

The Teleology of Teleology: What's the Use in Having a Use?

Proposed and observed roles of utility & potentiality in perceiving the nature of reality.

Abstract:

Teleology has historically been aligned with faith-based systems of belief, as when spoken of by Aristotle and Aquinas. I seek to give teleology more practical and logically sound uses, when describing reality.

Section 1 attempts to uncover the notion of inherent bias falsely appearing to be self-evidence, in order to provide a foundation free from bias. It goes on to illustrate how value – as measured by the potential progress allowed via the use of any thing – can be created upon this foundation. Section 2 sets up the powers and limitations of language, given our reliance on it in the construction of reality. It also prepares aspects of the medium of language to be used with regards to teleology, speaking of intention, metaphor, and literally-erroneous language use as factors in the logical construction of what I term informed heuristic teleology. Section 3 shows the proposed and observed roles of teleology in observing and constructing reality. Informed heuristic teleology is proposed as a value-creating tool. What I term teleological cycles are proposed as an accurate explanation of the observation of cycles of continuation and proliferation across the mental-physical barrier. Linguistic labelling and relabelling is explained as a result of teleological change.

Informed heuristic teleology and teleological cycles are proposed as tools by which we may practically and accurately shape and describe reality.

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Thank you, always, for everything, Mother.

In honour of Sky Magic.

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*The purpose of life is not to be happy. The purpose of life is to matter, to be
productive, to have it make some difference that you lived at all.*

– Leo Rosten. “The Myths by Which We Live” in
The Rotarian. September 1965.

Introduction

Aristotle posited the idea of there being Four Causes of every object, which must be understood in order to have knowledge of any given object.¹ To briefly outline this system, the material cause is that out of which an object is made; the formal cause is the shape, structure, or organisation of an object; the efficient cause is the primary source of the existence of an object in its current state; the final cause is the end goal of an object's existence. The latter of these is also known as a thing's *telos*, and is the foundation of the study of teleology. Teleology can be divided into two fields, by segmenting it into the study of intrinsic and of extrinsic purposiveness. Extrinsic purposiveness relates to purposiveness imparted unto objects by humans, such as that of a knife and fork to cut and hold food.² With humanly designed objects, the material, formal, efficient and final causes are fairly easy and uncontroversial to ascertain. In the above example, wherein the final cause has already been stated, the material cause is likely a type of metal or perhaps a wood, the formal cause is the specific shape of the utensils, and the efficient cause is the human or human-driven process that forged or crafted the items. Natural teleology, common in classical philosophy, deals with intrinsic purposiveness, suggesting that natural objects have this quality within them, irrespective of their use at the hands of mankind. This type of teleology is more controversial when it comes to defining a thing's Four Causes. Whilst the material and formal cause of a natural object is once again quite easily discovered, its efficient and final causes are less obvious. To ascertain an efficient cause for natural objects is to locate the source of creation of the natural world, which, of course, has led to the purporting of god(s) as creator, as well as the attempted retracing of causality's steps which has itself led to the notion of an infinite regress. All of these theories will be discussed later when speaking of existing schools of thought and their inherent biases. Furthermore, to ascertain a natural object's final cause is to unearth the reason for the existence of the natural world, which has similarly led to the invocation of deistic and theistic systems of belief. Regardless of whether we are

¹ Aristotle 1960, 71 b 9-11

² Dubray 1912

speaking of designed objects and their extrinsic purpose, or natural objects' intrinsic purposes, I argue that all things exist in what I term teleological cycles. This idea will be proposed and developed. It centres on the notion that if the teleological potential of any thing is actualised, this will lead to the survival, continuation and proliferation of that very thing. This is an application of teleology that I believe encompasses both extrinsic and intrinsic purposiveness.

With regards to modern and scientific philosophies and theories, academics and scholars are in debate as to whether we may achieve useful or accurate propositions via the use of teleological axioms.³ Though theological arguments' use of teleology reaches an impasse when it comes time to take a leap of literal faith into the unknowable, an example of the introduction of teleology to modern usage exists in the form of *attractors*. An attractor is, in terms of dynamical systems in mathematics, *a set of states toward which a system tends to evolve*.⁴ In this regard, an attractor is explained teleologically, as the inbuilt final cause of a system. It is something of a mirrored setup to that of causal explanations, which trace phenomena backwards through time rather than forwards. The relationship between causality and teleology will be developed further in due time, alongside a proposal of the use of *informed heuristic teleology*, which I coin. This term refers to the use of teleology in a linguistically metaphorical sense, speaking in a personified way of the potential purposiveness in the world around us. Thomas Nagel does something similar when proposing a non-Darwinian account of evolution that utilises natural teleology to explain the existence of life and value.⁵ For example, regardless of scientific proof, claiming that certain predators were *given* canine teeth or sharp claws because these features serve the purpose of predation is a useful – if personifying of evolution – description in terms of understanding the value provided by such characteristics, and the advantage they afford their owners in the quest for survival. Value will later be defined in teleological terms. Further examples and elucidation of *informed heuristic teleology*

³ Rountree 1997. See paper for a response to Pietroski's argument of evolutionary/teleological theory. Rountree notably addresses intentionality as part of his response, a feature that I also discuss in this thesis.

⁴ Von Foerster 1992, p. 310

⁵ Nagel 2012. See text for full discussion.

will be given, as I posit it as a value-creating and understanding-achieving tool. My application, though priming teleology for use in the lives of humans, is not anthropocentric with regards to suggesting that purposiveness exists in the world *for* humanity. Rather, I propose how innate purposiveness may be utilised to further understanding of, and create value in, our world. This usage is the teleology of teleology, to us.

The structure of this essay is as follows:

I first highlight the difference between naïve and informed heuristic teleology, emphasising the importance of being aware of the empirically true nature of reality even if we are to speak of it metaphorically. I address the concept of inherent biases being incorrectly labelled as self-evidence, and stress the necessity of removing false assumptions that are made based on this process, especially with regards to natural teleology's alleged inherency necessitating intelligent design. Having attempted to eradicate bias, I explicate how we may layer purpose unto a world devoid of objectively inherent purpose, in order to create and/or acknowledge value. This involves disputing Kant's proposition that rational humans should treat others and be treated as an end in and of themselves, and not a means to an end.

The power of language is then discussed, with special interest paid to the *erroneous* use of language, that being language use that has no relation to, or bearing on, reality. The logical structure of this type of language use is further analysed as actually – counterintuitively – being capable of constructing reality, with *intention* being posited as the deciding factor between illogical language use resulting in innovation or error. Kafka is used as an example of the creational possibilities of illogical language. All of these ideas are important in priming aspects of language use, such as metaphor and personification, which are to be utilised when employing informed heuristic teleology.

Next, I discuss the actualisation of the potentiality of all things, including the universal potentiality for cycles of survival, continuation and proliferation: I term these *teleological cycles*. Religious ideologies and Panopticism are here used as exemplars. When speaking of these cycles being liable

to linguistic and behavioural manifestation – that is, coming into existence due to language use and/or behavioural change – and of them alternating between mental and physical states of existence, erroneous language use is revisited, again as a source of creation.

Teleology and causality are compared as opposing explanations of phenomena, and I explicate how our explanations of phenomena necessarily rely on a clipping of reality into pre-selected measures, in lieu of the attainability of a natural – that is, not labelled by humanity – beginning or endpoint.

Teleology is proposed as the deciding variable in the labelling and relabelling of things. Conclusions are drawn pertaining to the accuracy and applicability of teleological cycles, and the usefulness of informed heuristic teleology.

