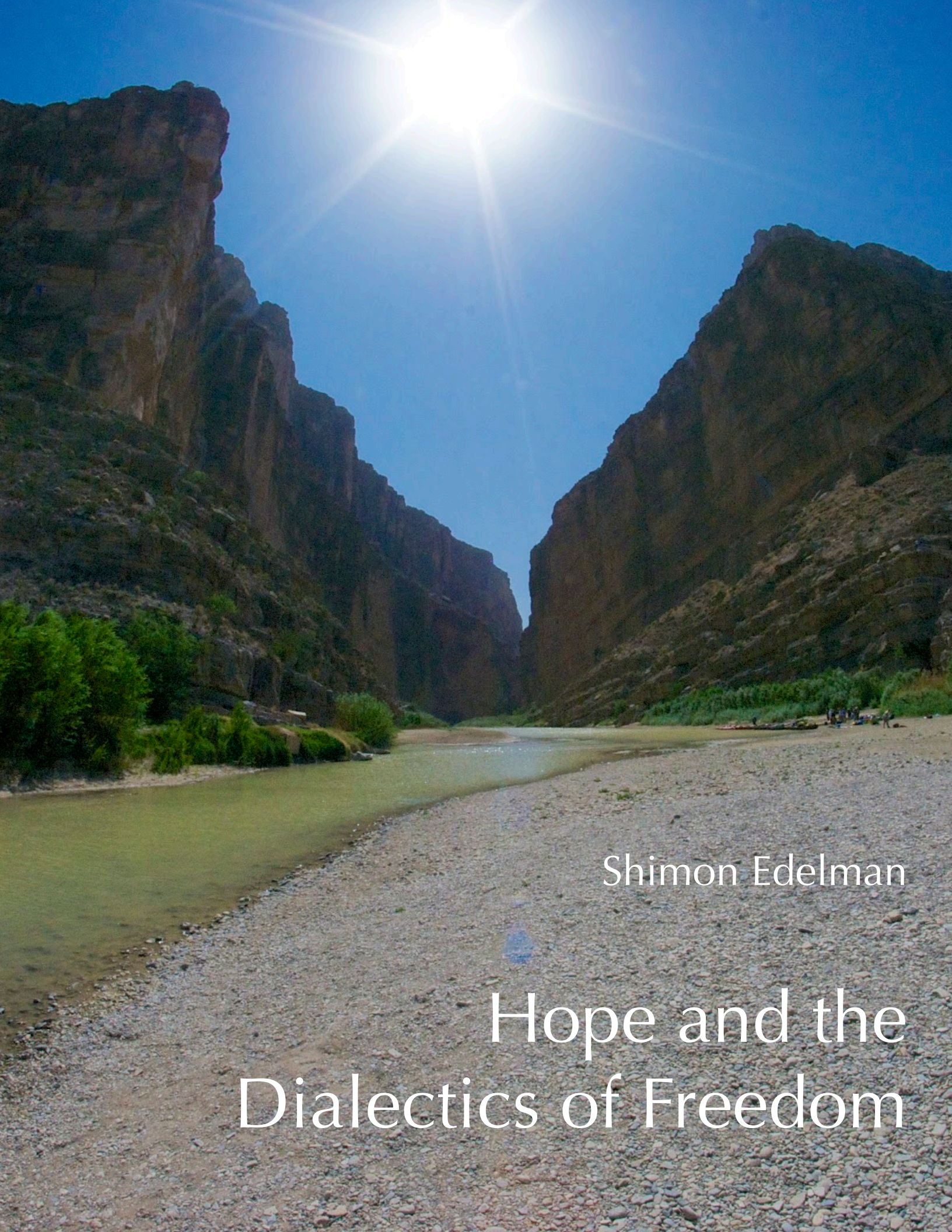




Shimon Edelman

Hope and the Dialectics of Freedom

Hope and the Dialectics of Freedom

Shimon Edelman

Peter Lang

VENTANA SOBRE LA UTOPIA

Ella está en el horizonte —dice Fernando Birri—. Me acerco dos pasos, ella se aleja dos pasos. Camino diez pasos y el horizonte se corre diez pasos más allá. Por mucho que yo camine, nunca la alcanzaré. ¿Para qué sirve la utopía? Para eso sirve: para caminar.^a

— EDUARDO GALEANO, *Las palabras andantes* (1993)

^aWINDOW ON UTOPIA. She's on the horizon, says Fernando Birri. I go two steps closer, she moves two steps away. I walk ten steps and the horizon runs ten steps ahead. No matter how much I walk, I'll never reach her. What good is utopia? That's what: it's good for walking. — Eduardo Galeano, *Walking Words* (1995, tr. Mark Fried).

