

ON THE CONCEPT OF FREEDOM OF WILL IN ERNST TUGENDHAT

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The present analysis of the evolution of the concept of freedom in Ernst Tugendhat's philosophy aims to highlight several interesting facts. First, Tugendhat attempts to describe the meaning of Kant's statement "I could have acted otherwise" from a non-transcendental perspective. Second, he makes an effort to avoid the classical Kantian dilemma of the relation of free will and determinism by *posing the question differently*. Third, he situates the issue of the relation of freedom and causality in the framework of the inner structure of freedom – examining it from the perspective of the human's relation to him- or herself. Fourth, he attempts repeatedly to overcome the impossibility of considering freedom in the objective language of causality. The paper demonstrates why the issue of freedom remains a central problem of continental philosophy.

Keywords: Freedom of will – Freedom of action – Determinism – Causality – Intentionality – Affectivity

How to Understand Freedom of Will? Speaking about freedom of will entails many meanings; that is why Tugendhat suggests narrowing it to the problem of one basic meaning: this meaning of the concept of freedom can be best described by the expression "accountability" (*Zurechnungsfähigkeit*) which represents the main problem of Kant's practical philosophy. According to Tugendhat, it is this meaning of the concept of freedom that lays the foundations for its other meanings and is expressed by Kant's claim: "I could have done otherwise." Of course, Kant uses a different expression – that of responsibility (*Verantwortung/Imputabilität*) – to denote this meaning. By accountability we mean responsibility, based on which we can say that someone is responsible for acting or not acting and we hold that person responsible for his/her actions. It depends on you whether something happens or not. This proposition also includes: he/she could have done otherwise. According to Tugendhat, the basic problem of freedom of will is not the question of possibility or impossibility of free action; instead, it suggests the correct understanding of the claim: "He/she could have acted otherwise."

Freedom of will is not a theoretical problem, but it is a question which has far-reaching consequences for human practice. If we took the claim: *this person could have acted otherwise* as mere illusion, then we would have to give up some of the crucial forms of human practice. Since most of the forms of human practice come out from the concept of freedom, it is necessary to specify the sphere of applicability of the claim "I could have

acted otherwise” in greater detail. Mostly those spheres of practice which are not conceivable without the notion of freedom are delimited in a very narrow sense; that is why, according to Tugendhat, for the explanation of the concept of freedom the description of the spheres of applicability of this concept is necessary.

I. How to Understand Freedom without a Transcendental Perspective? For Tugendhat’s explication of the concept of human freedom, the first chapter of Anthony Kenny’s *Action, Emotion and Will* and the third book of Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* are relevant. It is worth pointing out that a detailed analysis of these two works is absent in the writings Tugendhat assigned to the issue of freedom of will, but both of them play a crucial role in the explanation of freedom of choice in Tugendhat’s opus magnum *Self-Consciousness and Self-Determination*. This concept of freedom of choice is a part of his re-interpretation of practical self-relation (*care*) in Heidegger’s *Being and Time*.

Intentionality of human agency. Tugendhat’s analysis of human volitional acts is based on understanding them as other conscious relations of a human being (intentions, understanding, belief or concern) having an *intentional character*. They are a particular case of “consciousness of something.” Contrary to other “subject-object” models, a human being has no direct relation to himself, to the objects of the outer world or to intentions of will: all these relationships are semantically mediated because a human being lives in the structure of propositional speech. This means that human experience is articulated through an intentional structure “consciousness that *p*.” Hence, it is characteristic of human experience that people are in *conscious states* (*Bewusstseinszustand*), such as feeling, wishing, desiring, but also that they have “a conscious evidence about *being* in such states” ([8], 9), which they express in the form of propositional sentences “I know, I feel or I wish that *p*.”

The *first* feature of intentionality is then to be found in its specific object – one that differs from what we traditionally understand as the “object of consciousness.” Such an object cannot be perceived as an ordinary object in space and time, but has to be understood in linguistic terms as *an expression*: its grammatical object is always a nominalised sentence. “One cannot know or wish spatio-temporal objects...if one wishes something, etc., he always wishes that something were or would be such case” ([8], 10). Put in other words, even a simple statement “it is raining today” is characterized in a feature that cannot be found in spatio-temporal world, but only in human speech: in such a simple statement, the *affirmative moment* of the statement is implicitly present. Based on this affirmative moment, every statement “it is raining today” can be objectified into a propositional statement “I know it is raining today.” Thus, this affirmative moment is already implicitly present in every simple assertoric statement. Such presence of affirmation of statement’s validity is possible due to the specific feature of a grammatical object, which is the moment of proving its validity: We can ask ourselves or others whether this claim is true, or not – whether it is really raining today. The second distinctive feature of a grammatical object is the *holistic character* of its spatio-temporal identification. Tugendhat suggests: we should replace Husserl’s traditional concept *Sachverhalt* (state of affairs) with a more modern concept of “proposition,” which is often used in contem-

porary English philosophy. We consider articulated practice as an intentional experience when its objects are *propositions* and *propositional attitudes* – or *agreeing attitudes to propositions* that inseparably belong to them.