1. Nietzsche and Self-Evidence

i. The Eradication of Assumption

Friedrich Nietzsche in *Twilight of the Idols* states that ‘if you have your *why* for life, you can get by with almost any *how*.’⁶ The suggestion is that having a purpose to live provides us with an extra layer of resilience; a resilience that is not innate but comes from an association with a specified goal. This may be fairly simple to logicise: a purpose, in times of difficulty, becomes an incentive to overcome those difficulties, and thus someone with a purpose is further incentivised to be resilient than someone without one. Already we may begin to see the utility of having some sort of purpose. I will note, though, that this apparently self-evident utility is based on the idea that survival is a favourable outcome. This will be important in the later discussion of teleological cycles in both natural and artificial (read: made by mankind) objects and phenomena, a discussion which presupposes a proclivity towards continuation and proliferation. If we treat the notion of survival and propagation as self-evidently desirable, though, a reading of Nietzsche provides resistance. He says in his aforementioned text:

Judgments, value judgments about life, for or against, can in the final analysis never be true; they have value only as symptoms, they can be considered only as symptoms—in themselves, such judgments are stupidities. One absolutely must reach out and try to grasp this astounding *finesse*, that the value of life cannot be assessed. Not by the living, since they are parties to the dispute; in fact, they are the objects of contention, and not the judges—and not by the dead, for another reason.⁷

By suggesting value judgments regarding life are always unfounded, Nietzsche refutes the necessity of any sort of proclivity toward survival, as continued life cannot be asserted to be an incentive. Whilst I argue that there remains the possibility that humans may decide (however unfoundedly)

⁶ Nietzsche 1998, p. 6

⁷ Nietzsche 1998, p. 13

that life is a valid incentive, and so (even indirectly) use the pursuit thereof as a means of accruing resilience, Nietzsche's argument would seem to pose an issue for less intelligent organisms – i.e. ones incapable of asserting purposiveness unto life – having a proclivity for survival, and, by extension, the teleological cycles of continuation and proliferation in non-living things. This will be further discussed later. I will meter this though by saying that I do not think Nietzsche is actually arguing against the existence of survival instinct, and rather disputes only the fact that instinct and desire connoting value is self-evident. So, if there is some sort of universal, innate predilection toward continuation, Nietzsche has qualms only with its existence suggesting value, and not with its existence in the first place. This is a useful acknowledgment to make, as it questions how we should define and treat teleology.

Removing the suggestion of value from teleology removes with it the need for an intelligent designer who would have allegedly imbued the potentiality of all things with some sort of value which is reached upon actualisation. I deem it unnecessary to spend too long extricating teleology and intelligent design, but necessary nonetheless to justify why I have arrived at this conclusion. To do so, I will call attention to Nietzsche's stance during *Twilight of the Idols*. The text's subtitle, '*Or, How to Philosophize with the Hammer*', demonstrates Nietzsche's deconstructive approach: to pull the rug from beneath accepted philosophical ideologies. In doing so, Nietzsche attempts to expose logical fallacies as well as both overcomplications and oversimplifications which have (allegedly) historically been swept under said rug. I use the term deconstructive carefully, as, with deconstructionism being closely aligned with Jacques Derrida's work in the second half of the twentieth century, I seek to avoid anachronism.⁸ Nonetheless, Nietzsche's attempt to quite literally deconstruct certain fundamentals in philosophy can, I believe, be seen as a precursor for the later work of Derrida and others that grew into the deconstructionist movement. Moreover, the term *deconstruction* has come to popularly denote 'a critical dismantling of tradition and traditional

⁸ See Derrida's *Dissemination* (1972, preface & pp. 4-6) and *Positions* (1971, pp. 41-2) for his own definitions of deconstruction.

modes of thought', and so I extend this to be relevant and appropriate when describing not just the dismantling of traditional thoughts, but also of the logical underpinnings that allow them to exist, notably the smuggled-in use of assumption in the place of self-evidence.⁹ I argue that the comparable arguments both for intelligent design and for an unmoved mover fall into this category of fallacious self-evidence that Nietzsche sought to deconstruct. First theorised by Aristotle, an unmoved mover is said to be the primary cause of all motion in the universe.^{10,11} Thomas Aquinas, in the thirteenth century, used Aristotle's concept of an unmoved mover in an attempt to satisfy two of his five arguments for the existence of God: the argument from motion, and the argument from causation.¹² The argument is that motion and causality alike must begin somewhere, and with something. If we attempt to follow either of these things to a starting point, we come face to face with an infinite regress. As a result, philosophers such as Aristotle and Aquinas have invoked God as the unmoved mover in order to give a more comprehensible and acceptable solution. This is due to the logical inaccuracy that an infinite regress is absurd and unsatisfactory. I suggest that this is partially due to the pre-existent desire to invoke God/gods, as a result of the largely deistic and theistic paradigms of Aristotle and Aquinas' respective times. In *The Gay Science*, Nietzsche states that 'one hears only those questions for which one is able to find answers.'¹³ This implies that we address those dilemmas which we feel equipped to resolve, with infinite regress falling into this category. By asserting that an infinite regress is an unsatisfactory state of events, the invocation of God becomes a suitable and necessary explanation, if using Inference to the Best Explanation: the problem was effectively sought out with a view to a readymade solution. By way of comparison, there is a corresponding problem to that of infinite regress which, rather than tracing movement or causality backwards, would deal with the potential for those notions to move forward infinitely. An infinity provides the same issue regardless of its direction, yet this latter matter has not been

⁹ Encyclopaedia Britannica

¹⁰ Aristotle 1925, XII, 1072a.

¹¹ Nielsen 1971, pp. 170-2

¹² Aquinas 1911, Section 6

¹³ Nietzsche 1974, Book 3, Section 196

addressed with the same urgency as the former. As God's genesis of the universe is said to have already occurred, it is theoretically more accessible for study and attempted explanation than the comparatively unknowable remit of eschatology. The future is afforded unproblematic open-endedness due to the absence of a pre-existent remedial conception. As modern science and mathematics have come to terms with infinities, we have realised that the concept of an infinite regress is not as in need of rectification as it may have seemed to our thinking predecessors. (It seems to me that only the incremental increase in knowledge pertaining to infinities could be responsible for the acceptance of an infinity as a satisfactory endpoint of an argument.) Due to our advances in scientific and mathematical remits affecting the way we logicise beginnings, we can now do away with the idea of an unmoved mover or a first cause being a self-evident and necessary conception. Note that this is not contingent on an unmoved mover, first cause, or god *actually not existing*, and only serves to remove the notion of self-evidence from claims either way.

