

# Interpretation

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## Redeeming Modernity: The Ascent of Eros and Wisdom in Hegel's Phenomenology

WALLER R. NEWELL

CARLETON UNIVERSITY

wallernewell@sympatico.ca

A central feature of Hegel's philosophy is that it does not embrace a cumulativist conception of historical existence. Hegel's historicism is not the optimistic liberal account of a Condorcet, the belief that history is marching gradually but steadily forward. Hegel does not embrace a stage theory of history in which one era is seen as manifestly and decisively outmoding its predecessors in a relentless and triumphant advance. Instead, Hegel believes that we live in an age of uncertainty and even despair in which reason can often appear to support nothing but arid materialism, while nobler feelings are incapable of finding rational grounds for their conviction. Indeed, although differing from them profoundly in other respects, in his evocation of the historical present as a series of sharply contrasting and apparently irreconcilable alternatives, Hegel's historicism has an initially apocalyptic quality that more closely resembles that of Nietzsche and Heidegger than the textbook liberal progressivism. Mankind, Hegel believes, stands at a fateful crossroads. Modern reason has delivered us to a troubling threshold in which the old world is passing irrevocably away while the new world is not yet visible. Only this future, whatever it may be, can redeem the alienation, drift and frivolity of the present.

### I

These alternatives are brought out in two passages of remarkable poetic power in the Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*—doubly significant, since it is also a preface to the Hegelian system as a whole. I will refer to them as Images One and Two (Hegel 1975; bracketed references are by section number). There was a time, Hegel tells us in Image One, when the

richness of experience—the “abundant wealth of thoughts and pictures”—lay beyond the realm of earthly existence in heaven [8]. The mind shied away from the confusion of the profane and transitory earthly realm, preferring to keep its gaze fixed on the celestial kingdom to which the earth was attached by a “thread of light.” It is characteristic of Hegel’s style that, instead of distinguishing at this point (as he will later) between the classical, Christian and other religious accounts of super-sensible transcendence, he conflates them for now in a single allegory of celestial ascent. At this point, he is leading the reader toward a general reflection on modernity and the earlier moral and philosophical standpoints against which it defines itself. Concerned for now with guiding the reader to the first rung on the ladder to the Absolute, he does not ask us to reflect at this point on the profoundly different and in some ways contradictory accounts of transcendence given by, on the one hand, classical metaphysics *sub specie aeternitatis* and, on the other hand, the God who creates the intelligible whole out of nothing. That will come in due course. For the time being, we are offered a general *mentalité* that embraces the classical, Christian and feudal world-views taken together as a civilizational conglomerate, what Arthur Lovejoy calls the Great Chain of Being (Lovejoy 1936, 293-98).

For many eons, Hegel goes on, the mind resisted studying the earthly on its own terms. Finally it was “compelled” to introduce the rational clarity that had hitherto been exclusively reserved for the celestial realm into the “dullness and confusion” of the earthly and the sensuous. This reversal of values, in which the earthly now becomes the mind’s exclusive concern, telescopes the transition from the Great Chain of Being to modernity. For Hegel, modernity can be variously evoked as the Enlightenment, the Baconian physics of matter in motion, the verification of mental representations through their empirical correlates given in sense data, along with their broader cultural corollaries including the rise of commerce, individual autonomy and political liberalism. As we will see, central to these various manifestations of the new civilizational conglomerate is the ontological privileging of the unencumbered Hobbesian and Cartesian subject—a subjectivism that underlies both modern science with its empiricist epistemology and the political liberalism of the social contract with its enshrinement of the rights of man, and modern Romanticism’s exploration of the inner life of the self with its unique emotional and aesthetic stories. All of these forms of subjectivism are gathered by Hegel under the phenomenon of “consciousness.” For Hegel, consciousness is always the consciousness that a subject has

of an object, which in turn presupposes the categorical fixity of that division between the perceiving subject and the object perceived.

With the rise of modernity, then, mankind has veered to the opposite extreme, from excessive otherworldliness to an excessive immersion in the realm of earthly "experience." Modernity begins as a great quest to retrieve the wealth of thoughts and pictures previously fenced off from human existence in the divine incorporeal Beyond and bring it down to everyday corporeal reality. In its fixation on the earthly and the empirical, however, modernity has progressively impoverished those treasures of speculative theorizing and sublime art, cutting human experience off from the transcendental. Now mankind stands in urgent need of a Promethean effort to re-connect itself to the spiritual realm, an effort that will match the difficulty and intensity of the original modern quest to liberate ourselves from the authority of heaven. For, just as bringing the wealth of heaven down to earth has in the long run robbed it of its spiritual significance by reducing it to the materialistic and the measurable, so has the realm of divine transcendence been robbed of the *Gestalten*—the speculative and aesthetic "shapes"—that previously articulated and enriched it. Earthly experience has been reduced to a frequently crass subjectivity and utilitarianism, while the divine realm, seemingly discredited by modern rationalism, survives only in the barest and most impoverished outline of abstraction, an empty and groundless longing for what can never return. This agonizing contradiction between crass sensuousness and empty sublimity sums up the crisis of the modern age (see Abrams 1973, 121-22, 185, 293).

Echoing Schiller and anticipating Marx, Hegel depicts the spirit of modernity as a revolutionary, corrosive and destructive dynamic whose powers of analytical dissection break down and cast aside all previous traditions and customary bonds (Schiller 1965, 112-13; Gadamer 1971, 107-15). Hegel gathers these powers together under the term *Verstand*, the analytical "understanding" that accompanies the modern ontology of "consciousness" (see Marx 1975, 180-84; Taylor 1975, 14-15; Smith 1989, 184-86; Dallmayr 1993, 33). This brings us to Image Two [11]. The modern spirit, Hegel says, has "broken with" the old feudal and classical conglomerate. It turns back against the world and relentlessly subdues it, "dissolving" one remnant after another of the Great Chain of Being. As the comforting contexts of traditional faith, authority and culture "gradually crumble," there is widespread boredom, frivolity and foreboding, a feeling that we are adrift in a world increasingly bereft of its moral moorings. By the same token, however, our anxiety over the

disintegration of the inherited world of tradition bespeaks our tacit awareness that “something unknown” is “approaching.” Just as a child gestates over a long period of “nutrition in silence,” so mankind has enriched its organic heritage through its long odyssey from ancient to modern times. But, just as a child is suddenly thrust into a strange new world and must struggle for breath, so must the approaching new epoch undergo the traumatizing pains of birth. The work of the Enlightenment in dissolving traditions, carried out gradually over many years, is suddenly interrupted by a sharp jolt. The “flash” of the “sunrise” brings the form and structure of the new world into view at a single stroke. Hegel’s imagery here evokes the French Revolution and the spread of the doctrines of the social contract and the rights of man to the rest of Europe by the Napoleonic wars. The sunlight of the Enlightenment, *la Lumière*, whose rays have spread gradually for decades, is suddenly concentrated into the “flash” of torches and gunpowder—as well, perhaps, into the flash of electricity that so entranced the French about the legend of Benjamin Franklin, new world democrat and natural scientist who was known as the Electric Ambassador, and whose famous experiments were immortalized by the lightening bolts painted by David on the ceiling of the Jeu de Paume when the National Assembly took it over. For, as another American beloved of France, Thomas Jefferson, had observed, science and political freedom must progress together, each contributing to the liberation of the intellect (Jefferson 1998, 143-51).

The gestation of the new epoch (“something unknown” that is “approaching”) requires a sharp jolt of revolution, war and terror. We are again struck by the apocalyptic tension in these images, the sense of an eschatological reversal in which the darkness, confusion and anxiety of the present—precisely through being driven to their extreme—will usher in the new realm of light. Hegel’s imagery of a child born in the morning of a new age after a period of lengthy gestation anticipates Nietzsche’s imagery of the Three Metamorphoses and Heidegger’s evocation of the Advent of Being. Although Nietzsche and Heidegger are severely critical of the metaphysical account of Being in which, they contend, Hegel’s phenomenology eventually culminates, it is important to recognize that Hegel shares with his successors an ontology of Being that, in its most primordial and inward substructure, is premised upon strife. The ontological core of Hegelian phenomenology is summed up in the formulation that Truth is the unity of subject and substance [17], an ontology in which Being is understood primarily in terms of strife. Images One and Two are propaedeutics for Hegel’s own point of departure and claim to originality as a thinker.

Modern scientific rationalism has dissolved the old world. Romanticism heralds the advent of the new, but only as a vague and contentless yearning. Typically, Hegel does not tell us specifically what or who he means by Romanticism. He is not interested in a detailed intellectual history, or in the biographies of individual poets and artists, but (as before with his evocation of the old civilizational conglomerate) in the general *mentalité* variously expressed by such figures as Schlegel, Schleiermacher and Novalis, to whom we can add English poets like Wordsworth and Coleridge who were influenced by the German Romantics (Kaufmann 1966, 25, n. 16; Abrams 1973). According to Hegel, the Romantics have an authentic intimation of the higher spirituality that modern rationalism has turned its back on. But because the realm of evidence, experience and content have been conceded to that specifically modern form of rationality, the Romantic counter-reaction cannot re-claim the totality of experience for itself, but is reduced to floating alongside the modern world like a disenchanting specter. Viewed across the steely barrier erected by empiricism, the old world of communal heritage seems to be cut off from us forever, as we venture into ever more desiccated reaches of isolated individualism, profit and the search for purely personal aesthetic escapes so as to anaesthetize our immurement in an anxious, crass and philistine age. The Romantics, Hegel observes, equate knowledge of the whole with a *feeling* about the whole, a rapture over the way in which the whole always eludes complete empirical specification [7]:

The beautiful, the holy, the eternal, religion, love—these are the bait required to arouse the desire to bite; not conceptual rigor, but ecstasy; not the cold march forward of necessity in the subject matter, but the ferment of enthusiasm.

The Romantics try to recapture the richness of past, originally unified ways of life in order to oppose the barrenness of the world as it is progressively stripped of its enchantments by science. Fretting that modern mankind has forgotten the divine and is mired in the “dirt and mud,” the Romantics want to tear people away from their preoccupation with the “sensual” and with their private affairs as liberal individualists. Left to itself, however, their effort is doomed to mere archaizing, atavism and nostalgia for moonlit abbey ruins. Because they reject the canons of evidence and causality, the Romantics, having begun by rebelling against the barrenness of the scientific world-view, end up with a “feeling” about the divine that is equally barren. Repudiating his own earlier writings on the disjunction between scientific understanding and the divine, Hegel now argues that to separate God

from rationality reduces God to an arbitrary caprice, no more nor less valid than any other spontaneous effusion [10]:

When this non-conceptual knowledge of substance makes a pretense of having drowned the self in the depths of sheer Being, and of philosophizing in all holiness and truth, it hides the truth from itself. Instead of devotion to God, on the contrary, by spurning all measurable precision and determinateness, it merely gives free rein to the contingency of its content, and lets capriciousness be lord.

The attempt to rescue faith by insulating it from the claims of reason ends up paradoxically undermining faith in the eyes of thinking people by reducing it to a mere “enthusiasm.” Hegel had made precisely this rescue effort in his own early theological writings. The *Phenomenology of Spirit* constitutes a decisive break with that position (Hegel 1970, 303-13; consider also M. Rosen 1982, 78-84).

Romanticism has “depth” and “divinity,” meaning that it yearns to transcend the finite, concrete and the merely empirical. Its polar opposite is “science” (*Wissenschaft*). This is a term which, in this context and for much of the time in the *Phenomenology*, Hegel identifies with a specifically modern canon of rationality—the Hobbesian and Cartesian subject who begins by doubting all received opinion and tradition, and who seeks clear thinking through mental representations that are strictly correlated with the evidence received through the senses, unclouded by what Hobbes derided as the “powers invisible” of piety, Aristotelian teleology or other instances of “absurd” and “insignificant speech” whose existence cannot be verified empirically (Hobbes 1972, 100-110). But Hegel also identifies *Wissenschaft* with its broader and older meaning of earned knowledge about the good life and what the classics took to be a super-sensible realm of eternally perfect archetypes that endured beyond all transitory becoming, and in which transitory phenomena participated to achieve whatever degree of solidity and integrity of which they were capable. Hegel quite deliberately plays upon the ambivalent meaning of *Wissenschaft*, because one of his major claims is that his phenomenology relieves us of the harsh necessity of rejecting the older wisdom in favor of the newer scientific rationality. *Geist* embraces both and does justice to both.

As the *Phenomenology of Spirit* attempts to demonstrate at length, modern science grew out of the older and more expansive wisdom of the pre-modern epoch, and, after traversing the modern epoch of man’s alienation from nature and communal heritage, will return to its moorings



in the older wisdom while transforming, and being transformed, by it—preserving the rigor of modern Cartesian subjectivity with the expansiveness of the Platonic search for the Good (consider S. Rosen 1974, 52-62; Gadamer 1994, 21-30; Shklar 1976, 113-21; Schelling 1942; 1984, 146-53). Thus, when we encounter Hegel's strictures on Romantic rapture and his contrasting praise of "science," we must bear in mind that, however much he may appear in the first instance to be embracing the modern concept of science as against the Romantic protest, his long-range aim is to bring these two *Gestalten* together. Hegel's "shapes of consciousness" are the historicized analogy to the Platonic Forms, a term which in Greek (*eidos*) literally means the visible "shape" or "look" that we glimpse through the accidental or perishable aspects of a phenomenon. The purpose of the dialectic of Spirit is to show how that permanence of self-identity which, for the classics, resided in a realm of eternal metaphysical archetypes, for Hegel descends into the realm of becoming and develops its permanence immanently and progressively through—and embodied as—time (consider the discussion in S. Rosen 1974, 143). The "absolute Wissenschaft of Spirit" is not a pan-logistic attempt to impose Cartesian logical formalism on all possible phenomena, but rather an attempt to show how Being's evolution out of the passive cycles of nature into self-expression through its human intermediaries in the realms of culture and civic life reconciles the eternity of classical metaphysics with the time-bound processes of modern physics, so that the visible presence of the (now historicized) Forms as "shapes of consciousness" is the "result" of a dialectic of self-development (consider Fackenheim 1967; Gillespie 1984, 122-23).

At first sight, the two world-views face each other as if across a battlefield, the rigor of science versus the sublimity of the poet [14]: "One side parades its wealth of material and its intelligibility. The other side scorns this intelligibility, at any rate, and parades its immediate rationality and divinity." If Romanticism possesses depth of feeling and infinite longings for wholeness, science (as Hegel puts it) has spread, extension, and is concerned with the finite. Like Romanticism, therefore, it too is superficial and one-sided. Romanticism yields to the "uncontrolled ferment of substance," achieving a rapturous "intensity without content." It reacts to the spiritual poverty of modern science by opposing to its empty flatness an equally false extreme of empty depth, "sheer force without spread." Science, on the other hand, breaks life up into a multiplicity of concrete phenomena, thereby sacrificing the "force" of their underlying unity, and in this way counterposing to Romanticism's empty emotional depth an empty empirical breadth. But in so brutally ranging the defects of the two "shapes" alongside one another,

Hegel also limns their respective virtues, and prepares the ground for his argument that the “power of *Geist*” must draw upon both—Spirit must have spread as well as depth. Spirit will be shown to possess all of the yearning breadth and scope of Romantic Being, that intimation of the ineluctable mystery of existence that draws away from our empirical measurements to hide in the play of its inner contingency. But at the same time, Spirit must also extend itself *into* bodily, measurable, finite phenomena. Precisely so that the Spirit of all history, culture, learning and civilization can “lose itself” in the open horizons of the Romantic scope of Being without losing the precision of the heterogeneous distinctions among its densely articulated and layered structures of meaning, Spirit must at the same time instantiate itself in the “measurable precision and definiteness” of the empirically observable world. Otherwise, Spirit will be packed off into a beautiful but groundless ethical ideal or a religious or poetic transport floating above reality. The Romantics believe that by simply turning away from science, they attain a “holy” revelation and an unreflecting, spontaneous union with the transmundane [6]:

The Absolute, on this view, is not to be grasped in conceptual form, but felt and intuited. It is not the conception of the Absolute, but the feeling and intuition of it, that determine what is said and find expression.

But, according to Hegel, if we sacrifice the Concept (*der Begriff*)—that dimension of Spirit’s self-overcoming and self-development that includes the empirical precision and the causal and deductive necessity that are privileged by science—our revelation remains arbitrary and impotent. Romanticism tries to evade the power of science by conceding its validity so long as it is confined to the realm of the finite—the essential compromise between reason and faith or beauty developed by Kant and Schiller (consider Schiller 1965, 112-13; see also Beiner 1983, 12-19). But, as Hegel will try to persuade us, the “determinate” fixity that science seeks to measure is the result of infinity itself, as it reveals itself in successive shapes over time. In contrast with both classical and Enlightenment reasoning, Hegel’s phenomenology attempts to prove that the unified knowledge of the world sought by science is intimately connected with the scope of faith, and the intelligibility of religion with science.

Science and Romanticism must each reclaim what they have conceded to the other. But it would be fair to say that Hegel is more sympathetic to Romanticism in the sense that, while it stands in need of the heterogeneous content and articulation that only science can provide, it possesses an intimation of the scope and breadth of Spirit that science altogether

misses. Romanticism requires scientific supplementation in order for Spirit to become fully conscious of itself. But science, left to itself, cannot even fathom what it lacks. These considerations enable us to place in broader context the two images we have been considering so far—the ascent to celestial transcendence by the “thread of light” linking Experience to the Divine (Image One), and the “sunrise” of the coming epoch after the “crumbling” of the present is galvanized into birth pangs by a “flash” (Image Two). We now understand more clearly how these two images are telescoped genealogies of the shapes of consciousness—indeed, telescoped rehearsals of the entire phenomenology of spirit—from the respective standpoints of Romanticism and Science, the two dominant and ostensibly antagonistic world-views of our present disenchanted age. Hegel sees in the Romantics’ yearning for content without the rigor of knowledge a symptom of the crisis of modernity but also a sign of the prospects for its overcoming. For it is precisely the impoverishment of symbolic experience relentlessly pursued by empirical science that provides Romanticism with “the bait that arouses the desire to bite.” The “bite” of empirical reductionism and crass utility goads Romanticism to fulfill its contrarian yearning for the divine and the sublime by trying to recapture the fading civilizational conglomerate of the Great Chain of Being. Romanticism fulfills its longing to escape the arid utilitarian “desert” of the modern present through a hermeneutical openness to the past by “recollecting” the whole rich panoply of “thoughts and pictures” that crowd the pre-modern era [13]:

While the new world makes its first appearance merely in general outline, as a whole veiled in simplicity, the wealth of its previous existence is still present to consciousness in recollection.

With this passage, Hegel gives Romanticism the upper hand, not for what it is now, but for what it can become. Science has disintegrated the old world. The new world lies over the horizon, but is so far a bare abstraction “veiled in simplicity,” most poignantly evoked today by the Romantics’ edifying generalities (“the beautiful, the holy, the eternal, religion, love”). But the desire to “bite” at the “bait” of the current impoverishment enables Romanticism to evolve beyond itself toward Spirit through the process of *Erinnerung*—the “recollection” of the whole vast panoply of past shapes of consciousness, raising them to self-consciousness and thereby re-claiming them as the organically integrated personality of the coming “sunrise.” Here, too, it is important to note, we receive our first intimation of the non-linear structure of the *Phenomenology*’s outward historical chronology. To amplify an earlier observation, despite a superficial resemblance to the conventional textbook “march of ideas,” Hegel’s phenomenology is not a stage theory in

which the present trumps the past. Instead, it is best understood as a continuous cycle of re-engagement between an initially and ostensibly subjective modern consciousness and the organic heritage of shapes of consciousness accumulated so far by Spirit.

This hermeneutical re-engagement is sparked by the stark and equally unsatisfying alternatives posed by the alienation of Spirit from itself in the present. As recollection softens and eventually dissolves the fixed division between subject and object characteristic of consciousness by reclaiming this organic heritage, we will garner fresh energies and insights as we enter the coming age with which the current antagonism between analysis and feeling can be mediated and reconciled. Indeed, the current antagonism between Romanticism and Science crystallizes the entire inward and outward course of Spirit's history to date, an inward current of immanent reconciliation and communality intertwining with an outward track chronicling the aggressive pursuit of freedom through the transformation of nature. When these two currents are brought together, no fundamental conflicts will remain. Modern mankind's alienation from the all-encompassing cycles of traditional wisdom and authority as we struggled to carve out our autonomy and freedom as individuals will subside as Spirit returns to the communal harmony of its starting point—but only after nature and culture have been transformed by the pursuit of freedom so as to provide a haven for the noblest versions of modern individualism, dignity and freedom from superstition and despotism (see Kelly 1978, 113-15; Avineri 1972, 44-48, 180-84, 228-29; Dallmayr 1993, 33).

## II

Earlier, I suggested that Image One (the “thread of light”) deliberately conflated classical, Christian and feudal conceptions of a hierarchy leading us up from the here and now of fleshly and sensual existence toward the super-sensible realm of celestial transcendence. Not for the only time in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, Hegel evokes Platonic images of the simultaneous ascent of the mind and the passions toward their joint objects of longing, a progressive ascent that actualizes our capacity for happiness by sublimating the passions as energies for cultivating our moral and intellectual virtues as we rise toward the eternal Good. Plato characterizes this ascent as an erotic one—not in the sense of carnal desire, but in the sense that eros, properly understood, is a structured longing, a longing for immortality, in the pursuit of which we aim to perfect our virtues of character and, through achieving that inner harmony of the affects, achieve the fullest and most lasting

kind of satisfaction (consider Plato, *Symposium* 201a-212a). By attributing to Romanticism the hunger to bite at the bait of the modern world's impoverishment, Hegel selects it as the contemporary avatar of this erotic longing for a completion not yet at hand. This is another reason why it is fair to say that, in diagnosing the virtues and liabilities of both science and Romanticism, the Romantics come out a little ahead of the game. It is here, Hegel implies, that we will today find the traces of that erotic longing for completion through union with the beautiful and the good that Plato identified as the motive both for wisdom and for aesthetic and emotional fulfillment.

It will be useful at this point to re-examine Hegel's version of this ascent: (1) We once had knowledge of, and a feeling of union with, the "Immediate Being" of the eternal, with which the earthly realm was connected by a ladder of enlightenment. The "heavens were adorned" with the "thoughts and images" generated by this fecund union of what we moderns now experience as the divided standpoints of science and beauty. The celestial realm is the object both of the philosophical longing for knowledge and of the religious craving for unity with God—the distinction between reason and revelation is not given to us in immediate experience, but emerges only over the eons as the Spirit of history develops itself by generating such distinctions. (2) By following the "thread of light" by which mundane phenomena are able to participate in the eternal celestial truth, mankind looks back down at the profane world and sees it for the tawdry and chaotic morass that it is. The diminution and stigmatization of the apparent world in contrast with the shining purity of the real world of celestial truth causes mankind to flee from the former and cling to heaven. As a consequence, the thread of light that began by providing a solid connection between the apparent world and the real world—by showing how the eternal truth is instantiated in the transient phenomena that participate in the higher archetypes—ends by draining the apparent world of any connection with the divine, reducing it to a realm of ignorance, woe and oppression. (3) But then—Hegel tells us in an arresting passage—"the eye of Spirit had to be forcibly turned to the things of this world and held there" so as to *re-introduce* the "order of thought" into the "dullness and confusion of the earthly."

Hegel's metaphor of "the eye of Spirit" clearly induces us to reflect on the Platonic Socrates, whose preferred metaphor for intellection was the eye of the soul, and it thus exemplifies Hegel's hermeneutic of "recollection." Socrates had argued that intellection was more closely analogous to sight than to any other sense because the Forms constituted the moment of

visible “presence” by which the eternal and super-sensible Good is instantiated in transient becoming. The instantiation of the eternal in the transitory is also allegorized as the power of the Sun (the analogy in the realm of visible phenomena to the Good in the realm of the intelligible) to summon all phenomena toward a fruitful completion (*telos*). Further, in the Image of the Cave in the *Republic*, Socrates argues that the philosopher must be compelled to forsake the happiness that he finds when he climbs out of the Cave of ignorance into the Sunlight of the Good, sacrificing a measure of his own happiness out of a sense of duty to his fellow citizens trapped by their ignorance in the gloomy recesses below. Likewise, Hegel is suggesting, with his plain references to the Platonic imagery, that “Spirit’s eye” must be “forcibly turned” from its fixation on the Divine and its attention re-directed to the earthly and “held there.”

But there is a crucial difference between Hegel’s re-enactment and the Platonic original. It is revealed by the small but telling detail that, whereas for Plato in the Image of the Cave, the potential philosopher must be forcibly “turned” in order to face upward toward the sunlight, for Hegel, the eye of Spirit must be understood as being forcibly “turned” to forsake the celestial realm of eternal light that it has already attained. In other words, whereas for Plato, the philosopher must compromise his ascent to the truth in order to be philanthropic toward those left behind in the Cave, for Hegel, the spirit of philosophy must return to the Cave both out of philanthropy and out of a pursuit of the truth. For Plato, the summons toward the Good forcibly turns us away from our commitment to the Cave; later, having achieved a measure of transcendence, we must compromise our happiness and effect a partial return to the twilight. For Hegel, in order for Spirit’s odyssey to be fully actualized, the “turning” must be viewed as a summons downward from the heaven of reified metaphysical transcendence into the well-springs of historical action out of which the metaphysical realm originally developed.

For Plato, the philosopher’s ascent toward the sunlight of happiness and his return to his philanthropic duty to his fellow citizens in the Cave is a recurrent cycle, one that can occur in principle in any place and in any epoch, under the aspect of eternity. Moreover, only a very few people, the true natural aristocracy comprised of the lovers of wisdom, are equipped to make this ascent and return, with little hope offered that the philosopher’s dutiful return to the Cave will result in any widespread or permanent transformation of the benighted conditions of everyday life for the majority. In contrast, Hegel is arguing that the entire human species makes this ascent up

the Divided Line from fleshly and sensuous experience toward the light of the truth. Moreover, this ascent is not re-enacted recurrently under the aspect of eternity. Instead, the ascent is enacted one time only, and it entails not only the transcendence of the philosophic few, but the actual transcendence of past ignorance and oppression by the collective progress of mankind as a whole. In sum, the teleological ascent from becoming to the eternal Good is replaced by the teleological progress of history. Everyone will emerge from the Cave "into the spiritual daylight of the present" [177].