Affectivity. In Tugendhat's explanation of the concept of freedom the key role is played by applying a concept of intentionality to the sphere of human action. As Tugendhat himself states, he was strongly influenced by the work of the analytical philosopher A. Kenny concerning the central role of affections in the intentional structure of human action. Kenny, under the influence of Wittgenstein, tries to analyze grammatical expressions used to express our affections. For a methodical characteristics of *affections* (*happiness, envy*), it is important to compare them with "physical feelings" (*hunger, pain*). Their common feature is that they always present a motive for an action and that they both have a particular way of expression. The decisive moment in examining the semantic description of affections and bodily feelings lies in the difference between them when it comes to intentionality: only in the case of affections can we talk about their semantic structure and assign them *intentional objects*: "[Affect] involves the experience of something as something on the basis of its cognitive component, and in this respect discloses something ([8], 179).

In Book 10 of *Nicomachean Ethics*, Aristotle includes friendship among affections which are characterized by their intentional semantic structure: we find out that we like somebody when we "like to share a company with that person" ([9], 184). Thus, affections, such as anger, envy, etc. have their cognitive meaning which can be articulated, and therefore one can take an attitude to it. "Affection thus always implies a characteristic attitude to it" ([8], 181). Tugendhat demonstrates the intentional character of affections on a series of examples he adopted from Aristotle. In the case of "anger" we can speak about directly experienced meaning that it matters to me that "I am being undervalued;" in the case of "gratitude" I believe that someone has done something good for me; in the case of "envy" we are confronted with a "state of affairs" – I deserve that something good should have been done for me, but not for him.

"Good" and "Evil". Why is affectivity the key component in explaining Tugendhat's conception? Because it enables us to *experience* the consequences of our decisions, wishes and volitional intentions in the categories of *good* and *evil*: affections of happiness are experienced as "something good for us," affections of sadness as "something bad for us" ([2], 10). In both cases, something is being experienced as "good" or "bad" that *matters to us*. According to Tugendhat, the key point consists in the claim that affectivity is the primary way *in which these semantic concepts of human action are given to us in principle*: What is good or bad for me does not happen on the theoretical level, but reaches us through affection directly as something that concerns us – as something that matters. This necessity to deal with something that matters in human life presupposes awareness that the way of reacting to such proposition depends on me. Hence, it is *me* who is accountable for dealing with it as its counterpart.

Affections are then the key element for our understanding of human action, as Tugendhat suggests, because they make us *involved* through something being proved to

be good or bad for me or for someone else. Affections then present a way of constituting the basal meaning of the terms goodness/badness in a prudential sense – as an anthropological presupposition of human action. Analogously to Heidegger’s concept of *temperament* (*Befindlichkeit*), affections and moods do not express conscious experiencing of one’s mental states, but they express an elementary way of understanding the being we care for: that means present ways of direct evidence of action. Tugendhat builds upon Heidegger’s thesis according to which affectivity is a basic mode of the understanding of being. However, Tugendhat’s original contribution does not consist of emphasizing the semantic nature of affectivity: this aspect was sufficiently highlighted by Kenny, or as Tugendhat himself states, already by Aristotle in his theory of affections. And still we can say that Tugendhat’s sophisticated interpretation is original – even though we shall once again look for his inspiration in Heidegger’s opus magnum: affections are understood as something “that stands on the side of passivity which is present in traditional terminology for designating affections – Greek – *páthos*, Latin – *affectus*, German – *Leidenschaft*“ ([8], 204).

Passive mood. Paradoxically, the reference to the *passive* element constitutes a structural moment of the freedom of human beings. Affectivity is seen not only as a way in which a possible motive of my action (danger) relates to my well-being. Tugendhat sees its crucial role in a different rudimental position that he found in Heidegger’s philosophical inventiveness *par excellence* – the concept of *mood*. Heidegger’s formulations, when defining the phenomenon of mood, are rich in metaphorical expressions. What remains a murky metaphor for many interpreters, Tugendhat manages to convert into a methodically clear thesis: “Moods invade us, we endure them – but what is it we endure in them? What we endure is a backward–affective evidence of an ‘affect of the success or failure’ of [our actions,] intentions and wishes” ([8], 185).

A human not only acts, but is directly aware of the success or failure of his action – that is why Tugendhat describes man’s consciousness with an expression with double presence of “I” – as “a relation of oneself to oneself”. This backward evidence of one’s own successes and failures in life happens primarily pre-reflexively–affectively, and we experience it as something we have to endure. What best corresponds to the passivity of such experience (pathic dimension of the mood) is the experience of a man with negative moods, which shows the “burdensome character of Dasein [...]: in ill humour even more in boredom...we experience ourselves confronting unavailability of having to exist” ([10], 185). In Heidegger’s concept, the necessity of having to exist presents a source and a condition of the possibility of its positive affirmation in life enthusiasm just as much as it is negated in depression, which refers to the key meaning of practical necessity as a necessity to manage one’s life as a whole in an understandable way. We are touched by affections and moods in the meaning of “being hit” or “afflicted,” just as we experience fear, anxiety or happiness.