Ludwig Wittgenstein can be invoked here to give precedence to the notion of ensuring true impartiality, as opposed to allowing inbuilt bias to masquerade as self-evidence. In *Zettel*, it is stated that 'the philosopher is not a citizen of any community of ideas, that is what makes him a philosopher.'¹⁴ A philosopher then is to be unpartisan, unconvinced by mere consensus, and wholly unaffected by groupthink. Intersubjectivity is permitted and encouraged provided arguments are brought forward with honesty: an agenda to prove their supremacy amongst competing ideas must be based on sound reasoning and not cultural or proximity bias. Moreover, a philosopher's very ability to identify as such is dependent on their being detached from existing schools of thought, and as such it is their responsibility and duty, and in fact their defining characteristic, to remove the bias or *philosophical patriotism* from any given proposition that is presented as self-evident. The difficulty lies in an issue highlighted by Jonathan Swift: 'Reasoning will never make a Man correct an ill Opinion, which by Reasoning he never acquired.'¹⁵ Put more easily, *you cannot reason someone*

¹⁴ Wittgenstein 1967, I-455

¹⁵ Swift 1721, p. 27

out of something he or she was born into, and not reasoned into: this is precisely relevant to instances wherein bias masquerades as self-evident. Ideas born from a place of bias will, obviously, exhibit bias, but when compared against the baseline of their place of birth these biases will cancel out, as they will align with the default. Most simply put, we do not recognise biases that are inbuilt. Aquinas did not realise that his proclivity to believe in God was not self-evident, hence his tendency to label things outside of the necessity of a deity as absurd. I argue then that it is our responsibility as philosophers, aided by scientific advances and thorough logical and theoretical probing, to ensure that these types of bias-fuelled assumptions are exposed and done away with. Note again that it is the assumption of self-evidence that must be eradicated, not the belief in its own right. So, as previously mentioned, life may be deemed to have value, but this deeming is neither self-evident nor provable. This level of actively investigated doubt takes us towards the ultimate incarnation of doubt: René Descartes' *cogito, ergo sum*, or more accurately the doubt that drove the argument which eventually led to the cogito. Descartes' cogito desires to remove all assumption, leaving only what is immanent, that being – according to its theoriser – the fact that humans are beings that think. No more can be asserted as real, or truthful, with certainty. Many may claim that this level of doubt is playing devil's advocate, and it very well may be, but this is useful, and necessary. Not because it will change reality, but because it will allow, encourage, or enforce the world to be understood differently, and more accurately. This is perhaps an argument against naïve heurism: that mental shortcuts that bypass the truth in favour of convenience must be exposed, not because the shortcuts do not work, and not to suggest they cease to be used, but simply to allow the truth to be acknowledged, even if in the background, with no direct bearing on our behaviours. I distinguish between naïve and informed heurism: the latter skips over any steps/details deemed as unnecessary or trivial in favour of convenience and speed, whereas the former skips over these steps/details due to the belief that they do not exist. I deem informed heurism permissible and useful, and will come to place teleology within this remit as one of my conclusions.

ii. Value Creation

By bringing the two primary Nietzsche quotes that were used at the outset of this chapter together, I may further explain my position regarding the avoidance of assumption and the subsequent positioning of teleology. Nietzsche speaks of the impossibility and *stupidity* in making provable axiological judgments, yet clearly illustrates the utility of purposiveness when asserting that a *why* justifies and permits any *how*. By aligning the notions of, firstly, there being no provably inherent value and, secondly, the demonstrable value in having a purpose, we may conclude that value may be certifiably created by asserting a purpose. Teleology, then, may be used as a heuristic tool to suggest inbuilt purposiveness, with a view to creating value in any given stimulus, even if teleology may not be evidenced by other standards of the measurement of truth or scientific accuracy. Nietzsche may be used as a backdrop to advocate for the use of heuristic teleology alongside the warning to not assume the existence of inbuilt teleology due to its very utility. This is to say two things. Firstly: that we may *speak* of teleology as inbuilt and inherent when it serves us. Secondly: we must not use teleology's usefulness as a rationalisation for why it must and does exist inherently. This second statement is essential: if purposiveness leads to value, then assuming teleology's inherency is to assume value's inherency, which I use Nietzsche's earlier position to veto. Moreover, if we are using teleology heuristically to create value, it would be begging the question to then use this created value to imply inherent value. Informed heuristic teleology must be acknowledged to be a tool that we use, not a phenomenon that we observe.

I will now take this toward real-world application. Value, in the current line of argument, cannot be discovered with certainty, but it can be created with certainty. I suggest then that to increase satisfaction globally we must accordingly seek to create value rather than attempting to prove or discover its inherency. As value is created by the imposition of purposiveness, we must emphasise this process. Harking back to *if you have your why for life, you can get by with almost any how*, then it is more sensible to change the underlying goals, desires, and perceived purpose of a population, than it is to focus on changing the living conditions of a population. Exploring some widely-known

adages may aid this line of thought. It is often said that *money cannot buy happiness*: having adequate financial power gives its owner control with regards to *how* they may live, but this is inadequate for complete satisfaction. This is due, I now argue, to the lack of a *why*: comfort without purpose is unsatisfactory for us. The argument is somewhat reminiscent of the proverb *give a man a fish and you feed him for a day; teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime*. To give a population favourable living conditions is to satisfy their *how*, until those conditions change or until they are taken as a given and so lose their value, but to teach a population to find purpose is to satisfy that population regardless of their *how*. The implementation of informed heuristic teleology then would theoretically lead to sustained satisfaction irrespective of context. For clarity, I will explain a process whereby purposiveness may be understood and then applied to humans.

Value is created by utility: if something is useful it is valuable with direct correlation to the progress or change it allows its subject to enact. A teapot is valuable with direct correlation to the difference in value (to an actor) between hot water & tea leaves, and a brewed mug of tea. Likewise, money is valuable with direct correlation to the difference between its owner's conditions before and after utilising said money. When a thing is used for a purpose, its value is determined by the change this use brings about. Anything used as a means to an end is valuable with reference to the change between the start and end point. To increase resilience and satisfaction, then, humans must treat and observe themselves and each other as a means, not an end. This challenges Immanuel Kant's proposition that rational humans should be treated as an end in and of themselves, and not a means to an end.¹⁶ I understand Kant's concerns that people, if used or seen as means, become tools, yet I argue the upside of this process. In cases where the treatment of one person as a means would result in value being added to the lives of multiple people, such as in the case of one person's organs being extracted (willingly or otherwise) to preserve the lives of multiple others, a utilitarian argument would be justification enough. Arguments against the greatest good for the greatest

¹⁶ Kant 2010, pp. 37-108

number are surely ego-driven, with the assumption of the individual being more important than others, even several others. I suggest then that we do not *reduce* a person to a means, but rather *augment* them into a means, as the value of one life has now become the value of multiple lives, assuming each person brought equal value to the world in the first place. Speaking of which, there is also the case of *observing* someone as a means due to the value they bring to the world, as well as using them as one. This line of thought leads to appreciation of individuals, and does not necessitate an active utilisation of a human for a specified means. Rather, it encourages the acknowledgement of the valued changes that any individual brings: with this mindset we will consider the difference in happiness we experience with and without the existence/presence of our loved ones, as well as the appreciation of the more easily measured moments of value being added, such as in the workplace or on the sports field. By bringing the acknowledgement of value to the fore, by observing people as a means, we theoretically avoid this value being lost: value is lost when purposiveness is taken as a given. This occurs because the gap between the start and endpoint – created by the implementation of purposiveness – is closed, as the endpoint is believed to be the default, therein becoming a new starting point. Hence to create further value we must increase purposiveness. This could be argued to lead to continual growth as we incessantly demand more value to be added to the world in order to be satisfied, which may very well be the case, but I believe this argument contains an unfounded assumption that progress is always good, and more importantly that incessant progress is preferable to satisfaction within a more static environment.