—En buena hora, niño Guy, nos acompaña el pájaro *Pujuy*. Hay que seguir adelante, vencer el cansancio, el miedo y el deseo. La fatiga disfraza sus intenciones. La fatiga es sueño, curiosidad y desgano en *los caminantes*. Abre bien los ojos, hijo, y sigue al pájaro *Pujuy*. Él no se equivoca. Su destino es como el nuestro: caminar para que otros no se pierdan.^a

— ERMILO ABREU GÓMEZ, *Canek: historia y leyenda de un héroe Maya* (1940)

^a—Good thing, boy Guy, the *Pujuy* bird is with us. We must continue forward, overcome tiredness, fear and desire. Fatigue disguises its intentions. Fatigue is sleep, curiosity and apathy in *walkers*. Open your eyes wide, son, and follow the *Pujuy* bird. It does not make mistakes. Its destiny is like ours: to walk so that others do not get lost. — Ermilo Abreu Gómez, *Canek: history and legend of a Maya hero* (1940).

Contents

Preamble	1
<i>Morpho. What freedom is not. What freedom is. Dialectics of freedom.</i>	
<i>Roadmap.</i>	
Notes	7
Further reading	10
1 Children of History	15
<i>Freedom: a compulsion. The philosophy of willing and doing. The mechanics of chance and necessity. The thermodynamics of freedom. The reality of agency. Evolution and emergence. Radical self-becoming. The first dialectic.</i>	
Notes	34
Further reading	49
2 Debating and Deciding	59
<i>The hawk and the hummingbird. To do or not to do. To be or not to be. How to be a minimal self. The actors and the critic. Many dials, one dial. Kairos. Metanoia. Live and learn. The second dialectic.</i>	
Notes	77
Further reading	86
3 The Storm out of Paradise	95
<i>Reason and passions. Virtual reality. Western Occidentalism. Dogmas of rationality and liberalism. Countercurrents. On freedom and happiness. On the quality of life west of Eden. Armored snails in an iron cage. False consciousness and the great disenchantment. A matter of confession. The third dialectic.</i>	
Notes	118
Further reading	135
4 Right Relationship	151
<i>The old new hope. Relationality. Positionality. A well-tempered self. Spirits in a material world. I am because we are. "All my relatives". Regarding reality. A world where all worlds fit. The fourth dialectic.</i>	
Notes	178
Further reading	199

5	From Responsibilities, Freedom	217
	<i>The freedom of contentment. Responsibilities precede us. Cooperation: evolution and development. The land of the free. Free enterprise. Academic freedom. The fifth dialectic.</i>	
	Notes	236
	Further reading	249
6	Society Against the State	263
	<i>The second of man's creeds. The machinery of oppression. The state of unfreedom. Human right and human gain. The Indigenous Critique. The sixth dialectic.</i>	
	Notes	277
	Further reading	288
7	Walking in Eutopia	297
	<i>Anarcho-communism. Prefiguring eutopia. The seventh dialectic.</i>	
	Notes	309
	Further reading	320
	Postscript	329
	Notes	330
	Further reading	330

Preamble

Morpho. What freedom is not. What freedom is. Dialectics of freedom. Roadmap.

Mariposa clavada que medita su vuelo
(A pinned butterfly contemplating its flight)

Oda a Salvador Dalí
— FEDERICO GARCÍA LORCA

Хочу воспеть Свободу миру, на тронах поразить порок.
(I want to sing a world of Freedom, defeat the throned and crowned vice.)

Вольность: Ода (Ode to Liberty)
— A. S. PUSHKIN

I wish I knew how it would feel to be free.

— NINA SIMONE

Morpho

FREEDOM is difficult to pin down — surprisingly so, given how central its presence, or want, is to our lived experience. Like the iridescent wings of a Morpho butterfly, which lack actual pigment and only look blue because of their intricate nano-scale fabric doing magic with light,¹ freedom is not some essential quality of a person's life. Rather, it arises out of many little pieces of our existence coming together just so — under a proper illumination and perspective. Accordingly, this little book is an attempt to shine a light on freedom's subtle structure, and an invitation to you, the reader, to ponder the possibilities for human flourishing that the true nature of our freedom entails.