The ambition of the Hegelian enterprise—its assimilation of the classical account of the cosmos as an ordered whole to the ontology of Spirit as a self-making dynamic—is further manifest in Hegel's allusion to one of the best-known examples of Aristotelian teleology [12]:

When we want to see an oak with its massive trunk, its spreading branches and foliage, we are not satisfied to be shown an acorn instead. In the same way, science, the crowning glory of the world of Spirit, is not found complete in its origins.

Aristotle's point is that the purpose of the acorn is to develop into its telos, the fully-grown oak tree. It exemplifies his general teaching that the closer a being comes to achieving the stability of its visible presence, the more successfully it instantiates the eternal stability of the cosmos, and the more fully it actualizes its natural potential. Nature, in other words, is most informatively and intelligibly approached in terms of form, structure and the visible completion of entities, not in terms of the sub-phenomenal genesis that Heraclitus and many of the pre-Socratics identified with *physis* (Aristotle, *Physics* 196a-25, 196b10, 198a5-15; see also Plato 1988, 889-90; 1986, 152-53).

Hegel's friendly gesture in this passage toward the chief metaphysician of the West is meant to show how the phenomenology of Spirit's self-development out of this sub-phenomenal genesis *results* in the progressive actualization and completion of this Aristotelian movement from genesis to final end. Thus, in one sense, it is as true for Hegel as it is for Aristotle that Being is most informatively and intelligibly approached in terms of the form and structure of visible completion, but with the crucial difference that this plenitude of presence is the result of the underlying dynamic of genesis. The pre-Socratics understood the visible presence of beings as emerging out of, and passing back into, chance and happenstance (*tuche*), the invisible matrix of origination. But they had no doctrine to explain how these entities might interact and combine progressively over time to generate new, hitherto unknown and unknowable phenomena. Plato and his successors tried to



bridge the chasm between the invisible origins of the Heracleitean concept of *physis* and the static permanence of the Parmenidean identification of Being with the eternal and unchanging One by means of a phenomenology of participation in which beings developed out of the realm of becoming toward the realm of permanent Being by instantiating the heterogeneous yet permanent stable archetypes of the Ideas (consider the argument in Friedländer 1973). Hegel undertakes his own grand synthesis of the two major ontologies of antiquity, analogous to the Platonic synthesis but derived from historicist premises. The dialectic of Spirit shows how phenomena emerge from the invisible origins and participate progressively in the Absolute, instantiated in the “shapes” that make up the tapestry of Spirit’s completed odyssey. Being and becoming are reconciled by historical phenomenology.

In this connection, we can add a further observation about the crucial role played by Hegel’s hermeneutic of “recollection.” Here, too, another Platonic problematic is quietly assimilated to the dialectic of Spirit and its difficulties supposedly resolved. In the *Meno*, Plato asks how it is that a person comes to learn anything (Plato *Meno* 81b-e). If knowledge is derived from the eternal structure of the cosmos, then surely it should be fully manifest to us already, since we ourselves are a part of that ordered whole and are intelligible in terms of its structure. Why, therefore, do we need to learn? On the other hand, if human beings, owing to their mortality, vices and other frailties, are cut off from the realm of the immortal, then how could any amount of effort at learning bring together finite and imperfect beings with immortal and perfect ones? Plato’s answer is to suggest that, when we learn, say, a Euclidean proof, we are not forging access to the realm of the eternal through an effort of will, since imperfect beings could not force their way into the realm of perfect beings. On the other hand, we are not granted immediate insight into the eternal—an effort at study is required. Plato concludes by arguing that, before we were born into the realm of mortal becoming, perishability and impermanence, our souls—the only immortal aspect of our otherwise finite natures as humans—resided with the other eternal beings and thereby possessed perfect knowledge. Being born as human amounted to almost, but not quite, severing that link. The soul retains a fragile and attenuated but still reliable connection to the immortal beings that were its first home. When we study and learn, therefore, we are in effect “remembering” a part of that perfect knowledge that the perfect part of us possessed before being immured in our bodily shells.



Hegel is suggesting, in effect, that the teleology of historical progress more successfully and plausibly demonstrates the actualization of this Platonic doctrine of "recollection." It is no longer necessary to posit the existence of a transcendental empyrean realm beyond time and change, and further to posit a particle of this immortal realm in ourselves (the soul), in order to explain how finite beings can participate in a knowledge of the infinite. If all phenomena are time-bound, then our knowledge cannot leap beyond the limits of time, change, variability and perishability. From a Platonic perspective, Hegelian knowledge resides entirely within the realm of becoming. But, Hegel would argue, the decisive superiority of the dialectic of Spirit resides precisely in this collapse of the infinite into the finite, and the resultant immanentization of the telos in the temporal currents of accident and mutability. For now, at the end of the process, it is possible for us to understand retrospectively how the entire human species—not just the privileged philosophic few—are now poised to "remember" the infinite wisdom they have currently "forgotten." This wisdom is not merely speculative: It is the concretely actualized outcome of the entire previous eons-long pursuit of freedom, enlightenment and happiness, embodied in the living structures of the modern state, culture, education and religion. When the consciousness of the modern individual is sparked by the impoverishment of the present divide between science and the divine to remember this heritage, Spirit will complete its own evolution by breaking the final crust dividing itself as rigor from itself as love. The spirits of all human beings, mediated by the states and cultures in which they live, will join the Spirit of all existence in which they are enfolded, and the wisdom they raise to consciousness will not exist across a divide between the mortal and the immortal, nor will it remain an uncompleteable quest. Wisdom will fully reside, and will be fully grasped and lived, in the dawning new era.

Unlike the static archetypes of classical wisdom, moreover, the emerging wisdom of the new era will continue to pulsate with the underlying indeterminacy and dynamism of Spirit, a Heracleitean whole that has been eidetically articulated by the time it reaches the end of its teleological development. Spirit is a dynamic equilibrium shot through with contingency, in which the difference between entities is what establishes, through their mutual tension of resistance, the achieved identity of each. For we must continue to bear in mind that, in trying to demonstrate how phenomenology synthesizes Being with becoming, Hegel insists that the full scope of both realms must be preserved without sacrifice.

Indeed, when we look more closely at Hegel's allusion to Aristotle, we recognize that it is not strictly parallel. For Aristotle, the fully visible oak exhausts the potential of the acorn for actualization—strictly speaking, the oak is the acorn. Insofar as the acorn “is” at all, insofar as it participates in nature conceived in terms of permanence, it is no more than a way-station toward the tree. So thoroughly does Aristotle identify the visible completion with the nature of a being that the primordial colloquial sense in which the term *physis* (a cognate of the verb *phyein*, meaning “to grow”) evokes fecundity and teeming fruition is almost entirely paved over by his physics. Indeed, Aristotle argues in Book II of the *Physics* that the pre-Socratics' identification of nature with genesis and chance (*tuche*) is literally unintelligible (“without logos”), since it attempts to derive the intelligible from the unintelligible, or, what amounts to the same thing, claims that there are causes without antecedent causes. But when Hegel assimilates the example of the oak tree to his own dialectic, he is careful to remind us that we are not exclusively interested in the stable perfection of the fully grown tree, but in the “massive trunk, its spreading branches and foliage” as well. In other words, even in endorsing Aristotle's privileging of the eidetic clarity of the *nunc stans*, the moment in which the visible phenomenon most closely approximates the eternity of the Unmoved Mover, Hegel partly shades his example away from the stable presence of the tree down into its darker undergrowth, the vigor of its unseen sap, the rustling and pulsating foliage that intimate how the tree is as much rooted in its vibrant and invisible genesis as in its transient moment of completion in the sunlight. Hegel's formulation of the Truth as the unity of subject and substance is precisely premised on the account of *physis* as an uncaused cause, a spontaneous or “self-moving” event, that Aristotle pronounced as being “without logos.”

Hegel's assimilation of the Aristotelian example—adapting it but also subverting it—is a small but revealing example of how philosophy, in Hegel's judgment, needs to reconcile the holism of the Romantics with the measurable precision of modern science and the classical physics on which it is distantly but unquestionably based. In his own peculiar philosophical lexicon, unlike anything that comes before or after, Hegel moves like quicksilver between the recondite technical language of modern rationalism and the moodiness of his contemporary Hölderlin. For Hegel, the dialectic of Spirit does not require us to make a division (as had Aristotle) between the eternal and the temporal dimensions of nature and harden them into a dichotomy, with the consequence that the temporal dimension is increasingly stigmatized as a fallen, privative realm of mere accident and mutability, while the most

permanent—and therefore, in the classical sense, most natural—dimension of a phenomenon floats away from the phenomenon we actually observe and experience into the super-sensible realm of the eternal tree and other such ghostly archetypes.

Because Hegelian phenomenology is time-bound, it encompasses not only the final telos, but the whole rich loam of flowering, growth and decay out of which the telos emerges. Hegel's subtle emendation of the Aristotelian example is especially worth bearing in mind when we remember that, when Heidegger comes to argue that Hegelian phenomenology is, at the end of the day, and despite its best intentions, undermined by its attempt to retain a link with the Platonic and Aristotelian metaphysics of presence, he too uses examples of trees, flowers and plants. Whereas Hegel attempts a synthesis between his own phenomenology and classical metaphysics by purporting to assimilate the latter to the former, arguing that the latter is more successfully demonstrated by the former than Plato and Aristotle were capable of doing for themselves, Heidegger by contrast almost forsakes the visible presence of the tree entirely for its invisible roots, descending much deeper than had Hegel into the temporal sub-structure and implying that the Question of Being cannot even be adequately posed until we part company with any such Hegelian hope for a synthesis between phenomenology and metaphysics.

### III

We are now in a better position to synthesize the ascents sketched in Images One and Two. Hegel's claim that the mind must be compelled to turn away from the Good and return to worldly experience is the corridor between the two images. Heaven, having drained the apparent world of a permanence that is now entirely trans-worldly, floats away from the earth and leaves it bereft of order and purpose. Because heaven has drained the world of transcendence, leaving only matter-bound "experience" in its wake, knowledge is subsequently reduced from the trans-worldly to the "opposite need"—knowledge is reduced from celestial contemplation to the unencumbered Cartesian subject, which becomes the sole criterion for sure and certain knowledge, a knowledge restricted to the representation of sense-data. Science saves the world from the chaos resulting from heaven's departure through an "order based on thought." The price we pay for this modern order is that we "wander in the desert" of empiricism, a realm of dry facticity bereft of wholeness and repose. Romanticism betokens an ever more intense longing for a recovery of that lost sense of solid being now banished to a celestial realm that modern empiricism appears to have refuted decisively and

irrevocably. In our inchoate longing to find the “thread of light” back to the lost richness of heaven stirs an eros for the recollection of our vanished riches.

This takes us to the threshold of one of Hegel’s most provocative insights, one echoed more or less consciously by his successors including Nietzsche and Heidegger. For the ancients, according to Hegel, the “immediacy” of natural being—the sense that the cosmos is a harmonious structure of permanence and repose that offers a mooring for human aspirations for happiness—was a spontaneous and effortless given. They looked into nature, and nature looked back with a friendly visage. As the ancients reflected upon this intuition of substantive repose, harmony and beauty, they were led from that spontaneous intuition to the complex speculative systems of first philosophy, including the Platonic Ideas and Aristotelian substance. The naive experience of reconciliation with nature gave rise to the self-conscious search for deeper knowledge. For us moderns, the situation is the exact reverse. For us, it is philosophy itself which must consciously regenerate the lost immediacy of content and “restore the feeling” of reconciliation with the world. As philosophy crystallized and evolved into science, it progressively corroded and drained away the richness of naive immediacy given to us prior to reflection. Now the world is barren, but an enormous complex of thought structures from Plato to Kant fills the void. Hence, philosophy must find a way to regenerate the enchantment that philosophy itself has destroyed. As Nietzsche was to put the same paradox from a considerably more pessimistic vantage point than that of Hegelian *Wissenschaft*, modern man must “learn to forget.” How can we consciously will ourselves to naiveté, to wholeness and a lack of coruscating self-awareness? The prospects for educational and civic wholeness in the modern world are corollaries of the same dilemma. How can we consciously will ourselves to re-inhabit the “aesthetic democracy” of the Greek polis, a sublime blend of the chthonic and the Olympian that enveloped the Greeks in a seamless intersubjectivity, but which our modern criterion of rationality has split asunder into such antinomies as nature and freedom or happiness and virtue? “Science” in the broader sense played upon by Hegel must aim for a realistic but non-reductionist psychology and a social and political ontology that, in its mediating cultural and civic forms, will commingle the communitarianism of the ancients with the individual autonomy of the moderns. But how?

Let us sum up the results so far: The “desert” of modern rationalism that is the despair of Romanticism in Image One is expanded into the epoch-shaking “disintegration” that the Enlightenment has visited upon

the world as it willy-nilly and without being aware of doing so ushers in “the sunrise” of Image Two. The two images pre-figure what Hegel will shortly reveal as the central premise of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*—the conceptual outline of the Truth of Spirit as the unity of subject and substance. The two images prepare us for this powerfully pregnant, not to say gnomic formula, corresponding respectively to the subjective will-power to dissect the world (Image Two) and the Romantic longing, through hermeneutical recollection, for substantive repose and reconciliation among humans and between humans, the world, and their heritage (Image One). The two images show how the world has been impoverished, but also how this impoverishment is necessary as “bait,” so that, when its corrosive imperative reaches an extreme of alienation and drift, we long all the more keenly for the missing reconciliation. But, in contrast with the trans-worldly reconciliation promised by the traditional classical-Christian conglomerate, the reconciliation emerging today is brought about by the very dynamic of corrosion that sets itself up as the greatest foe of the longing for the divine. Accordingly, the new world (as yet only “something unknown [that is] approaching”) will return to the transcendental while *including* the world as it has been thoroughly disrupted, re-shaped and transformed by modern rationalism—not only in terms of the scientific understanding we bring to bear on it, but including the cultural, civic and political corollaries of the Enlightenment with its core assumption of individual consciousness. Hence, the emerging reconciliation is both a going back and a going forward, or a movement forward guided by a movement back. In keeping with this atavistic and futuristic spiraling, a movement in which Spirit continuously returns to its innermost origins while continuously spreading its distinctions outward and ahead, the *Phenomenology of Spirit*—and Hegel’s philosophy as a whole—has a very peculiar structure, one that is far removed from the unilinear chronological movement from past to future with which it is sometimes misidentified.

Spirit is this oscillation between reconciliation and difference pre-figured by the two images. These reflections lead us back to the contrast between the Hegelian ascent and the Platonic one whose pedigree it purports to assimilate. For Plato, the Good draws us—as Diotima puts it in the *Symposium*—“on up.” We want to remain in the empyrean heights, but we have a duty to go back down. For Hegel, on the other hand, the historical process—Spirit—generates the distinction between heaven and earth as one epoch-making way station in its exploration and development of itself. This divide between the divine and the profane constitutes a stupendous gain in the deepening and spiritualization of the human pursuit of freedom. Indeed,

the tension between celestial perfection and earthly woe reveals the future goal of all historical striving in outline: freedom for mankind brought from heaven down to earth. For these reasons, therefore, if we are Hegelians, we cannot want to remain in the sunlight. Indeed, we cannot even wish for there to be a sunlight in the Platonic sense. We don't merely have to return to the Cave, we must want to return. Going back down is not a sacrifice of our satisfaction, but a return to its source.

Philosophy must return to the dynamic origins out of which Spirit develops itself in order to re-invigorate the ideals that otherwise tend to ossify and float off into an abstract realm of the unattainable Beyond. In this respect if certainly not in others, Hegelian wisdom is prospectively more like the wisdom of Nietzsche's Zarathustra than it is Platonic or Socratic. Zarathustra's crisis is akin in several respects to Hegel's diagnosis of the crisis of modernity, and in my view Nietzsche's to some extent justified polemics against his predecessor have occluded certain deep ontological resonances that their philosophies share in common. Zarathustra lives in a cave, but his cave is on a mountain top—he is already on the heights. Like modern philosophy and modern mankind in general, he has been born into a world already thoroughly transformed by knowledge. Zarathustra is benighted, not by the absence of the heights, but by his immurement in the cave of hypertrophic rationality that separates us from "life." Whereas, for the ancients, eros led reason to clarify the perplexities and mysteries of naive longing, for the moderns, eros longs to descend beneath the adamantine overlay of science to re-immense itself in those perplexities. Zarathustra begins with transcendence, and it is sterile. He must go back down into life in order to regenerate his wisdom with the fecundity of becoming. Whereas, for the Platonic Socrates, going back down constitutes a sacrifice of one's happiness and erotic satisfaction in the sunlight, for Hegel and his successors, our erotic longing is for the origins, because the transcendence we possess has become a prison, a dry husk severed from the sap-giving root.

What for Plato is the eternal Good is for Hegel the "result" of Spirit's progressive self-unfolding. For Plato, our inability to achieve union with the Good fully or permanently is an insuperable necessity stemming from the fact that the eternal part of our human nature, the soul, is immured in a transitory part, the "cave" of the body, whose irrational passions dominate most men, and sometimes even the philosophic. For Hegel, by contrast, the problem is not so much our essential incapacity as bodily mortals to live permanently in accordance with the divine spark in the soul that connects the

human intellect to the noetic structure of the cosmos. On the contrary: The problem is that the truth is fully and successfully embodied in every historical epoch. We can attain complete access to it through the spirit of our time. But, having attained union with that truth, we find that the truth tends to reify itself into a fixed polarity between itself and all competing claims, bringing history to a halt—which then occasions a return to freedom, seeking action in order to break down the distinction. Thus, whereas for Plato the problem is that our contact with the permanence of the truth is too fleeting, for Hegel, the problem is that the truth of an epoch takes itself to be too permanent. That is as true today, as we stand at the threshold of the new era, as it has been during similarly momentous civilizational shifts in the past. In order to break down the dichotomy between Romanticism and science, our modern heaven and hell, we have to return to the dynamic interplay of opposites out of which both the modern physics of matter in motion and the Romantics' restless alienation from the world have emerged. If we follow Hegel up the ladder to the Absolute, we will be forced to part ways with common sense and cease seeing culture in terms of combatants glaring at each other across a battlefield. The modern view of nature as a happenstantial flux bereft of purpose is as necessary to the moody sentimentality of modern poetry as it is to the capacity of modern physics to conceptualize anthropocentric, analytically self-referential structures of causality and law-like necessity and thereby repudiate classical metaphysics. Science and poetry, Hegel argues, are battenning off of the same modern ontology of nature as motion.

Of course, bad as it may be to be chained to a passive reverence for the Absolute as it is embodied in the doctrines or prejudices of the current epoch, it is equally retrograde according to Hegel to veer to the opposite extreme of a stance of permanent heaven-storming struggle. There is as little room in Hegel's understanding of political and cultural maturity for a Trotsky as there is for a Doctor Pangloss. Permanent revolution is just as sterile as unreflecting reverence. Spirit reconciles us to a world of tensions by showing us how those tensions empower us and provide us with the moral and cultural energies we need to be fulfilled and responsible citizens. What modern subjectivistic consciousness takes to be a series of external impediments or limitations to its egoistic freedom are, properly considered from within the dialectic of Spirit, a life-world of rich energies that express themselves through, and find measure in, our actions as integrated modern personalities. In marked contrast with Marx, for Hegel, the solution to alienation is not to abolish it, but to multiply its sources. Alienation is only burdensome when our self-expression is reduced to one overwhelming Manichean contradiction



between ourselves and the Other—an overbearing doctrine or authority. When the objects through which we can externalize and develop our powers are multiplied in number and content, we enter the earthly kingdom of spirits.

Hegel sums up the relationship between the two images in this way [12]:

The arrival of the new spirit is the product of a widespread revolution in various forms of spiritual culture, the reward of a complicated and tortuous course of development, and after much struggle and effort. It is a whole which, after running its course and laying bare all its content, returns again to itself, and is the resultant simple notion of the whole. But the actual realization of this simple whole is only found when those previous shapes and forms, which are now reduced to its ideal moments, are developed afresh in their new medium, and with the meaning they have thereby acquired.

The Enlightenment culminated in the project of bringing the rationality of heaven down to earth, reducing rationality to what could be observed and measured empirically by an unencumbered subject, and analytically dissecting and breaking down the inherited pre-modern civilizational conglomerate. That task, having revolutionized all forms of life, has now run its course. But what is the final result of that revolution? So far, it is only a “bare abstraction,” whether we mean by this the causal rigor and measurable precision offered by science or the counter-factual longing for spiritual fulfillment intuited by Romanticism. But, at bottom, Hegel reminds us, scientific rationality and the Romantic longing for wholeness cannot be seen as irreconcilable opposites. The achievements of the modern scientific mind, rooted in and evolving out of the earlier speculative philosophy of the ancients, are “the crowning glory of the world of Spirit,” while the Romantic’s yearning for wholeness “misses in the new form” of that emerging wholeness “the expanse of content, and still more the development and cultivation of form by which distinctions are definitely determined and arranged in their precise relations.” According to Hegel, the implicit common ground between the two world-views is the basic principle of intelligibility, or, more generally, Understanding ), the principle of identity and difference. Both modern science and Romanticism claim to have understood the whole.

Both lay claim to the emerging new era, glimpsed so far only as a “bare abstraction.” Both claim that their insights possess universal validity and can be universally grasped. Understanding is the seemingly frail tendril that, as Hegel puts it, continues to link the “scientific and the



unscientific consciousness," and at least holds out the prospect that each can enter the other's domain.

In these lines, then, we find an outline of the structure of Spirit and the completed course of world history. Reason has devoured the world and broken it down into its constituent elements in its centuries-long pursuit of absolute knowledge. Having "run its course," it "returns again to itself"—it has achieved the universal general intelligibility that it sought in the first place. But that universal general intelligibility, whether expressed scientifically as empirically verifiable causation or Romantically as an intuition of wholeness, stands over against the world of concrete shapes and forms which it has subsumed under its general determinations. Those shapes and forms, currently cut off from the general account of the whole for which they were meant to provide the evidence, are accordingly frozen in aspic, isolated from each other and from the world as a whole by being reduced to "ideal moments." In order for the general intelligibility achieved by the modern mind to be "actually realized," that general mind must re-descend into the world of experience and "develop" those currently isolated moments "afresh." But those isolated moments must be developed "in their new medium," that is, shaped in light of the dynamic and on-going alternation between identity and difference that forms the ontological core of Spirit, and whose oscillation between alienation and reconciliation has already been limned by the two images themselves. We cannot literally return to the past, or reclaim it exactly as it once was. The richness of the traditional civilizational conglomerate must be integrated with the dynamic fruits of modernity at its best—the harmony and repose of the world we have temporarily left behind must be recollected so as to contextualize the sometimes overly-aggressive individual autonomy and political and commercial utilitarianism of the present.

Mind returns to its origins so as to re-capture the scope of its original longing for a satisfying account of the whole. It re-integrates the fragmented knowledge of the modern epoch within that immanent continuum of the organic cycles of life, community and culture, but at the same time, that immanent continuum is galvanized and energized by the still-thrusting negativity of the autonomous and skeptical modern consciousness. Not only does adequate thinking in the present continuously re-enact this cycle of alienation and reconciliation as mediated progressively by the organic heritage of recollected cultural shapes, but it unfolds simultaneously as the historical fruition of mankind's ascent, both collectively and individually. Absolute thinking is both the actual, lived history of the world

and the human species and a cognitive map of the mind's patterns. Spirit is simultaneously the structure of reason, the history of the world, and the psychological history of every living individual as he or she lays claim to the organic *Bildung* of moral energies evolved over the centuries.

Every section of the *Phenomenology of Spirit* must be read on these three levels. Each "shape of consciousness" such as, say, Skepticism or the Unhappy Consciousness is, at one and the same time, the crystallization of a precise historical epoch (for example, the late Roman Empire), the crystallization of a moral stance that is to some extent still alive for the present, and a cognitive archetype mapping the operations of the mind. The multi-leveled quality of each shape, the way in which it is both rooted in the past and operative in the present within the totality of Spirit's self-unfolding, explains the notorious obscurity of these passages, and in particular the fact that Hegel often offers no clue, or only vague allusions, about precisely which era he is examining. A few opaque references to the Crusades and to bells and incense must suffice to connect the Unhappy Consciousness with Christianity, while the classical *polis* is situated historically with no more than a few very broad allusions to Homer and Sophocles. The reason is not that Hegel was unclear or wrote in too great haste. He is eminently capable of exhaustive historical precision when he needs to be. The opaque quality of the *Gestalten* set forth in the *Phenomenology of Spirit* is a hermeneutical requirement of Hegel's aim of displaying them as archetypes of a fully evolved and integrated personality in the *present*—archetypes whose successful recollection has a therapeutic value for the modern reader who raises them to consciousness through reflection on the completed odyssey of Spirit, and not as mere historical information however diverting, instructive or fascinating. Spirit's achievement of wholeness through self-development, Spirit's success in returning home to its origin in the longing for completion by having developed this whole panoply of moral, intellectual, religious and artistic riches, entails and grounds the capacity of modern peoples, and the autonomous individual personalities who make them up, to complete this same journey for themselves. Because the Spirit of the whole world fulfills itself by developing itself through its human agents, we are able to lay claim to this evolutionary heritage and enjoy its fruits in ourselves.

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## Suffrage and Democracy in the Political Philosophy of John Locke

MANFRED BROCKER

CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF EICHSTÄTT-INGOLSTADT (GERMANY)

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

*mbrocker@princeton.edu*

An issue on which historians of political thought are divided is whether John Locke's main political work *Two Treatises of Government* expressed the belief that *democracy* was the only form of government compatible with the legal and constitutional principles therein developed, and whether Locke's consequent intention was to favor *universal* and *equal* suffrage for all citizens of a state or "Commonwealth" (II: 133). My objective in this interpretation of Locke's political philosophy is to demonstrate that while it was open to different forms of government—monarchist, oligarchic and democratic (II: 132)—the text of the *Two Treatises* furnishes no evidence for the often-heard view that Locke attached a property census to suffrage and desired its award to be dependent on the level of taxation imposed on each individual citizen. If, then, the citizens of a (post-revolutionary or new) state were to draw up their constitution and thereby choose a form of government requiring the regular reelection of members of the legislative body, *all* citizens would have to be awarded equal rights to participate in the reelection.

Locke responded to the question of the "True Original, Extent, and End of Civil Government" (II, title page), a controversial issue in contemporary political philosophy, in the second of his *Two Treatises of Government*, developing the model of a state of nature free from government and rule, in which people lived freely and independently prior to uniting to form a "political society." This "State of Liberty" was according to Locke not a "State of Licence" (II: 6), in which people could follow their "natural" urges and instincts and do as they pleased with no consideration whatsoever for

others. A “law of nature” (II: 7, 8, 9, 12, 13, *passim*) determined the scope and type of actions which an individual could perform without jeopardizing and restricting others’ freedom in doing so.