2. The Power of Language

i. Creation, evocation, denotation

Though our predecessors refuted infinity in the name of, albeit flawed, logical absurdity, the issue may persist even after rationalisation. More worrying, and Wittgensteinian in nature, this may be a result of our language use: if our language surrounding cause and effect, and motion consists of prepositions that define an effect as always having a cause, and a motion always having a stimulus, then we construct a reality in which the suggestion of no beginning *is* absurd. Perhaps this is what led to the alleged necessity of an unmoved mover when discussing infinite regress. When Ludwig Wittgenstein claims that the limits of our language are the limits of our world, and that ‘what can be said at all can be said clearly, and what we cannot talk about we must pass over in silence’, he argues that existence – or at least our understanding thereof – stops where our language stops.¹⁷ Whilst I broadly agree with the weight Wittgenstein affords language’s role in our interaction, understanding, and very construction of our world, I do feel there is something important to consider: the fact language can be used incorrectly, unreliably, and be misunderstood. Even in the case of accepting that there is no objective reality beyond that given to us by our language use, I purport that it is logical to argue that a faulty tool or the faulty use of a tool (in this case, the faulty usage of language, our reality-constructing tool) results in a faulty conception, even if there is no existing conception to compare to. If we were shown a supposedly completed jigsaw puzzle but found pieces to be overlapping, or some pieces made from a different material and quite clearly belonging to a different puzzle, then we would not have to check the image on the front of the box in order to adjudge the puzzle before us to be faulty. Similarly, if language is used incomprehensibly then we do not need a rectified version in order to acknowledge the fault. Thus, Wittgenstein’s assumption that ‘what can be said at all can be said clearly’ is false: much can be spoken that is

¹⁷ Wittgenstein 1922, 6.54

unclear and incorrect. As a result, we must be careful not to assume that all language use is denotive, or constructive, of reality.

First, I will further address the constructive and/or unearthing capabilities of language. As our main method of conveying information, it is important to know the possibilities and limits of language use; for my purposes, it is important to know the potentialities of language, in order to attempt to discuss the role of teleology in the nature of reality without simultaneously changing that very nature of reality. This is to say that we must seek clarity of meaning so as to speak about reality and our understanding thereof, without causing such things to change as a result of our very discussion. Let us consider, then, occasions wherein the use of seemingly illogical or unexpected language is actually elucidatory or constructive with regards to reality. Oxymoronic language is a prime example here, such as the instance in William Shakespeare's *Romeo & Juliet* where the eponymous female character states that 'parting is such sweet sorrow.'¹⁸ Here, the juxtaposing 'sweet' and 'sorrow' – rather than collapsing under the weight of contradiction – actually gives further insight into the nature of reality and the possibilities of our emotions, adding nuance and context to the notion of 'parting.' Now, not only is the parting *sorrowful* due to the separation of two lovers, but it is also *sweet* due to the hope of meeting once more. The at once illogical pairing of contradictory words achieves a synergy which brings another dimension to the notion in question. Does this use of language evoke already existing bittersweetness from within the context, or create it, or, perhaps, can evocation be deemed constructive? The question then is whether this use of language *unearths* more of an already existing reality, or whether it *creates* this new depth of sentiment. Is Shakespeare utilising language to create a reality that he feels more accurately depicts what he wants to say, or to penetrate more deeply into a reality that already existed (at least by inference, if we treat the narrative as operating akin to a real-life incarnation thereof)? It may be clarifying to give examples of these things occurring in real life. When scientific advances allow us to rectify the

¹⁸ Shakespeare 2011, Act 2, Scene 3, line 200

labels we associate with certain phenomena, we experience language use change to *unearth* and signify meaning that was already existing but was out-of-reach or mislabelled. For example, Aurora Borealis can now, thanks to advances in science, be explained (albeit vaguely, here) as *electrons releasing protons after the arrival of charged solar particles initially increasing the energy of said electrons*. This use of language, as compared to historical beliefs of the phenomena, is novel, and occurred due to the attempt to unearth meaning, to penetrate inaccuracies and reach a more accurate reality. The scientific reality already existed during the period where the ancient Greeks believed that the lights were ‘Aurora, the sister of Helios (the sun) and Seline (the moon), racing across the sky to tell her siblings to prepare for another day’, or when Aborigines thought the lights to be, simply, happy gods, dancing, but now that reality has been brought into discussable existence via the employment of scientific language.¹⁹ (Note that of course we cannot disprove these beliefs, but regardless, language is being used to unearth and signify what we feel is an existing reality.) The same process occurred when microscopic germs were discovered and became the cause for certain illnesses and diseases that had allegedly previously been the work of demons and curses. An argument may claim that meaning in these scenarios was unearthed by scientific discovery and then signified by language. I am not convinced that this poses an issue for the suggestion that existing meaning has been evoked by new language use, as progression outside of language occurs incessantly and must be discussed and labelled, nonetheless. In any case, the example of infants learning to speak, and of the learning of new languages in general, should illustrate that new language can be accrued and used to convey meaning that was already existing in the world – in this case within a person – but missing a linguistic construction capable of its expression. Pre-verbal infants and non-native speakers have intentions before their linguistic skill allows these to be verbally articulated. Language in these cases mobilises meaning from its dormancy, rather than creating new meaning.

¹⁹ Gaskill 2018

I will use George Orwell's *Animal Farm* to further address these queries of construction and evocation. During the novel, a pig, Napoleon, changes a commandment from 'all animals are created equal' to 'all animals are created equal, but some animals are more equal than others.'²⁰ Again, language is used unexpectedly and illogically, and again this results in meaning being added rather than scrambled. As readers, we understand that inequality and injustice are being conveyed beneath the veneer of equality, despite the nonsensical makeup of the mantra itself. Our understanding is aided by the knowledge that Orwell is commenting on Stalinist Russia; the understanding of this instance of language use, then, is reliant on an external reality. Whether this instance unearths truths about the regime criticised by Orwell or creates meaning with the intention of it being aligned with the regime, though, is still unclear, and could easily veer into a political debate regarding whether the metaphor is an accurate and fair illustration or slanderous propaganda. I draw a distinction here between *innovation*, that being the artful use of metaphor, and *error*, that being the purporting of untruths. Further to this, I align the already discussed terms *evocation/unearthing* and *creation/construction*: innovative language is an instance of evocation, with a dormant potentiality being unearthed and iterated, whereas erroneous language is an instance of creation, as something that does not already exist is constructed linguistically (this *something* is any erroneous meaning – intentional or not – created by language use). Both instances occur due to the unexpected or novel use of language; the distinction therebetween may instigate debate, as illustrated by the example from *Animal Farm*. This is because the mechanism is the same, regardless of whether the created meaning is evoked or created. As a result, the ability to distinguish between unearthed meaning and created meaning is not available at a theoretical level, but only once real-world application has occurred, at which point opinions and politics obscure objectivity. It seems then that evocation and creation – to the extent that we may analyse with objectivity – are inextricable. This may point towards the aforementioned proposition: can evocation be deemed constructive, and vice versa?

²⁰ Orwell 2000, p. 86

If we are speaking of a statue chiselled from a marble slab, the answer is yes. *David* is certainly Michelangelo's creation, for the sculptor brought into existence something which did not exist before; or perhaps Michelangelo merely unearthed the form of what would come to be known as *David*, as all constituent parts existed within the marble slab before any chiselling whatsoever occurred. In this respect, we could only consider creation as occurring in instances of the coining new terms, neologisms, and the like, as any meaning created from linguistic subunits (i.e. sounds and words) is a result of evocation of potentiality from the pool of already existing possibilities. Outside of this – or even including these examples, if we accept that the potentiality for neologisms exists due to the pre-existence of sounds – supposedly new language use can only be evoked from a place of hiddenness. This is reminiscent of the law of the conservation of matter, whereby we may reconstitute but not create or destroy.²¹ As applied to language and meaning, reconstitution would be the reordering or novel use of language, of which all constituent parts exist before and after any sort of reformulation. To clarify with reference to the useful marble sculpture analogy, chiselling does not destroy marble but rather turns it into dust so that we may move it out of our way in order to see (evoke) the statue within; the same occurs as we move meaning around using a different tool, that being language, to evoke novel and different sentiments from the initial pool of meaning which includes the potentiality for any and all meaning, just as the marble slab houses the potentiality for all shapes. This has helped us to understand that language is the tool and meaning is the medium. In turn we may further explain the earlier mentioned issue that may arise with Wittgenstein: that all language is denotive or constructive of reality. I mentioned that incorrect language use results in error, which has no relation to reality. We may term it *unreality*, or something of the sort, as its only relation to reality is one of erroneous negation, or erroneous purporting. This is to say that error either contradicts reality or attempts to layer it with erroneous meaning. This may now be further explained with the metaphor of language as a tool: we can see how, by using an incorrect tool, we may not be able to shape the marble/meaning in the desired way, and may fail to shape it at all, if

²¹ National Geographic Society

using *a feather to chisel* or using *erroneous language to convey meaning*. The process will still occur in both cases, but no new form or meaning will be evoked. Language, then, need not always denote reality: indeed, erroneous language *does* not.