What freedom is not

This invitation will seem odd to a contemporary reader whose mind is open, whose heart is in the right place, and who therefore sees — and cares about — how scarce freedom is in practice. Let us therefore pause for a moment and recognize this truth before we go any further. As I am writing these lines, the world outside my study is

burning, both metaphorically and literally. A vast majority of the eight billion of us live under regimes that embody what the young Pushkin called, in his 1817 *Ode to Liberty* that got him banned and exiled, “throned and crowned vice.” Two centuries later, our rulers pay lip service to freedom while demonstrating, for all who have eyes to see, what freedom is not.

It is not freedom when politics is a preserve of the rich or the merely violent. It is not freedom when pervasive surveillance and brutal repression by the state — corporate or totalitarian or both — are the norm. It is not freedom when democracy and communism are made into equally empty slogans used to mislead the masses and keep them compliant. It is not freedom when fascism is openly resurgent while peaceful dissent is brutally punished. It is not freedom when religious fanaticism makes a mockery of humanist morality and of humane faith. It is not freedom when people starve while oligarchs feast. It is not freedom when endless wars are fought in the name of peace. It is not freedom when a dozen genocides are under way at any given time. And it is not freedom when capitalism sows universal alienation and commits global ecocide for the sake of the profit of a tiny minority of the planet’s inhabitants — whose privilege, however, will not avail them in the face of the climate catastrophe, which brings lethal heat waves, fire, floods, mass migrations, war, death, and destruction to all.²

As is usually the case with the complicated concepts that we humans go by in our dealings with one another, so it is with freedom: merely negating the bad will not cause the good to magically take its place. We must be able to imagine, richly and faithfully, how it feels to be free. We must keep building a better understanding of what real freedom is, so that we can prefigure a better world *now*. That way, we may hope, with Pushkin in his last year, that our life’s work will not have been in vain:³

И долго буду тем любезен я народу,
 Что чувства добрые я лирой пробуждал,
 Что в мой жестокой век восславил я Свободу
 И милость к падшим призывал.

—
 And long will I be favored of the people
 For stirring kindness with my lyre in their hearts,
 For daring in this cruel age to hallow Freedom,
 And call for mercy for the fallen and ill-starred.

Let’s get to work, then. We start at the beginning.

What freedom is

Freedom is a matter of conscious experience, which, however, is open to outside persuasion. It is subjective in that the ultimate arbiter of the degree of my freedom is me, just like you are of yours. That said, the experience of freedom differs from the subjective experience of basic perceptual qualities such as color or taste, or the complex and

equally subjective experience of emotions such as happiness or fear. It makes no sense for me to dispute your description of some barely ripe mulberries as sweet, even if they taste bland to me. Neither does it make sense for me to reject your estimate of your own happiness at having just had the first mulberries of the season. Not so in matters of freedom. Imagine deciding to open up to a friend (or perhaps a therapist) about feeling trapped in an abusive relationship. You hold that you don't deserve better and in any case there is no way out, but your friend disagrees on both counts — gently, yet insistently, eloquently, and at length, perhaps even mentioning explicit options that you had somehow missed. At the very least, this should now prompt you to reassess the feeling of unfreedom that made you raise the issue in the first place.

Freedom is often described as having two complementary flavors, positive and negative. The relationship example illustrates both. The feeling of being trapped signifies a lack of *positive* freedom, or “freedom to” — as in having options to pursue so as to leave the trap. The other kind is *negative* freedom, or “freedom from” — as in the possibility of acting in spite of the bully's power over you. The need to specify “to” or “from” in contrasting the two suggests that freedom is best studied as a *relation*, tying together the acting person, the context (which, very importantly, includes other actors), and the action. The relational approach recognizes that abstract questions such as “What is freedom?” or “How can I be free?” are ill-defined. Instead, we should be asking whether or not a specific person can perform (or refrain from performing) a particular action in a given situation.⁴

Freedom is both desirable and dangerous. For the oppressed, it can be existentially unsettling: having positive options to choose from is anxiety-inducing, as is the prospect of having to take responsibility for one's choice.⁵ For oppressors of all ranks — from the abusive spouse and domineering parent in a nuclear family to the authoritarian politician and the plutocrat billionaire — freedom is a threat to the power differentials that let them dictate to others what actions are allowed or forbidden. This is why freedom is such a favorite subject of propaganda: the rulers' and the bosses' greatest peril is the possibility that the oppressed underclass should become fully aware of its predicament and strike out for liberation. This explains the constant attempts on part of the ruling class to suppress education for what Paulo Freire called critical consciousness and to stifle public debate about freedom, or subvert it through Newspeak-style spin.⁶