Practical necessity. In this sense, affections have two main features: they uncover something as being good/evil for me in an emotionally taken mode – as something that relates to me, because this something is emotionally related as contributing/not contri-

buting to my well-being. Secondly, the second deciding feature for Tugendhat's explanation of the concept of freedom is represented paradoxically by the essentially passive character of affectivity. Based on this "passive" aspect of existence Tugendhat elaborates a key thesis about the phenomenon of "practical necessity of being", and thereby he explains what Heidegger means by his thesis about the facticity of being as *Zu-Sein (has to be)*. The term *practical necessity* emerges from the basic characteristic of affections, through which we uncover the world and ourselves in passive-affective mode as contributing/not contributing to our well-being. As far as I am, I always have to react (take a stance) to the state of affairs, how I feel in the world – whether I want to or not. And I have always felt a certain way of how I am. This original tension between affirmative and refusing relation to one's necessity to exist is reflected in human affectivity.

Temporality of action. This term which is so important to Tugendhat's explanation of freedom also comes from Heidegger's analytics of Dasein. Tugendhat explains it, and not accidentally, in direct connection to intentional structure of affectivity, when he critically deals with Heidegger's description of two basic affections from *Being and Time* – *fear* and *anxiety*. "Fear" presents a specific affection which Heidegger used to demonstrate the temporal dimension of human existence. In §30 of *Being and Time*, "fear" is analysed as a certain mode of awareness in chaos or animosity caused by *future evil*. Expected evil is being felt as a source of concern and pain "here and now." At the same time, this affection also has a semantic structure: fear warns me against something that is "bad for me," while I have to respond to this warning by my action/non-action – but in present time. Since fear is related to one's own future and, at the same time, does not mean affection-free, future evil becomes an evil that can be experienced now. According to Tugendhat, the crucial point of the explanation hides behind this trivial claim: because through fear, future evil is experienced as a present one; fear is different from another kind of expectation as a theoretical forecast: the fact that future evil is felt as a present one simultaneously means that I am affected by it in my present being. The being that matters to human action then gains a *temporal* quality that Tugendhat is primarily concerned with: "My being that is now has to be carried out" ([8], 182).

In other words, fear does not approach me indirectly, but always immediately, as I am a subject affected by fear in my own well-being. From the perspective of action, this is a deciding discovery: only intentionally given states of affairs which affect one's well-being can become motives of human action. Whereas fear uncovers being given in the mode of future, we can talk about danger that has an open, but not a decided character. Human fear is thus *being at issue*, because one has to respond to it in this or that way in his action that need to be carried out. To decide for an action, or to lack enough power to decide presupposes a possibility of action, as well as a possibility to refrain from it. Whether one wants or not, one always finds himself in the situation of action he must respond to – he may decide to act this or that way, or he may decide not to act at all. This constitutes the first meaning of "practical necessity," where future evil is being felt here and now. Temporality is a synonym for openness of possibility – known in modern philosophy since John Locke.

Let us summarize the meaning of the thesis about the temporality of being. First, the

fact that I have to carry out my being means that I cannot avoid it – whether I want to or not. Even the basic fact that I am has to be – explicitly or implicitly – decided by me. Second, this being is always at issue for me: because my being is not the existence “that has already elapsed, but an existence that is always forthcoming in time” ([8], 193). Third, the relation that I have to my always forthcoming being which has to be carried out is different from the relation someone else has to it. Someone else may relate to it prognostically, but I have to decide it in this or that way with a responsibility for my life which has to be carried out while I am living, thus I am irreplaceable with anyone else. Tugendhat rightly points out that this moment is best expressed by Heidegger’s term *Jemeinigkeit*. As long as we live we relate to ourselves, to this existence and we relate to it as to our always future being; in this context, being means being that has to be carried out at the present moment.

Life as a whole. We can endure the practical necessity of existence by learning to come to terms with it. This holistic concept of existence has found its expression in pre-Heideggerian philosophy in Kant’s notion of rational being as an “end in itself.” What Heidegger probably had in mind was the same phenomenon of life as a whole, which he expressed with the terminological metaphor “for-the-sake-of-which.” At the same time, this term serves as a terminological substitute for the terms good/goodness in *Being and Time*, and the core of Tugendhat’s criticism of Heidegger rests in the analysis of the reasons of absence of these terms. What is decisive for our problem of freedom of will is the way in which Tugendhat defines the problem of good and evil in relation to life as a whole. Let us begin with the concept of good: “We call good or better something that we prefer, wish, or in certain cases intend on the basis of deliberation” ([8], 185). This definition presupposes that the agent is, firstly, capable of acting and not acting and, secondly, he is able to think of or deliberate about what he might do or not do.

Human beings are consciously deliberating their lives because they live in the structures of speech. Let us once again mention that, for Tugendhat, the objects of deliberation are good/worse reasons for action which he also calls *propositions*. “Propositions are states of affairs to which a speaker relates affirmatively or not as to identical” ([8], 16). Practical propositions are thus states of affairs which are conscious or reflected *impulses*: “In propositional speech, the role of the scheme Impulse/Reaction is replaced with affirmative *yes* and refusing *no*” ([2], 17). This capacity of saying both *yes* and *no* to the proposition is possible only thanks to the fact that human life is not carried out in situation-given impulses, but in anticipated consequences of our actions which are independent of the situation. Such ability of deliberating the anticipated consequences of action is based on two justifications of good, better or the best action that we demand from each other.