However, although such a law imposing normative limitations on human actions, and thus seemingly guaranteeing a life in freedom and equality, existed in the “state of nature,” according to Locke this state was fraught with insecurity, “full of fears and continual dangers” (II: 123). Not only was there a perpetual element of “degenerate men” deliberately breaking the “law of nature” and violating others’ rights (to life, physical integrity, liberty and property) for their own profit; in addition, in the “state of nature” the interpretation and execution of this law was left to the individual, and the “self-love” and “partiality” (II: 12, 13, 20, 87, 98, 124, 125) of individuals could cause them (consciously or unconsciously) to strive to interpret and apply the law to their own advantage. However, conflicts and arguments were inevitable (even when people were subjectively benevolent) when these individual interpretations collided and fundamental differences of opinion arose concerning the content of the laws or the extent of the penalties and compensations sanctioned by them.

Since in the “state of nature” a violation of the “law of nature” could not be permanently ruled out and anyone could potentially be affected by such a violation, it was in everyone’s interests to create conditions that improved the effectiveness of natural laws and afforded the maximum protection to each individual’s natural rights. Here the concept of uniting people into a *political unit* was developed and enacted as the most obvious method of increasing and enhancing legal certainty.

The union of individuals in the “state of nature” to form a “Political, or Civil Society,” a “People,” or “Body Politick” (II: 89—all terms given here are used synonymously by Locke), itself derived from the conclusion of a contract of all those interested in such a union: “the *beginning of Politick Society* depends upon the consent of the Individuals, to joyn into and make one Society” (II: 106). This contractual agreement to join a political society was of necessity *voluntary*, assumed the *free* will of the individual, and could not be achieved by coercion: “*Politick Societies* all *began* from a voluntary Union, and the mutual agreement of Men freely acting” (II: 102). Only by explicitly agreeing to the “original Compact” “by express Promise and consent” (II: 15, 95, 96, 97, 103, 104, 112, 119, 122) and voluntarily transferring his right of jurisdiction and execution under natural law to the political society into which he desired to enter could an individual be subject to that

society's legislation and dispensation of justice from that point on, beholden to compliance with the laws passed by the society (i.e. compliance with natural laws in the form authoritatively established and interpreted by society). By, in effect, "signing" the social compact, *every individual* thus participating in the foundation of a political society became a (full) citizen of the (thus developing) commonwealth and an equal member, with equal voting rights, of the constituent assembly. This constituent assembly of all original partners in the social compact, to be regarded as a *pouvoir constituant*, necessarily had the character of a "perfect democracy," in which *each* citizen had the right to participate in deciding the fundamental structure of the political order in which he would be compelled to live afterwards (II: 121, 132).

The social compact implied the rule, that the *majority* had the right "to act and conclude the rest" (II: 95; 96–99, 132) in determining the *form of government* to be established, and in electing members of that government to exercise rule. For only when this right of the majority was recognized and the citizens waived the right to veto decisions in these matters would it be possible to establish a government that was capable of action, and avoid regressing into the state of nature that had previously reigned. (Here the necessary assumption was that the "social compact" itself included the obligation to observe and accept this majority decision and that explicit agreement to the obligation had been given by the act of "signing" the compact and joining the society, in order to enable a majority decision to commit and legally bind all members of that society, including dissenters. Since at the time of concluding the compact individuals could not know whether their votes would place them in the majority or minority, agreement to the majority principle was rational provided that every individual was afforded equal opportunity to put forth and promulgate his ideas. However, Locke's own reasons, given in section 96, were hardly convincing, namely that the agreement of the individuals to the establishment of a political society had given rise to a new political body that must "move one way," namely "whither the greater force carries it, which is the *consent of the majority*." This image from the field of solid state physics did not, however, explain why the minority could be *obliged* to follow the decisions of the majority—particularly since the image was not quite accurate: in fact, a physical body does not move in the direction of the strongest force acting upon it, but in the direction of a resultant—which can be expressed as a vector—of all forces acting upon it. The direction in which the body moves is thus not identical with any single direction out of the forces acting upon the body, not even with the strongest;

this will *only* be the case if no more than two powers act upon it, one pushing “north” and the other “south”).

Irrespective of the *form* ultimately selected for the government by the majority of the citizens, the government required two powers to be exercised as a mandate of the political society, corresponding to the two instrumental rights accorded each individual by nature. These were the right of interpretation of the “law of nature” and that of the judgment and punishment of offenses against the “law of nature” thus interpreted, the committing of which men renounced upon their entry into political society. These two powers were *legislative* power—passing laws within the “law of nature” that enabled citizens’ actions to be judged, legal issues impartially settled and punishments and reparations assessed (II: 87, 88, 89, 94, 124)—and *executive* power, charged with pursuing, judging and punishing offenders within the legal framework (II: 87, 88, 89, 125, 126), and which, in the case of “Injury done unto any of its Members, by any one that is not of it [sc. society],” held “the *power of War and Peace*” (II: 88). Later Locke qualified this “power of war and peace” as a distinct power of the commonwealth (“federative power”), separate from the “executive,” “one comprehending the *Execution* of the Municipal Laws of the Society *within* its self, upon all that are parts of it; the other the management of the *security and interest of the publick without*” (II: 147). Although “almost always united,” they are “really distinct in themselves” (II: 148).

The fundamental framework of political order was thus pre-defined, and within its boundaries citizens could select the concrete form desired for their system of government. There were five questions to resolve in this process of selection as the “original and supream act of the society” (II: 157) by majority decision: (a) the form of government to be adopted, and who should accordingly be a member of the legislative body, which was the highest power of the commonwealth (II: 132); (b) the scope of power necessary to enforce laws, to enable the officers of the executive to perform their office efficiently; (c) the extent of authority to be awarded to the legislative with regard to the rights of the executive, and to the executive with regard to the legislative; (d) the appointment of holders of legislative and executive power (election to public office); and (e) the method of regulating the *successors* to the officers thus elected by the constituent assembly.

We will restrict our examination to questions (a), (c) and (e), which primarily involve Locke’s definitions of legislative power. The answer to the last question (e) had to show *who*, in Locke’s view, should take part in



elections for members of the legislative, i.e. precisely which citizens should be awarded active suffrage to appoint future lawgivers.

**Question (a): Form of Government.** The legislative was the first and “Supream Power of any Common-wealth” (II: 131; 132, 149, 150, 212), because it was the sole body to pass laws to be observed by the citizens of the state and enforced by its executive, *and* simultaneously prescribing rules to the executive’s actions, i.e. legally regulating and limiting the exercise of power by the executive (II: 150). It was necessarily separated from the executive and clearly distinct from it in its specific ruling powers. The task of the constituent assembly, in addition to thus determining the precise extent of authority of the legislative, was to decide on the holder of this power.

Locke writes that the “*first and fundamental positive Law of all Commonwealths, is the establishing of the Legislative Power*” (II: 134). Its origins lay in “a positive voluntary Grant and Institution” of the people (II: 141) and it had no authority beyond what by this positive grant and commission was delegated to it. In accordance with this grant, the legislative was bound to pass clear, orderly (i.e. non-conflicting) laws to be promulgated and to serve as a yardstick for verdicts and decisions in all conflicts arising between citizens (II: 124, 131, 142). These laws should not violate the law of nature and not infringe upon any individual’s natural rights (II: 138, 142). The laws were not to be passed arbitrarily (II: 136, 137) and rescinded at will, but required “a constant and lasting force” (II: 144) to succeed their *well-regulated* definition and promulgation, enabling citizens to place their trust in them and in the stability of the legal system, which alone was capable of guaranteeing the degree of legal certainty necessary for every society. It was also necessary for the laws to apply to the members of the legislative themselves (II: 138, 143) with no exemptions for anyone whomsoever (II: 94, 142). Furthermore, the legislative was strictly forbidden to effect a change to the form of government (II: 217) by transferring its lawgiving powers to another authority, for example the executive or perhaps even a foreign power (II: 141, 142).

The form given to the government and the commonwealth by the establishment of legislative power was determined by the number of persons upon whom the right to make laws for the society was conferred (II: 132). This selection of the holders of legislative power was, in addition to defining and delimiting the ruling structures specifically associated with that office, the prime task of the constituent assembly. Its members, the signatories of the social compact, could select the form of state legislative body they wished to adopt from three basic types: The members themselves could

constitute the legislative, assembling from time to time to pass laws after the dissolution of the constituent assembly; in this case the people would have established a “perfect *democracy*” (II: 132) in which the *majority* of the citizens were granted the right to decide the positive laws of the state. However, in Locke’s view the establishment of such a perfect democracy was hardly practical, owing to the limited feasibility of assembling all the citizens in a single place to vote on bills as part of future legislative activities. “If we consider the Infirmities of Health, and Avocations of Business, which in a number, though much less than that of a Common-wealth, will necessarily keep many away from the publick Assembly” (II: 98), the potential difficulties experienced by a larger commonwealth in gathering the entire population in one place at one time to pass laws were plain to see.

Here, then, the constituent assembly was able to entrust “one Man” (II: 132) with the right to exercise legislative power, in order to avoid the organizational problems of a democratic assembly, thus founding a “Monarchy.” However, Locke also saw little virtue in this form, since states in which the responsibility for legislation lay with single individuals were in constant danger that “they will think themselves to have a distinct interest, from the rest of the Community; and so will be apt to increase their own Riches and Power, by taking, what they think fit, from the People” (II: 138). In other words, while a monarchy involved far fewer organizational problems than a perfect democracy, it was also open to a far greater danger of abuse of office and power than a form of government in which laws were made directly by the people themselves.

A third solution to the problem of how to institutionalize society’s legislative authority, which succeeded in balancing the shortcomings of both other forms of government, was the “oligarchy.” Here legislative power was granted to “a few select Men” (II: 132), i.e. the “Legislature was placed in collective Bodies of Men, call them Senate, Parliament, or what you please” (II: 94), that, because of their limited size, would not suffer the organizational problems to the same extent as a perpetuated constituent assembly, yet were also unable to abuse their office to further their own interests as easily as could a single monarch holding legislative power:

Therefore in well order’d Commonwealths, where the good of the whole is so considered, as it ought, the *Legislative* Power is put into the hands of divers Persons who duly Assembled, have by themselves, or jointly with others, a Power to make Laws, which when they have done, being separated again, they are themselves subject to the Laws they have made. (II: 143)

In this way, legislative duties could be carried out efficiently, yet misuse of office by the holders of legislative authority could be largely ruled out.

Furthermore, the constituent assembly could develop mixed forms of government from these fundamental options (such as bicameralism or a “king in parliament” system), thus shaping the political system in whatever way it deemed the most appropriate and practical to fulfill the system’s primary tasks: namely to protect the natural rights of its citizens and prevent infringements of whatever kind by statutory means (II: 132).

Having decided on an “oligarchy” (the form of government favored by Locke) and appointed a number of members defined and initially selected by itself ([d]: primary election), the constituent assembly would then need to decide (1) the method of appointing future successors to the officers thus selected (assuming they had opted for an *elective*, not a *hereditary* oligarchy as their preferred institutional form), (2) the rights of the executive in establishing the method and implementation of the elections, and (3) the citizens eligible to participate. Let us turn to Locke’s statements on the “future” tasks of the executive in managing the elections to the legislative body.

**Question (c): Executive and Legislative.** While the constituent assembly granted the legislative extensive rights with regard to the executive, the reverse did not apply, with the executive awarded only minor areas of authority pertaining to the legislative.

For example, if the legislative comprised a specific number of representatives, meeting only occasionally to pass legislation instead of occupying office permanently, the executive could decide the time they were to meet and the duration of the legislature period, unless these had already been decided directly by the constitution or by parliamentary resolution. If the constituent assembly had opted for an *elective* oligarchy, reelection dates for parliamentary members too were set by the constitution directly or by the *executive*:

this power of chusing must also be exercised by the People, either at certain appointed Seasons, or else when they are summon’d to it: and in this latter Case, the power of convoking the Legislative, is ordinarily placed in the Executive, and has one of these two limitations in respect of time: That either the Original Constitution requires their *assembling* and *acting* at certain intervals, and then the Executive Power does nothing but Ministerially issue directions for their Electing and Assembling, according to due Forms: Or else it is left to his Prudence to call them by new Elections, when the Occasions or Exigencies of the publick require the amendment of old, or making of new Laws, or the

redress or prevention of any inconveniencies, that lie on, or threaten the People. (II: 154)

In this case, then, the executive had the right to respond to complaints issued by the people concerning inappropriate or burdensome “old laws,” not, admittedly, by repealing the laws (cf. II: 214 on this prohibition), but by convening the legislative, drawing attention to the people’s problems and demanding an amendment to the laws.

This power awarded by the constitution to the executive, of setting election dates and “*Assembling and dismissing the Legislative ...*” gives not the Executive a superiority over it, but is a Fiduciary Trust, placed in him, for the safety of the People, in a Case where the uncertainty, and variableness of humane affairs could not bear a steady fixed rule” (II: 156). The executive also required a similar degree of authority to amend the “original Frame of the Government” if, in a parliamentary system involving the election of representatives in electoral districts, the relative size of these districts changed over the course of time so that “a fair and equal” representation was no longer guaranteed (II: 158). In this case, to change the apportionment rules could not be seen as an attempt to change (and manipulate) the legislative, provided that it was directed solely at eliminating unequal conditions of representation (and applied solely to “rotten boroughs”) (II: 157, 158). This “Power of Erecting new Corporations, and therewith *new Representatives*” had to be regarded as a concession to the country’s changing socio-economic and demographic conditions and as an action aimed at creating “equal measures,” since it was possible that “those [places] have a just right to be represented which before had none; and by the same reason, those cease to have a right, ... which before had it” (II: 158).

**Question (e): *Appointing Successors.*** Once the constituent assembly had defined the political and administrative offices and established their areas of authority, selected their officers and assigned and entrusted duties to those officers, its last remaining task was to determine the method of appointing successors for all these (legislative and executive) offices (II: 198). For members of the legislative there was *not* a separate form of appointing successors required if a “perfect democracy” had been introduced by the constitution. In this case, *all* citizens of the state (adult, non-lunatic members, not otherwise devoid of rights) played an active part in legislation; furthermore, all new citizens who had either become members of the commonwealth by explicitly agreeing to do so and entering from outside, or who had by birth adopted the rights of their parents and thus received full citizenship upon

reaching the “age of reason,” were also immediately admitted as part of the legislative.

In a situation where the constituent assembly had placed the legislative in the hands of a single person (a king), thus establishing a “monarchy,” and had designed this form of government as a *hereditary* monarchy, legislative authority was passed on to a successor to the king designated by the constitution to espouse the king’s rights (thus the monarch’s eldest son, assuming that the constituent assembly had constituted a hereditary monarchy and established primogeniture as the rule of succession). However, if the constituent assembly had established an “Elective Monarchy” and awarded legislative office to the king “only for Life,” then “upon his Death the Power of nominating a Successor ... return[ed] to ... the Majority” (II: 132), to whom the responsibility of discussing and deciding on the granting of legislative authority again fell.

In an “Oligarchy,” too, in which laws were made by some “select Men,” their office could be transferred by heredity or reassigned by election (II: 132). In the first case, legislative power was held by a hereditary aristocracy, and in the second case by an elected parliament, to be reelected after a specified period had expired. England’s constitution was distinguished by a combination of both options, in which a (non-elected, aristocratic) upper house shared the legislative authority of the state with an (elected) lower house (in connection with the reigning monarch) (II: 213).

The representatives of the people, whose task and responsibility it was to make laws in Parliament, were initially elected by the constituent assembly itself and then exercised their office for the period of time specified in the constitution—as can be concluded from Locke’s explanations concerning the process of formation of a state subsequent to its foundation by a social compact. The principles of the constitution drawn up and passed by the constituent assembly also had to specify the *successors* to these representatives, and the method of their appointment. Since the Civil War and the emergence of the radical democratic Levellers movement, political discussions in England had allotted a special importance to the question of *who* should be eligible to elect the representatives of the people (Davis 1968; Thomas 1972; Hirst 1975; Hampsher-Monk 1976; Tuck 1993, 245-47), and since Locke’s arguments—despite his striving for universality in his remarks on the political order of a “civil society”—were often clearly based on his critical view of conditions in England, it was expected that he would ask and answer the question of suffrage. Yet despite the preeminent significance also accorded to

the problem of elective franchise (universal and equal suffrage for all? universal male suffrage? suffrage for landowners or taxpayers only?) in his political philosophy, he refrained from commenting explicitly on precisely who, in his view, should be permitted to participate actively in parliamentary elections. Correspondingly, literature on Locke's political theory has expressed both the view that Locke was a "democrat" and—at least implicitly—demanded equal suffrage for all citizens throughout the land (at least for the entire adult *male* population: Kendall 1965, 121; Tully 1980, 173; Richards, Mulligan, and Graham 1981; Ashcraft 1986, 164-65, 578-85; 1987, 166-79, 193-94; Hughes 1990, 1992; Ashcraft 1992; Stevens 1996), and the conviction that in a country in which suffrage had always been associated with property-related qualifications, Locke had been able to envisage no more than limited suffrage for the economically prosperous groups among the population (Aaron 1955, 285; Macpherson 1962, 194-262; Seliger 1968, 177, 253, 283-93; Hill 1980, 255; Ryan 1984, 10, 14-48; Wood 1984, 83-85, 101; Andrew 1985, 541-42; Cohen 1986; McNally 1989; Wootton 1992; Becker 1992; Wood 1992; 1994, 325-41). Furthermore, no *clear* evidence concerning Locke's position on this issue can be gleaned from repeated readings and analytical exegesis and interpretation of the text of the *Two Treatises* and relevant passages in Locke's other works. However, the sole conclusion from the *logic* of his arguments was that he advocated *universal* and *equal* suffrage for all citizens (adults, non-lunatics, not otherwise devoid of rights). For *all* persons in the state of nature who had accepted the social compact to join the "political society" thus formed and who were compelled to decide on the "Frame of Government" were necessarily regarded as equal members of the constituent assembly (for "by nature" all men were *equal* and equally *free*, and none had a claim to legal superiority over another). If this constituent assembly (or the *majority* of its members) selected the establishment of an "elective oligarchy" as their favored form of government and were simultaneously required to decide a method of designating successors for the legislators appointed to office by direct election, it was extremely unlikely that the constituent assembly would grant suffrage to only a minority of its members for the vitally important task of appointing future parliamentary representatives—particularly since the legislative was the "Supreme Power of the Commonwealth" and equipped with the highest authority. This would have meant that the majority would have both been able to exclude the dissenting minority (those voting against the establishment of an "oligarchy") from any later participation in political life, and—assuming conditions similar to those in England, where suffrage was held by a maximum of only 27-40 percent of the adult male population (Hirst 1975, 105)—in

part also politically disqualify itself for the future (here it was necessary to imagine that some members of the constituent assembly voted in favor of a decision that would exclude them from all other future votes)—admittedly *conceivable*, yet hardly plausible. Locke omits any treatment of the decisive issue in this context from the point of view of his liberal political theory, namely whether the exclusion of some citizens from suffrage while others actively participated in appointing the members of the legislative authority did not represent a contradiction of the *principle of liberty* itself, i.e. whether according to the “law of nature,” the constituent assembly could claim even the *right* to disqualify part of the population from political life. A more likely assumption was that the English constitution, which excluded the majority of the population from participating in elections, did *not* correspond to the constitution developed by the constituent assembly and the voting provisions therein, and thus needed to be changed. Locke may have refrained from examining the issue of suffrage in more detail and explicitly calling for the critical and democratic consequences of his constitutional theory solely because he did not want to distract the readers of his work from the actual core issue of the *Two Treatises* by making overly radical demands, since the intention was to approach his readers at a political level and win them over to the Whig party on a specific constitutional question (*not* the suffrage issue). Locke’s silence on this question, then, should not be interpreted—as was sometimes the case (Seliger 1968, 288)—as a sign of acceptance and affirmation confirming his agreement to the restrictions on the franchise imposed in England, which he is sometimes assumed to have regarded as so self-evidently just that he did not think them worthy of further comment. For Locke’s arguments about a political order based on *natural law* were actually more consistent with *universal* suffrage for *all* citizens than they were with the disqualification of large parts of the population from political status. This (as it may appear, “modern”) demand for universal suffrage was not unthinkable even in the seventeenth century, as the Levellers had already demonstrated, particularly since the anchoring of private property in natural law, which Locke had identified as residing in the labor of the individual, excluded the very possibility which had always been deplored as the destructive consequence of the Levellers’ demands, namely the threat to and expropriation of bourgeois property by propertyless “paupers” dominating the legislative. For Locke believed that property, as a natural right, was unassailable even by the legislative and its majorities, of whatever kind (Waldron 1988, 137-252).

However, champions of the theory that Locke had actually demanded a *restriction* on suffrage, to be measured by the property of the



individual citizen, claim that the text itself supports their interpretation. A (subordinate) clause in section 158 states:

If therefore the Executive, who has the power of Convoking the Legislative, observing rather the true proportion, than fashion of *Representation*, regulates, not by old custom, but true reason, the *number of Members*, in all places, that have a right to be distinctly represented, which no part of the People however incorporated can pretend to, but in proportion to the assistance, which it affords to the publick, it cannot be judg'd, to have set up a new Legislative. (II: 158)

Martin Seliger (1968), Joshua Cohen (1986, 301-2) and others have concluded from this that Locke had intended to make suffrage dependent on the personal taxes levied on *individual* citizens: "Assistance is afforded to the public through the payment of taxes. The right to vote depends on whether one has taxable property or not, and is, moreover, graded proportionately to taxable property" (Seliger 1968, 286); "those who pay taxes should have the suffrage" (Wood 1984, 84); "Locke conceived of the legislature being composed of, and elected by, men of taxable estates" (Andrew 1985, 541). The context of Locke's sentence, however, enables a completely different interpretation to be drawn. In sections 154-58, Locke speaks of the representatives forming the legislative, that they are chosen "by the People" and that "this power of chusing must ... be exercised by the People" (II: 154), by whom the composition of parliament is decided. Locke never gives any property qualification when using the term "people" to exclude parts of it (II: 141, 142, 157, 222). That here, in section 154, the word "People" must actually mean all citizens is also supported by the argument in section 155 which states that if the executive power hinders the meeting and acting of the legislative, it declares a state of war with the people, "who have a right to *reinstate* their *Legislative in the Exercise* of their Power." Since no citizen can be deprived of his right of resistance within the state, and thus in such an emergency all citizens could be considered potential resisters of the state, in order to restore "their" legislative by revolutionary means they must previously have participated in electing the representatives whose meeting was hindered by the executive.

In sections 154-58 Locke speaks of the representation of *the* people as a *unit* (not of individual voters), and of the principles of equality and fairness to be observed thereby: "For it being the interest, as well as intention of the People, to have a fair and *equal Representative*..." (II: 158). He also speaks of the demographic and socio-economic changes within the constituencies which necessitate amending their boundaries, in conformity with "the



reasons it [i.e. representation] was at first establish'd upon" (II: 157). This discussion was occasioned by the potential situation (which actually occurred in England) in which some or all inhabitants of certain constituencies which had previously fielded one or even two representatives in Parliament departed from the area, leaving an almost entirely depopulated region which yet retained its parliamentary representation, while flourishing new cities were entitled to field only one representative, or even none at all:

People, Riches, Trade, Power, change their Stations; flourishing mighty Cities come to ruine, and prove in time neglected desolate Corners, whilst other unfrequented places grow into populous Countries, fill'd with Wealth and Inhabitants. But things not always changing equally, and private interest often keeping up Customs and Privileges, when the reasons of them are ceased, it often comes to pass, that in Governments, where part of the Legislative consists of *Representatives* chosen by the People, that in tract of time this *Representation* becomes very *unequal* and disproportionate to the reasons it was at first establish'd upon. To what gross absurdities the following of Custom, when Reason has left it, may lead, we may be satisfied when we see the bare Name of a Town, of which there remains not so much as the ruines, where scarce so much Housing as a Sheep-coat; or more Inhabitants than a Shepherd is to be found, sends *as many Representatives* to the grand Assembly of Law-makers, as a whole County numerous in People, and powerful in riches. (II: 157)

Locke's theme in sections 154-58 was not, as has been assumed, the individual "right to vote," but the right of the executive to amend the apportionment rules if conditions within the electoral districts had significantly changed. The right of the counties and boroughs to delegate representatives in Parliament should be appropriately considered in a constituency reform—"in proportion to the assistance, which it [sc. "the part of the People however incorporated," namely in counties or boroughs] affords to the publick" (II: 158)—not a decision made concerning citizens' *individual* franchise gauged by their tax payments. At this point there is no mention of individuals or taxes, and certainly not of any right of the executive to, say, disenfranchise citizens if they have lost their taxable (land) property in the meantime, which would be the logical conclusion of this reading. However, according to Locke the executive was expressly forbidden to make *any* alteration to the number of "Electors" (II: 216). "Thus to regulate Candidates and *Electors* ..., what is it but to cut up the Government by the Roots?" (II: 222).

