throughout the 2010s. To argue against Harris, we are going to develop a scientific approach by making use of the Neo-Darwinian theory of evolution.

Evolutionary Argument Against Scientism

In our case, only two major principles of the theory of evolution are of significance. Our argument is based on the principle of natural selection and Neo-Darwinism. Natural selection is the main mechanism through which species adapt to their environment and change (Futuyma and Kirkpatrick). Accordingly, organisms with advantageous heritable traits have more chances to reproduce and pass on the beneficial traits to their offspring. Over time, these more advantageous traits become more commonly observed within the population. This is the process of natural selection.

Neo-Darwinism is the integration of Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection with genetics (Futuyma and Kirkpatrick). Accordingly, the source of the genetic variation is the mutations in the DNA of an organism. Mutations happen randomly and are independent of the needs of the species. In this regard, mutations can be beneficial, harmful, or neutral.

Taking these two components of the theory of evolution as accurate, which Sam Harris and other adherents of scientism are not expected to dispute, it is at least not rational to accept Harris's view on morality. It is noteworthy that, unlike the previous evaluations, our claim here is not logical but rather probabilistic. If Neo-Darwinian evolution is true, a scientific endeavor to ground moral realism is very likely to fail. We are going to cite two main reasons for this improbability.

First and foremost, we have to take a look at the behaviors of unconscious animals and their evolutionary explanations to understand one of our reasons. Consider bees, for instance. Darwin (1871) himself also thought the same example in his book "Descent of Man", and he concluded that it is highly probable that morality is largely shaped by the evolutionary process and thus has no intrinsic value. If we evolved differently, our conception of morality would also differ accordingly.

Bees live in what might be depicted as a strict communal life, within which a member of the

commune can be self-sacrificed for altruistic excuses. In fact, self-sacrifice for reproductive altruism is a cornerstone of their eusocial structure. Moreover, in many cases, this altruism is not voluntary but rather enforced. Now, assume that bees have evolved by means of the same

evolutionary process thanks to which they got this altruistic set of behaviours, but also became conscious to the extent that humans are. Would the same altruistic behaviours occur under such conditions? It appears that there is no empirical ground to think otherwise. Since those enforced altruistic behaviours are in contradiction with the general conceptions of morality in the human mind, a purely scientific explanation of morality must be anti-realistic. Furthermore, certain types of actions that are considered immoral can be explained through the structural features of the process of evolution. To give you an idea, theft is regarded as immoral and unlawful in all societies, from the most primitive ones to the contemporary ones, without exception. Given this fact, let us go through a thought experiment. Imagine two separate tribes, in one of which theft is commonly practiced, whereas the other strictly forbids and ruthlessly punishes theft. In case of a potential clash between the two tribes, the possibility that the latter wins the battle would be pretty high. In this context, the immorality of the act of theft is not discovered in some ideal world by the human mind but rather made up for survival reasons.

The second reason we will introduce is based on the teleology of evolution. Evolutionary principles that we cited above depict a world where species aim at two things: Survival and reproduction. If we leave the million-year-old history of evolution behind and focus on the question of “How ought I to act”, it becomes clear that a fairly subjectivist perception of morality is faced with. In fact, individuals can justify all acts that contribute to the possibility of the transfer of their genes to future generations. As long as there is not a surveillance watching every single individual and as long as there is not a higher authority to punish certain types of acts, such as homicide, (an ugly man can rationally commit homicide a handsome guy because the handsome guy decreases the possibility of him finding a partner for reproduction), many immoral acts would be justified from individualistic perspectives.

Due to the reasons we have mentioned above, a scientific trial to ground objective morality is not possible. In fact, it is not in the purview of science to say anything about fields such as morality. Science only describes things as they are in the outer world. Nevertheless, we need more than a description to explain morality.

The final premise of our argument was about moral realism. It would not be absurd to claim that we can presume a morally realistic framework as long as the contrary is not proven. We can rationally take it as granted because, as humanity, we have several fundamental and indispensable axiological beliefs thanks to our intuitions. However, we will cite an epistemological argument to ground our rational

take in favor of moral realism. The argument is as follows:

P1. To rationally reject moral realism, one needs to give rational arguments

P2. The truthfulness of the premises of rational arguments is not as evident as some of the moral principles

Conclusion: It is not possible to rationally reject moral realism

Many philosophical arguments against moral realism can be developed. However, the evidence of those philosophical suppositions is much less than the evidence of some moral propositions. And indeed, they appear to be more speculative and disputable. For example, the evilness of acts such as infanticide, incestuous relations, or the act of rape seems to be less disputable than the premises of arguments against moral realism.

Conclusion

In conclusion, this study has established a deductive argument to assert that a moral framework exists in which an ontologically superior being who prescribes moral rules promises absolute justice, intending to rationalise moral acts in all scenarios and ensure the bindingness of the prescribed rules. We have also presented defenses for each premise of the argument and responded to potential objections. One more analysis of the scientific attempts to ground the existence of objective moral rules has been made. Hence, it has been demonstrated that an atheistic perception of the world entails a morally relativistic position which is unlikely to be true. For the final remark, to object to this theistic defense of moral realism, at least one of its premises presented herein must be refuted.

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Zamanın, bedenin, dansın ve benliğin sınırlarını tartıştığımız bu sayımızda, felsefenin kalıplara sığmayan, benzersiz açıklığını kutluyoruz.

Aslıcan Tüter, Sakamoto'nun piyanosu üzerinden çürümenin estetiğini tartışırken; Irmak Çankaya melankolik depresyondaki bedensel ve zamansal çöküşü fenomenolojik bir perspektifle ele alıyor. Eren Taha Yalçın zamanın "anlardan" oluştuğu yanılgısını, Cansu Yılmaz ise zaman algımızın metaforik inşasını inceliyor. Nelin Beste Eryılmaz, dansın ontolojisini Budizm'in "Bağımlı Birlikte-Oluş" ilkesiyle akışkan bir zeminde yeniden kurarken, Seyfullah Bozkurt Hume Yasası ışığında natüralist ahlakı eleştirip İlahi Buyruk Teorisi'ni savunuyor.

Üçüncü sayımızda emeği geçen herkesi selamlıyoruz. Tüm bu felsefi sorgulamaların var olabilmesi, kısıtlanmamış bir zihinle mümkündür. Baskıya, tahakküme ve akademiyi hizaya çekmeye çalışan her türlü otoriteye karşı felsefenin eleştirel direncine işaret ediyor ve bir kez daha en gür sesimizle sesleniyoruz:
Özgür düşünce ve özgür - özerk üniversite!

In this issue, where we discuss the limits of time, the body, dance, and the self, we celebrate the unique, uncontainable openness of philosophy.

While Aslıcan Tüter discusses the aesthetics of decay through Sakamoto's piano, Irmak Çankaya approaches the bodily and temporal collapse in melancholic depression from a phenomenological perspective. Eren Taha Yalçın examines the illusion that time consists of "moments," whereas Cansu Yılmaz analyzes the metaphoric construction of our perception of time. Nelin Beste Eryılmaz reconstructs the ontology of dance on a fluid ground with the Buddhist principle of "Dependent Co-Arising", while Seyfullah Bozkurt criticizes naturalist morality in light of Hume's Law and defends the Divine Command Theory

We salute everyone who contributed to the publication of our third issue. The existence of all these profound philosophical inquiries is possible only with an unrestricted mind. Pointing to the critical resistance of philosophy against oppression, domination, and any authority attempting to bring the academy into line, we declare once again with our loudest voice:
Free thought and a free - autonomous university!

Nelin Beste Eryılmaz (Editor)

KHÔRA

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