The definition of life as a whole is thus the outcome of the ontological status of propositional speech: according to traditional definition, it is not possible to define life without a theological dimension: without a will to life. A distinctiveness of such will to life consists in it concerning life itself. In other words, the function of the will to life consists in the maintenance of life processes, which means it is the same as the end of biological life. In the case of a human being, the striving for preserving life is not

determined by instinctive scheme impulse/reaction, nor by what is pleasant or unpleasant. Human beings that live in conscious states, which they can express in sentences, are related towards what is good for them: “The consequence of this striving is not only determined by feeling but can also be directed towards facts (ultimately towards the fact of being) and can be affected by means/end deliberation” ([8], 158). Preservation of life loses its automatic nature, which is being reproduced in the form of preservation of life: in this interpretation, human life is also an end in itself, but, contrary to biological life, this relation to oneself is carried out in a deliberative way – in the selection of better or worse options of action. This activity is thus an object of practical deliberation and answering the question: “What kind of life to live, which life to prefer?” becomes its goal. These important theses from Tugendhat’s work *Self-Consciousness and Self-Determination* (1979) got their clearer methodical meaning in his later work *Egocentricity and Mysticism* (2004) in which he enriched the relation of passivity (mood), temporality, self-determination (activity) as structural components of action with another dimension of a “passive” moment – the phenomenon of contingency.

What significance do these lines have for understanding Tugendhat’s concept of freedom? Let us mention again his main thesis about the affective character of a human being for which his own being is at issue: we have seen that the intentional states of affairs to which affections refer always matter to us because they are affecting our well-being. In relation to well-being, we experience them as good or bad for us. What is good or evil for us then touches us as something that endangers us as future evil right at present, and thus it uncovers the basic temporal character of human existence as of being that has to be carried out. The only man – if we are to paraphrase Tugendhat’s Heidegger – “has his being to be whether he wants to or not” ([10], 158). And the fact that human life is primarily carried out in the situation of action is an unavoidable facticity, but there is no situation of action “that would not contain a range of practical possibilities, for otherwise it would not be a situation of action” ([10], 158). What refers to individual situations of action refers to the fundamental situation of life which Tugendhat associates with Hamlet’s question “to be or not to be.”¹

¹ Aristotle’s concept of happiness allows us to delimit a relation of affections to human freedom. In the first book of *Nicomachean Ethics* Aristotle examines a proposition of well-being as a category on which the reason for every human action (praxis) is based. Human beings achieve their goals not only by actions, but they do so in a specific affectively taken mode “how.” Within the range of possibilities “better, worse,” this semantic predisposition enables us to experience satisfaction from a well-done job or disappointment and frustration from the opposite. “Happiness is of all things the one most desirable, and it is not counted as one among many others” ([9], 14). For Tugendhat, Aristotle’s happiness means (contentment with life as a whole) a basic predisposition to act, which accompanies the whole human life to that extent to which it is possible to characterize human life as a wholly affectively experienced and retrospectively realized set of one’s possibilities, fortunes and misfortunes when achieving my goals, when fulfilling my own desires and wishes, which are at the same time equal sources of human happiness and unhappiness. “The being is given to us as something that we have to be, and that is at issue for us; in this respect, the relation of oneself to being that is so experienced can only be a practical one, that is, volutative and affective” ([10]). Such well-being is a synonym for “good life,” “good action,” or for the phenomenon that we have on mind when we say “he is faring well.”

II. The Problem of Freedom

The phenomenon of *I can*. In his article *The Problem of Freedom* Tugendhat examines chapter 6 of G. E. Moore's ground-breaking work *Ethics*. A crucial issue of this work is the interpretation of the expression *I can* in its ambiguity. Following Heidegger's well-known distinction between "available" perception of being and "occurrence" mode of being, Tugendhat generalises this phenomenological description as two in principle opposite ways of expressing the meaning of *I can*: in a "stated veritative" way and in a "practical voluntative" way. In its "veritative" meaning, the expression *can* means the right opposite of what we mean with the expression *I can* – the ability to act. How to understand it?

Tugendhat clarifies this problem in his *Lectures on Ethics* by making use of the following example: the claim "this glass can be broken" expresses causal relation, which will necessarily be repeated if the same external conditions occur. The fact these conditions occur "here and now" is then left to an accident. The meaning of the claim "I can break a glass" always implies presence of a more general "*if*" structure – *if I only willed*. In the case of human abilities we do not deal with occurrences, but with decisions. Here, one presupposes a factor of will, besides external conditions: if we depart from Moore's original formulation, then it is possible to translate the definition of human agency into the formal definition: "S can perform H = S will perform H, if S wants" ([1], 347). The fact that something happens is not a matter of accident, neither it is solely dependent on circumstances or opportunities; it rather depends on a person and his will. Tugendhat in accord with Moore is sure: such interpretation of "can" presents a phenomenon that enables us to grasp the practice of human inter-subjective obligations, which rests on the condition of one's responsibility for his or her actions. So where is the problem then?