Finally, freedom has one foot in the physical universe and the other in the social sphere, as we all do. This twofold nature is the source of much perplexity for the philosophy and the science of freedom. Our impressive collective achievements in understanding how physics works are of limited help here. Ironically, systems that afford a non-trivial conception of freedom, such as human beings (as opposed to, say, billiard balls), are the least well-understood, because all the interesting things that happen to them have to do with biology and psychology and are therefore both several times removed from physics and much more difficult to fathom.⁷ Things get really out of hand, though, when it comes to human *societies*. Physics is, to us, a given; its laws are non-negotiable. In contrast, societies are created — or rather are *being created* — by us. It is through our forgetfulness of the cardinal fact that society's written and

unwritten laws are always up to us that unfreedom persists in our lives. This is why most of this book deals with social, not physical, dimensions on freedom.

Dialectics of freedom

The remarkable thing about these characteristics of freedom is that they all come in pairs of opposites. Freedom is subjectively experienced, yet objectively conditioned; some of its facets are positive, others negative; it is desirable, but also anxiety-inducing; its dimensions are both physical and social. These contrasts are not merely rhetorical. In each case, both opposites are essential. They cannot be reduced to a common denominator, nor can either of them be safely ignored. Our only option is to recognize that freedom is inherently *dialectical*.

Dialectics, which in philosophy is a technical concept, has had its present-day reputation shaped through association with two extremely influential 19th century schools of thought: Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel's "dialectical-speculative" idealism and Karl Marx's dialectical materialism. The not inconsiderable baggage with which the concept of dialectics has been saddled as a result of this association contains at its core a doubly dialectical challenge. On the one hand, proper attention must be paid to the intriguing yet apparently self-contradictory construal of freedom as "the insight into necessity" — a phrase of Hegel's coinage, endorsed by Friedrich Engels, Marx's lifelong friend and collaborator.⁸ On the other hand, it would be nice to engage with this conception of freedom without spending too much energy on yet another rebuttal of Hegel's pseudophilosophical gobbledygook. Likewise, the orthodox Marxist dialectical "science of history" must be repudiated — without, however, abandoning Marx's true legacy, namely, a call to arms against capitalism and a vision of hope and liberation for all.⁹

In progressive social theory, Marxism has long epitomized modernity, which it construed dialectically. In a review titled *After Dialectics*, Göran Therborn notes that¹⁰

Marx and Marxism were very much modern in this sense, invoking the term again and again in the *Communist Manifesto* and *Capital*... However, and this was crucial, it was a dialectical conception of modernity, seen as inherently contradictory. The modernity of capitalism and of the bourgeoisie was hailed, but at the same time attacked as exploitative and alienating. This dialectical understanding of modernity was, in a sense, the very core of Marxian thought.

One of the manifestations of the 20th century postmodern turn (driven by a general disillusionment with modernity) was a collapse of the Marxist dialectic of capitalism, whose depredations in the name of progress could no longer be excused or tolerated:¹¹

The justification of capitalism presumes an identity between its promised achievements — including individual freedom, efficiency and equal opportunity — and the reality it has accomplished. Yet the increasing inability

to imagine what being free might be like in a non-capitalist society tells us about what freedom amounts to in a capitalist one. Immediate realities tell us even more. Grinding inequalities, sprawling slums, slave-like wage labour and environmental degradation constitute the fault lines between the massive capacity of productive forces and the exploitative relations that support them. Attempts to stitch the identity of capitalism back together result in an unresolvable contradiction that finds its correlate in an antagonistic society.

Whatever else can be said about postmodernism,¹² its disdain for dialectics liberates one from the strictures of the Marxist (and Hegelian) “logic of contradiction” (an expression that is devoid of literal meaning, given that logic is a system for *avoiding* contradictions in reasoning).¹³ It is possible to welcome this liberation without buying into postmodernist theory’s intellectual kit (such as it is). This is precisely how I intend to treat the dialectics of freedom in the present book, where I take dialectics to stand merely for a particular method of inquiry — one that best suits topics rife with inherent and perhaps irresolvable contradictions. In applying the dialectical method to freedom, I am explicitly motivated by the following observations:

- First, that the our human world is best described not as *being* but rather as *becoming*: it is at all times under construction, by us — as we ourselves are.¹⁴
- Second, that in the process of constructing, and trying to understand, the world and our place in it we are being pulled in opposite and seemingly incompatible directions;
- Third, that understanding such opposites can often be achieved within a broader, typically multidisciplinary, context, where they are neither reconciled nor negated, but rather integrated, in a sense that still needs to be spelled out;
- Fourth, that this integration can only be achieved by a process of dialogue and reasoning that is interactive and open-ended (echoing the first point above) and that can therefore be used to consciously and actively steer our world’s becoming in a direction that is desired — that of more and truer freedom.¹⁵

Before we can productively apply the dialectical method to freedom, another acknowledgment and a disclaimer are in order. The acknowledgment is that of massive precedent: dialectics of freedom is a perennial concern of theology, be it Hindu, Buddhist, Daoist, Jewish, Moslem, or Christian (to mention just a few of the more prominent established religious traditions). My disclaimer follows immediately from the very nature of the discipline of theology. As philosopher of religion Hent de Vries observed, a propos Søren Kierkegaard’s Christian dialectics of freedom, “Humanly speaking, theology is impossible. It is possible only on the basis of the divine Self-speaking, an event over which humans have no control.” Attempting the impossible being generally ill-advised in a regular book project,¹⁶ I shall gloss over the theology of freedom, while recognizing the role of personal and interpersonal spirituality and faith in framing the human experience of meaning, moral behavior, and desire for liberation.¹⁷

Roadmap

Our exploration of the dialectics of freedom will be a bit of a roller coaster ride; expect entertainment and an occasional thrill, but not at the expense of safety (sound research and honest reporting). The track runs unobstructed through three domains commonly perceived, or rather misperceived, as being at odds with one another: selves, societies, and nature. Along the way, it climbs seven topical hills, offering vistas over logical quagmires, conceptual quicksand, industrial hellscape, imperial ruins, and beleaguered nature preserves and enclaves of resistance, from which living examples of better ways to be beckon to the travelers.

1. CHILDREN OF HISTORY. The first order of business is to clear the most fundamental hurdle: what kind of freedom is physically possible for humans (as compared to billiard balls)?
2. DEBATING AND DECIDING. Our simple, or first-order, and meta-level, or second-order, desires sometimes clash, as when I willfully act on a craving that I would rather not have. What are the implications of the human ability to entertain second-order desires for the freedom of the will — that is, my freedom to will what I want?
3. THE STORM OUT OF PARADISE. The capacity for rational thinking, as distinguished from feeling, is often considered to be a prerequisite for free decision making. Indeed, rationality, along with individualism and personal freedom, is central to the Western liberal worldview. Why then did the West's global political and economic world order turn out to be such an unmitigated humanitarian and ecological disaster?
4. RIGHT RELATIONSHIP. There are plenty of examples, both historical and living, of well-tempered selves coming together in free societies that cultivate human flourishing and respect for more-than-human nature. How can we best learn from them?
5. FROM RESPONSIBILITIES, FREEDOM. Being free in a society implies taking on responsibility for the freedom of others. How does this insight inform the project of mutual liberation?
6. SOCIETY AGAINST THE STATE. The citizens of democracies are constantly reminded, in the face of mounting evidence to the contrary, that their freedoms are best guaranteed by the state — the very entity whose minions do the reminding. What shape could freedom take in a world without states?
7. WALKING TO EUTOPIA. True freedom must include both the freedom from oppression by power, personal or political, and the freedom from want. What lessons can we draw from past successes of anarcho-communism, which embodies this principle, for the future of human emancipation?



Notes

1. For a sample of the ongoing work on understanding the microscopic structure of the wings of several members of the *Morpho* genus, see (Giraldo and Stavenga, 2016).
2. For some background to these observations, see David Graeber’s analysis of the 2011 Occupy Wall Street movement (Graeber, 2013a).
3. Pushkin’s creative life spanned the two decades between 1817, when he graduated from the Imperial Lyceum at Tsarskoye Selo, and 1837, when he was fatally wounded in a duel. It was bookended by two poems on freedom, both unpublished during his lifetime. The first one, *Вольность: Ода* (Ode to Liberty; Wikipedia contributors, 2024), was written in his final year at the Lyceum and for obvious reasons was concealed until discovered by Imperial security among the belongings of some of his Decembrist friends after the suppression of their revolt in 1825. The second one, written on August 21, 1836, was published posthumously, in a radically censored form, in 1841. Its penultimate stanza appears here in my translation, in the approximate rhyme and meter of the original (Wikisource, 2023; first published without the censor’s alterations in 1881).
4. The commonly drawn distinction between positive and negative freedom received a widely cited treatment in an essay by Isaiah Berlin (1958), titled *Two Concepts of Liberty*. This by now traditional distinction is not, however, very crisp, as the very same aspect of a person’s situation can relate to both positive and negative freedoms. For one thing, the options that define one’s positive freedom are very likely constrained by external factors, which thereby infringe on one’s negative freedom. At the same time, recognizing these negative-freedom factors makes it possible to conceive of ways to counter them, in a win for positive freedom. MacCallum, Jr. (1967) points out this and other conceptual problems with the positive/negative distinction, as made by Berlin and by many other commenters. Instead, he proposes that