Against the backdrop of this information taken from its direct context, then, the passage quoted above from section 158 reads thus:

The executive which had the “power of Convoking the Legislative” should consider the *true* (demographic and socioeconomic) conditions in the country when amending constituencies and the number of representatives accorded to each, and not follow fashion or old custom. It “regulates ... the *number of Members*”—where “members” here means parliamentary representatives, not members of the voting population—and thus at the same time those constituencies themselves with a claim to representation (“in all *places* [here synonymous with “part of the People”] that have a right to be distinctly represented [i.e. those places with the status of *individual* constituencies and not represented merely as part of a larger constituency, for instance a county], which no part of the People [thus referring only to groups and *parts* of the population, not to *individuals*!] however incorporated can pretend to, but in proportion to the assistance, which it [i.e. the constituency as a whole] affords to the publick ...”). “Assistance” may be interpreted as the tax payment of a village, community or city, but is more probably to be generally understood as the contribution made by those entities toward national welfare or the common good—in the form of taxes paid to the government, payments in kind and services to other parts of the population, by virtue of the specific significance of a place with regard to its infrastructure (ports) or educational policy (university towns), by the provision of recruits, etc. On this basis, Locke did not, unlike modern electoral systems, require the mathematically precise assignment of one representative to a certain number of inhabitants (and thus the definition of artificial boundaries to constituencies, involving enormous organizational problems), but villages, counties and towns, measured by their number of inhabitants and socio-economic significance, would be permitted to send one or two representatives to parliament (or possibly, in the case of very small villages, none of their own). This may have been the cause of inequities (or areas of disproportion, to be more precise) in representation because the effect of voting would not be identical throughout the country (since perhaps a major port such as Bristol, with 20,000 inhabitants, would be permitted to elect and submit two representatives because of its special economic significance, while a single member would be allocated to a county with the same number of inhabitants but a lower degree of economic prosperity), yet it did not affect the fundamental right of *every* citizen to participate in elections, which was compatible with this voting provision. Thus no conclusive proof could be found in the (admittedly relatively non-specific) statements in section 158 to support the theory that Locke’s intention was to make the citizens’ individual suffrage dependent on their tax payments (thus completely excluding a large part of the population from voting, although

they were all to be regarded as having entered into the social compact). It was not the definition and amendment of the constituencies, claimed Locke,

that makes an Inroad upon the Government, but the tendency of it to injure or oppress the People, and to set up one part, or Party, with a distinction from, and an unequal subjection of the rest. Whatsoever cannot but be acknowledged to be of advantage to the Society, and People in general [!], upon just and lasting measures, will always, when done, justify it self; and whenever the People shall chuse their *Representatives upon just and undeniably equal measures* suitable to the original Frame of the Government, it cannot be doubted to be the will and act of the Society, whoever permitted, or caused them so to do. (II: 158)

Had Locke expressed his views on the issue of suffrage more explicitly and taken his orientation from the principles of his political theory as a whole, he would certainly have imagined nothing other than universal and equal suffrage for *all* citizens who had “signed” the social compact or had later joined by express consent. Locke’s “argument provides no basis for limiting the franchise. His egalitarian commitments ... press inexorably in the direction of universal inclusion” (Shapiro 2003, 327; see also Waldron 2002, 84, 114-38). The fact that even those countries that implicitly or explicitly invoked Locke’s liberal heritage and principles of constitutional order did not actually adopt *universal* suffrage until over two hundred years after his death definitely does not serve as an argument refuting the specific structure of his *theory*.

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## The Theory of Pleasure According to Epicurus

VICTOR BROCHARD

TRANSLATED AND EDITED BY EVE GRACE

COLORADO COLLEGE

[egrace@coloradocollege.edu](mailto:egrace@coloradocollege.edu)

**Note:** Victor Brochard (1848-1907) was a French scholar whose work was praised very highly by, among others, Friedrich Nietzsche and Leo Strauss. In *Ecce Homo*, Nietzsche described Brochard's *The Greek Skeptics* as a "superb study" (1967, 243). During a course on Cicero given in the spring quarter at the University of Chicago in 1959, Strauss praised Brochard as among the greatest students of Greek philosophy prior to the First World War, and described this article as one of the rare cases in which, in his view, a problem has been properly solved.

"La théorie du plaisir d'après Épicure" was first published in *Journal des Savants* (1904, 156-70, 205-13, 284-90), then reprinted in a collection of Brochard's articles entitled *Études de Philosophie Ancienne et de Philosophie Moderne* (Paris: Vrin, 1954). It is here translated into English for the first time and reprinted by kind permission of Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin.

### I

All those who have studied the moral philosophy of Epicurus with some care know that while the philosopher defines the sovereign good as pleasure, he gives to this word a very particular meaning which is not that of ordinary speech or of common opinion (Schiller 1902; cf. Guyau 1878; Usener 1887; Natorp 1893).<sup>1</sup> But what exactly is this meaning? How did Epicurus conceive of pleasure? Here the difficulty begins. Most historians, perhaps excepting only Guyau, accept that according to Epicurus pleasure

is reducible to the absence of pain: “indolentia”—“nihil dolere”—what we would call a purely negative state.<sup>2</sup> One must admit that the texts that justify this interpretation are very numerous, and confirmed by the Master’s own testimony when he says: “the limit of the greatness of pleasures is the suppression of all pain” [Usener 1887, §139, 72]. On the other hand, however, it seems difficult to dispute that the same word “pleasure” has often been given a different meaning, and that it has designated a very positive state of actual enjoyment, which is evidently something other than an absence of pain. Cicero seems to be quite right when, in the second book of *De Finibus*, he emphatically accuses Epicurus of having designated two distinct things by the same word, *voluptas*, or *hēdonē*: on the one hand, the absence of pain or pleasure at rest (*voluptas in stabilitate*), for example the state of the man who does not suffer from thirst; on the other hand, pleasure in motion or positive pleasure (*voluptas in motu*), for example the state of the man who is thirsty and who drinks (Cicero 1914, II. v. 16). Epicurus has even been accused of having benefited from this ambiguity in order to play, as it were, a double game, and to satisfy by turns the devotees of pleasure and the partisans of a more severe morality. He caters to the opinion of the former when he says that the belly is “the principle and the root of all good” (Usener 1887, §409, 278).<sup>3</sup> Or again, when he expressly declares: “I do not know how to conceive the good, if I exclude the pleasures of taste, those of Venus, those of hearing, and the agreeable motions which come from form through sight” (Usener 1887, §67, 22). Or again, when he says: “if the objects that stimulate the pleasures of the debauched dissipated the fears of the soul, those caused by meteors, by death and by pains; if, in addition, they taught the limit of the desires; we would have no reason to blame the debauched at all, gratified as they are in every way by pleasures, and in no way affected by suffering and pain, which are the bad” (Diogenes Laertius 1925, X, 142). But it is easy to tell the other side of the story, and other texts, no less precise and no less authentic, present the doctrine under an altogether different light. Epicurus himself protests against the interpretation of his doctrine already given in his time: “When we say that pleasure is the sovereign good, we are speaking neither of the pleasures of the debauched nor of those which consist of physical enjoyment, as some think through ignorance, or because they do not agree with us, or because they understand us badly; we mean only the fact of not suffering in body and of not being troubled in one’s soul” (Diogenes Laertius 1925, X, 131). Thus he also says that “with a bit of bread and water he rivals Jupiter in felicity;” and it is known, besides, that he made his life conform to this maxim, since one *as a day* sufficed him to live.<sup>4</sup>



On another point the philosopher's thought seems no less wavering and indecisive. He says, on the one hand, that there is only one pleasure, the pleasure of the belly: all the pleasures, even the most learned and the most refined, are only varieties (*poikilletai*) of the pleasure of the flesh, and are reduced to it (Diogenes Laertius 1925, X, 144; Usener 1887, §409, 278). On the other hand, he often speaks of the pleasures of the soul, and places them above those of the body, because they are more certain and more within our power (Usener 1887, §§ 437, 439, 287-88). Finally, he considers the wise man to be one who fully suffices to himself (*autarkēs*): this means that it is always in his power to be happy, that he is not at nature's mercy, and that he is perfectly independent (Diogenes Laertius 1925, X, 139). That is why he sometimes declares that the wise man is happy even in Phalaris's bull.<sup>5</sup> It is also known that he himself, as his beautiful letter to Idemoneus proves, maintains that he was happy on the last day of his life, despite the agonizing pains of the illness from which he died (Usener 1887, §§ 601 ff., 338; §138, 143-44). Nevertheless, there still seems to be a contradiction here. For, even if we define pleasure as does Epicurus, it cannot be said that the wise man is entirely free, since he at least needs bread and water, and since it is not always in his power to obtain some. Besides, how can one make sense of the same philosopher telling us that the wise man is happy in Phalaris's bull, and that the sovereign good consists of pleasure, by which he means physical pleasure? Moreover, there is no question here of an idea accidentally expressed by the philosopher; on the contrary, he returns to it several times, and various evidence shows us that the supreme wisdom is conceived in the same way by Epicurus and by the Stoics. Thus Seneca tells us: "*Invitis hoc nostris popularibus dicam: sancta Epicurum praecipere et, si propius accesseris, tristitia*" ["I shall state this to our reluctant fellows: Epicurus gives precepts that are sacred and, if you will approach them more closely, stern"] (Usener 1887, §460, 298). Faced with these disconcerting divergences, one can understand that historians have often accused Epicurus of weakness in logic, incoherence, or contradiction. These criticisms have been repeated a thousand times since antiquity. They are perhaps deserved, but one also has to admit that the contradictions just pointed out are quite flagrant, and that one ought to reconsider before attributing them to a philosopher who exercised so great an influence, and who collected around him such a large number of enthusiastic disciples in that Greece which numbered so many subtle minds, minds so ingenious and so quick to criticize. Could it be that the interpreters and the historians have not fully grasped the philosopher's thought, and that they have not always succeeded in placing themselves at the genuine center of the

perspective from which one can discover the entirety of the system, and perceive its unity? In any case, before accusing the philosopher, one must make every effort to discover his genuine thought. This is our excuse for coming back to a question which may seem hackneyed and exhausted. We in no way want to plead a cause, or make an attempt at rehabilitation. We mean to take a purely historical point of view, and it is by an attentive examination of texts that we want to try to determine with precision what Epicurus designated by the name *Pleasure*.

## II

A very ancient piece of evidence, one which seems to have escaped the attention of the critics, proves that there has been a misunderstanding regarding this question. Authentic Epicureans have never accepted the interpretation of Epicurus's doctrine given since antiquity, and which has since prevailed. Cicero, who seems in so doing to be the very interpreter of common sense, clearly distinguishes in the passage cited above three manners of being: pain, for example the state of the man who is thirsty and cannot drink; the absence of pain, or if you wish, pleasure at rest, for example the state of the man who is not thirsty and who does not drink; and finally, pleasure in motion, for example the state of the man who is thirsty and who drinks (Cicero 1914, II. v. 16). As we said, Cicero insistently accuses Epicurus of having designated by the same name, pleasure, these two apparently very different states, pleasure at rest and pleasure in motion. It is quite noteworthy that, in his reply, Epicurus's defender does not exonerate his master on this point. He gives no explanation, and limits himself to saying that Cicero does not understand Epicurus's thought: "*Negatis nos intelligere quam dicat Epicurus voluptatem.*" ["You persistently deny that we understand what Epicurus calls pleasure."] This denial irritates Cicero: "*Soleo subirasci*" ["I am wont to be annoyed"], and he asks somewhat impatiently whether he does not know Greek, or does not know the genuine meaning of words (II. iv. 12). It would be useless to investigate here whether the author of *De Finibus* speaks in his own name, as Mr. Thiaucourt for example assumes; or whether, as various indications might lead one to think, he drew his inspiration from a Greek model, for example Antiochus of Ascalon (Thiaucourt 1885, 83). Whatever opinion one adopts on this point, the passage cited obviously establishes that the Epicureans of Cicero's time did not recognize the thought of the Master in the interpretation of it given by the author of *De Finibus*. Besides, the passage in question is not the only one where Cicero speaks of this disagreement. He lays stress on it a little further on, and observes that Epicurus speaks a

language proper to him: “*Epicurus suo more loquatur, nostrum negligat*” [“Epicurus speaks in his own manner, and neglects ours”] (Cicero 1914, II. v. 15). He returns to it again a number of times in *De Finibus*, notably in passages 7, 21-23, and 75. In the same way, various passages in the *Tusculan Disputations*, principally Book Three, Chapter 20, seem to allude to the perpetual quarrel between the Epicureans and their adversaries regarding the definition of pleasure. Consequently one cannot accept, without reservations, either Cicero’s accusation, which reproaches Epicurus with having confused pleasure at rest with pleasure in motion, or the interpretation of Epicurus’s doctrine that has prevailed from antiquity to this day, and according to which pleasure, in Epicurus’s view, would be defined negatively, and would only be the absence of pain. Whatever may be the number, the authority, the ancientness of the historians and critics who have maintained this from Cicero’s time to ours, it must be considered as null, since the Epicureans never accepted it. There is here an obscure point that must be elucidated, and since it is a matter of the very definition of pleasure, it is clear that this is the crux of all the problems raised by the interpretation of Epicurean moral philosophy.

The problem that now faces criticism is to know the meaning of the word *pleasure* that Cicero, by his own admission, did not understand, and that his successors have not tried any more than he to rediscover. In order to resolve this question, the simplest thing to do would doubtless be to have recourse to the texts of Epicurus himself, because we have some that are very precise, and whose authenticity cannot seriously be contested. One has to admit nevertheless that the exclusive study of these texts does not give entire satisfaction. It would in any event be astonishing were it otherwise; for, if the works of Epicurus were wholly explicit, one could not understand how a reader such as Cicero, and so many after him, could have been mistaken on such an important point; and the long-standing misunderstanding that we have just pointed out would be inexplicable. Without a direct study of the *Letter to Menoeceus* and of the texts of Epicurus that we possess, what method to use to recover the lost thought of Epicurus?

It seems that there is only one: that is to try to understand the doctrine of the philosopher by replacing it in some fashion within its historical context; by comparing it to the theories that preceded and prepared for it; by reviewing the problems that preoccupied Greek thought, and the solutions that had been given for them, at the point when Epicurus conceived his system. Perhaps this comparison will make it possible exactly to define the philosopher’s conception of pleasure; perhaps we will then also

understand why the texts he left us seem not to be explicit enough on this point which occupies us. It may be, in effect, that the texts of Epicurus, as they are, appeared sufficiently clear at the time they were written, because the problem was posed differently; and that they ceased to be clear afterwards because other questions had arisen, or even because the meaning of words had been modified. It is therefore a necessity, if one wants to understand Epicurus's definition, to go back and to present a summary of the various theories regarding pleasure proposed by Epicurus's predecessors, notably those of Aristippus, Plato, and Aristotle. We will apply ourselves to presenting this indispensable summary in the most succinct form.<sup>6</sup>

### III

We find a precise theory of pleasure first in Aristippus and the Cyrenaics. It is even more necessary to recall the principal arguments of this school, because it has often been confused with that of Epicurus, even though it differs from the latter on nearly every point. To begin with, pleasure is defined by this school as a motion, a light motion (*leia kinēsis*), while pain is a violent motion. The first of these motions is compared to the light undulation that is produced on the surface of the waves by the action of a gentle breeze; the second is the storm that stirs them up. According to some evidence given by Plato (which certainly seems to refer to them), the Cyrenaics considered along with Heraclitus that everything in the world is in perpetual motion, and could not therefore accept a third state that Democritus had considered as the sovereign good. This state is the absence of agitation, calm, or tranquility (*galēnē*), comparable to the immobility of the sea when it is not stirred by any wind (Plato 1925, 43a, 53c; Natorp 1893, 146).<sup>7</sup> Here we see appear an idea that is entirely opposed to the one we just encountered in Cicero. Between pleasure and pain there cannot be a middle term, a negative state, for such a state would be rest, and there is no place for rest within a Heraclitean conception of the world. Hence we see that the Cyrenaics were absolutely opposed to the Epicureans regarding the question of constitutive pleasure (*hēdonē katastēmatikē*) (Usener 1887, §451, 293-94). Moreover, they did not content themselves with the argument we just indicated. They added that such a pleasure could not suit living beings, and they first formulated the accusation, so often repeated since, that pleasure as Epicurus conceives it is the state of a man asleep, or of a cadaver (*nekrou katastasis*). In addition, again because the Cyrenaics adopt Heraclitus's argument about the perpetual flow of things, they are quite naturally brought to say that the past and the future are nothing, because the first is no longer, and the latter is not yet.

Thus one must attach oneself only to present enjoyment (*to paron*). The wise man worries neither about the day before, nor about tomorrow; he is entirely within the present minute. We will see later that on this point also Epicurus entirely disagrees with Aristippus. Thirdly, one should note that the Cyrenaics recognize a specific difference between the pleasures of the body and the pleasures of the soul, and they even declare that corporeal pleasures or pains are inferior to those of the soul (Usener 1887, §§ 451, 452, 293-94). On this point, Epicurus is again distinctly opposed to them, and if he accepts the pleasures of the soul, we will see later that it is in an altogether different sense than the Cyrenaics. Finally, while Aristippus proclaims that pleasure in motion is the sole good, he does not for all that abandon the argument dear to Socrates, and common to all the Greek philosophers, of *egkrateia* or self-mastery. In gathering the pleasure that presents itself to him, the wise man remains thoroughly in possession of himself: “*egō, ouk ekhomai*” [“I have, but am not held”] said Aristippus, while speaking of Laïs.<sup>8</sup> If he frees himself from the universe, it is by subordinating to his own satisfaction the things that procure it for him. That is what these lines by Horace show:

*Nunc in Aristippi furtim praecepta relabor  
Et mihi res, non me rebus, subjungere conor*

[Now into the precepts of Aristippus stealthily I slide back,  
And to me things, not me to things, I endeavor to subjugate]

(Horace 1926, I, 18)

As we will show later, Epicurus understood quite differently the wise man’s attitude toward the whole of the universe. We have proof through the *Theatetus* that Plato knew very exactly, and examined very closely, the theories about sensation formulated in Heraclitus’ school either by Protagoras or by the Cyrenaics. The *Philebus* furnishes a similar proof regarding the theory of pleasure. Plato set forth in this work numerous new ideas, and ingenious and profound insights, a few of which have remained as acquired truths for Greek thought and have, in any case, exercised an incontestable influence upon Epicurus’s doctrine. Like the Cyrenaics, Plato stays faithful to the Heraclitean dogma of universal flow in the world of becoming. It is absolutely necessary, then, that pleasure in all its forms be defined as motion. There is therefore no place in Plato’s psychology for pleasure at rest. Aristotle will reproach him for this later, and, on this point, Epicurus will take Aristotle’s side. However, Plato immediately separates himself from Aristippus in that he considers pleasure not as any motion but, at least in the natural and normal state, as a determinate motion, and one that tends

toward an end. Pleasure has as its object order and harmony. It is produced when the body is in a good condition, just as pain manifests itself when the organism is in peril or dissolves. The limits within which it is produced are evacuation and repletion (Plato 1925, 31e; 1930-35, 585a). It therefore tends toward a kind of equilibrium. Taken by itself, pleasure entails more or less. It belongs to the nature of the infinite. In the normal order, and when it conforms to nature, it is limited (*peperasmēnon*). Pleasure is not a pure quantity, but includes a qualitative element. We will see later that the same ideas, expressed in the same terms, are to be found in Epicurus's philosophy. Secondly, Plato also agrees with Aristippus in denying that between pleasure and pain there is room for a third state of indifference or rest (*hēsukhia*). In other words, he expressly rejects the conception, which we encountered a while ago in Cicero, that seems to conform so much with common sense. There are not three distinct states, but only two: pleasure and pain. If Plato rejects the idea of an intermediate state—such as that of the man who is not thirsty and does not drink—it is not for lack of knowing the distinction between the three states, for he expounds and discusses it in the *Philebus* and in the *Republic* (Plato 1925, 33a; 1930-1935, 583c). He invokes several arguments beyond the one drawn from universal flow that he has in common with Aristippus. First, if there is an intermediate state between pleasure and pain, it is incomprehensible that this state could transform itself either into pleasure or into pain; just as it is impossible that a metal that is supposedly intermediary between gold and silver transforms itself either into one or the other. In addition, in the very profound analysis which is set forth in Book Nine of the *Republic*—where one finds even to the details some of the ideas, and even some of the expressions, of the *Philebus*—Plato makes manifest the psychological illusion of those who believe that they experience a pleasure when they are delivered from a pain, or vice versa. Such a state is not a genuine pleasure; it is a phantasm of pleasure. For, at the boundary that separates pleasure and pain, one would have to say that the state in question is a pleasure inasmuch as it is the end of a pain, and a pain inasmuch as it is the cessation of a pleasure. It cannot be both at once. An illusion is produced here. If one in fact distinguishes among the high, the low, and the middle, the man who passes from the low region into the middle one could believe that he has ascended, and that he has reached the upper part; it is nevertheless not so, and this illusion is caused by ignorance. Similarly, the man who ceases to experience a pain believes that he has attained genuine pleasure, but he is the dupe of an illusion. In other words, real pleasure is a positive state and cannot be defined as a simple negation.

To deny, as does Plato, that there is a state of indifference or rest intermediate between pleasure and pain is already, as we have just seen, to deny that pleasure can be considered as the simple negation of pain. This is what the passage cited from the *Republic* attests to, and what the long discussion consecrated to this subject in the *Philebus* shows even more clearly (Plato 1925, 44b). Hence the argument later attributed to Epicurus is found to be refuted in advance. To say that pleasure is a simple negation is, in the language of Plato's contemporaries, to say that it is a non-being, or that it does not exist at all. This thesis is precisely that of the philosophers whom Plato designates above all by their bad temper and their difficult character, and in whom one clearly recognizes Antisthenes and the Cynics. Plato momentarily takes them as allies and appropriates their opinion; but he takes care expressly to say that at bottom he does not share their point of view and that, as for him, he considers pleasure to be a perfectly positive reality (51a). The whole of the end of the discussion of the *Philebus* completes the demonstration of this point. We will see later that Epicurus manifestly remembered this discussion, and that Plato's argument very probably provides the solution of the problem that we raised above.

What follows is an entirely novel distinction that properly belongs to Plato, and which was also to exert a profound influence on later theories. One must distinguish pure pleasures from mixed pleasures. The mixed pleasures are those that, being preceded by desire, are by that very fact always mixed with pain. For every desire is a privation, that is to say, suffering; such are, for example, most of the pleasures of the body, those relative to hunger and thirst, and the pleasures of love. They are always linked to their contraries. The pure pleasures are not—as has often been thought—the pleasures of the soul, even though the latter are often pure pleasures; they are simply those that, not being preceded by desire, are mixed with no suffering. Such is, for example, the pleasure we experience in smelling a good odor, or in looking at a symmetrical sphere. It is important to insist on this distinction, because it is perhaps here that the difference between Greek thought of the fourth century and more recent doctrines is most clearly marked. Plato is far from disputing that the mixed pleasures are more vivid than the pure pleasures; he even recognizes that they can grow infinitely or, as he says, they participate in the nature of the infinite. Because, however, they are always in essence attached to a pain, if one calls them goods one has to call them ills at the same time. Further, and always as a consequence of the definition—and it is in any case what experience confirms—the more they grow, the more pain, that is to say the bad, increases along with them. Pleasure becomes worse in



proportion as it becomes greater. For desire, that is to say suffering, grows in proportion as it is satisfied. To want to satisfy it is to resemble the Danaids or those sick people who suffer from itches all the more intensely the more efforts they make to have them disappear (cf. Plato 1932, 494; 1925, 46a).

It is quite otherwise with the pure pleasures. Far from being able to expand infinitely, they belong to the nature of the finite, and are essentially limited and stable. They do not contain anything contrary to their essence, and are thus more perfect. They cannot grow beyond a certain limit: that is why they are less intense, but by that very fact more perfect; they deserve the name of pleasures more than the mixed pleasures, whatever may be the intensity of the latter. A little white that is very pure is more white than a great deal of white mixed with black (Plato 1930-1935, 585a; 1925, 53b).

That is why the pure pleasures can be called good and why, accordingly, in the enumeration of the elements that make up the sovereign good for man at the end of the *Philebus*, pleasure can occupy the fifth place. The Platonic point of view is therefore exactly the opposite of the one we adopt today. We willingly call positive pleasures those which are most intense; those which have as a condition the absence of pain appear to us instead as negative. Plato says the contrary. The pleasure of drinking when one is thirsty would be in his eyes a negative pleasure because, being mixed with pain, it is not a genuine pleasure. The well-being of the man who is not thirsty would, on the contrary, be a positive state. We see that we are already far from the distinction so in conformity with common sense that Cicero indicated. We will show later that, here again, Epicurus has remained faithful to the Platonic point of view.

Finally, Plato completes his theory of pleasure with the distinction between the pleasures of the soul and the pleasures of the body. Here again he introduces entirely new elements and goes radically beyond the Cyrenaic School. By these words, pleasures of the soul, he designates two different things that he does not yet neatly separate, but that posterior criticism will distinguish. First, pleasure in its most general form cannot be related uniquely to the body. As the Cyrenaics had already correctly seen, the motions of the body cannot be called pleasures unless they are strong enough to reach the soul or intelligence or—as we would say today—unless they reach consciousness. Besides, who would want to enjoy a pleasure without knowing that he enjoys it, that is to say, without intelligence joining itself to the motions of the organism? Moreover, as Aristippus had shown, since the body is in perpetual motion, one can only attribute to it present pleasure

(to *paron*), for at each instant the past is no longer and the future is not yet. But, objects Plato, such a pleasure ceases as soon as it begins; it is thus a pure non-being. In order to exist, it must have a kind of duration; in other words, it must escape the flight of time. It must keep something of the past and anticipate a little on the future, and that is only possible through memory and foresight, that is to say again through intelligence and the soul (Plato 1925, 34b). Finally, pleasure is nearly always narrowly tied to desire and depends upon it. Now, it is evident that desire, being an aspiration toward a change or modification, implies foresight, and that this foresight itself supposes memory. Therefore, in whatever way one looks at bodily pleasure, one realizes that it cannot exist uniquely in the body and that it must not, as the Cyrenaics believed, be strictly limited to the present. It is through the intervention of the soul or of intelligence—we would nowadays say of consciousness—that corporeal motion becomes a pleasure. Every pleasure of the body is, in the final analysis, a pleasure of the soul.

Yet the intervention of the soul in the production of pleasure does not only manifest itself through the necessary emergence of consciousness, memory, and expectation. One must also say that there are pleasures of the soul that are specifically different from those that are related to the body, such as the pleasure of hunger or thirst. The soul in itself and by itself experiences sentiments of pleasure or of pain: such are anger, sadness, envy, and with all the more reason, the enjoyments attached to intellectual knowledge. We do not have to recall here the details of the subtle and profound analyses by which Plato, in the *Philebus*, shows how these emotions of the soul are often a mixture, in diverse proportions, of pleasure and pain. It is enough to recall here the distinction he draws between the pleasures proper to the soul (*oikeiai hēdonai*), and corporeal pleasures (Plato 1925, 51d).

Thus Plato takes the term “pleasures of the soul” in two senses: first, these pleasures are the pleasures of the body transposed, so to speak, outside of time and saved by memory; second, they are pleasures specifically different from those of the body. In both cases, however, Plato makes us see that the pleasures of the soul can exist along with those of the body. For example, the man who suffers from hunger and thirst can at the same time experience joy if he hopes that his desires will soon be quenched. Plato limits himself to observing this coexistence or, as he says, this mixture. We will show later what use Epicurus, from an altogether new point of view, made of this theory.