Ernst Tugendhat offers a similar interpretation of "can" in his work *Self-Consciousness and Self-Determination*, but the thoughts of G. E. Moore from 1912 are no longer his basic polemical target. Rather he aims at Kenny's analyses of the so-called "volitional abilities" from his work *Action, Emotion and Will*. Tugendhat's key objection regarding interpretations of "can" by A. Kenny and by G. E. Moore is about the methodological disability to differentiate between *freedom of will* and *freedom of action*. Tugendhat presents his most crucial statements about the relation of both meanings of freedom very briefly. If my acting is free under the condition that I willed to act this way, then the problem of determinism and will moves just one floor higher: if we can freely act otherwise, can we at the same time *freely* will to act otherwise? Is my will free in its willing or is it not? While for Moore the differentiation between freedom of will and freedom of action presents a conscious but open problem, for Kenny denying this differentiation has already a methodologically binding character. And that is for two reasons: at first, along with postulating freedom of will, the question of "mysterious self" as an entity determining both the will and action arises again; secondly, by taking this step we restore the traditional problem of comprehending freedom as *libertas indifferentiae*. According to this concept of will, every possible course of action is evenly possible, as well as their opposite. But this raises doubts about the human practice of obligations and of respect emerging from them, which we assign at least to some of our decisions.

According to Kenny, both of these problems are cancelled if we erase the assump-

tion that will is a factor independent of action to which he assigns a causal character: “If someone has the ability and opportunity to do x, then no identifiable occurrence of will needs to precede such action” ([8], 217). The concept of will cannot be differentiated from the concept of action (agency) – what I do is what I will. Tugendhat refuses this solution: he insists that it is not because of indeterministic connotations of Kenny’s equation of will with acting. If will is not an individual factor of acting, then human agency must be determined by psychological endowment. In *Self-Consciousness and Self-Determination* Tugendhat still claims that by postulating this “metaphysical problem of determinism and indeterminism” ([8], 217) the issue of freedom of will may only get murky(!) – in the spirit of hermeneutical ambition to cast doubt upon the issue of freedom through wrong understanding of the question.

Capability of deliberation. What matters here and because of which one should refuse Kenny’s solutions is a “purely descriptive problem” referring to “empirical” criteria, based on which acting is denoted as free. As we shall see, this is a standpoint that Tugendhat failed fully to justify. Freedom cannot be verified by empirical criteria – the postulate of freedom can only be normatively defined. Although Tugendhat does not admit such interpretation, the empirical ground for necessity to differentiate between freedom of will and freedom of agency comes out from this normative perspective: instead of a metaphysical “person within ourselves”, freedom of will is represented by the “ability to deliberate”, which “animals lack and we presume it is limited to a certain level in case of a drunkard” ([8], 218). This capability of practical deliberation – and this is the fundamental problem for Tugendhat – always takes place in the perspective of the first person.

Only when this ability of practical deliberation replaces the metaphysical prejudice of “person within ourselves,” it is possible according to Tugendhat to formulate the issue of freedom of will in a correct way. The radical methodological decision which Tugendhat suggests to make is the following: the issue of freedom does not refer to the “general phenomenon of will,” it cannot be exemplified by the question of raising our finger, because the problem of freedom is related only to a “conscious and reflected will” ([2], 59). Tugendhat speaks of it in direct reference to Aristotle’s notion of *sensory will*, which is used now in the meaning of freedom of action (volition 1). From the point of volition 1, an action is considered free if it is not caused by outer coercion – as in the case of negative freedom. This understanding of freedom of action does not exclude full causal determination of such mentally voluntary action: one should only avoid making a mistake and not to try identifying “causal determinism with coercion” ([2], 59). Here, Tugendhat most likely thinks of David Hume and his opinion about determination of the will through the fixed character of a person.

Problem of freedom of will. The basic issue of the freedom of will begins with a reflexive and practical, deliberately controlled will, which again – with a reference to

Aristotle – Tugendhat calls *rational will*.² Only on the level of practical deliberation we can pose the question that Tugendhat has in mind: the ability of self-control and responsibility of a person, which is unjustifiable without the postulate of the freedom of will. The question of freedom seems to have little or no meaning for Tugendhat in terms of neurological debates about the free or determined possibilities of raising a finger. The only issue that matters is the question of practical self-control, the problem of freedom of rational will: such will is supposed not to be dependent on mere immediate wishes and desires of man, but rather on him. The problem of freedom is related to one and only phenomenon – rational will which has a similar meaning as Harry Frankfurt’s volitions of the second order.

This is more than just a courageous claim, as reducing the issue of freedom to its rational part, and hence, to the issue of practical obligations, would set the whole “neurological debate” about the determination of man by genes and neurones aside. So let us ask under what kind of *freedom* Tugendhat wants to subsume the two meanings: freedom of action and freedom of will which – being a sensible will – is reserved exclusively for the human. Let us mention one more time that Tugendhat differentiates between the freedom of action which he associates with sensory will and freedom of will which is based on practical deliberation.