Whenever we use language, we engage in the process of reformulating the entire pool of language. By mastering more language(s), including learning the meaning of more linguistic devices, of tones, of dialects, we equip ourselves with more tools, so that we may reformulate more of the total pool of language and in more ways. This reformulation of language can result in the reformulation of our understanding of reality as we evoke meaning from our configurations and then layer it onto reality. For this to occur, there must be a part of reality which corresponds to the evoked meaning: this is what allows the meaning we evoke to exist certifiably. By this, I mean that without a referential portion of reality to apply to, meaning is erroneous: this type of language would result in the aforementioned unreality. For example, when Bertrand Russell speaks of the existence of a china teapot revolving in an elliptical orbit somewhere between the Earth and Mars, he (intentionally) uses language in a way that contradicts reality (assuming that there is no teapot), and not in a way that layers new meaning unto existing reality as was the case with Orwell and Shakespeare.²² Instead, Russell's thought experiment illustrates that language can be used to create a unit of meaning that has no bearing *on* reality, and that language can exist without being denotive *of* reality. What we are speaking of is the formulation of sentences without propositions; these sentences then essentially come to denote fictitious information, as the meaning offered does not and cannot apply to reality.²³ Propositions can exist without sentences, as these are potentialities as of yet without linguistic denotations/labels, as discussed earlier with regards to the relabelling of phenomena or the initial labelling of previously unidentified phenomena. However, sentences cannot exist meaningfully without a proposition. Again, if one were to say 'there exists a china teapot orbiting above our heads' (again, on the assumption this isn't the case), this sentence, and

²² Russell 1952, pp. 542–548

²³ Russell 1952, pp. 307–343

the meaning it evokes from the pool of all potential meanings, attaches to no proposition, and so remains useless with regards to our understanding of reality. When Franz Kafka states that 'A cage went in search of a bird', he illustrates this point perfectly; it is only Kafka's self-awareness of the absurdity of his use that allows for it to exist meaningfully.²⁴ A cage in search of a bird is akin to an unexpressed proposition in search of a sentence. Reality doesn't work like this, which is what Kafka uses to his own aim: creating an aphorism with a sense of endlessness and inverted logic. By using illogical language when speaking of entrapment, Kafka invokes rumination on freedom, implanting thoughts – albeit confused ones, which is the very point – in the mind of his readership. Kafka knows that reality doesn't work as his language suggests, but the context renders it permissible. It is as though he has stated 'two plus two doesn't equal five', but by showing rather than telling. More accurately it is as though he has stated 'two plus two does equal five', but only with the knowledge that it does not, and with the intention to illustrate this very contradiction. Instances where labels eventually come to denote something, such as when a theory becomes actualised, parallel a cage finding its bird: these instances work only because reality shifts and *then* the evoked meaning has a corresponding reference to denote. In response to an argument that the initial sentence would have been correct as it denotes something that came to be, I would suggest that denoting a potentiality that comes to fruition holds no more weight than denoting one that doesn't, and so uttering something that *eventually* becomes correct is not the same as uttering something that *is* correct. A prediction is not a statement of a current fact, but it is in some cases a statement of a futural fact. The relationship between non-existent notions and their eventual fruition, though, must be looked into further, and will be, when I later discuss teleology as the physical incarnation of mental states, thoughts, ideas, and beliefs. Kafka's example shows us the potential for abstract notions (i.e. those without counterparts in reality) to incur thought in a mind, and the liminal space between mind and matter will be delved into, with a view to theorising a chain from the abstract to the physical.

²⁴ Kafka 2002, p. 82

ii. Manifestation & intention

The second section of this chapter works on the basis that I have already addressed erroneous language, defining it as the use of language that does not have a corresponding proposition, and so says nothing about reality. I must clarify what I speak about when using the word *proposition*. I am speaking not only of propositions that have been uttered, as of course these would already have a linguistic form. I refer rather to potential propositions, which as of yet have not been uttered. As previously highlighted via Kafka, though, there can be instances of apparently erroneous language use which nonetheless exist meaningfully. The already used example of a cage being in search of a bird is an instance of manifestation, whereby at-once erroneous language use creates something which it itself corresponds to. This is where we realise that intention is important when categorising and adjudicating language: if Kafka had – in the very same words he used in his aphorism – intended to suggest that there is, in reality, a cage which moves around actively seeking a bird which it may entrap, he would have been erroneous. However, due to the gleaned intention of Kafka, to scribe some sort of confused, thought-provoking aphorism, his language use implies meaning which the language itself may then denote. This unclear, difficult-to-define sentiment did not exist before Kafka's use of language, but, due to said use, achieves certifiability (that is, having a corresponding *thing* to apply to in reality) via the same means by which it achieves existence. Rather than being layered onto something pre-existing as in the case of relabelling or mere description, this instance shows us that novel language use can create the very thing which it denotes. Very importantly, this is an instance of creation: we have only encountered this before when speaking of erroneous language's attempt to create falsehoods. Here, the same logical process is used that would be for the creation of a falsehood, however, on this occasion – due to intention – a new aspect of reality is created. This type of creation is a self-satisfying form of innovation which differs to the kind which evokes meaning by artfully rearranging existent subunits of meaning. It is important to emphasise that intention is the deciding factor here, as this begins to point towards language being used

heuristically: if intention allows us to create reality, then it is possible that language could allow us to create more reality, rather than only learning more or penetrating more deeply and comprehensively into reality that already exists. This requires clarification: we are comfortable with language being used as a tool to mould meaning via its rearrangement. We have discussed how the potentiality for all possible arrangements of language exist within the pool of all linguistic subunits, and so the potentiality for the corresponding meanings evoked by each of these numerous arrangements also exist. We have also discussed how erroneous language use has no corresponding meaning due to its inability to denote reality, and so instead attempts to create falsehoods with no corresponding denoting thing in reality. However, we have since acknowledged instances wherein language with the same logical setup as erroneous language may in fact come to denote reality, in the discussed fashion. Thus, manifestation occurs when language is organised in an erroneous way, but fuelled by intention which allows for the creation of novel meaning, i.e. meaning whose potentiality did not exist within the pool of existing, feasible language formulations (feasible meaning possible via language use that denotes existing reality). It is the equivalent of adding to the slab of marble rather than carving into it. This process occurs often during the use of metaphor, where context is necessary to define language as constructive of meaning rather than erroneous.