... freedom is thus always *of* something (an agent or agents), *from* something, *to* do, not do, become, or not become something; it is a triadic relation. Taking the format “ x is (is not) free from y to do (not do, become, not become) z ,” x ranges over agents, y ranges over such “preventing conditions” as constraints, restrictions, interferences, and barriers, and z ranges over actions or conditions of character or circumstance.

This formulation is arguably too narrow in that it only considers context as constraining; as we shall see in later chapters of this book, context can also be essentially enabling. For a brief but characteristically eye-opening glimpse of the historical-anthropological perspective that supports this broader take, see (Graeber, 2013b).

5. See Søren Kierkegaard’s seminal treatment of anxiety as a reaction to freedom (Kierkegaard, 1980). Although that work focused on theology (namely, the Christian notion of the original sin; see Davenport, 2000; Quinn, 1990; Schneider, 2005), it inspired much subsequent discussion in philosophy. Prominent examples include the existentialism of Jean-Paul Sartre (“We are not free to cease being free”; Sartre, 1956) and the fusion of psychoanalysis and Marxism of Erich Fromm, the author of *The Fear of Freedom* (2001); see also (Dagostino and Lake, 2014).

6. For an explication of the need of education for critical consciousness, see Paulo Freire’s books (1970; 1974). A similar concept is at the core of the “liberation psychology” of Ignacio Martín-Baró (1996). A discussion of propaganda aimed at instilling false consciousness, as well as examples of Newspeak, can be found in (Edelman, 2023, ch.4). Regarding the connection between freedom and propaganda, MacCallum, Jr. (1967, p.313) remarks that “disputes about the nature of freedom are certainly historically best understood as a series of attempts by parties opposing each other on very many issues to capture for their own side the favorable attitudes attaching to the notion of freedom.”

7. The key concepts here (all of which will be discussed at some length, and with many more references, in chapter 1) are the *levels of understanding* of complex systems (Edelman, 2008, ch.4) and the distinction between physics and “special sciences” (Esfeld, 2020), as well as *emergence* (Longo, 2018).

8. Here’s the relevant passage from *Anti-Dühring* (Engels, 1878, I,XI):

Hegel was the first to state correctly the relation between freedom and necessity. To him, freedom is the insight into necessity (die Einsicht in die Notwendigkeit). “Necessity is blind only in so far as it is not understood [begriffen].”

9. Cf. Darko Suvin (2016, p.107):

Let us on the radical Left — the only hope left in this historical moment, however faint — therefore go back to our roots: that is, Marx. Besides towering scholarly achievements for intellectuals, what is it in his work that inspired millions of badly, partly or not at all schooled people to organise into parties identifying with his horizon? It is that all he wrote was deeply imbued and shaped by a sense that the old world of class society

can be wrenched around toward emancipation, justice, and pleasure: that is, destroyed and replaced by a classless society.

That said, one must not ignore the false scientism of Marx's approach to history, which I shall touch upon in later chapters, along with the disastrous consequences of 20th-century political experiments inspired by his work — notably, the Russian revolution of 1917 and the Chinese revolution of 1949 — from which the Left's reputation has never quite recovered (as Suvin (2016, p.108) remarks, “in global ideology the precious baby was emptied out with the unbearably dirty bath-water”).

10. Source: (Therborn, 2007, p.74); see also (Therborn, 2006).

11. Source: (Grant, 2010, p.226). This view is consistent with Therborn's (2007, p.65):

While the inequalities of capitalism were increasing in most countries, while the global gap between rich and poor was widening, and while the brutality of the rulers of the main capitalist states was reaffirmed again and again, the dialectic of capitalism was imploding.