III. Do We Have to Want Everything We Want? By working up a traditional differentiation between two orders of will and by reducing the issue of the freedom of will to the second one (Harry Frankfurt), Tugendhat is trying to cope with two traditional problems of the philosophy of will. Firstly, with the “mysterious self,” and, secondly, with a temptation to understand freedom as a non-obligatory volition in the sense of *libertas indifferentie*: I can decide freely only if the contrary decision is possible – and both options of acting are at the same level equally possible for me. There are situations when, for instance, people choose “between particular pieces of cake or sorts of ice cream” ([2], 69). Such cases do not refer to the issue of freedom of will, instead, they refer to – as expressed in Kantian terms – the issue of taste – such choice does not have to be justified. Tugendhat successfully shows why free will cannot be reduced to non-obligatory arbitrariness, but still he collides with the key interpretation problem when defining the concept of freedom.

Tension between desires and goals. A relation between sensory and rational will is an intentional relation. The ability to suspend one’s own desires to the benefit of rational goals presupposes – firstly, that I am able to take a stance towards my own desires; secondly, that this stance is a practically affectional attitude and does not happen in an indifferent vacuum, and thirdly, the manner by which I relate to my own desires and wishes has a semantic (meaningful) character. The awareness of the ability to will

² Also a reference to Kant’s terminology is hidden under this distinction: reason as “a higher virtue of lust,” which is assigned to the will determinable by reason, while for “immediate will the terms inclinations and desires are designated” ([2], 151). Similar differentiation can be found in Hegel’s deliberations in *Philosophy of Right*, but certainly Aristotle was the first author who distinguished between sensory and rational will.

otherwise is always the awareness of the ability to will “what is best for myself” ([2], 8) – it depends on me if I manage this or that well or not. Thus, one does not deal here with the stating evidence of one’s desires, but with a *tension* between desires and rational goals between which I have to make preferences. For Tugendhat, lack of freedom means primary weakness of will – it does not have its anthropological source in outer pressure, it rests in the inner pressure of the desires and wishes accompanied by *the ability to suspend* them.³ Human freedom and the ability to suspend primary desires and wishes – the ability to control oneself – then present one and the same problem. This conceptual proposition is related to the whole ideal of education of man aimed at his self-sufficiency, the ability to take care of himself. The primary point of its departure is to be found in the ability of rational suspension of primordial desires.⁴ Tugendhat cares for the phenomenological description of this relation which would delimit it from the understanding of freedom as *libertas indifferentiae*: a relation between sensory and sensible will takes place in the tension between sensory affective wishes and volitional ability to control them – to replace them on the ground of better reasons for action.

In both spheres one is dealing with a certain way of self-relation towards wishes which one succumbs to – due to their emotional power (weakness of will) – or which one can master by *the concentration of will* (rational will). A man is a being who can will also otherwise – not just to succumb to emotional power of his own wishes, “I am between the wishes succumbing to me as immediately felt and those I have to concentrate at in order to fulfil them” ([2] 68). If, then, practical deliberation replaces the irrational person within ourselves, it is obvious that freedom of will does not take place in a vacuum. Thus it does not have the character of an indeterministic arbitrary will resembling Buridan’s ass: should I stay or should I go? A man must always aim at achieving something he takes to be good, while aiming here literally means “overcoming emotional motives which are ‘against’ ” ([2], 72). Affectively experienced tension is a primary medium of human will: the ability of will not to will/wish everything I can and the weakness of will to succumb to this inner pressure. In Tugendhat’s diction, freedom of will presents the opposite to arbitrariness – to be able to do everything what I consider to be appropriate in this moment. How Tugendhat then explicates the ability of will which attaches itself to a further irreducible phenomenon of “I will” – it depends on me what I will, in a philosophically correct manner?

IV. Tugendhat’s solutions to the dilemma of freedom of will and determinism.

Let us consider Tugendhat’s four solutions to this dilemma. We should bear in mind that Tugendhat connects their solvability with the legitimacy of such areas of human practice

³ Cf. ([2], 8 – 9).

⁴ “Since early childhood we all have to learn overcoming present satisfactions of our desires in favour of future prudential good... [and this is possible not only by, mm] adjusting our present wishes to their future projections, but also by the ability to adjust all direct wishes – either present or future – to the projection, but we are also able to succumb to an idea, provided that we want to understand each other.” ([2], 61)

which happen in the mode of accountability of human behaviour – in relationships to others and in “oneself-to oneself- relationships.”⁵

Solution 1. It is interesting that in his basic paper on the freedom of will *The Concept of Freedom of Will* (1987) Tugendhat offers a false response to the dilemma of freedom/determinism. The solution he suggests is based on the presupposition of a unified – not differentiated – scope of freedom in which both – yes or no – possibilities of action must be available to an agent ([1], 349). This scope relates to two levels: first, a man is responsible for his actions as a being with the capability of deliberations; even if he did not actually care about the consequences of his/her actions, as a rational being he could have always considered them. There is a fundamental question arising here: is a choice a man makes when he decides to activate his/her deliberative capability a rational or irrational act? In 1987, Tugendhat managed to tackle this basic issue with one sentence: “You have had this option (of practical deliberation) at your disposal in the same way as you have an option to move your leg” (1, 350). But this solution means a step back towards grasping freedom in the meaning of arbitrariness – *libertas indifferentiae*. Why should I be motivated to consider the consequences of my acting, if I have the same possibility not to do it – like in the case of moving/not moving my finger?