Aristotle's famous theory regarding pleasure seems, at first sight, to be in complete opposition to that of Plato. Upon closer examination, it is rather a continuation of the latter; and, as almost always happens, the disciple critiques the master only in order to give to the same thought a more exact and finished form. The great novelty introduced by Aristotle in the question of pleasure, and which in any event has been abandoned after him by most philosophers, is that pleasure is neither a motion nor a becoming nor, as will be said later, a passage from one state to another. It is a stable and definite state, a positive and durable manner of being, a quality (*poiotēs*). In short, pleasure is not in the pursuit, but in possession. This is what he explicitly establishes in the passage in the *Nicomachean Ethics*—evidently directed against Plato and the Cyrenaics—where he shows that pleasure is neither a *kinēsis* [motion] nor a *genesis* [production, or generation] (Aristotle 1926, X. iii; 1173a15). The argument appealed to by Plato to prove that pleasure in itself is not a definite reality, that is to say the fact that pleasure entails more or less, is not decisive; for one can say as much about justice and health, which are certainly realities. This is not the place to enter into the details of the very profound and very subtle discussion to which Aristotle subjects the argument of his Master. Let us only recall that this doctrine is directly refuted in the *Nicomachean Ethics* (X. iii. 2-3; 1173a25 ff.).

Pleasure is not a motion. Is this to say that pleasure is a state of rest, and is it here that we see appear for the first time in history the expression pleasure “at rest”? In reality, this expression is not to be found in Aristotle. He says only: *hē hēdonē mallon en ēremia estin ē en kinēsei* [“There is a greater pleasure in rest than in motion”] (Aristotle 1926, VII. xiv. 8; 1154b27). And this no doubt means that pleasure is not rest, that is to say, the simple negation of motion, or inertia; nevertheless, this means that it belongs more to the nature of rest than to that of motion. This is the decisive point, for we will see that Epicurus preserved Aristotle's doctrine. In order to understand the philosopher's thought, however, one has to enter into a few details.

We know that, according to Aristotle, pleasure accompanies the act and completes it. Pleasure, says Aristotle, is not confounded with the act, as some have been tempted to believe. For we would still like to accomplish the acts or the functions upon which pleasure depends—that of seeing or thinking, for example—even if they were not accompanied by any pleasure. Nevertheless, one can admit that there is, in fact, a necessary (*ex anagkēs*) bond between pleasure and the act (Aristotle, 1926, X. iii. 12; 1174a6). Now the act is something else than motion, of which it is the limit

and the completion. Motion is divisible and is accomplished part by part; the act is simple and it is produced as a whole (*holon ti*), in one indivisible instant (*en tō nun*) (X. iv. 4; 1174b4). Motion thus finds in the act its reason for being and its perfection; and that is why an imperfect act (*energeia atelēs*) can be defined. The act therefore contains everything that is real in motion, but brought to its highest degree of perfection; it can last for more or less of a long time; but what characterizes it is that, during all of the time that it lasts, it remains the same. It is in a way a synthesis of the present and of the past like that indicated by the term so frequent in Aristotle: *to ti ēn einai* [this difficult phrase can be translated “what it was (in order) to be”]. There is an active immobility, an energy of the immobile (*akinēsia energeia*): it is a kind of active rest as different from absolute rest or from inertia as from motion (VII. xiv. 8; 1154b25).<sup>9</sup> This active rest is superior to both; in a sense, however, it is more akin to rest than to motion, since it does not change. God and soul, which are acts, are motors, but immobile motors. This is the great novelty of Aristotle’s metaphysics.

Like act, like pleasure. A pleasure in motion therefore exists, pleasure that is divisible and imperfect like motion itself; genuine pleasure, however, will be that which, like the act itself, is produced in the indivisible instant. As long as this pleasure lasts, it entails neither augmentation nor diminution; it is everything that it can be. Further, if it is not indifferent to man that his pleasure lasts for a long time, at least time does not change the nature of pleasure itself: time has nothing to do with it. Pleasure in motion and perfect pleasure consequently do not oppose one another like two contraries, but are rather the same thing considered during two moments in its development. It is therefore proper to designate them by the same name. The kind of immobility that must be attributed to pleasure, like that which must be attributed to the act, is thus very different from inertia or from the absence of pain. Far from being a purely negative thing, it is on the contrary the most positive reality that we can attain. That is the sense in which one can say that pleasure is a state of rest: *hē hēdonē mallon en ēremia estin ē en kinēsei*.

We do not enter here into the details of the well-known theory that connects pleasure to the act, like beauty to youth. On two points only it seems useful to provide some indications, because often historians leave them a little too much in obscurity.

First, in this inseparable union of pleasure and act, the act is the essential element. Pleasure is an increment that adds itself to it. Aristotle does not, however, understand this word “increment” as later did the Stoics,

for example, and many historians after their example. He calls it not only *epigennēma* [surplus, or that which is produced after] but *epigignomenon ti telos* [this phrase can be translated “some added-on finish”] and this signifies without any doubt that pleasure, although dependent on the act, nevertheless is worth being sought out for its own sake (Aristotle 1926, X. iv. 7-8; 1174b33). It has its own proper value, which is not a negligible quantity or quality. It is an end, that is to say a good; that is because it is a *poiotes* [quality]. It follows from this that it is fitting to make a place for it next to the act itself. Besides, as we saw above, this is what Plato did in a very explicit way. The moderns, obeying inveterate habits of mind, have often unknowingly modified the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle, that is to say the purest expression of Greek thought, by forgetting that pleasure (*hēdonē*), is by right a part of the definition of the sovereign good. Aristotle, going further than Plato on this point, does not hesitate to attribute pleasure to God himself: *mian kai haplēn khairēi hēdonēn* [enjoys a single and simple pleasure] (Plato 1925, 33b; Aristotle 1926, VII. xiv. 8; 1154b26). One will not find such a formula again in any other philosophy: Aristotle alone dared to attribute pleasure to God. Consequently it is no exaggeration to say that Aristotle, like Plato himself, is a partisan of pleasure. If he criticizes Eudoxus, it is because the arguments the latter puts forward do not seem sound to him, not because he judges that his thesis is false.

Before Epicurus, and better than he, Aristotle was the representative of the moral philosophy of pleasure. It is not enough to say that his moral philosophy is a eudaimonism; one must say that it is a rational hedonism, for there is no virtue without pleasure. The difference between Epicurus and Aristotle is that for the latter, pleasure is not the sole good, but only one good which adds itself to another.

A second point that is important to note in Aristotle's theory of pleasure is his thesis regarding the specificity of pleasures, which is a rigorous consequence of the given definition. Pleasure is attached to the act. Since acts or functions of different kinds, or different beings, are essentially distinct, if pleasure is attached to the act there must be as many pleasures that are irreducible one to the other as one can distinguish acts or functions (*diapherousi tō eidei* [differing in kind]) (Aristotle 1926, X. iii. 13; 1174a10 and X. v. 1; 1175a22). In particular, the pleasures of the body will be specifically different from the pleasures of the soul. This is, besides, what experience confirms. The pleasure proper to an act makes it easier and more prompt. For example, one succeeds better at geometry if one experiences pleasure in studying it. On the

contrary, a pleasure of a different nature hinders an act upon which it does not depend: for example, those who love music have difficulty in following a conversation if one plays the lyre near them. For the same reasons, when we take a lively interest in an act, every pleasure which is not a pleasure proper to this act bothers us. Those who eat sweets at the theater choose in order to do so the moment when the bad actors are on the stage; they do not want to let themselves be distracted from the pleasure of listening by a pleasure of another kind. It is no exaggeration to say that Aristotle's ethics rests entirely on this theory of the specificity of the pleasures, for thanks to this theory he can establish a hierarchy among pleasures, and assign as a goal for the efforts of man the superior pleasures in preference to the inferior ones. We will soon see that on this very important question dissent arose among Greek thinkers and that, moreover, the same disagreement exists among modern thinkers.

#### IV

Coming after these learned and profound researches, it would be surprising if Epicurus's doctrine of pleasure retained no trace of them. In fact, his doctrine is linked to them by the closest ties. The philosopher drew his inspiration more than once from his predecessors. This did not, however, prevent him from separating himself from them on a good many points, and from being in his time a very bold and very original innovator.

Pleasure as Epicurus understands it is called constitutive pleasure (*hēdonē katastēmatikē*). The word *katastēma* [condition, or constitution] seems to correspond in Epicurus's system to the term *sustēma* [composite whole] that the Stoics preferred to use. While this latter term above all designates the entirety of the parts that constitute a living being, or the conjunction of multiple elements toward a unique end, the word *katastēma* rather expresses the definitive, stable and permanent state—at least for a certain duration—of the living organism. It is no doubt permitted to compare this expression to the formulas that we also encounter in the authentic texts, such as *eustathes katastēma tēs sarkos* [the sound constitution of the flesh], or again *eustatheia* [stability, tranquility, or by extension, good health] (Usener 1887, §68, 121-22). In the final analysis, this equilibrium among the different parts of the living body, the equilibrium that constitutes health (*hugieia*, a term also used by the Epicureans), is the immediate condition of constitutive pleasure (Diogenes Laertius 1925, X, 131). Pleasure is produced naturally and of itself when, through the natural action of the organs, physiological equilibrium is established within a living being.

From this one can determine the relation of Epicurus's doctrine to Aristotle's. There is no question, in a philosophy such as that of Epicurus, of a metaphysical principle such as that of the Aristotelian act or even of function (*ergon*), as is still accepted by the Stoics. As is proper according to an atomistic conception, this idea is replaced by the completely physical idea of equilibrium, which expresses in mechanical terms the same reality. As to the pleasure that is added to the equilibrium and is produced by it, it very much seems as if Epicurus understood it in approximately the same way as Aristotle. We see, in effect, that according to the most explicit texts pleasure is a limit (*peras*) that cannot be exceeded. No doubt a pleasure accompanies the motion of the organism when it works to reestablish the equilibrium that has been momentarily destroyed: that is pleasure in motion. Further, since this pleasure involves a disappearance of the equilibrium, it is by that very fact accompanied by pain. When the pain ceases, that is to say when the equilibrium is reestablished, pleasure is naturally produced. It is what it can be; it entails neither augmentation nor diminution. This is no doubt what the Epicurean formula signifies: "The limit of the greatness of pleasure is the suppression of pain." It is enough to make pain disappear for pleasure to appear: not because this suppression, something entirely negative, is by itself pleasure; but because, at the moment when it takes place, by virtue of the natural action of the organs, by a law of nature, the corporeal equilibrium is reestablished, and the living being experiences satisfaction. Epicureanism here implies a kind of optimism whose harmony with the rest of the system is perhaps not easy to see, but which is certainly in Epicurus's thought, for he says: *kharis tē makaria phusei* ["Thanks be to blessed nature"] (Usener 1887, §469, 300). While expressing the philosopher's thought, Seneca uses the expression *amantissima nostri natura* ["Nature, most loving of us"] (Usener 1887, §446, 292). This is the same optimism whose traces one finds in the theory according to which what is indispensable to the satisfaction of natural and necessary desires, that is to say bread and water, is easy to procure for oneself (*euporiston*) (Usener 1887, §469, 300). Such is also the law according to which pains, if they are very vivid, do not last or, if they last, are tolerable (*aut tolerabiles aut breves*).

The often repeated affirmation that the time pleasure lasts does not modify its nature would conclusively show, if there were need, that Epicurus thoroughly agrees with Aristotle about the very conception of pleasure. Pleasure remains exactly the same, whatever its duration. One single instant, were it ever so fleeting, is enough to make known the nature or essence of pleasure (Diogenes Laertius 1925, X, 145). This is a very important point



to which we will later return, and upon which is founded one of the strangest parts of Epicurean moral philosophy. Hence, just as with Aristotle the act to which pleasure is attached is immobile without being inert, in the same way with Epicurus equilibrium—the condition of pleasure—is stable without being the negation of motion. The immobility produced by the equivalence of contrary motions that neutralize one another in a stable equilibrium is not inertia; and pleasure, like the condition upon which it depends, is a perfectly positive reality.

If one places oneself within this point of view, all the contradictions with which Epicurus's doctrine is charged disappear one after the other. First, since this constitutive pleasure is always produced when pain disappears, one can very easily grasp how the interpreters of Epicurus have taken these two expressions as equivalent, and substituted one for the other: pleasure and suppression of pain (*indolentia*). The misunderstanding that we pointed out before is in this way most simply accounted for. If one wants to express Epicurus's thought, one must not say that pleasure is the suppression of pain, but that pleasure is always produced when pain is suppressed. The necessary and sufficient condition for pleasure is the suppression of pain; pleasure is in itself, however, perfectly positive and real. Pleasure is the physical well-being that naturally results from corporeal equilibrium or from health: it is the very sentiment of health or of life.

One thus also understands how Cicero, or the Greek philosopher from whom he drew his inspiration, could have accused Epicurus of giving the word pleasure two different meanings, and of designating at the same time pleasure in motion and pleasure at rest. As a matter of fact Epicurus gives to the word only one meaning: pleasure is essentially constitutive pleasure, that is to say, a pleasure at rest. For Epicurus as for Aristotle, pleasure in motion does not essentially differ from pleasure at rest. Pleasure in motion is the beginning of pleasure at rest, its first degree, a sketch of it; that is why a single term—*hēdonē*—very legitimately designates the two aspects or the two degrees of the same reality. At bottom, the misinterpretation engaged in by Cicero, and against which we saw the Epicureans protest, consists in this: Cicero, like common sense, considers pleasure in motion and pleasure at rest to be two opposites. That is what we do ourselves when we call positive pleasure the pleasure of the man who drinks when he is thirsty, and negative pleasure the well-being of the man who is not thirsty.<sup>10</sup> For Epicurus, as for Aristotle, these are not two opposites; there is only one state which deserves the same name in one case as in the other. The only difference that

separates these two degrees of a same reality is that pleasure in motion—or what we call positive pleasure—is accompanied by pain; whereas the other, pleasure at rest—which we call negative—is exempt from it. For Epicurus, no less than for Plato and Aristippus, there are no grounds to accept, as it again seems to us today must be done, an intermediate state that would be the absence of pain (Cicero 1914, II. xi. 37-38). Such a purely negative state would be a non-being: that is to say, it does not exist. Pleasure starts as soon as the pain stops. This pleasure, moreover, can be very moderate. Plato said: a little bit of very pure white is whiter than a great deal of white mixed with black. Epicurus says: a little bit of very pure pleasure is better than a great deal of pleasure mixed with pain. What we call positive pleasure would be called by him a negative pleasure, since it is mixed with pain. When they speak of pleasure, the Moderns above all consider quantity; the Greek seeks out quality.

The other contradictions with which the system is charged vanish in the same way. Constitutive pleasure, as we have just defined it, is exclusively a corporeal pleasure; it results from the equilibrium of the flesh (*katastēma tēs sarkos*). The essential condition of physical well-being is evidently nutrition. It would therefore be rigorously exact to say that the root and the principle of all the pleasures is the belly (*gastēr*). For the same reason, one can understand why Epicurus said that the different forms of corporeal pleasure (pleasures of taste, pleasures of Venus) are the only ones that can give us the idea of pleasure; it is in effect in these diverse ways that physical well-being manifests itself to the consciousness. Finally, the same philosopher can have said that in themselves the pleasures of the debauched are not blameworthy, as long as they do not entail distressing consequences. In effect, as we just saw, it is by reason of the pain mixed with it that a pleasure can be declared bad. On this point, Plato, Aristotle, and Epicurus are in perfect agreement. Pleasure is good by itself; it is a good; and, if it ceases to be one, it is uniquely when pain is added to it.

Epicurus's doctrine of pleasure is therefore perfectly coherent and logically consistent. In order to understand it well, one has only to recall that pleasure is not, as we have so often said, a simple negative state. One must also have present in one's mind this conception belonging to all of previous Greek philosophy, according to which pleasure is not a *quantity*, capable of growing indefinitely; rather, it is a *quality*, perfectly determined, defined or, as Epicurus himself says, a limit (*peras*). A grave error was committed when Epicurus's doctrine was approximated to English utilitarianism, which assigns as the supreme goal of human activity the greatest sum of pleasures.

On a few detailed points there may be coincidences between Epicureanism and Benthamism; on the essential question, the definition of pleasure, there is a radical opposition.

## V

If Epicurus remains, in the final analysis, faithful to the Platonic-Aristotelian tradition with regard to how he conceived the nature of pleasure, he has nevertheless—by linking pleasure to corporeal equilibrium—introduced into his precursors' conception a modification pregnant with consequences. We will see in effect that, starting from his definition of pleasure, he was brought to orient his moral philosophy in an entirely different direction, and finally ended with views diametrically opposed to those of Plato and Aristotle. It is on account of this that, while he in a sense carries on from his predecessors, he goes singularly beyond them or, at least, really becomes an original and bold philosopher according to the ambition he boldly declared.

It is a proposition accepted by common sense in every age that there are pleasures of different kinds. In particular, all the schools prior to Epicurus, without even excepting that of Aristippus, had recognized that the pleasures of the soul differ from those of the body. We saw above in particular how Aristotle, with his habitual vigor and precision, supported and justified the thesis of the specificity of pleasures. It is precisely on this point that Epicurus parts company from him. In his eyes, there is only one kind of pleasure, a unique pleasure; furthermore, this unique pleasure is corporeal pleasure.

One can clearly see that Epicurus expressly professed the doctrine of the unity of pleasure in the texts in which he says that pleasure in itself does not change, that it can only be varied (*monon poikilletai*) (Diogenes Laertius 1925, X, 144). In any event, this necessarily follows from the definition we have just seen. Nothing is easier to accept than the thesis of specificity when, like Aristotle, one explains pleasure in terms of the act. The acts or functions are manifestly diverse and irreducible one to the other. However, it is an entirely different matter if, along with Epicurus, one links pleasure to corporeal equilibrium. This equilibrium is, in effect, always and everywhere the same. Since it does not differ during life, one can deviate from it momentarily only to return to it, and to find oneself in a state always specifically identical to itself.

Physical well-being, the easy and regular flow of life that no obstacle stops, is thus like a continuous weft upon which external circumstances can in a way draw different designs. This entirely exterior diversity does not, however, change the very nature of pleasure. The unique, constitutive, and fundamental pleasure can be variously colored or nuanced; what truly constitutes it, what is like its substance, does not change.

It also follows from this that the sole pleasure is corporeal pleasure. On this point again the testimony of Epicurus himself is explicit. The pleasures of the soul, he says, do not differ from the pleasures of the body. There are no pleasures of the soul, if one intends to mean by this pleasures radically different from those of the body. There are doubtless, as we recalled above, many texts in which Epicurus speaks of the pleasures of the soul, and even opposes them to those of the body. Nevertheless, we will see later that he gives to this term a very particular meaning, a meaning peculiar to him; there is not even the appearance of contradiction between his theory of the pleasures of the soul, and the very explicit denial in his work of the specificity of the pleasures. He says, in effect, that all the pleasures without exception are related to the body (*anaphoran ekhei*), and that the pleasures called spiritual are only varieties (*poikilmata*) of the unique pleasure that is corporeal (Usener 1887, §409, 278). This proposition greatly scandalizes Cicero and all the adversaries of Epicureanism. They ceaselessly return to it, in the *De Finibus* as well as in the *Tusculan Disputations*; the very insistence with which they combat it gives clear evidence that what is at issue here is one of the fundamental theses of Epicureanism (Usener 1887, §397, 264-74; §217, 165-68; cf. §410, 279; §429, 284-85; §451, 293-94). Besides, this proposition is clearly implied in the Epicurean formulas we just recalled. That is what Epicurus really means when he reduces all the kinds of pleasures to the belly, and when he declares that if one sets aside the pleasures of taste, of smell, or of Venus, he does not know how one could conceive of pleasure.

Finally, we have it as expressly certified that on this point the Epicureans were openly in disagreement with the Cyrenaics who, as we saw above, distinguished the pleasures of the soul from those of the body. The Epicurean theory no doubt means that, in fact, the essential condition and basis of pleasure—whichever it might be and even when it seems very distant from corporeal satisfactions—is a certain physical well-being. Between the pleasures that are called spiritual and those of the body there is, according to Epicurus, no greater difference than there is between the pleasures of taste and those of smell or those of Venus. These three latter kinds of pleasure,

albeit different, are nevertheless considered as being of the same species: they are corporeal pleasures. One has to say as much of spiritual pleasures. They are first of all related to a physical well-being; they are that well-being itself, nuanced or colored differently, but at bottom always identical with itself.

The theory of the unity of pleasure, besides rare exceptions that we will later indicate, has been rejected by nearly all philosophers. The contrary doctrine of specificity has passed on without discussion from the teachings of Plato and Aristotle into modern philosophy, and it is still taught today. Even the utilitarians do not contest it. Thus Bentham accepts that the pleasures differ qualitatively from one another; he only attempts to get around the difficulty by seeking quantitative equivalents for the diversity of the pleasures. If he reduces them to unity, it is only indirectly and by means of a sort of artifice, that is, without denying their natural heterogeneity. Stuart Mill also clearly perceived the necessity of considering the specific quality of the pleasures, but one cannot say that he submitted the question to a profound examination. He is especially preoccupied with the criterion that would permit one to judge the different kinds of pleasures. He does not say upon what that distinction itself is founded. He could not accept, as for example did Aristotle, that the specific differences between the pleasures have a natural and objective foundation in the diversity of acts or functions, which are themselves in turn conditioned by external realities. His idealism put up an insurmountable obstacle to this point of view. Nevertheless, this is a question that would be worth thorough study, and one can regret that modern psychology has never undertaken it. One can say as much regarding the Epicurean thesis that reduces the sole pleasure to corporeal pleasure: the thesis, in other words, that all pleasure, even the one most distant in appearance from sensible facts, nevertheless involves a physical condition or, if one prefers, a physiological basis. However this may be, it is perhaps not without interest to note that the Epicurean conception of pleasure prevailed in antiquity, and has definitely prevailed over that of Plato and Aristotle. From Epicurus onwards the words *voluptas* and *hēdonē* uniquely designate the sensible pleasures and no longer—as they did with Plato and Aristotle—sometimes intellectual pleasure, and sometimes physical pleasure. It is in this way that Cicero, in *De Finibus*, explicitly defines pleasure: “*jucundus motus quo sensus hilaretur*” [“delightful motion by which the sense is gladdened”] (Cicero 1914, II. iii. 8). If the Stoics treat pleasure with such contempt, it is because they understand it precisely in this sense; they had to invent a new word, *khara* [delight, or joy], in order to designate the satisfaction that attaches itself to the functions of reason. One cannot help but notice while reading Cicero that he constantly

speaks of pleasure as if he did not know Aristotle's theory, just as he gives of *entelekheia* [having fullness, or completeness] a manifestly inexact definition (Cicero 1927, I. x). Even when he follows the Peripatetics, it seems that neither he nor his Greek masters had read the *Nicomachean Ethics*. Perhaps they did not have the work before them.

Among the Moderns, no one before Kant had again taken up the thesis of the unity of pleasure. In the *Critique of Practical Reason* Kant also maintains that the philosophers are dupes of an illusion when they accept heterogeneity among the diverse pleasures (Kant 1848, 160). We do not need to investigate here the rather numerous and very strange differences that distinguish Kant's doctrine from that of Epicurus. It is enough to indicate the philosopher's thesis regarding the unity of pleasure. Their agreement here is explicitly acknowledged by Kant himself. He does not seem to be right, however, when he ascribes to Epicurus his own doctrine regarding the double origin of pleasures. We have just shown not only that for Epicurus all the pleasures are of the same kind, but that they are all reducible to corporeal pleasures, that is to say, to pleasures attached to sensation. If Epicurus makes room in his doctrine for the pleasures of the soul, we will see later that it is according to a point of view entirely different from Kant's. After Kant, it is in the work of a psychologist animated by an entirely different spirit that we find again in nearly identical terms the doctrine of the Greek philosopher. Mr. Ribot brings his analysis to bear on pain rather than on pleasure, but it is clear that the two doctrines amount to the same thing (Ribot 1896, 43 ff.).

We will not examine here the question whether Aristotle's arguments have lost all their validity, and whether modern psychology has said its last word on the strange and too often neglected problem of the specificity of the pleasures. We must, however, point out the very important moral consequences that Epicurus drew from his doctrine. In effect, by denying the specificity of the pleasures, by reducing them to a single type, Epicurus erases all the differences among the objects that induce the choice of the human will. If the pleasures that are said to be intellectual are not worth more than the pleasures of taste or those of Venus, the latter in their turn are not preferable to sobriety or to temperance. If Epicurus allows all the varieties, he recommends none of them. It can no longer be a question, as it is with Aristotle, of a hierarchy of pleasures, each having its proper value (*axia*) that is objectively determined. All the objects have value, not in themselves, but insofar as they serve to produce physical well-being or health. In themselves they are equal or, in other terms, indifferent. It follows from this that in defining the diverse

pleasures as *poikilmata* [varieties], Epicurus treats them with as much contempt as the Stoics do when they call them *epigennēmata* [surpluses]. Insofar as they are diverse, the pleasures are accessory things, indifferent, negligible (*poikilmous ouk anagkaious*). In this, Epicureanism rejoins Stoicism because, like the latter, it refuses to consider what were called external goods by the school of Plato and Aristotle as having any value whatever. In saying that pleasure is the sole good, Epicurus arrives at the same result as those who consider virtue to be the sole good. In the Greek sense of the word, health is almost a virtue, and in every sense of the word virtue is a superior form of health. One can even say that Epicurus exceeds the Stoicism of Zeno and of Chrysippus, since the latter still attribute a value (*axia*) to the *proēgmena* [things that are preferred]. As for Epicurus, he rejects even this distinction: his is almost the thesis of Ariston of Chios and of Pyrrho. In this way the wise man is almost entirely independent with regard to nature. To make all of one's happiness consist in pleasure, if this pleasure is purely corporeal equilibrium or health—that is to say, after all, a subjective condition—is to liberate oneself as much as possible from the external world. No doubt, that is not autonomy as Kant understood it, but it is *autarkeia*, independence such as is sought by all the Greek moralists after Aristotle. For all of them, and to whichever school they belong, the supreme goal of moral philosophy is in effect to find a definition of the sovereign good according to which the wise man suffices to himself: which is to say that it depends on him to be happy; happiness is within the reach of every reasonable man. All unanimously oppose the doctrine of Happiness as it was understood by Plato and Aristotle, which to a certain degree subordinates the good to external circumstances or to fortune.