Another instance wherein language that may be considered erroneous if taken literally occurs during personification (a form of metaphor). Speaking once more of heurism, we may humanise objects in order to speak of them teleologically, in much the same way as we did earlier when creating value in individuals. In fact, we often do this already. When speaking of a pair of spectacles we likely say that *they help us see*, when in fact *we use them to help us to see*. We often linguistically adorn objects with more agency than they actually have, and in doing so imbue the world around us with more value. By speaking of objects as actors, we decentralise our agency, and more easily acknowledge the value of the things that we use. I would extend this to say that whilst a sentence claiming an object to have agency may be literally erroneous, its corresponding proposition is not. I do not agree that by stating that an object *does* something, it is implied that that object consciously and actively

goes about doing said thing. I believe then that it is accurate to say that spectacles help us to see, despite the fact that they rely on us to pick them up and place them on our noses. When serving this purpose, the object is experiencing the actualisation of its potentiality for purposiveness, of which an object may have many. If we were able to ask a pair of spectacles what it was doing, it would reply "helping you to see." Success for an object is the actualisation of its/one of its potentiality/ies. This leads to the survival of the object, as its utility is being utilised. When I come to speak of teleological cycles, this notion of an object seeking its own continuation in a survival instinct type manner will return.

3. Application & Observation

i. Teleological cycles; potential actualisation; physical incarnation of non-physical things

I have discussed the dormant potentialities existent within language, which via usage may be actualised. The same setup exists within all things, physical and/or non-physical: objects, notions, living organisms, thoughts, all have teleological potentialities that may be actualised upon use. While the use of language results in the creation, evocation, denotation, or manifestation of meaning, the use of the things listed in the previous sentence may give rise to the actualisation of several things. In reality, an object may have several feasible uses, any of which may be actioned given a specific context. Whether a packet of fusilli is to be boiled and eaten or become part of a child's arts and crafts set is yet to be determined when it sits on a shelf. The specifics of actualising potentiality then are multifaceted and almost infinite. What is constant though is that any use results in the experience of value, which has already been defined here as corresponding to the difference between a circumstance before and after a process has occurred. I will say then that there is teleological value inherent in all things: all things by their very existence have the potentiality to add value as a result of usage. Before moving further along I will add a clarification regarding the disparity between living and non-living things, whom I argue share this universally applicable notion of teleological value. As some living things can move and have autonomy, they may be said to use themselves to actualise their own dormant teleological potentialities. Contrastingly, inanimate or unconscious things experience the actualisation of their potentialities but do not action it. They do however allow for the actualising to occur, due to their very mode of existence housing the potentialities for such actualisation. This is to suggest that these types of things house value inherently due to their very nature, even if they cannot evoke and put to use this value of their own accord.

I will take this argument further by suggesting that although different things house the potential for different uses, the potentiality for survival, continuation, and proliferation is universal. I term the process of the actualisation of this teleological potentiality a *teleological cycle*, wherein if the primary use of a thing is actioned, the necessary result is that thing's continuation. This continuation may cross back and forth across the barrier between the mental and physical world. It is unnecessary to attempt to evidence behaviour suggesting survival instinct in living organisms here: it is easily observable in interactions between wild animals, in the behaviour of plant-life, in the processes of cells under the microscope. Though there may be opposition to the notion of non-conscious organisms exhibiting survival instinct, I use this term heuristically: living organisms all behave as though they seek survival, continuation, and proliferation, regardless of their level of consciousness. Bacteria avoid danger and seek favourable conditions just as plants and animals, including humans, do. As a result of this acknowledgment, my argument here will centre on inanimate objects and non-physical notions, such as thoughts and ideologies, as there is more room to question the existence of teleological cycles in these cases. It is also easier to define *primary* uses in these cases, whereas individualisation as well as ethical and axiological arguments may suggest that living organisms, even those of the same type, may have different priorities: as discussed earlier in this essay, Nietzsche questions the assumption that life may be considered unquestionably valuable, and so arguments that a living organism's primary use is not survival would not be surprising. Discussing these arguments is beyond the scope of this essay.

First, we will consider an example whose survival, continuation, and proliferation can be found to cross the physical/non-physical barrier: religious ideology. A religious ideology may be judged to be successful or powerful if it manages to solidify itself in the physical realm, by giving rise to texts, monuments, places of worship, and so on, which in turn increase the outreaching possibilities of the ideology. In turn, and again if successful, this broadened scope will lead to more subscribers to the religious ideology in question, then more calls for its representation, and the cycle continues. This is the very process that allows ideologies to continue, as evidenced by the line drawn from the first

scribes of religious texts to the existence of their corresponding beliefs in the twenty-first century. The reasons for the initial birthing of any ideology may be debatable; in this case, opinions may range from religion being the very literal documentation of the word of God, to it being a pedagogical metaphor intended to benefit mankind, to it being an entirely false construction intended to exert control unto populations. The specifics become irrelevant when considering the primary use from the perspective of the ideology itself: regardless of the reason for its inception, success is to be measured by how far-reaching – in terms of both number of believers at any one time, and longevity – the ideology is. To achieve success, then, an ideology goes through the aforementioned process, of becoming incarnated as broadly as possible in the physical realm, in order to be reimplanted into as many minds as possible. Note that this is not just a measure of success according to those purporting any given ideology but is immanent in the concept of an ideology itself. Though we may not claim that continuity and survival are inherently *valuable*, we can observe that all things strive to this end if functioning ordinarily. Just as living organisms behave in ways that increase the likelihood of their continuation, non-living things' primary uses function to ensure the same thing. Every manufactured product, if successful, leads to increased production of others like itself via satisfaction and word-of-mouth promotion. Even advertisements are advertising for themselves, as if a marketing strategy is successful it will be more widely used. Again, if any given thing actualises its teleological potential, it leads to survival, continuation and proliferation. Thus, we may use these things as barometers of success for any given thing. Success is synonymous with the acting out of teleological cycles.

A further example of a successful *thing* is the notion of Panopticism. The term (from the Greek *panoptēs*, or *panoptos* [all-seeing; seen by all]) was introduced by Jeremy Bentham to the English language in the late 18th century, describing the architectural design of a prison wherein 'there ought not any where be a single foot square, on which man or boy shall be able to plant himself..under any assurance of not being observed', achieved by having a central watchtower

capable of seeing into any given cell at any given time.²⁵ In 1813, Bentham was granted 23,000 pounds by parliament in order to bring this vision to life, in New Delhi; the resulting prison still functions today. Almost two centuries after Bentham's initial introduction of the term, Michel Foucault constructed a less literal iteration of the panopticon, now speaking in terms of a pervasive, internalised system of automatic control that citizens exert unto themselves via the omnipresent surveilling of one another.²⁶ The notion of Panopticism, once primarily physical, has re-entered the mental remit. It is the *idea* of this type of surveillance, behind each of its physical or behavioural incarnations, that lives on with each teleological cycle, from mind to matter and back again. Beyond heuristically claiming that non-living things *want* to go through these cycles, which may imply a level of consciousness that would lead to controversy, we can say that these things simply exhibit behaviours that lead to the continuation of said cycles. To say that these things want to do so then becomes unnecessary as well as extrapolatory, as they inherently exist in these cyclical patterns already. The same may be applied to nature. To say that an acorn *wants* to become an oak tree would be, linguistically, a case of personification, but to say that *acorns become oak trees* is factual and moreover implies the inherent potentialities of acorns. This can be taken further by saying that potentiality has an inclination to be actualised, otherwise everything in the world would be in a state of stasis, with no drive for the actualisation of potential.