We should not forget that with this step Tugendhat contradicts his own ideas in the following sense: he interchanges freedom of action with freedom of will – with the presupposition of a causal will appearing from nowhere.⁶ The second step towards understanding the freedom of will in 1987 is based on Tugendhat’s attempt to eliminate the moment of arbitrary choice from the area of activating practical deliberation. If the outcome of action “depends on deliberation,” then this deliberation must take place in the sphere of the possibility to accept or to refuse with an important addition: “The one of them that will be carried out depends on the outcome of this deliberation” (1, 349). But such a solution relies on rationalistic prejudice: a *causal* power of thought, which has a direct impact on changes of will. This rationalistic prejudice was already refused by David Hume.

Solution 2. In his works *Egocentricity and Mysticism* Tugendhat revises both of these inconsistent assumptions. The fundamental shift from the position he took in his paper about the freedom of will in 1987 is to be seen in the substantial methodical decision: freedom of will must be grasped primarily from the perspective of a “relation to oneself” ([5], 58), rather than from the perspective of inter-subjective morality or law. This shift is based on the division of the scope of freedom from the “I can” perspective into two spheres that cannot be reduced further: the sphere of practical deliberation and the sphere

⁵ “If the claim that a man could have acted otherwise rested on an illusion, or if we weren’t able to give such claim clear conceptual meaning, then we would have to give up these or other forms of human practice” ([1], 335).

⁶ In 2004 Tugendhat writes: “According to traditional opinions, freedom of will lies in the ability of man to do whatever he wants – for example [...] if I wanted I could raise my hand. [But] this is not freedom of will but freedom of action” ([2], 57).

of volitional effort: “The capability of deliberation, which is constitutive for accountability, is just one form of freedom of will” ([5], 57). What is significant here is not the moment of choice, but rather the directivity of this choice towards a “better” or “worse” solution – a relation to “good.” The second form of freedom of man is his ability to concentrate on the fulfilment of his goals he takes to be good. “An I speaker can be weaker or stronger related to the good” ([5], 57). In both cases we deal with the 1st person singular perspective, because both cases focus on the responsibility of an acting human.

This differentiation of the spheres of freedom is a result of the tension between the ability of will to concentrate on achieving goals and its weakness: man is a being that always finds himself in opposition to his own passivity, in relation to which I experience myself as a being who wants either more or less from himself. The question of freedom of will “could I have done otherwise?” decomposes into two separate questions: “If I deliberated better, I could have decided differently (better)” and “If I worked harder towards my goal I could have achieved my goal better” ([5], 58).

In both cases we deal with a kind of affectively experienced reproach I address primarily to myself, without which no “I can” in prudential sense is possible. Without such affectively experienced self-activation no self-education is possible. This reference to the phenomenon of self-activation of man solves both problems of the paper from 1987: self-activation of man in confrontation with his own indolence (“der innere Schweinehund“) cannot be grasped in the sense of *libertas indifferentiae* – as freedom to move one’s legs. At the same time, by differentiating between the two spheres of freedom Tugendhat weakens the influence of practical reflection in favour of intensity of will, which is not a causal result anymore. But how to explain this shift from the perspective of freedom of will and determinism?

Solution 3. Tugendhat did it in his following paper entitled *Freedom of Will and Determinism* (2002). In this work we can find Tugendhat’s only direct answer to the solution of the dilemma of freedom of will/determinism. This solution is rather a philosophical metaphor than a conceptually clear answer. When examining the intervention of freedom of will into the world’s causality, Tugendhat compares it to a string we can make a knot on, while this string represents causal happenings and a knot on it represents free will: a knot is the metaphor for interrupting the causality of events, which is supposed to be replaced with “human action.” The meaning of this simile is based on the compatibilistic presupposition about the compatibility of freedom of will with the principle of causal happenings: “After all, even a knot consists of a string” ([2], 69). From the point of view of natural causality one cannot either eliminate or affirm decision-making at the “I” level as a causal event: “We have to leave the possibility open that the happenings within a knot...cannot be reduced to causal connections. For the structure of free will this doesn’t matter” ([2], 72).

A compatibilist solution preferred by Tugendhat rests on the metaphor of a knot on a string; it departs from an agnostic position to the question of freedom of will which leads “neither to determinism nor to indeterminism.” Incompatibilism must be philosophically put in doubt; hence, the only alternative and a negation of the principle of causality is the principle of an “accident.” The principle of accidentality is disqualified in

two ways: firstly, by the demands of human practice of crime and punishment for which we bear by no accident responsibility; secondly, by lacking evidence of an alternative, which would be outside of or beyond the distinction of “either causality or an accident.”

With this solution Tugendhat wants to avoid the traditional dilemma: with a reference to the openness of the problems, which does not prevent one from talking simultaneously about causal determination and weighting the reasons (while suspending the power of causality of primordial motives) – because of lack of evidence of the opposite case. He gains a lot by taking this agnostic attitude: firstly, by admitting compatibility of freedom of will and causality; secondly, he finds a leitmotiv of this attitude – a negation of the traditional assumption of “a-causal person” within ourselves, which as the “prime mover” *causally* determines the whole of human will. Such position is a metaphysical claim, the motivation of which arises from the lack of a positive answer to the issue of compatibility of freedom of will and natural causality.