## VI

The wise man's independence with regard to nature is not, however, yet entirely complete. In reducing pleasure to physical well-being and in refusing all value to the varieties of pleasure, it seems that Epicurus has decreased as much as possible the holds that fortune can still have upon us. In order to attain felicity it is enough to have a bit of bread and water, which is easy to procure. In the same way, all the desires that are not both natural and necessary must be suppressed, and those that are necessary are easy to satisfy. Nonetheless, despite all this man is still—however little it may be—subject to dependence on external things, for it at times happens that he is unable to procure the indispensable objects. Physical well-being especially is exposed to many dangers; a thousand circumstances and, above all, illness, can at every instant endanger it. The wise man is therefore not sheltered from



the blows of fate. Furthermore, it is clear that happiness cannot be composed of discontinuous instants of pleasure; there must be a certain connection and some continuity between them. Aristotle dared to show that one is not happy because one has a few moments of happiness: a swallow does not make the spring. Happiness is worthy of the name only if it lasts for a normal amount of time: *ou ton tukhonta khronon, alla ton teleion bion* [not for an accidental period of time, but for a complete life] (Aristotle 1926, I. x. 15; 1101a16). One must therefore take account of time and, if pleasure is the sole good, the secret of happiness will consist in finding the means to make it last and to shield it from the flight of time. In order to resolve this problem, Epicurus introduced into his moral philosophy an entirely new element that finally gives it its genuine meaning and allows it to attain the goal that it had assigned itself, or at least to come noticeably closer to that goal.

We have until now only spoken of the body or of the flesh (*sarx*); it is now proper to take into account reason or the soul. There are pleasures of the soul, but one must understand this expression in an altogether different sense from the one that Aristippus and most philosophers had given it.

In the first place, as we saw above, the understanding marks out the limits that pleasure must attain and not exceed. By itself, Epicurus plainly says, flesh extends to infinity (Diogenes Laertius 1925, X, 145). If flesh can determine a limit, moderate itself, and as a consequence attain genuine pleasure exempt from pain, that is thanks to the intervention of the understanding. It is impossible not to recognize here the doctrine that we encountered before in Plato, and that this philosopher opposes in the *Philebus* to those who vindicate pleasure without restriction and without measure. Thus, there is a pleasure of the soul in this sense: the soul knows and marks the limit of pleasure, that is to say the absence of pain; even physical pleasure, as it has been defined previously, cannot be realized without this intervention of reason. Moreover, it goes without saying that this intervention of reason in no way modifies the very nature of pleasure.

The activity of the understanding or of the soul does not limit itself to this. As Aristippus had clearly seen, flesh left to itself enjoys present satisfaction (*paron*), and nothing more. Now Plato had thoroughly shown that a pleasure which ceases to be at the very moment that it begins and disappears when one believes one seizes it cannot be called a good, and that, properly speaking, it does not even exist: it is a non-being. Furthermore, experience in fact shows that most pleasures have desire as a condition. Now,

as Plato had again very clearly established, every desire is necessarily an anticipation of the future and supposes a reminiscence. Remembering and foreseeing: these are two functions of which the flesh or the body, always in a state of becoming, is radically incapable, and that can only be attributed to the soul. This is why Epicurus, following Plato and Aristotle, accepts the existence of a soul (*psukhē*) distinct from the body, or of a reason (*dianoia*) distinct from the senses. In agreement up to this point with his predecessors, however, Epicurus parts company from them on two essential points. First, the soul in question is entirely corporeal, composed solely of atoms that are more subtle and more mobile. If the soul is capable of thought as a consequence of consciousness, memory, and foresight, in the final analysis these functions amount to extremely rapid motions. Furthermore, the understanding or reason no longer has objects peculiar to it—that is to say immaterial realities—as it did in prior philosophy. As a consequence, one could not attribute to it pleasures intrinsically different from those of the body. The function of understanding applies itself uniquely to sensible data without changing its nature; it limits itself through memory and foresight to shielding them in a certain way from the flight of time, to prolonging them, to fixing them immovably. The understanding does not, properly speaking, add any element to them; it simply transposes them. One could say in modern speech that the understanding keeps the content of this sensible data by giving it only a new form; from that point on the pleasure that it saves in this way from destruction always remains as it was previously defined. In this sense one can say that all the pleasures, even those of the soul, always remain corporeal. A pleasure of the soul is always a corporeal pleasure that is recollected or anticipated. In another sense, however, there are pleasures of the soul; indeed every pleasure, inasmuch as it has some duration, that is to say, some existence, is a pleasure of the soul. Between the two meanings that Plato gave to the words “pleasures of the soul,” Epicurus draws a distinction: he maintains the first meaning, and rejects the second. That is how Epicurus could have said in turn, and without contradicting himself, that all the pleasures are related to the body, and that there are nevertheless pleasures of the soul.

We are touching here on one of the most delicate and difficult points of Epicurean logic or, if one prefers, of Epicurean psychology. This is not the place to set forth the details of these theories, and even less to examine the difficulties that they raise. Let us only recall that sensations are incited by material realities (*eidōla*) [effluences] that outlive them, and remain still present to the understanding, even though by their tenuousness they have become imperceptible to the senses (see Usener 1887, §46, 10). Thus the very

images that we perceive in thought have, according to Epicurus, a genuine reality outside of us. We can, however, here set aside the question of the objective existence of bodies. It is enough to show how the states that the soul has already experienced can be renewed, and in a certain way resurrected, by its own action. The famous theory of the *clinamen* shows that the soul is capable of freely taking the initiative of certain motions. The soul can, as it wishes, carry itself toward this or that one of the representations that have been given to it, *phantastikē epibolē tēs dianoias* [this phrase can be translated “imaginative application of the mind”], attach itself to it, and by the adherence it gives the representation and that constitutes judgment or *doxa*, confer upon it a certain reality and make it actually present. The soul in a way makes a representation live again through its own action, and the reality the soul lends a representation by taking it back from the past is not inferior to that of actual sensations. The soul or the will thus in a way steals from nature the materials that nature used in order to produce the sensation. From that point on the soul ceases to be dependent on external things; the matter that the soul needs belongs to it; the soul has appropriated it. One must not say that the soul’s conceptions are purely imaginary, even though imagination plays a great role in them. They have a sort of reality somewhat in the manner of the Ideas of Plato. By a strange daring Epicurus finds in his very materialism a support and a force for his idealism. Nevertheless, these conceptions exist for thought only through the act of will that attaches itself to them; their existence is in this sense the work of the will. Therefore, it is always up to the soul in a way to recapture a past pleasure, to give it back to itself, to enjoy it anew as long as it wishes, or to project it into the future and to enjoy it in advance. It is above all up to the soul, by the same procedure, to push aside sad or painful images and thus to shelter itself from every kind of disturbance. The soul becomes mistress of its destiny. Thanks to this power to evoke, or by what one would nowadays call a kind of auto-suggestion, it can mix with the actual data of sensed life reminiscences of past life, or the anticipations of a life to come. These memories and these hopes have for it as much reality as the sensations incited by external things. Such are the genuine pleasures of the soul. As we see, they are always of the same nature as pleasure previously defined; they are corporeal in essence and in origin. They are pleasures of the soul only due to the position they hold in time, and due to the act of will that chooses them and actualizes them. By the direction it gives to its thoughts, by the choice it makes of representations, the soul is thus truly the artisan of its own felicity. It causes pleasure to be born that, by the same procedure, pushes pain aside; as it pleases, it is as it wishes happy or unhappy. It can subtract itself from the

miseries of present life, and take refuge in a happier world that it creates. This world is not an intelligible world, in the sense understood by Plato. It is nevertheless a world different from the sensible world, even though all the elements of which it is composed are borrowed from the latter and have the same origin and nature. Wisdom consists in choosing the opinions most favorable to happiness, in setting aside sadness, in avoiding all fear. From this arises the relentless war that Epicureanism has never stopped waging against superstitions and fear of death, against everything that can be for the soul a cause of disturbance. The first condition of happiness is *ataraxy*. The felicity of the wise, however, is not purely negative. At the same time that the soul pushes aside the causes of disturbance, that is to say false beliefs, it can attach itself to true beliefs and voluntarily create for itself a felicity that is entirely independent of nature and of fortune. Epicurus maintains that because he is the master of his beliefs, the wise man can tear out of his soul all the desires that are natural without being necessary, or that are neither natural nor necessary. One must therefore distinguish between two parts in the life of man: on the one hand, sensitive life, which is subjected to the direct action of external things; on the other, the life of the soul, which is independent and free. Now these two elements, as Plato had shown, can be at variance with one another. It can happen that the soul is troubled and anxious while the body is healthy and happy, or vice versa. This is why the definitive formula of happiness that Epicurus provides us is twofold, or implies two conditions. As we saw, one must not suffer in one's body, and one must not be disturbed in one's soul, or again: the Good consists in corporeal equilibrium joined to the hope that it will not be disturbed (Diogenes Laertius 1925, X, 131; Usener 1887, §68, 22).

The wise man can go even further. The memories evoked by the soul can not only mix with and substitute themselves for the actual data given by the senses; if they enter into conflict with the latter, the adherence the will gives them can also be strong enough to conquer, and even to annihilate, present sensations. The memory of a past happiness, revived by the soul, can be strong enough to stifle a present pain, however sharp it may be. Such an assertion seems to be a wager, and one would hesitate to attribute to Epicurus a thesis that equals or goes beyond the most audacious paradoxes of the Stoics, if the texts were not so numerous and so precise. We should not be surprised that it has provoked innumerable sneers from Epicurus's adversaries, principally from Carneades. The skeptic made fun of this wise man who, in order to "be happy, goes seeking in his ephemerides how many times he had pleasant relations with Leontium, or took part in succulent dinners" (Usener 1887, §436, 287).<sup>11</sup> Even when his body is prey to the most cruel

sufferings—for example, were he placed in Phalaris’s bull—the wise man can, by attaching himself to pleasant memories, by fixing upon them, by pleasing himself with them, by becoming obstinate over them, make these memories actual and present enough to create an equilibrium with the moment’s pain and even to make it totally disappear (Usener 1887, §444, 290-91). Here one must cite: *Epicurus vero ea dicit, ut mihi quidem risus captare videatur. Adfirmat enim quodam loco, si uratur sapiens, si crucietur—exspectas fortasse dum dicat: patietur, perferet, non succumbet: magna me Hercule laus et eo ipso per quem ivravi digna. Sed Epicuro homini aspero et duro non est hoc satis. In Phalaridis tauro si erit, dicet: quam suave est, quam hoc non curo ...* [“Epicurus truly says those things, such that to me indeed, it seems that he strives after laughs. To be sure, he asserts in a certain place that if the sage were to be burned, if he were to be tortured—you are waiting perhaps until he should say: he will endure, he will carry through, he will not succumb. And that’s great praise, by Hercules, and worthy of the one by whom I swore. But for Epicurus, that harsh and hard man, this is not enough. If he were in Phalaris’s bull, he would say: how sweet it is, how I pay no attention to this ...”] (Usener 1887, §601, 338; Cicero 1927, II. vii. 17). Cicero’s testimony is confirmed by that of Seneca and many others.

One can suppose that Epicurus did not go to such extremes of his own will and that he was constrained to do so by the objections of indefatigable adversaries. The text cited above from the *Letter to Idomeneus*, however, proves that this really is his genuine thought, and not only an admission made by a few disciples at bay and pressed by opponents (Usener 1887, §138, 143-44).

Having reached this point, Epicureanism has attained its goal. The wise man is entirely liberated: nature no longer has any hold upon him; the secret of happiness is found and is within everyone’s reach.

Shall one say that the very pleasure that the wise man can recapture through memory from his past, and make actually present to himself by an effort of imagination and will, must at least have been experienced a first time, and that therefore the wise man still depends on nature? Epicurus would no doubt admit this. He would add, however, that there is no living being at all, however miserable or unprivileged he may be, who has not known the enjoyment of living for at least an instant; no living being who has not felt—were it in the most fleeting way—this state of physical well-being which is, as we saw, a free gift from nature. Now it is enough to

have tasted it, if only for an instant; it is enough to have glimpsed it, if only in a flash. The will from then on is able to resuscitate it and give it back enough force to set it victoriously against the most atrocious pains or the cruelest tortures. With an intrepidity that nothing has been able to overawe, the Epicureans have pressed their doctrines to their most extreme consequences. They have gone so far as to vindicate blindness, deafness, and all the infirmities. “*Horribilis ista caecitas quibus tandem caret voluptatibus*” [“Which pleasures, after all, does that frightful blindness lack”] (Usener 1887, §599, 336)? That is perhaps going a little far. One has to read in the fifth book of the *Tusculan Disputations* the strange—also admirable—reasons that these excellent philosophers invoke in support of their astonishing paradox; never has exaltation and, I dare say, the delirium of moral force been pushed so far. The Stoics, in order to sustain their energy, had the support of principles and eternal truths, of the unshakeable and always present authority of reason. The Epicureans, whose terrain was circumscribed by their system, have only the memories of sensations and images to set against pain. It is with these feeble arms that they descend into the arena. They do battle nevertheless with as much courage and perhaps with as much success. It was reserved for these materialists to show to what point the heroism of effort and the stiffening of the will can go. Their adversaries were perhaps not wrong when they were astonished to see end in this way a doctrine that had begun by identifying the sovereign good with pleasure.

Stoic wisdom ends with precisely the same conclusion. The two schools make use of the same example: Phalaris’s bull. And that is as it must be, since both of them have assigned themselves the same goal, which is the entire liberation of the wise man. Through different, but in a certain way parallel, theories, they arrive at the same result. Step by step, one can find the similarity of tendencies beneath the difference in terms. The two doctrines begin with a theory of free will—the theory of *clinamen* among the Epicureans and that of *sugkatathesis* [assent] among the Stoics—which is equally difficult to conceive and to reconcile with the rest of the system. On the basis of a theory of judgment and of free belief, both of them make the wise man master of his felicity. By isolating himself from the world of nature, by falling back on himself, and by a violent effort of will, he attempts to attain this mastery; he attains it through a game of representations or of ideas substituted one for the other. Despite many differences, there is thus between the two doctrines a profound resemblance in spirit, and almost in the letter. Beneath two distinct forms is the same conception of moral philosophy.

## VII

Interpreted according to its true meaning, Epicurus's theory of pleasure deserves neither the excessive criticisms that have been addressed against it in all times, nor the praises that certain philosophers have sometimes bestowed upon it.

That his theory is not the brutal doctrine that simply vindicates physical pleasure, such as not even the Cyrenaics conceived it, has been admitted for a long time. If his theory sees in pleasure, in physical pleasure—the pleasure of the belly—the sovereign Good, it gives to these expressions a meaning and a value which singularly modify their import, and which leads—despite appearances—to conclusions that are more or less innocuous.

As we saw above, the gross contradictions with which Epicurus has so often been reproached are for the most part the effect of a misunderstanding. Despite his avowed disdain for Logic and his nonchalance regarding definition and demonstration, he knew very well what he meant to say when he was defining pleasure, and he coherently and perceptively developed the consequences implied by his formula. There are perhaps, there are certainly in Epicureanism—as for that matter there are in all philosophical systems—contradictions, inaccuracies, contestable views. These contradictions and errors, however, are at least not the evident absurdities that one has sometimes wanted to see in them, and they deserve to be discussed.

Neither would it be just, as has sometimes been done especially in antiquity, to see in Epicurus only a kind of compiler who borrows shreds of doctrines from all sides in order to sew them together for better or for worse.

On the other hand, Epicurus has sometimes been credited with having founded utilitarian moral philosophy, and for having been the precursor of contemporary English moralists. Guyau especially, in his so interesting and lively book consecrated to *The Morality of Epicurus*, has made himself the interpreter of this way of regarding Epicurus and did not spare the ancient philosopher the most enthusiastic praises (Guyau 1878). He is certainly mistaken. No doubt expressions approximating those of contemporary utilitarianism can very well be found in Epicurus's texts. He reasons like a perfect utilitarian when, for example, he recommends that one renounce a lesser pleasure in order to obtain a greater, or in order to avoid a pain; when he recommends that one consent to a pain in order to avoid a greater, or to obtain a greater pleasure. But there is no one, from whichever



school, who does not subscribe to reasoning of this kind; in particular, it would be easy to find very similar expressions in the systems most different from that of Epicurus. It would not be a paradox, but a strict truth, to say that all of ancient moral philosophy has been, in a certain sense and in its own way, utilitarian. Plato and Aristotle never separated happiness, genuine utility, and even pleasure from the good; the Stoics themselves, in defining the sovereign good, characterize it by this attribute, that it must be useful or advantageous (*ōphelimon*).

If, however, one considers the philosophy of Epicurus as a whole, if one wants to characterize its spirit, one will certainly see that there is a singular distance between the disciple of Bentham—who calculates his actions in order to obtain the maximum of pleasure and the minimum of pain, who is smitten with well-being and comfort, careful to foresee and to combine, and avid for all the kinds of sensual delights that can be reconciled with one another—and the thin Epicurean who, living frugally at the far end of a garden in the company of a few friends, is above all concerned with avoiding the blows of fortune, conceals his life, and declares ostentatiously that with a little bread and water he rivals Jupiter’s felicity.

Even less would the Utilitarians consent to follow Epicurus regarding his theories about the happiness of the wise man and the guidance of one’s ideas. It is not by an effort of will, by a kind of auto-suggestion, and finally by an action of the imagination that they want to attain felicity. They need more solid and in a way more palpable joys. Stuart Mill may have said that “it is better to be a dissatisfied Socrates than a satisfied pig” [Mill 2002, 10]; he did not say that the wise man can be happy in Phalaris’s bull.

Epicurus’s Moral philosophy cannot be likened to any other. All in all, it still has its greatest affinity with its rival and contemporary, Stoic Moral philosophy. It is evident, however, that the differences outweigh the similarities. Epicurus’s doctrine is irreducible and unique.

The thesis of the unity of pleasure, the affirmation that all the pleasures—in particular intellectual pleasures—are only physical pleasures, can provoke explicit reservations. But modern psychology and physiology, as we saw, have perhaps not said their last word regarding the relations between intellectual pleasure and sensible pleasure, and regarding the question of knowing up to what point moral joys have as a condition a certain physical well-being.

One must finally arrive at the part of the system—so strange and so singular at first glance—which gives us the means to reduce or to suppress pain. Let us say nothing about the conception of free will, upon which it entirely rests. The *clinamen* has been in all times an object of scandal for all philosophers, and as Epicurus presents it to us, it has hardly found a defender. The theory that makes all of our desires depend on our judgments and our judgments themselves on our will has also in all times raised the most serious difficulties. This is not the place to discuss it; one must only recall that it has also been accepted by the Stoics and by all the ancient philosophers after Aristotle. It has found illustrious partisans among the Moderns; it still has defenders today. Whatever opinion one professes on this point, one cannot blame an ancient philosopher for having taught a doctrine that has been ceaselessly discussed, and that will perhaps always be discussed. Can one say, however, that it is enough to evoke pleasant memories or to take pleasure in the hope of a better life in order to vanquish and to rise above the cruelest pains in the present? Is it true that we always have within our memory the necessary elements, and in our will the sufficient instrument, to neutralize actual suffering? The images of the past or the anticipations of the future are never anything but faint copies. How could they contend victoriously with the sting of actual pain?

It is not surprising that such a paradoxical thesis has been greeted since antiquity by sneers. One would even have had trouble taking it seriously if Epicurus had been content with his dialectic; if he had not given it the authority of the real thing; if his example and his courage had not commanded everyone's respect.

Still, we have better things to do than to take up here again the ready jokes of Carneades and Cicero. Whatever reservations it calls forth, when we consider this doctrine more carefully we perceive in it a kernel of truth, and even a profound view of what is the very essence of wisdom. It is a truth often recognized by poets and moralists that the pleasant or painful memories of the past by mixing themselves with the impressions of the present moment, can modify or transform these. In truth, they are not in agreement on the question whether it is a good or an ill to evoke a happy memory on a day of misery. But the very fact that this question is still discussed, and that it can be resolved in diverse ways, seems at least to attest that the Greek philosopher was not entirely in error when he sought in the relics of the past a softening of, or a remedy for, present sufferings. We know since Archimedes that a great and strong idea or an intense joy can

momentarily make us insensible to impressions from outside. Do not history, psychology, and physiology show us at every instant in the conceptions of the mystics, in the pathological illusions of certain sick persons, or in the phenomena of ecstasy, images that are strong enough to counterbalance external impressions, and substitute themselves for these? The person with hallucinations lives in a world created in every detail by his imagination; it is strictly true to say that for him, pain is not only softened, but even disappears or is transformed into joy. The phenomena of hypnotism, of suggestion, of drunkenness produced by certain substances, every day set before us analogous examples; the case of the stigmatized shows us how the ghosts of the imagination can, so to speak, become embodied and insert themselves into the phenomena of physical life.

It is not one of the least singularities of Epicurus's system that every time one digs a little in the furrow he marked out, one immediately arrives at one of the problems that modern science is trying to resolve, as if the old Greek philosopher had foreseen, guessed, or glimpsed through a cloud the solutions that are proposed for them today.

One might perhaps say that this is only a matter of exceptional or morbid facts; that if they are produced outside of illness, sentiment alone and the exaltation of emotions can provoke them; that it does not seem that the will is enough to cause them to arise; and that finally, it would be ridiculous to seek in hallucinations a remedy which is at hand for everyone against the ills of life. Is there not something ridiculous and almost offensive in speaking to us of joys that we can suggest to ourselves, as if the supreme wisdom consisted in voluntarily duping ourselves, and in replacing by factitious joys the happiness reality denies us? If Epicurus could defend himself, he would perhaps answer that the cases about which we are speaking are much more frequent than it seems at first glance. He would add, as Lucretius so eloquently showed, that where sentiment or the imagination can produce superstitions strong enough, and fears obsessive enough, to poison the lives of the men most favored by fortune, it is not entirely certain that the well-directed will and reason aided by memory—two powers that resemble each other perhaps more than is normally believed—cannot give man some comfort against present miseries, and assure him legitimate satisfactions. After all, the joys which are to be revived are not entirely illusory, since they have been felt. It is to offend neither truth nor anyone to try to make happy times live again. Between past joys and those that one attempts to recapture through autosuggestion, there is only the difference of time, and time is

nothing. Finally, if, in extreme cases, the remedy is difficult to apply, one has to consider that these cases are in themselves rather rare. Great sufferings and cruel illnesses are happily exceptions, and in the ordinary course of life, one does not need to have recourse to the supreme efforts. Not everyone enters Phalaris's bull, and all men do not suffer from the terrible illness from which Epicurus died. It is for great ills that great remedies are needed. Furthermore, were it true that in certain cases man can escape ills only by tensing in a supreme effort all the springs of his will, and that he cannot save himself except by heroism, it is not the business of the philosopher to dissimulate or to soften the rigors of the human condition. He is not required to find easy remedies. He has done his job if those he points to are only possible.

Let us nevertheless admit that the remedies proposed by Epicurus are insufficient and even a little puerile; one always finds in this doctrine a little something skimpy and cheap that arrests one's mind at the very moment when it is most disposed to admire. Admittedly, no, it is not enough in order to master pain to evoke joyous memories or to nourish auspicious hopes. What Epicurus saw very well, however, is that against adversity we have no recourse but within ourselves. It is our own thoughts, our own reflections that we must, by a persevering and obstinate effort of will, oppose to the blows of fate. We have no other resource. The Stoics made fun of the remedy proposed by Epicurus. They were right to replace his weak means by the idea of necessity, or by trust in the laws of the universe. Once the wise man has thoroughly understood that things could not be otherwise than they are, once he has let the ineluctable fatality of natural laws thoroughly penetrate him, and submits himself to them because he cannot do otherwise and because that is what is best to do, he has more or less attained the final limits of what philosophy and science can do for him. He obtains the supreme consolation he can hope for in this world, if he succeeds in persuading himself that this fatal order of the universe is the work of a wise will, and that Necessity is another name for Providence. Submission to the divine will or resignation is the last word in wisdom. This is how the Stoics understood it; this is how Descartes understood it when he defined wisdom as the effort to vanquish oneself rather than fortune, and to change one's desires rather than the order of the world [perh. Descartes 1984-1991, 1:122-24; 3:257-58, 272]. Spinoza does nothing else than to apply the same principles in the last formulations of his *Ethics*, and moralists of all ages have not been able to use any other language regarding this question [perh. Spinoza 1994, Part V, Propositions 10-41, 250-65]. Religion does not speak otherwise here than philosophy does. Submission to the will of God does not differ from

philosophical resignation. Common sense has recognized that this is really the last word in human wisdom and the very essence of philosophy, when it gives the name of philosopher to the one who knows how to bear ills and to bear himself well in the face of the miseries of life. It is not without a profound reason that philosophy is a synonym for resignation. That is what Epicurus understood; and for having been one of the first to say it, albeit in a form that is in truth imperfect and even a little naïve, he belongs to the breed of great moral philosophers, and deserves to keep among them the place that history has assigned him.

### NOTES

1. (Ed.) All endnotes designated by (Ed.) are the editor's; all other endnotes are Victor Brochard's. Brochard often cites classical works without referring to a specific edition. For greater convenience, references are given to the Loeb editions of those works. Brochard refers to Aristotle both by book and chapter, as well as by Bekker number; references to Aristotle are therefore made both to the Loeb edition and by Bekker number. The Greek in the original text has been transliterated. All translations of the original Greek and Latin words and phrases used by Brochard are mine, and are inserted in square brackets in the text. Sources not identified by Brochard are also put in brackets.

2. Guyau saw correctly that pleasure as Epicurus conceived it cannot be purely negative, and that it is not reducible to the absence of pain (Guyau 1878, 55-56). He also thoroughly showed that the condition of pleasure is physical equilibrium. But it does not seem that he has sufficiently justified his assertions on this point; he perceived or guessed the true meaning of Epicureanism, but did not rigorously demonstrate his thesis.

3. For greater brevity, citations to Epicurus's texts are taken from Usener's excellent compilation (1887).

4. (Ed.) The *as* was a basic unit of Roman currency.

5. (Ed.) Phalaris, a tyrant of Akragas, had condemned prisoners roasted alive by shutting them up inside a hollow brass bull placed over a fire. It is said that the bull was designed so that the shrieks of the dying sounded as if the bull were bellowing.