Suvin (2016, p.115) likewise ties postmodernism with the absolute hegemony of capitalism:

The radical reorientation in Post-Modernism, where domination of financial capital supplanted that of industrial capital, is supplanting production of mass goods and mass employment by “production” of huge riches for the 1 percent and huge miseries for the roughly 95 percent (globally).

12. Unlike Suvin, for whom the cause of the Left is an enduring source of hope even in these dark times, Therborn (2007, p.75) associates postmodernism with an abandonment of any hope for liberation: “The concept of collective emancipation or liberation has undergone a remarkable mutation over the past few decades, as part of the process of postmodernization. It has largely lost its former social referents — the working class, the colonized, women, even gays and lesbians — and, above all, its earlier socialist horizons of emancipation from capitalism.”

13. The phrase “logic of contradictions” can be found, for instance, in Grant's (2010, p.220) discussion of the method of Michel Foucault, a key figure in postmodern thought: “[Understanding Foucault's method] requires elaborating an appropriate logic of dialectical relations that cannot be reduced to a logic of contradiction.” While I find Foucault's tilting at Hegel's windmills rather beside the point for the purposes of the present book, I do appreciate Grant's (2010, p.235) observation that “Foucault makes it acceptable to participate in dialectical thought without being a dialectician. The difference is wide enough: dialecticians generate insights by intentionally employing dialectical thought; others, such as Foucault, become participants in dialectical thought when their work takes on dialectical implications.”

14. Becoming will be discussed at length in the next chapter; see note 53 on p.45 for select references.

15. This construal of dialectics heeds the warnings of (Popper, 1940) and follows the example of *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (Horkheimer and Adorno, 2002). Specifically in the context of freedom, this approach has been taken by Kovel (1998) and Khurana (2013). My four premises can be compared to Brincat’s (2021, p.34) three points:

Dialectics means many things, to many different people. But consistent across most of its forms are three elements: an ontology of flux and relations, methods of dialogue and logic, and a purpose (or knowledge-interest) in the possibility of consciously directing change.

16. Here’s a similar sentiment by Hilary Putnam (2012, p.567): “No one who has the temerity to address such broad themes as ‘science, religion, and the human experience,’ as I was originally invited to do, can hope to hide behind an academic facade of ‘professional expertise.’ ” A certain kind of encouragement can, however, be found in Kierkegaard’s unpublished diaries: “‘Leap of faith — yes, but only after reflection.’”

17. A classical source is the Pelagian / Augustinian debate (e.g., Boulnois, 2017; Crouse, 2004; Peroli, 2013), which is inextricably interwoven with Christian dogma. Pojman (1972) discusses the dialectic of freedom in Kierkegaard. In a paper titled *Does anxiety explain original sin?*, Quinn (1990, p.243) writes:

We might think of Kierkegaard as sailing between Scylla and Charybdis. On the one side, there is the danger that, in trying to make room for the freedom necessary to make the individual morally responsible for evil, one cuts the individual off from the possibility of even being influenced by society or history in opting for evil. . . . On the other side, there is the danger that, in trying to explain how the option for evil is influenced by its temporal antecedents, one bypasses the individual’s choice altogether.

Further reading

Berlin, I. (1958). *Two Concepts of Liberty*. Oxford, UK: Clarendon Press. Reprinted in *Four Essays on Liberty* (Clarendon Press, 1969).

Boulnois, O. (2017). What is freedom? *Dionysius XXXV*, 38–62.

Brincat, S. (2021). Ancient Indian dialectics and Marx. In S. Ray and S. Gupta (Eds.), *Probing and Re-probing: Essays in Marxian Reawakening*, Chapter 1, pp. 31–50. London: Routledge.