An endnote for this section: we earlier spoke of the attempt to create falsehoods. I find it interesting to briefly revisit the idea, with the consideration that falsehoods – conscious or not – are also liable to the discussed teleological cycles which are fuelled by the inclination towards continuation and proliferation. The adage *if you tell a lie enough times it becomes the truth* is useful here, and also recalls the earlier discussion on manifestation. If a lie is purported continuously, the falsehood it depicts becomes ingrained in its audience, whose behaviours will subsequently alter with bias towards the falsehood. In turn, reality is shaped around a falsehood, which results in that very

²⁵ Bentham 1843, p. 86

²⁶ Foucault 1995, p. 228

falsehood coming to occupy the place of a truth, or even come to denote a truth. For an example of the former type, a false report of a road closure may lead to drivers avoiding said road, which results in reality behaving as though the falsehood were truthful. An example of the latter would be words said in hope which lead to modified behaviour, such as political rhetoric claiming *we are united* inspiring this belief in a population even if it was not apparent when the initial sentence was uttered. This is similar to what was discussed with Kafka's linguistic manifestation, earlier. In this example, once again we glean notions becoming incarnated physically (behaviourally).

ii. Teleology & causality: heurism, description, labelling

After having discussed the caution that must be taken to avoid bias masquerading as self-evidence, the ability to create value after stripping away this inaccuracy, and the capabilities of language in various respects, I will now assess the usage of teleology. I intend to have left a space for teleology that allows for unbiased heuristic description of our world. The acknowledgement of the powerful role played by language when discussing the potentialities and causes of things in the world is integral. We must be clear about when we are using metaphor rather than empiricism to describe our world, but we must also be more confident in the usefulness and – importantly – *accuracy* of metaphor, rather than casting it as a less useful tool than empiricism due only to the assumption that literalness is always the most necessary factor in judgment. The metaphorical world exists, just as does the literal world, and both can be of use. If teleology has no empirical evidence, this does not mean that it has no use: we began the first section of this essay by speaking of the utility and value of having purpose whether inbuilt or actively invoked. Using teleology heuristically or metaphorically, then, is not a case of naively defining the world in easily understood but ultimately false terms, but is at the very least based on acknowledging the dormant potentiality and so value in the world. A metaphorical sentence can still denote a very real proposition. Moreover, I have laid out a logical structure pertaining to the definition of teleological cycles as the continual actualisation

of potentialities. Hence, teleology is more than a metaphorical description; it is an accurate way of speaking about the progress we observe in the world. I argue that teleology can and should be used to describe the world in a similar manner to causality: though we may not be aware of the nature of causality's *unmoved mover* or teleology's *potential actualiser*, by which I mean the force(s) at hand that incur progress in the world, we may use language to describe our understanding of the processes, gained by both observation and logical examination. When making an observation of progress, we must acknowledge that not only is there occurring a series of causes and effects, but also a series of potentialities being actualised: not only does X lead to Y, but so too does Y emerge from X. Similarly, if logic dictates that every effect needs a cause, so does logic imply that that very effect's potentiality existed within its cause. As a result, we may align causality and teleology as constituent parts of an holistic description of progress. This logicising of causality and teleology – as previously discussed – explains progress without the need of a religious doctrine. The idea of replacing useful religious notions with equally useful corresponding faith in logic and reason is something encouraged by Kant when speaking of morality. He sought to remove what he saw as the false aspects of religion, these being the narrative specifics of religious belief, whilst replicating the useful moral guidelines in a more secular incarnation.²⁷ We can likewise eliminate (or substantiate, depending on an individual's perspective) beliefs based solely on faith, in other remits, including the one at hand: teleological and causal progression.

Firstly, a line may be drawn from an infinite regress of causality to an infinite future, with each cause actioning an effect in any given phenomena, and each effect further actualising said phenomena's utility. The physical reality of this setup would look identical through a causal or teleological lens, given that the physical reality we seek to explain is the world around us. The only difference is the perceived and argued driving force of the progression. Either a causally linked series of actions incrementally changes the physical world, or else the inbuilt teleological purpose of any given thing

²⁷ Kant 1998, Axi

mobilises potentiality into actuality. These two approaches may be spliced into a congruent explanation of perceivable progression, simply by aligning the incessant procession of cause and effect with a posited purposiveness. When assessing an acorn becoming an oak tree, teleology speaks of the inbuilt potentiality of the former to become and latter, whilst causality segments the process thereof into subunits wherein *X* causes *Y*.²⁸ Thusly, causality describes the increments of the process between two points, wherein the overall progress made between the two may be explained by a teleological actualisation of potential purposiveness. Whilst causality explains each subunit of change, teleology speaks of the very potential for these changes to occur. Causality and teleology alike, though, encounter the same questions when asked to explain extremities.

As previously discussed, cosmological argument dictates that causality requires an *unmoved mover* or a *first cause* to address the issue of infinite regress.²⁹ The issue then is the same: both causality and teleology fall short of fully explaining the reason for phenomena changing over time (outside of divinity), due to their inability to specify the circumstances of an inception or eventual end of purposiveness or causality in the world. This is in part due to our inability to map the entire spatiotemporal scale of the universe. Brian Greene *has* tentatively mapped the entire scope of physical and mental existence from a proposed start point of the Big Bang, to the eventual breakdown of protons and so allegedly the preclusion of the constituent parts of thought itself.³⁰ However, propositions regarding the entire lifespan of our world are far from proven, certain, or reliable, and so this exercise is merely a clipping of infinity into the broadest understanding feasible for current human understanding, and so logically does little or no more than clipping a specific instance of phenomenal progress for analysis. This is to say that causality relies on the same foundation regardless of whether it is applied to an instance of an acorn becoming an oak tree, or to the estimated lifespan of the entire perceivable universe. Teleology, for its part, is similarly

²⁸ Hume 1888, p. 106

²⁹ Reichenbach 2012

³⁰ Greene 2020, pp. 159-61

unaffected when it comes to scaling, as any clipped instance of phenomena would be liable to the same questions of the broader pool it was extricated from: from where came purposiveness? What is said purposiveness driving or pulling the phenomena in question towards? We see then that regardless of scale, and regardless of the scope of current scientific understanding, both causality and teleology must work within the boundaries of knowledge, bracketed or otherwise. By this I mean that the elucidation of source or destination that would increase the satisfaction of causal or teleological arguments is out of reach by its very nature.

To further clarify: any suggestion of an origin or of finality in the world is imposed by the human mind. Birth and death demarcate a life, but only because we have already defined what *a life* is, and even then, there is large-scale disagreement, especially regarding the onset of life, as well as surrounding what are the necessary features of life and/or intelligent life. These linguistic and conceptual definitions have real-world implications for legality and morality, and so the process behind deciding when a thing becomes that which it is, is important on a societal level as well as a more abstractedly philosophical or phenomenological one. Antoine Lavoisier in 1789 taught us that the constituent parts of any given perceivable phenomena exist before and after its existence in a specific form, since which we have been forced to accept that our system, our world, is a closed one, at which we can only look from within. We must also accept that labels are temporary, not simply because things exit existence, but because they become new things with new labels. This occurs not due to the loss or creation of matter, but due to the changing utility of a collection of atoms. There is no perceivable entrance or exit into the physical realm, hence we cannot assert an origin or destination for causality or teleology. This is save the attempts of quantum physics – and notably the Large Hadron Collider – to perceive the movement of quantum matter across dimensions. If successful, some previously-perceived matter would cease to be perceived, and give us a strong perimeter for the perceivable world and an external, quantum one. It is less clear where demarcations come into play when the observed phenomena remains observable, though: we must decide when a *thing* becomes something else. Just as quantum leaping between dimensions may

identify the parameters of one system, teleological jumps are necessary to demarcate the lifespan of any given object/set of objects under discussion. So, we may and do use teleology when labelling and relabelling things. When the primary use of a thing changes, so too does its label.