6. One may wonder that, following the learned work by Natorp (1893, 147 ff.), we do not count Democritus among the masters of

Epicurus. We are not disregarding the resemblances that are so carefully enumerated there; these analogies, however, seem to us to be external or sometimes accidental. We cannot accept that “Epicurus started from Democritus and that he remained Democritean” (133). The object of the present work is precisely to show that Epicurus was subjected to far more profound influences, notably those of Plato and Aristotle.

7. We accept Natorp’s interpretation on this point, which takes Eusebius’ text, *Praeparatio evangelica* (XIV, 18) to be of Democritean origin (cf. Ritter and Preller 1898, 208).

8. (Ed.) Laïs (4th century BC), said to be of Corinth, was a courtesan renowned for both her beauty and her price who was known to spend time with such men as Aristippus, Demosthenes, and Diogenes.

9. On this question, see the remarkable study by Mr. F. C. S. Schiller (Schiller 1902).

10. Eduard Zeller understands positive pleasure and negative pleasure in this sense (Zeller 1880, 440).

11. (Ed.) Leontium or Leontion is described by Diogenes Laertius as a courtesan (1925, X, 4-6).

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PAUL D. MORENO

HILLSDALE COLLEGE

*pmoreno@hillsdale.edu*

Ann Ward has written a provocative interpretation of the work of Herodotus that should radically challenge many historians' view of the "father of history."

Though a recent generation of modern historians has taken Herodotus seriously as the father of cultural history, he had more often been regarded as a lightweight when compared to Thucydides. Herodotus had certainly taken steps beyond those of the poets or "myth-historians," but still did not quite rise to the standard of completely rational, "scientific" history. As Ward puts it, the *Histories* were "long regarded as simply an ancient travel guide or anthropological survey like *National Geographic*" (13). Ward presents a different Herodotus, one who has a coherent philosophy of the best regime, based on unchanging principles of human nature. Philosophers have tended to overlook Herodotus, she says, because he chose the medium of history in which to present his philosophy.

The intellectual historian Donald R. Kelley, in his anthology of classic works of historical writing, notes that "Necessarily his methods were crude—a blend of sightseeing and tradition—but he was by no means uncritical" (Kelley 1991, 23; Kelley includes Herodotus in his "mythis-tory" section, along with Homer and Hesiod, while Thucydides introduces "pragmatic history"). Herodotus seemed remarkably hesitant to criticize his sources. "So much for what Persians and Phoenicians say; and I have no intention of passing judgment on its truth or falsity. I prefer to rely on my own knowledge," he writes (Herodotus 1954, 43). "Anyone may believe these

Egyptian tales, if he is sufficiently credulous; as for myself, I keep to the general plan of this book, which is to record the traditions of the various nations just as I heard them related to me” (ibid., 178). Though somewhat skeptical about the gods, he does not exclude them from his account and shows at least residual piety. “If Heracles was a mere man (as they say he was) and single-handed, how is it conceivable that he should have killed tens of thousands of people?” he asks. “And now I hope that both gods and heroes will forgive me for saying what I have said on these matters!” (ibid., 148). He repeats so many fabulous stories that his detractors dubbed him not “the father of history” but “the father of lies.” He tells us that Libya is home to “dog-headed men, headless men with eyes in their breasts (I don’t vouch for this, but merely repeat what the Libyans say), wild men and wild women, and a great many other creatures by no means of a fabulous kind” (ibid., 334). He reports ants that are bigger than foxes, but not as large as dogs, flying snakes, and other fantastic species. But other doubtful phenomena that he depicted have subsequently been proved true. Whatever their historicity, Herodotus’ stories had great value as entertainment.

Thucydides, on the other hand, was completely rational, excluded the gods and the fabulous altogether, and focused on politics. “In investigating past history [and here Thucydides used the term *xyngrapho*—the result or product of the research, rather than Herodotus’ *historia*—the research or the process itself], and in forming the conclusions which I have formed, it must be admitted that one cannot rely on every detail which has come down to us by way of tradition.” In what sounds like a dig at Herodotus, he goes on, “People are inclined to accept all stories of ancient times in an uncritical way,” and includes not just the poets but “the prose chroniclers, who are less interested in telling the truth than in catching the attention of their public” (Thucydides 1954, 46-47).

Above all, Herodotus was known for his cultural relativism. “Everyone without exception believes his own native customs, and the religion he was brought up in, to be the best... Pindar, in my opinion, was right when he called [custom] ‘the king of all’” (Herodotus 1954, 219). Thucydides, on the other hand, was a “scientific historian” or a philosopher of history. “It may well be that my history will seem less easy to read because of the absence in it of a romantic element,” he wrote—again seeming to distance himself from Herodotus the Entertainer. Unlike Herodotus, who denies any fixed human nature, Thucydides believed that human nature is fixed and knowable, and therefore that history can be a predictive science.

“It will be enough for me, however, if these words of mine are judged useful by those who want to understand clearly the events which happened in the past and which (human nature being what it is) will, at some time or other and in much the same ways, be repeated in future. My work is not a piece of writing designed to meet the taste of an immediate public, but was done to last forever” (Thucydides 1954, 48). Thus political philosophers have always preferred Thucydides. Thomas Hobbes, for example, the first to translate Thucydides into English, praised both the substance of his work (which Hobbes claimed was an atheistic attack on democracy) and his method. “Digressions for instruction’s cause, and other such open conveyances of precepts (which is the philosopher’s part), he never useth; as having so clearly set before men’s eyes the ways and events of good and evil councils, that the narration itself doth secretly instruct the reader, and more effectually than can possible be done by precept” (Kelley 1991, 308).

Ward upends many of these traditional interpretations and shows that Herodotus was in fact a philosopher who, like Thucydides, used the vehicle of history to illustrate timeless truths. Moreover, his principal concern, again like Thucydides, was politics. And Herodotus was no relativist. He believed that Athenian democracy was the best regime, but warned that it was prone to fall into the trap of imperialism. In this sense, we can see that Herodotus’ history of the Persian wars is a precursor to the story finished (or nearly finished) by Thucydides in his *History of the Peloponnesian War*. At the moment of their great victory over the imperialistic Persians, the victorious Greeks (specifically, the Athenians) were themselves seduced by imperial ambition. “The Athenians, represented by Themistocles,” Ward observes, “no longer simply attempt to transcend boundaries and look on the other without fear; they try to possess the other and make it their own. At the moment of their highest victory in the service of Greek freedom, Herodotus presents the potential of the Athenians to become as tyrannical or imperial as the Persians” (152).

Herodotus sounds rather like Samuel P. Huntington who, in his *Clash of Civilizations*, also warned against the delusion that American liberal democracy could be imposed upon the world. Our civilization is just one civilization. At the same time, this view does not imply, *contra* today’s postmodern relativists (and this view is mistakenly attributed to Herodotus) that all civilizations are equal, or that permanent principles of human nature do not exist. Rather, it is precisely the existence of numerous civilizations or cultures that enables us (or at least the philosophically inclined) to recognize

that all customs or cultures differ from the universal. In other words, diversity enables us to see the difference between custom and nature, between the particular and the universal.

And it is precisely as a historian that Herodotus envisages the philosophic life. We understand the truth through historical study—understand the infinite, that is to say, by way of that which is finite. The best (philosophic) life is lived through the study of human diversity—not, as the Persian and later Athenian imperialists mistakenly thought, by conquest and the imposition of one's own civilization on others. "Herodotus aspires to discover and convey such knowledge as he, like Darius, investigates the customs of others, which differ from his own," Ward writes. "However, Herodotus does so not through foreign conquest, but through the writing of his *Histories*" (160). Darius, to the contrary, "seeks to destroy all foreign customs and conventions by universalizing the particular customs of Persia. In thus denying otherness in the world, he would destroy the ability to identify the natural or to distinguish between nature and convention. He would thereby destroy the possibility of self-knowledge."

Thucydides makes a similar claim in Pericles' funeral oration, in which the Athenian statesman says that "Future ages will wonder at us, as the present age wonders at us now. We do not need the praises of a Homer, or of anyone else whose words may delight us for the moment, but whose estimation of facts will fall short of what is really true" (Thucydides 1954, 148). One can say that both Herodotus and Thucydides were trying to replace Homer—that historians were attempting to replace the poets—as their civilization's exemplars. Here again it sounds like Thucydides is claiming to surpass Herodotus who, though distinguishable from Homer, still displayed too much of a mythopoeic style, "whose words may delight us for the moment." Yet, as Ward shows so well, Herodotus as much as Thucydides endeavored to write philosophic history.

Ward's interpretation of Herodotus as a philosophic historian thus gives new life to a well-known passage in the *Histories*, in which he seems to make a clear judgment in favor of democracy. "Thus Athens went from strength to strength, and proved, if proof were needed, how noble a thing freedom is, not in one respect only, but in all; for while they were oppressed under a despotic government, they had no better success in war than any of their neighbors, yet, once the yoke was flung off, they proved the finest fighters in the world. This clearly shows that, so long as they were held down by authority, they deliberately shirked their duty in the field, as slaves

shirk working for their masters; but when freedom was won, then every man amongst them was interested in his own cause” (Herodotus 1954, 369). The principal lesson, then and now, is that democracies need to resist the imperial temptation. For a universalized democracy would make philosophy impossible. This appears to comport with Allan Bloom’s interpretation of Socrates’ argument in Plato’s *Republic*, that (proper, non-imperial) democracy is the only regime that allows for the philosophic life. Democracy may be indifferent to philosophy, but all other regimes are hostile to it. Thus “Socrates the citizen praises timocracy, the regime most hostile to philosophy, while Socrates the philosopher desires democracy. He is actually engaged in a defense of democracy against its enemies” (Plato 1968, 421).

Still, Ward does not take up the question of the historical accuracy of Herodotus’ *Histories*—that is, whether he was “the father of history” or “the father of lies.” This is the principal problem that divides historians from political philosophers. If, in the philosopher’s view, history is simply “philosophy teaching by example,” it really doesn’t matter if the examples are historically accurate or not. Thucydides himself, for example, admitted that he kept the speeches that he reported as close “as possible to the general sense of the words that were actually used,” but that he also made “the speakers say what, in my opinion, was called for by each situation” (Thucydides 1954, 47). This nonchalance about sources was characteristic of the ancient historians, long after Herodotus and Thucydides.

In fine, *Herodotus and the Philosophy of Empire* will give historians and political philosophers compelling reasons to return to Herodotus, shedding valuable new interpretive light on old questions.

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Cecelia Kenyon, *Men of Little Faith: Selected Writings*, edited by Stanley M. Elkins, Eric L. McKittrick, and Leo Weinstein. Amherst and Boston: University of Massachusetts Press, 2003, 287 pp., \$40.

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SCOTT KUZNER

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, COLLEGE PARK

*skuzner@gvpt.umd.edu*

In 1955, Louis Hartz unleashed *The Liberal Tradition in America* on historians and political scientists, positing an anthropological-political theory that America's lack of a feudal past and extensive social revolution, such as those of its European counterparts, explained the country's marriage to Lockean liberalism and tendency to rebuff socialist movements. That same year, in the field of American history, Cecelia Kenyon published "Men of Little Faith," an article that explored the ideological context during America's Revolutionary period in order to challenge Charles Beard's theory in *An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution of the United States* (1913) that the Founding Fathers were primarily motivated by economic and property interests when shaping the Constitution. While Kenyon shared Hartz's view that America lacked a social revolution similar to those that occurred in Europe, her article largely emphasized the ideological context during the Revolutionary era. Hartz and Kenyon appear to have been pursuing parallel paths during the mid-1950s, possibly unaware of each other, but both developing theories related to Beard's *Economic Interpretation*. Hartz mentions Beard mostly in passing as he explains the tradition of Lockean liberalism in America by using anthropological terms, while Kenyon dedicates much of her work to a direct correction of Beard and his followers by re-examining the political and philosophic concerns of the Founding Fathers. Most political theorists are probably more familiar with Hartz's *Liberal Tradition* but should become acquainted with Kenyon's contributions to understanding

modernity and its direct and distinct influence on the American political experiment that has taken shape since 1787.

It may seem strange to discuss Kenyon's work in the same breath as Hartz's *Liberal Tradition*, especially since Herbert Storing and his scholarship on the Federalist-Antifederalist saga would be a more appropriate and comparable subject. But it is interesting to see that Kenyon, like others in her field at this time, was developing alternative or similar theories on the history of American political thought. Why Kenyon and Hartz do not intersect in this collection is curious, especially since she wrote from the late 1940s to the mid-1980s. I link the two authors because Kenyon's greatest defect in her Antifederalist articles is an inadequate treatment of Lockean liberalism. Noticeably missing is a discussion of Locke's account of property rights in his *Second Treatise on Government*. Perhaps Kenyon avoided such a discussion so as not to be seen as too close to Beard and other economic determinists with their emphasis on property. However, Lockean liberalism helped the Founding Fathers expand property rights beyond enjoying the fruits of one's labor, into the realm of one's physical personhood and intangibles such as beliefs and freedom to express one's will as long as none of this infringed upon the rights of others. The reason such a treatment seems necessary is that, although Kenyon's landmark essay "Men of Little Faith" addresses the opinions of the Founding Fathers' generation, it lacks a direct and substantial discussion of Lockean liberalism. Fortunately, the beauty of a collection like this is that the inclusion of additional articles fills such a void. Kenyon's piece "Republicanism and Radicalism in the American Revolution" is a good example. This minor shortcoming aside, Kenyon does a brilliant job at weaving early American history and political thought with the general political theories of Montesquieu, Rousseau, Locke, and others.

In reading contemporary work in political philosophy or scholarship outside of political science that incorporates political thought, there is a tendency to place the text into one of two camps: pragmatic or ideological. If we humor such a tradition and consider Kenyon a political theorist in this work, or at least playing the role of one, we would expect that insofar as she is a historian she would fit the pragmatic designation. But a careful reading of each of her pieces in this collection gives pause. Distinctions like these offer a myopic method of classification and can become a caricature of political theory itself, yet point to a perennial issue within the field. Much of Kenyon's work addresses this tension in the American context, and she consistently places her own approach within it.

From the writings in this collection, Kenyon appears to be best characterized as a moderate pragmatist. She is first and foremost a historian, but one who dares to pass judgment on the events and historical figures she analyzes.

The book's title, *Men of Little Faith*, was chosen from the title of Kenyon's first essay on this subject—considered her most influential work. The collection pulls together seven of her journal articles and four reviews. The editors have fashioned a compilation that works not only as a thematic collection on the Founding Fathers' generation, but also flows in a logical, informative order. The journal articles fit into three groups. The first four address republicanism; the nature of man as understood in the eighteenth century; and those men in the Federalist-Antifederalist debates who, doubting the possibility of altruistic citizens and statesmen, were truly "of little faith." The next two pieces call up two leading figures (Hamilton and Paine) of the Revolutionary era, who Kenyon believes were naïve in their beliefs about human nature and subsequent opinions on republicanism. She attributes both Hamilton's and Paine's naivety to their belief in man's ability to fulfill the Rousseauian vision of the ideal citizen and submit to the public good. This, according to Kenyon, was unrealistic and not in accord with either human nature or the individualist attitudes of America's early years. The last essay evaluates early constitutionalism, which one can view as the harmony and product of republican concerns during a period of revolution. The essays are followed by a series of Kenyon's review articles that confirm earlier suspicions of her political outlook.

"Men of Little Faith" takes issue with Charles Beard's *Economic Interpretation*, accusing Beard and his followers of promulgating the idea that the Founding Fathers were primarily motivated by economic determinism. Kenyon analyzes the Federalist-Antifederalist exchanges of 1787-1788 to explore the opinions that shaped the Constitution and demonstrate why such an approach more comprehensively explains the motivations of its framers than Beard's theory. If the dominant opinions of the eighteenth century are understood, Kenyon urges, one will see that Beard's interpretation of the framers in *Economic Interpretation* was influenced more by the populist and progressive movements of his own time than by the political beliefs of 1787 (32). Had Beard studied the opinions and debates leading to the Constitution properly, he would have seen it was born out of consideration for concepts like Montesquieu's republicanism and system of checks and balances (33). Another key philosophical component at odds with Beard's theory

was that the philosophy of the founders sought to curb man's lust for power, and this concern materialized in the form of limitations on the power of governmental officials via separate branches of government in the Constitution.

Kenyon continues to challenge Beard in "Introduction to 'The Antifederalists'" The tone here is less charged than "Men of Little Faith," but brings more historical detail to buttress Kenyon's claims. The goal of this essay is to convey why the republican form of government was so highly regarded at this time, which had nothing to do with protecting the property interests of an aristocratic few. Rather, republicanism was chosen because it accounted for man's nature and appeared to be the form of government best suited to it. Although the Revolutionaries did not agree as to the proper ends of government, they were of one mind in holding selfishness to be the dominant motive of human political behavior and in urging that the structure and operation of government should check it. A republican form of government seemed the proper buffer for this human disposition.

Political philosophy is sprinkled throughout this essay, and in one section Kenyon offers a clear summary of a core tension in this field, while placing it within the context of early American political thought:

The conflict in the American political mind of these two tendencies, the empirical or pragmatic, and the doctrinaire or ideological, is responsible for much of the contradiction and contrast within the American political tradition, and it contributed to the complexity of the situation during and after the Revolution. For that situation was characterized by both rigidity and flexibility of political ideas, and this was especially apparent during the ratification debate. (75-76)

In this same section, Kenyon traces the evolution of political theory's journey before and through American Revolutionary thought. The Americans were willing to experiment with the Aristotelian idea of "tailoring the form of government to fit the people and their circumstances." Kenyon states that this variety of political relativism emphasizes empiricism to a certain extent so as to temper the opposing tendency toward doctrinairism. This subjective political influence migrated to America via the early settlers and was popularized in the eighteenth century by Montesquieu. According to Kenyon, this subjective or relativist check was necessary because in the course of a revolution, humans are naturally inclined to become doctrinaire in their quest for certainty (75).

The discussion of republicanism continues with "Republicanism and Radicalism in the American Revolution: An Old-Fashioned

Interpretation,” an article that analyzes scholarship’s confusing treatment of the Revolution’s radical and conservative aspects. Most importantly, this article finally provides the reader with a substantial treatment of Locke’s *Second Treatise*. Here, Kenyon traces the history of republicanism in American political thought to see how it became associated with the ends of good government. She criticizes her fellow historians for insufficient, dichotomous analysis of the Revolutionary period. This observation of dichotomy is consistent with Kenyon’s recurring proposition that the Revolution consisted of pluralistic and multi-causal factors. Part of Kenyon’s issue with political divisions is that there is no consensus on the definitions of terms such as radical, conservative, liberal, or democratic and how these can be applied to the Revolutionary era (136-41). She does carve out her own definitions, which one could easily accept, but it is still perplexing as to why these are not placed into a broader context of operating under the legacy of classical liberalism. However, Kenyon’s analysis of Locke’s *Second Treatise* and its impact on American republicanism makes up for this oversight.

The Revolutionaries created a radical version of individualism by substituting *pursuit of happiness* for *pursuit of property* in the Lockean trilogy of rights in the Declaration of Independence (147). Kenyon looks at this as a far more individualist and equalitarian end than simple protection of material goods, since property “was a tangible, objective element, while happiness was a subjective goal dependent on individual interpretation” (148). She also takes on Locke, while refuting Beardian economic determinism:

The concept of property as a right to be protected and fostered by government may be and has been interpreted to mean the preservation of the *status quo*, and the *status quo* may be an aristocratic one. This seems to have been Locke’s intention, for there is nothing in the *Second Treatise* to suggest that he had an economic or social revolution in mind. (148)

By stressing the importance of the Revolutionaries’ substitution of *happiness* for *property*, Kenyon has undercut the importance of Lockean liberalism or at least called into question the assertion that economic and property interests were the primary motivation of Revolutionary thinkers. Republican concerns, not protecting their own wealth, prompted the founders to modify Locke’s conception of property. Such an account leaves Beard and his followers on shaky ground when they attempt to lean on Locke for ideological evidence of economic determinism.

Kenyon's criticism of Beard continues in "An Economic Interpretation of the Constitution' After Fifty Years," as she asks why Beard's *Economic Interpretation of the Constitution* was accepted for so long. When Kenyon wrote this essay, her charges against Beard were commonplace in academia, and *Economic Interpretation* no longer dominated American historiography. Consequently, she moves to a detailed line-by-line analysis as distinct from her general critique in the "Men of Little Faith" article. In drawing out the many historical inaccuracies of Beard's theory of economic determinism, she calls up George Mason as an example of an important and wealthy figure who does not fit Beard's thesis: Mason should have adopted the new system, but did not (163). Additionally, she recalls Beard's own treatment of Alexander Hamilton, an exception to his thesis. In sum, Kenyon describes Beard's collective man as an extraordinarily rational, single-minded creature "pursuing his economic interests without the distractions of custom, tradition, ideology, or passion," which she credits as the fundamental weakness of *Economic Interpretation* (177).

The next two essays, "Alexander Hamilton: Rousseau of the Right" and "Where Paine Went Wrong" allow Kenyon to provide detailed accounts of two figures whom she deems hopelessly naïve and confused. Her analysis of the political thought of neither one advances her larger goal of refuting Beard and his followers, but both articles do reveal just how much of a realist Cecelia Kenyon is when examining human nature. Neither dark nor cynical, her realism is informed by solid practical concerns. These concerns lead her to favor written constitutions, a predilection defended in "Constitutionalism in Revolutionary America"—the last essay in the collection.

The essay evaluates the effects of the Revolution and presents America's commitment to constitutionalism as the stabilizing force that maintained the Revolution's original spirit, a rarity in the legacies of most revolutions. With Federalist-Antifederalists concerns examined in the first six essays and the discussion of republicanism thoroughly treated, it is appropriate that the reader now encounters constitutionalism. Kenyon begins by noting the instability that can occur during a political revolution and showing how aware the Revolutionaries were of it. Indeed, this is what prompted the rebels of 1776 to urge the colonies to establish new, more permanent governments and thus form social contracts in the midst of a revolution. Such foundations would help alleviate a general feeling among Americans that they were in a state of nature (214-15). A detailed account of the formation of the constitutions in Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts during

1776-1780 follows. The importance Kenyon places upon constitutionalism, her belief that “good government requires a written constitution to secure the liberty and welfare of the people” (236), is central to her whole understanding of politics.

The last section of the collection features four of Kenyon’s review articles, two of which offer further insights into her scholarly approach. Her review of Bertrand de Jouvenel’s *Sovereignty: An Inquiry into the Political Good* (1957) questions his assertion that society can minimize conflicts by achieving consensus about a common objective morality. Her response is that if “one is inclined toward practicality and also toward ethical relativism, as this reviewer is, one may have doubts about both the validity of some of M. de Jouvenel’s arguments and about the practical applicability of some of his concepts and conclusions” (249). Kenyon believes the concept of common objective morality is unrealistic, because to hold a diversified society together through consensus requires accounting for a complex set of constantly shifting factors (252). This seems to be a problem for Kenyon because it is not clear how consensus can ever be achieved if morality, values, or society’s needs are constantly shifting. A more obvious flaw in de Jouvenel’s theory would be whether the notion of an *objective morality* comports with the concept of consensus, since objective principles are necessarily not grounded in popular acceptance. In the end, Kenyon has placed M. de Jouvenel in the naïve camp with Hamilton and Paine and in doing so revealed more about her intellectual foundations.

Kenyon’s internal check on her own pragmatism is explicitly revealed in her review of Daniel Boorstin’s *The Americans: The Colonial Experience* (1958). While finding little to criticize in Boorstin’s work, she finds that his “emphasis on the practical, pragmatic, and non-ideological, antidoctrinaire character of the Americans and their experience is not new, but it is pushed to such an extent here as to come perilously close to becoming itself doctrinaire” (268).

Overall, Kenyon’s essays are an excellent example of the overlap, even the combining of, sound historical research with equally sound political theorizing. Studies in American political thought are sometimes regarded as an offshoot or subfield of political philosophy, but Kenyon’s work does much to help them demand a higher and more visible place. With the curious omission of Locke from her first two essays resolved later in the collection, the only shortcoming is that political theorists may expect more direct quotations from the great thinkers Kenyon references instead of simple



glosses on the authors in a broad discussion of their teachings. This is a minor criticism and by no means undermines her work. *Men of Little Faith* is highly recommended for those exploring the political thought of the Revolutionary era and looking to unravel the themes and basic opinions developed in the debates that shaped the U.S. Constitution. The collection will be of special interest to those in the fields of American history, political philosophy, and public law.

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Lorraine Smith Pangle, *The Political Philosophy of Benjamin Franklin*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2007, xi + 277 pp., \$20.95 (paper).

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PETER MCNAMARA

UTAH STATE UNIVERSITY

*peter.mcnamara@usu.edu*

The American public's appetite for stories about the grand exploits of its Founders never varies much and now seems as great as ever. Almost the whole cast of "founding brothers" has been the subject of recent, sometimes multiple, fine and popularly acclaimed works. In this outpouring, it is surely Benjamin Franklin who has received the most extensive and the most favorable attention. The 300th anniversary of his birth no doubt contributed to this attention. But perhaps something in the times is at work. Heated partisan politics at home, and a resurgence of war and religious fanaticism abroad, perhaps make the pragmatic, compromising, witty, lovable solver of problems big and small, who charmed women and tamed nature in his spare time, all the more appealing.

Lorraine Smith Pangle suggests that Franklin indeed has something important to say to the present time: his "healthy democratic vision is uniquely suited as an antidote for some of our worst civic woes, and in particular for our tendency to go to extremes of cynical, world-weary withdrawal from public life on the one hand and zealous, intolerant moralism on the other" (5). Her book, *The Political Philosophy of Benjamin Franklin*, is sure to be one of the most enduring works in this current wave of Franklin books. It is an introduction to Franklin's political philosophy—his political, social, moral and economic thought—but it is as well the kind of introduction that situates Franklin in the broadest context and has him confront, in her final chapter, the "ultimate questions": eros, death, and eternity. Pangle contrasts Franklin not so much with his eighteenth-century counterparts, Washington and Madison in practice and Hume and Montesquieu in theory,

but with Socrates and Aristophanes. Her penetrating comparison of Franklin with Socrates runs throughout the entire book. The key question, according to Pangle, apparent even in his earliest writings, is “what is the meaning of Franklin’s laughter? To what extent is it a diversion from seriousness, and to what extent does it show a seriousness too deep to tolerate the sentimental hypocrisy usually served up with grave topics?” (7). In answer to these ultimate questions, after a careful evaluation, Pangle seems to believe that Franklin, “the most American of Americans” (1), is, despite his charms and accomplishments, too easy-going, even shallow, and lacking both the real bite that lay behind Aristophanes’ humor and Socrates’ relentless drive to get to the bottom of things. Franklin, it seems, might have something useful to say to us, but it would seem not to be about the most important things. Not that Pangle ignores Franklin’s substantial accomplishments, but her treatment of them is structured by her concern with the ultimate questions. Franklin might be a little amused at the comparisons to Socrates and Aristophanes. They also might have irritated him. According to John Adams, Franklin was, at every moment of his life, thinking about how to acquire fame. By comparing Franklin to the likes of Socrates and Aristophanes rather than taking his accomplishments on their own terms, Franklin might worry that his well-earned fame will be diminished!