Solution 4. Tugendhat presents a strong philosophical argument and, at the same time, one of the basic problems of interpretation of freedom of will, which is known from the times of Wittgenstein’s *Tractatus Philosophicus*: “One cannot understand how it is possible that the awareness of ‘it depends on me’ and that ‘I have to go an extra mile for it’ is not to be translated into objective language – a language, in which the word ‘I’ does not occur” ([2], 70). The compatibility of free will and causality in Tugendhat’s interpretation rests on a solipsistic paradox: impossibility to convert (translate) the inner perspective of *I can* into the objective, causally interpretable language. Neither the intensity of volition, nor the discourse of practical reasons can be translated to the causal language, because every reason to act must be a reason *for me*. Talking about human freedom presupposes the “I” talk, which is not understandable in terms of objective causality – from the position of the outer spectator.

In his short essay *Addition 2006*, which was published together with the text *Freedom of Will and Determinism*, Tugendhat radicalizes the consequences of the impossibility to grasp the issue of human freedom in terms of objective causality. He shifts his original compatibilist–agnostic position towards indeterminism of human will. Here, Tugendhat repeats his basic *methodical* thesis once again: “The way of expressing the phenomenon of *I can* while leaving the expression ‘I’ out – and thus leaving out the necessity of using verbs as *strive, aspire, decide* – is not known until present day” ([5], 78). If one understands will as a rational (sensible) will, then such expressions as “try” or “attempt” must inevitably take place in the first person perspective – “I perspective.” The final decision is always *my decision* – and as such it “depends on me myself, it is indetermined” ([5] 76).

When human decisions take place under the influence of reasons and passions, there is a primary tension, as we always decide between various reasons and under the influence of various, even mutually contradictory passions. Firstly, because it is me who is self-responsible, and not the motive or consequences of action. Secondly, the impossibility to translate, or to convert the claim “I could have willed to act otherwise” into the objective language leaves this claim impossible to answer from the outside. Why then is the “I perspective” in the claim “I could have acted otherwise” a further irreducible and

rationally inaccessible factor? In our opinion, what is hiding behind the shift towards subjectivization of human will in late Tugendhat is an objective philosophical motive which Tugendhat develops in his work *Egocentricity and Mysticism* (2004), as well as in a shorter text *Whom to Thank?* (2006): the factor of contingency. Thus, this factor can be called a modern *principium individuationis* – as a source of subjectivisation of accepting the responsibility for life as a whole.

Instead of a conclusion. In *Egocentricity and Mysticism* Tugendhat repeats his basic thesis: a human being acts and retrospectively endures the consequences of his actions in affectively given evidence of success/failure, because his volitionally intentional life aims at ends, which are carried out in the mode of future. This tension between present intention of action and its always “later” appearing consequence (both matter) is a condition for the possibility of the experience of contingency. When achieving our goals, when fulfilling our own desires and wishes, we are confronted with two kinds of self-repugnant experience, which result from the tension between intended and achieved outcomes of action – from “the tension between success and failure” ([5], 121). On one hand, this experience of the tension between the intended outcomes of action, which are not within our power, explains the core of a volitional life of a human being as his own self-objectification: “self-activation” of a human being arises from uncertainty of the outcome and from an effort to make use of all possibilities that are within our power in order to achieve it. On the other hand, the same tension is confirmed by the experience of “self-relativisation” which results from awareness: the outcome of action (success/failure) is never fully within our power.

That is why we use expressions such as “bad luck” or “luck” as synonyms for expressing the experience of contingency. The awareness of the ability to act is accompanied by the realisation of “radical insufficiency of my own actions.” This actually happens when solving everyday issues related to health or illness, as well as peculiar issues of life and death: life of a man, as well as lives of his relatives, are confronted with the phenomenon of accident, an exemplary case of which is death. Place of birth, lack or sufficient amount of love of one’s parents, poverty, colour of one’s skin, etc., these all may be cases of accident in human life. Despite this, a moment of contingency essentially belongs to life and thanks to this unpredictability of fate it co-decides about what sort of life we live – good or bad – or, as we say, whether we are lucky or unfortunate in our lives.

This defines a new methodical meaning of the categories of good and evil: if a moral use of these expressions presupposes a concept of responsibility for action we ourselves carried out, then success or failure as equivalent expressions to good and evil also presuppose the concept of responsibility for what happened to us and our close ones independently of whether we wanted it or not. A man must be able to endure such life and not only change it by his actions. How shall one explain this responsibility for life as a whole? According to Ernst Tugendhat it is only possible to assume responsibility for one’s life as a whole and to take life seriously even with its unpredictable contingency when one accepts that he may stand in front of an absolute being (God) to whom he has to pay his bills in the end. “All it contradicts is your intellectuall honesty.” That is why in the

philosophy of Ernst Tugendhat the factor of freedom of will remains an indetermined, further irreducible and rationally inaccessible factor.

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