- Crouse, R. (2004). St. Augustine, semi-Pelagianism and the *Consolation* of Boethius. *Dionysius XXII*, 95–110.
- Dagostino, V. and R. Lake (2014). Fromm’s dialectic of freedom and the praxis of being. In S. J. Miri, R. Lake, and T. M. Kress (Eds.), *Reclaiming the sane society: essays on Erich Fromm’s thought*, Chapter 2, pp. 17–30. Rotterdam / Boston / Taipei: Sense Publishers.
- Davenport, J. (2000). ‘Entangled freedom’: ethical authority and choice in Kierkegaard’s concept of anxiety. In S. Ake, D. González, T. A. Olesen, R. Purkharthofer, K. B. Soderquist, P. Søltoft, and B. S. Tajafuerce (Eds.), *Kierkegaardiana*, Volume 21, pp. 131–151. Søren Kierkegaard Selskabet.
- Edelman, S. (2008). *Computing the Mind: How the Mind Really Works*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- Edelman, S. (2023). *The Consciousness Revolutions: From Amoeba Awareness to Human Emancipation*. Cham, Switzerland: Springer.
- Engels, F. (1878). *Anti-Dühring*. Leipzig: Genossenschafts Buchdruckerei. First published in *Vorwärts* in 1877–1878. Translated by Emile Burns from 1894 edition.
- Esfeld, M. (2020). *Science and Human Freedom*. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Freire, P. (1970). *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. New York: Continuum. English translation 2011.
- Freire, P. (1974). *Education for Critical Consciousness*. New York: Continuum.
- Fromm, E. (2001). *The Fear of Freedom*. London: Routledge.
- Giraldo, M. A. and D. G. Stavenga (2016). Brilliant iridescence of *Morpho* butterfly wing scales is due to both a thin film lower lamina and a multilayered upper lamina. *Journal of Comparative Physiology A* 202, 381–388.
- Graeber, D. (2013a). *The Democracy Project: A History, a Crisis, a Movement*. New York, NY: Spiegel & Grau. Available at <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/david-graeber-the-democracy-project>.
- Graeber, D. (2013b). Two notions of liberty revisited or, How to disentangle liberty and slavery. *Open Democracy Forum*. Available at <https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/david-graeber-two-notions-of-liberty-revisited?v=1642976432>.
- Grant, J. (2010). Foucault and the logic of dialectics. *Contemporary Political Theory* 9(2), 220–238.

- Horkheimer, M. and T. W. Adorno (2002). *Dialectic of Enlightenment*. Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press. Originally published in 1944. Edited by Gunzelin Schmid Noerr. Translated by Edmund Jephcott.
- Khurana, T. (2013). Paradoxes of autonomy: on the dialectics of freedom and normativity. *Symposium: Canadian Journal of Continental Philosophy* 17(1), 50–74.
- Kierkegaard, S. (1980). *The concept of anxiety: A simple psychologically orienting deliberation on the dogmatic issue of hereditary sin*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press. Originally published in 1844. Translated by R. Thomte with B. A. Anderson.
- Kovel, J. (1998). Dialectic as praxis. *Science & Society* 62(3), 474–482.
- Longo, G. (2018). How future depends on past and rare events in systems of life. *Foundations of Science* 23, 443–474.
- MacCallum, Jr., G. C. (1967). Negative and positive freedom. *The Philosophical Review* 76(3), 312–334.
- Martín-Baró, I. (1996). *Writings for a liberation psychology*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Translated by A. Aron and S. Corne.
- Peroli, E. (2013). Dialectic of freedom: Hans Jonas and Augustine. *Dionysius XXXI*, 141–160.
- Pojman, L. P. (1972). The dialectic of freedom in the thought of Søren Kierkegaard. ThD thesis, Union Theological Seminary.
- Popper, K. R. (1940). What is dialectic? *Mind* 49(196), 403–426.
- Putnam, H. (2012). *Philosophy in an age of science: physics, mathematics, and skepticism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. Edited by M. De Caro and D. Macarthur.
- Quinn, P. L. (1990). Does anxiety explain original sin? *Noûs* 24(2), 227–244.
- Sartre, J.-P. (1943/1956). *Being and Nothingness (L'Être et le Néant)*. Paris / London: Gallimard / Philosophical Library.
- Schneider, M. (2005). The anxiety of innocence in Blake and Kierkegaard. *European Romantic Review* 16(3), 351–359.
- Suvín, D. (2016). What is to be done? A first step. *Socialism and Democracy* 30(1), 105–127.
- Therborn, G. (2006). After dialectics: Postmodernity, post-Marxism, and other posts and positions. In G. Delanty (Ed.), *Handbook of Contemporary European Social Theory*, Chapter 14, pp. 185–202. London: Routledge.

- Therborn, G. (2007). After dialectics: radical social theory in a post-communist world. *New Left Review* 43, 63–114.
- Wikipedia contributors (2024). Ode to liberty (poem) — Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia. <https://w.wiki/33bV>. [Online; accessed 16-May-2024].
- Wikisource (2023). Я памятник себе воздвиг нерукотворный (Пушкин) — Викитека. <https://w.wiki/A6Pu>. [Online; accessed 16-May-2024].