An object, once victim to breakdown or misuse, may become – rather than a *thing* – another object, with renewed or transmuted utility. I suggest that this may also occur due to growth or progression. This may expand Bill Brown's intended use of Thing Theory, so that it can be applied to objects and things outside of their utility as determined by human use. The logical process remains the same: as a thing exists, it may grow, be used, be broken, and its teleology will accordingly change. The necessity remains as to where the teleological boundaries are when an object becomes something else. A single object may have various uses: for example, a dumbbell, away from its designed use, may be used as a doorstop. The same may be said of any blunt object being used as a weapon, or a chair being used as a makeshift stepladder to reach a top drawer. In these cases, the object remains constant but its teleology has varied due to use. It would not be irrational to call the dumbbell a 'doorstop', or to call it a 'weapon' should it have been used in an assaulting manner, but to call a chair a 'stepladder' seems less acceptable. This may be due to the fact that whilst seating is the defining use of a chair, it is not uncommon for one to be stood upon, whilst it is less common for a dumbbell to be used outside of its designed use. I believe then that widespread varied use of an object broadens its linguistic label, meaning that even when said object's teleology changes, its label remains unaffected. Objects whose use is largely monopolised, however, have only developed a single identity, based on intended use, and so when used differently adopt a new label: that which usually corresponds to the object associated with the new use. More broadly this suggests that the manner of use of an object is important in its linguistic labelling, and furthermore that if this manner of use is outside of the object's intended use, it may in some instances be capable of pulling the object across a teleological-identity barrier, resulting in new linguistic labelling.

In instances of an object remaining physically constant this makes sense. However, in cases of object breakdown, or in the case of natural objects undergoing progression/change, we must consider teleology as a spectrum or continuum. Whereas a dumbbell becomes a doorstep in a binary way once used differently, natural objects change incrementally and continually, hence so may their teleology. Manner of use may still affect the utility of these objects, as well as their linguistic labelling. Returning to the example of an acorn and an oak tree, we will consider manner of use alongside a naturally transforming object. An acorn may be used as a projectile, and a tree as a climbing frame, but I would suggest that outside of a child's imagination or hyperbole these objects would most likely retain their initial linguistic label. It strikes me that this may be the case for most or all natural objects. The labels assigned to manmade objects seem to have less sanctity than those assigned to natural objects: I suggest this may be to do with a misattribution of authority by way of inherency on the part of the human mind. Though *all* labels are decided by language users, those used for natural objects are afforded a degree of timelessness due to their association with the natural world, giving a false sense of the label and object being inherently linked, whilst those used for manmade objects are associated with impermanence, changeability and human will. Thus, manner of use is powerful in relabelling manmade objects, but less influential when it comes to natural ones.

It may though seem counterintuitive that objects with a definite inbuilt utility, with unchanging physical forms, are more liable to relabelling than objects whose utility is not determined by mankind and whose physical forms are incessantly changing. Perhaps this points to the fact that nature has built in teleology which is more respected than the human-designed kind. In the manmade world we are the unmoved mover who suffuses objects with purposiveness via the Four Causes and via manner of use, whilst the natural world moves and grows regardless of our interaction therewith. This suggests a parallel unmoved mover (logically speaking, not religiously) whose world functions with purposiveness outside the control or authority of mankind. This is where the misattribution of authority may play a role: in these such cases, we associate our own labels with

SZ. Hallern

the authority of a perceived unmoved mover in nature, and so feel less willing to alter natural objects' identity.

Conclusions

The intention for this thesis has been to renew teleology's usefulness by providing two proposed usages. Firstly, the coined *informed heuristic teleology* is intended to produce a value-creating tool. It does this by constructing a mode of language use that allows us to speak metaphorically about the value around us rather than stripping things of their inherently-held functions and reducing their inbuilt potentiality for utility to extensions of our own actions. By personifying things in direct correspondence with the potential utility that their mode of existence allows us to actualise, we acknowledge the value in the world that is always ready for evocation, rather than seeing value only in our ability to use things to our own ends. We may speak of a sunset making us happy, skipping over the details of sunlight increasing the release of the mood-enhancing hormone serotonin, not because we do not know the science or causality beneath our emotions, but because the more metaphorical level of sunsets leading to our happiness is still truthful.³¹ We could theoretically fracture processes into infinitely more minute increments, but each new layer of minute detail would not nullify the truthfulness or validity of its broader predecessor. We must then be more confident when speaking metaphorically about the value given to us by the world around us and the things/objects therein, without fearing nullification at the hands of a more minutely segmented causal explanation for phenomena. By acknowledging broader relationships of cause and effect and teleological potential actualisation, we may perceive the value created by the actualisation of potentiality of things in our environment.

A further intention has been to argue for natural teleology in a modified sense, considering its usual application has contemporarily been considered largely controversial.³² Accordingly, I do not seek to suggest that everything has a set, preordained purpose. Rather, I argue that due to any thing's specific mode of existence, it has many inherent potentialities that may be actualised. Furthermore, centring my argument on non-living things, I suggest that these things each have a primary use –

³¹ Nall 2019

³² Allen 1995

again contingent on their specific mode of existence – which, if exercised, gives rise to the continuation of what I term *teleological cycles*. These cycles exist in physical and non-physical things and are essentially the continual acting out of primary uses to form a line of survival, continuation and proliferation. These cycles can interact with living things, and in doing so crossover between the mental and physical remit, as exemplified earlier with religious ideologies and the notion of Panopticism. Teleology is thus an accurate way to speak about the progression we observe in the world, as well as a useful tool in perceiving and creating value, and not merely a faith-based suggestion that the world has been imbued with innate meaning.

Teleology has a further application in the discussion of our world. Objects are adorned with linguistic labels dependent on their potential utility. The reason that things are given labels is that we organise them into labelled groups consistent with their potential uses. If we did not consider the potential utility of objects, we would only distinguish between things by sensory differences. We label things in accordance with that which we observe or design them to do. A flower and a sculpture of a flower are not the same thing, nor, as Kant famously purports in his third critique, are birdsong and an imitation thereof from a human voice box.³³ It is not enough for two things to look, smell, feel, taste and/or sound the same: for them to share a linguistic description, they must inhabit the same teleological cycle. Teleology then is vitally important in our labelling and description of the world around us, being the foundation of nomenclature.

To expand the scope of this essay we may revisit the earlier mentioned notion of the teleology of living things, including humans, giving special attention to potential arguments for the primary use(s) of conscious beings being outside of the cycles of survival, continuation and proliferation. It may be the case that, in instances where a conscious organism is able to consider and alter its own purposiveness, beings of the same type may have varying teleological cycles. Of course, at one level, teleological cycles would necessitate the continuation of the physical incarnation of any organism,

³³ Kant 2000, p. 182

therein necessitating procreation as a primary use, but we may be able to clip the cycle of these organisms into a single physical lifetime. Having done this, we may delve into the potentialities other than genetic proliferation and continuation which may lead to the survival of, let's say, humans, outside the literal survival of the species. This is to say that there may be cycles of continuation that ensure the survival of something akin to *human spirit* or the *essence* of humanity, without necessitating that this be done primarily via procreation. Edmund Husserl, for example, claims that philosophers are 'heirs and co-bearers of the direction of the will which pervades [...] humanity', and that '[there exists] spiritual unity through the unity and driving force of the task which, in the historical process [...] seeks to move through the various stages of obscurity toward satisfying clarity until it finally works itself to perfect insight.'³⁴ Perhaps then we are but physical vessels for the continuation of an intangible *human will* which seeks survival via the means of passing through a series of human minds, striving for spiritual and philosophical enlightenment as it goes.

³⁴ Husserl 1970, p. 71

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