Pangle begins with Franklin’s economic thought. Franklin’s wildly popular and still well known *Poor Richard’s Almanac* was his major vehicle for teaching the benefits of industry and frugality. Through it he tried to make to make his readers, and perhaps especially those at the very bottom of society, tougher and more realistic about what is required to live a free and comfortable life. Less well known is that Franklin developed a home-spun version of the doctrine of free trade. Franklin was not quite Adam Smith in depth or consistency, but he saw clearly the substantial benefits of allowing individuals to pursue their economic interests free from the restraints of traditional hierarchies and government. He believed that it was precisely this kind of economic system that would grant to ordinary individuals the greatest opportunity to rise. Franklin’s heavy emphasis on industry and frugality in his *Autobiography* led Max Weber to see (correctly) that Franklin embodied the capitalist spirit and to believe (incorrectly) that he regarded money-making as the highest moral duty. Pangle disposes of Weber’s “distorted caricature” (29) by showing that Franklin’s priorities, displayed in both his words and his deeds, were far from seeing money-making as the highest human endeavor. Public service, study, science and friendship all ranked much higher for Franklin, with public service, as Pangle suggests,

probably ranking first. Franklin's "priorities are strikingly similar to those of the aristocratic gentleman" (40). Similar but not the same, Pangle argues, because Franklin's frequent stressing of the utility of these aristocratic pursuits "served to blur the crucial difference between things we choose as means and things we cherish as ends in themselves" (46). Pangle worries that this blurring, coupled with Franklin's more general and common emphasis on "toiling and saving" (46), will prove an insufficient barrier to the crowding out of serious leisure in capitalist America.

After dealing with private virtues, Pangle turns to Franklin's ideas of virtuous citizenship and civil associations. Franklin rejected the Hobbesian and Mandevillian notion that human beings are without a natural inclination to benevolence. This natural inclination was at the root of the substantial pleasures that Franklin found in philanthropy and public service. Furthermore, he believed that in the long run there is a convergence between private and public happiness. As a result, ideas of courage, duty, and self-sacrifice have little place in Franklin's account of citizenship. Franklin redefined courage, the first of the virtues for both Plato and Aristotle, as merely "Resolution." "Resolve to perform what you ought. Perform without fail what you resolve." Franklin believed that virtue was not only useful but essential to human happiness. Pangle rightly observes that Franklin's theorizing about virtue never confronted the extreme case where private and public service obviously clash and, further, that Franklin saw no value in and was personally appalled by the grand ambition of an Alexander or a Caesar and even the hereditary pretensions of the Society of the Cincinnati. Nevertheless, Pangle shows that Franklin elaborated broad and compelling ideas of both democratic citizenship and democratic leadership. Franklin did not lead from the front, nor does he recommend it. His leadership style was to get others to embrace his ideas as their own, to recognize their interdependence with their fellows, and to allow them to experience the pleasures of civic involvement. The *Autobiography* is full of delightful examples of Franklin's successful grass roots leadership. Franklin's thinking about leadership was not confined to the grass roots. His plan for the University of Pennsylvania clearly contemplates the education of civic-minded citizens equipped with the skills necessary to participate and lead in the wider society. Franklin draws particular attention to the political power of the printed word in the modern world.

Before turning to the ultimate questions, Pangle surveys Franklin's thoughts on government, the realm in which, she remarks, his

ideas about the benevolent power of enlightened self-interest are put to a severe test. Although he was a signatory to the Declaration of Independence, Franklin clearly did not adhere to the natural rights philosophy of Locke's *Second Treatise* embraced by nearly all of the founding generation. Franklin was more pragmatic, preferring to speak of traditional rights and liberties and couching these in the language of opinion and belief rather than certainty. At bottom, however, Pangle believes that Franklin was not merely pragmatic. He adhered to an "inviolable" principle of justice: "it is not right that certain citizens be treated merely as tools for the use of others" (145). Franklin's approach always put him in a good position to act as a compromiser and peacemaker. Furthermore, it did not prevent him from considering speculative projects, whether it be forming an American union or reshaping the British imperial union, or liberalizing the entire international order itself. As long as those projects were founded on the rock of enlightened self-interest, Franklin thought them within reach.

In actual diplomacy Franklin could be masterful. Pangle presents a very insightful account of Franklin's capacious realism that, when dealing with the French, not only took into account calculations of their interest but also catered to their sense of honor. Franklin's pragmatism did, however, lead him to miscalculate the reactions of his prickly rights-talking countrymen to British encroachments again and again. Eventually, but very reluctantly, Franklin threw his powers behind the idea of an independent America, but without ever, perhaps, giving up on the idea that things might have worked out differently if only the British had attended to their true interests. Franklin was again out of step with Americans, or at least with most of the other leading Founders, when it came to forms of government and the outcome of the Constitutional Convention of 1787. Franklin, to be sure, supported the new Constitution and spoke movingly in its favor at the Convention. But it was very far from his own positions. Franklin's own substantially, even radically democratic preferences (perhaps understated by Pangle) seem to have been embodied more in the Articles of Confederation and especially the Pennsylvania Constitution of 1776. In the final year of his long life Franklin doggedly but unsuccessfully defended the latter against reforms that would introduce bicameralism and strengthen the executive.

Pangle's excellent survey raises the following question about one of her basic assumptions: lovable and important as he is, just how American is Benjamin Franklin? Is he really the most American of Americans? Put otherwise, how Franklinian is America? Certainly Franklin gave early

voice and shape to the American version of the capitalist spirit, and he, perhaps, even invented what Tocqueville would later call “self-interest rightly understood” and the “art of association.” These were no small contributions to modern politics and American life, as Tocqueville for one made clear. But consider the critical aspects of American life that Franklin rejected or distanced himself from. First, Franklin had little time for the kind of democratic leadership displayed by Washington. Of course, there was just one Washington, but let’s speak then of executive leadership in general, which is precisely the kind of leadership Franklin eschewed. But, surely, this is one highly distinctive feature of American government and indeed of American life in general. Second, Franklin’s rejection, for it would seem to be that, of natural rights puts a considerable distance between him and the core of American political life. Finally, Franklin’s religious views, however humane and ecumenical, were certainly at odds with his contemporaries and probably remain at odds with America’s dominant religious sects. In sum and by way of example, something as essentially American as Lincoln’s Second Inaugural Address would have been out of Franklin’s reach. He couldn’t have written it and he might not have agreed with it. One might respond that now at least the commercial spirit is the dominant (and crushing) spirit in America and in the West more generally. But is this true? Or is it to commit something like the Weberian error of believing that the capitalist spirit was all there was to Franklin? Having said this, one might argue, as Pangle does, that Franklin’s pragmatic public-spiritedness is just what is needed now, perhaps to correct for the excesses and distortions of some of the other features of American life just mentioned.

Pangle’s final but, in a real sense, first concern is Franklin and the ultimate questions: eros, death, and eternity. As noted earlier, Pangle explodes Max Weber’s caricature of Franklin. But D. H. Lawrence’s critique of Franklin fares much better. Pangle does not embrace Lawrence’s ravings about the “dark forests” of the soul, but she does see something disappointingly true in Lawrence’s contentions that Franklin lacked a sense of mystery, that he was unserious, and that he lacked true eros. This section of the book is striking and brilliantly done. She presents a sustained comparison between Franklin and Socrates and, to a lesser degree, Aristophanes. The interpretations of Franklin’s writing are both penetrating and judicious. The reflections on Franklin’s life are equally so. In both areas, Pangle explores the moments when Franklin seems to have flinched or contradicted himself or failed to follow through the logic of his own arguments. She is particularly interested

in what she sees as Franklin's inadequate reflections on the related themes of Providence and the rewards for justice in this world.

It is the case that the overwhelming preponderance of the evidence shows that, for one reason or another, Franklin saw nothing tragic in life and especially his own life. Almost his parting thought to the world was that he would gladly live his life over if given the opportunity. Franklin presents this opinion as something of a joke: the opinion of an old and vain man who, despite his age and vanity, nevertheless has something important to offer the world in the way of advice. The doubt surrounding Franklin's humor makes it hard to know what to make of such an opinion. Is it ultimately groundless boasting? Or is the joke just another of Franklin's many clever self-deprecating rhetorical tricks to make readers more open to following Franklin's example, and the opinion in fact his considered view? These are hard questions to answer because Franklin's statements are fragmentary and elusive. It is certainly the case that he never displays or holds up for emulation that relentless drive to get to the bottom of things so characteristic of Socrates. But was he without answers to these ultimate questions? Might he have had answers if pressed? We are left to speculate for ourselves, and Pangle's fine study is an excellent guide to such inquiries.

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BENLI M. SHECHTER

UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, COLLEGE PARK

*bmshechter@gvpt.umd.edu*

Remarkably, the greatest critiques of Marxism surfaced not from among those in the right wing of the ideological spectrum, but from among those in its left wing—that is, from those even further out than today’s mainstream of Marxism. This means that, in certain respects, the collapse of the Soviet Union (assuming ideas do truly matter, and that the best—or at least second best—weapon of the revolutionary is the inked pen) owes more to the likes of anarchists, including Proudhon and Bakunin, than to the likes of liberal anti-communists, including Arendt and Aron. After all, Bakunin (1814-1876), the Russian anarchist and Marx’s chief rival for control of the First International, was the first to articulate what he saw as the Marxist swindle (ironically, as something all too similar to what Marx saw as the democratic swindle).

Bakunin asked himself,

What does it mean: “the proletariat raised into the ruling class?” Will the proletariat as a whole be at the head of the government? There are about forty million Germans. Will all the forty million be members of the government? The whole people will govern and there will be no one to be governed. It means that there will be no government, no State, but if there is a State in existence there will be people who are governed, and there will be slaves. (Bakunin 1953, 287)

Bakunin thus refused to swallow the bait. Where Marx philosophized (and dreamed) of the long-heralded eschatological end of history—of the Proletarian Revolution to end all revolutions, not to mention exploitation, of



Communism, seen as the self-conscious riddle of history solved and as the universal emancipation and redemption of man—Bakunin saw only power and the veiled social and political interests of a new, burgeoning, minority class of “real and counterfeit scientists and scholars” ruling over the immense ignorant majority, all in the name of knowledge (Bakunin 2002, 319). Some emancipation!

The irony is that as much as Marx ridiculed the anarchists, castigating them as infantile and reactionary leftists (akin to what Lenin would do some decades later), both he and Bakunin shared a similar vision of the future post-revolutionary society. Not for nothing did Bakunin interpret Marx’s *Communist Manifesto* as an *Anarchist Manifesto*, save for its mistaken strategy (Hodges 1999, 113-30). And, not for nothing did Franz Mehring (a Marxist, mind you) claim that the Marx of *The Civil War in France* (1871) had come “dangerously near the position of the anarchist Bakunin” (cited in Nomad 1961, 130). To be sure, there is good reason and justification for both of these positions. Yet there is also much in favor—perhaps even more in favor—of Marx’s radical opposition to anarchism, both in theory and most assuredly in practice. Of course, this whole matter is further problematized by the very nature of Marx’s writings, many of which were written at the behest of various groups and political parties, most of which were polemical, and some of which were (initially) unpublished study notebooks never intended for publication. How one is ultimately to make sense of Marx’s writings or identify the “true” Marx amidst this sea of literary madness is no easy endeavor. Topping it all off is Marx’s classic re-formulation of the role of philosophy from seeking to understand the world to changing the world (Marx and Engels 1978, 145), and, to paraphrase Engels’ speech at Marx’s graveside, Marx being viewed as above all a *revolutionist* (Marx and Engels 1978, 681). What this meant in the end was that truth (and science) became a tool in the interest of power, i.e., in the interest of revolutionary proletarian power, at least as Marx conceptualized it.

Where then do matters stand today? Which is the “true” Marx? And does he even exist? Or must we somehow come to terms with the possibility of there being more than one Marx, perhaps many more? This would seem to be the postmodern interpretive inclination (which need not mean that it is the correct interpretive inclination). One thing, however, seems certain: Marxist studies have now moved beyond the confines of the Great Debate. Today, scholars view the Great Debate as a great, tattered, and shopworn debate (Thomas 1994, 13). No one is concerned any longer with the

question of a young versus a mature Marx, of two Marxisms or one. Whether or not this is a good thing remains to be determined; the jury, without a doubt, is still out.

A major participant in the general discussion is David Leopold; and his impressive new work, *The Young Karl Marx*, marks an important contribution. He begins with an abbreviated history of the “discovery” and late appearance of the early writings, plus an analysis grounding the reasons for their divided and contested status. For the most part, his story begins with the 1932 publication of the *Paris Manuscripts* which were immediately embraced by intellectuals as somehow containing the hidden thread that ran throughout the entire corpus of Marx’s works. Leopold provides two noteworthy examples, “separated by some thirty years and several thousand miles” (6), namely, the reactions of Herbert Marcuse and Marshall Berman.

At the University of Freiburg in 1932, Marcuse maintained that the publication of the *Manuscripts* was a “crucial event” because it served to cast doubt on the apparent orthodoxy of the Marxian theoretical system. As he saw it, the entire theory of “scientific socialism” was now being called into question. Similarly overcome with excitement was Berman, when a student at Columbia in 1959. Berman immediately bought twenty copies of the book as Hanukkah gifts for friends and family. He declared the book to be the “Kabbalah” written by Marx “before he became Karl Marx,” destined to become a second magnificent and awesome Bible that would shake the world, for its “product” was “Marx, but not communism.”

Immediately thereafter, interpretation of the *Manuscripts* and their relation to Marxism writ large became polarized and divisive. As Leopold explains, the issue was clear: *either* the Manuscripts were to be abandoned as juvenilia, *or* they were to be taken as the long-lost key to the proper interpretation of Marxism (7). Thus the origins and contours of the Great Debate were marked, a debate rooted historically in the society and politics of the Cold War. But the Cold War, no more than the Communism of the Soviet Union, no longer exists. Leopold sees this collapse, that is, the squashing of the Iron Curtain divide, as marking a great intellectual opportunity and offers the “optimistic conjecture that our own times might prove comparatively congenial to the serious evaluation of the nature and significance of Marx’s thought,” an opportunity, therefore, not for burying Marx, but for better understanding him (7-8). And yet, while our brave new post-ideological era removes one set of interpretive difficulties, a whole other slew of additional obstacles remains. These include problems arising from

the form, content, status, and polemical focus of Marx's early writings (8). While this is chiefly an intellectual and cultural barrier, it is one which can be removed—thanks to Leopold—with modest and persistent effort by the reader of *The Young Karl Marx*.

Leopold's book, part of a Cambridge series called "Ideas in Context," is excellent, and though some might consider its limited chronological remit (focusing only on a brief two-and-a-half-year period from March 1843 to September 1845) as a major shortcoming, it actually marks its greatest strength. For Leopold is interested not in the early writings, *per se*, but in the most eminently political of the early writings. Thus, by reducing and narrowing the scope of the readings, he significantly enlarges the scope of the content.

More precisely, Leopold's book, organized around three central chapters, is concerned, respectively, with the young Marx's account of the emergence, character, and (future) replacement of the modern state (11, 15). This roughly breaks down into respective analyses of three major works, namely, the "Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*" (chapter 2), "On the Jewish Question" (chapter 3), and the so-called "1844 Introduction" (chapter 4). In the end, Leopold offers the reader a rare and elaborate exegesis of a few select and opaque works, works that are truly impenetrable without a firm grasp of the intellectual and cultural context.

Hence, chapter 2 (17-99), on "Germany Philosophy" (and the emergence of the modern state), is embedded in a larger discussion of mid-nineteenth-century German history, culture and philosophy, theories of German backwardness and exceptionalism, established Teutonic preoccupations with inwardness (*Innerlichkeit*) and notions of a dream-history (*Traumgeschichte*), Hegelian metaphysics, Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*, and, of course, Marx's "Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*." Similarly, chapter 3 (100-182), on "Modern Politics" (and the character of the modern state), is embedded in a larger discussion of Bruno Bauer and his then well-known essay, "The Jewish Question," which would become the essay that Marx took as a springboard for a more general discussion of the achievements and limitations of political emancipation in "On the Jewish Question." Lastly, chapter 4 (183-278), on "Human Flourishing" (and the future replacement of the modern state), is embedded in a larger discussion of Feuerbach's critique of religion and philosophy, including Feuerbach's analysis of alienation and his understanding of the character of the un-alienated future, Aristotle's account of the *zoon politikon*, the relation between politics and human nature,

community and human flourishing, classical and modern conceptions of the good life, the civic republicanism of Machiavelli and Rousseau, and the technocratic and utopian spirit of Saint-Simon, before ultimately presenting Marx's own projections as laid out principally in the "1844 Introduction," but also in the *Paris Manuscripts* and Marx's "Comments on James Mill."

In the end, *The Young Karl Marx* accomplishes exactly what it sets out for itself. This includes, in Leopold's modest assessment, support for the claim that the work of the young Marx contains ideas worthy of further study, clarity about some of the arguments and assumptions of the early writings, and the addition of something of value to an already voluminous existing literature (14). Indeed, Leopold does all this with authority and perhaps a fair share more.

In my estimate, Leopold's most intriguing and resonant contribution for contemporary thinkers results from a series of scattered sections throughout the book. Taken together, "The Lineaments of the Modern Social World" (chap. 2, 62-69); "The Preconditions of the Modern State" (chap. 3, 134-39); and "The Structure of Human Emancipation," "Institutional Fragments," and "The End of Politics" (chap. 4, 184-86, 245-54, 254-62) assemble a forceful and lucid presentation of what has come to be known as "alien politics" (Thomas 1980, 1994)—that is, the prototypical theory of the state adumbrated in Marx's early political writings (most notably, in the "Critique of Hegel's *Philosophy of Right*" and "On the Jewish Question"). For alien politics is precisely where the true merit of Marx's early work resides. There, we learn that socialist revolution has to do fundamentally with disalienation, but disalienation of the state rather than the economy (Thomas 1994, 192).

To be sure, as Leopold notes, the young Marx characterizes modernity in terms of a "double separation"—of individuals from each other, and of individuals from the state (100). Leopold's Marx is concerned primarily with the latter and with very good reason. This focus allows him to reflect on the great chasm separating political from human emancipation, and to opine on the grave limitations of the former. Ultimately, Marx determines that as it currently exists, the state—abstracted, remote and estranged from the everyday, real life of the citizen and civil society—is structurally ill-equipped to facilitate human flourishing or to set man free, at long last, from his bygone enslavement. In Marx's words:

Only when real, individual man resumes the abstract citizen into himself and as an individual man has become a *species-being* in his empirical life, his individual work and his individual relationships,

only when man has recognized and organized his *forces propres* [his own strengths] as *social forces* so that social force is no longer separated from him in the form of *political* force, only then will human emancipation be completed. (Marx 1992, 234)

Remarkably, even if but for a fleeting moment of history (and perhaps, still, only in the Marxist imagination), theory would meet practice some twenty-eight years later, in the form of the Paris Commune of 1871.

To Marx, the seventy-one days during which the Commune ruled Paris signaled a great advance in the struggle for proletarian power and human emancipation. But, surprisingly, it was a practical advance that deviated from much of orthodox Marxist theory. Remember, the program of the *Manifesto* calls for the formation of a proletarian party, the conquest of state political power, and then the wresting by degrees of all capital from the bourgeoisie (Marx and Engels 1978, 484, 490). In other words, the Marx of 1848 favored a position that would rely on the existing state machinery to expropriate the capitalists. Merely four years later, however, Marx was already having second thoughts. With the publication of *The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte* (1852), he amended his earlier position to focus on the necessity of fully dismantling the existent state machinery (Hodges 1999, 94-95). In his words: “All the revolutions perfected this [state] machine instead of smashing it” (Marx and Engels 1978, 607). The problem—and its resolution—was thus closely related with alien politics. For consonant with Bonaparte’s *coup d’état*, with the royal victory of executive power over legislative power, the sovereign people of France effectively came to renounce all will of their own, surrendering themselves to the “superior orders of something alien, of authority” (Marx and Engels 1978, 606).

Then followed the Paris Commune. According to *The Civil War in France*, written by Marx as the official statement of the General Council of the First International (read in an address on May 30, 1871), the most positive feature of the Commune was that it “radically deinstitutionalized political power, and in so doing repoliticized society” (Thomas 1994, 105). In short order, the Commune transformed the state and its organs from being the masters of society into its servants—first, by filling all posts through elections on the basis of universal suffrage and making them subject to recall at any time; and, second, by decreeing that all public service be done at working men’s wages (Marx and Engels 1978, 628). Additionally, the state’s standing army and police forces were immediately abolished and replaced with an armed people’s militia, all churches were stripped of their status as

proprietary bodies, and access to educational institutions was opened to the people free of cost (Marx and Engels 1978, 632). Marx's reaction was utterly ecstatic. Unveiling the true secret of the Commune, he noted: "It was essentially a working-class government, the produce [*sic*] of the struggle of the producing against the appropriating class, the political form at last discovered under which to work out the economic emancipation of labor" (Marx and Engels 1978, 634-35).

In a draft manuscript of *The Civil War in France* the Commune is even further praised, this time in idiom that can't help but remind us of the earlier political writings, the young Karl Marx, and alien politics. The Commune is defined as:

the reabsorption of the state by society as its own living forces instead of as forces controlling and subduing it, by the popular masses themselves forming their own force instead of the organized force of their suppression—the political form of their emancipation, instead of the artificial force (appropriated by their oppressors)...of society wielded for their oppression for their enemies. (Cited in Thomas 1994, 107.)

Marx thus saw the Paris Commune as a "Promethean revolt for the course of the future as against the decaying past" (Nomad 1961, 129), as the glorious harbinger of a great and novel society (Marx and Engels 1978, 652). Indeed, with the proletariat holding the reins, it was for him the birthing of a brave new world that would endure for millennia. It was the political form in which freedom would reign supreme; where humans would cease to be the objects of an abstract and remote, estranged, alien state; and would become the self-consciously free-acting subjects of their own self-willed creation.

In the end, history's first "dictatorship of the proletariat" (Marx and Engels 1978, 629) drowned seventy-one days later in a rabid sea of blood. So much for a brave new world! History's second proletarian dictatorship would follow thirty-six years later, in 1917, after the Bolshevik seizure of power. This time "Marxists" again hailed the (Russian) Commune, and the possibilities that lay in store for the future of humanity. To the faithful, the eschaton seemed imminent. But would the Soviet Union ultimately mark such a re-birth in freedom and in the radical de-alienation of political institutions? Or would it actually re-alienate "alien politics in a revolutionary register" (Thomas 1994, 194)? A question that need not be answered.

For the most part, Leninism (Stalinism, too, for that matter) should be interpreted none too differently than Bonapartism. Remember *The Eighteenth Brumaire*, but put Vladimir in place of Louis. The similarities

are uncanny. For there can be no doubt that Lenin tremendously strengthened and perfected the existing state machinery, rather than smashing it. Indeed, the Soviet State became an alien oppressor, removed, abstracted and wholly towering above the masses of its alienated citizens. The irony, of course, is that Lenin considered himself to be Marx's foremost disciple. Thus, we might ask, which Marx? Definitely the Marx of 1848. But what about the Marx of 1871?

Marx's outright support and enthusiasm for the Paris Commune of 1871 seems peculiar in light of the theoretical foundations of the *Manifesto*. Franz Mehring was right: Marx had come dangerously near the position of Bakunin. As one astute critic has noted,

In [*The Civil War in France*] Marx accepts not only Bakunin's critique of bureaucracy, but also the conditions of overcoming it: all offices to be elective, to be revocable at short term and to be performed at workers' wages. The Paris Commune [thus] owed more to Bakunin's followers than to Marx's so that in pledging support to it Marx was indirectly backing Bakunin. (Hodges 1973, 38)

In another respect, the Marx of 1871 makes all too much sense when seen in light of the theoretical foundations of *Marxism*. These foundations lie in Marx's youthful political writings of 1843-1845, that is, in his early theory of alien politics.

What this means is that there is more similarity between Marx and Bakunin—specifically between Marx's alien political theory and Bakunin's anarcho-Marxism (Hodges 1973, 34-40, 72-78)—than had originally been supposed. Both these behemoth figures and their larger-than-life-sized theories provide radically democratic critiques of reified political institutions regardless of their places of origin, be they (bureaucratic) capitalist or (bureaucratic) socialist in nature. Thus, today, after the collapse of the Soviet Union and as we approach the heyday of the great Age of Information, the time has finally come to reconcile Marx and Bakunin. To do so entails the following two-fold requirement: first, creating a more conducive space in academia for the proper study of anarchism; and second, returning, really, rediscovering—yet again—the political writings of the young Herr Doktor Karl Marx. Of the former requirement's success I am none too optimistic; but of the latter's, one need not wait long. For Leopold's new book, *The Young Karl Marx*, takes a giant step in that very direction, elucidating a series of elusive, markedly important, and complex issues that perhaps are now more relevant than ever.



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David Janssens, *Between Athens and Jerusalem: Philosophy, Prophecy, and Politics in Leo Strauss's Early Thought*. Albany: State University of New York Press, 2009, 258 pp., \$24.95 (paper).

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FAISAL BALUCH

UNIVERSITY OF NOTRE DAME

*fbaluch@nd.edu*

Philosophy, Strauss wrote, “is nothing but genuine awareness of the problems, i.e., of the fundamental and comprehensive problems” (Strauss 1988, 116). Understanding past philosophers who speak to us through their texts thus requires a recovery of the fundamental problems that concerned them. This task of recovery is often not an easy one. Strauss was, however, forthright about the fundamental problem that animated his own work. In a new preface (1965) to his book *Hobbes Politische Wissenschaft*, Strauss states that since his encounter with Spinoza’s thought “the theological-political problem has remained *the* theme of [his] investigations” (Strauss 1997, 453). David Janssens’s book, through a reading of Strauss’s early writings, shows how deeply the course of Strauss’s intellectual odyssey was marked by this fundamental problem.

Janssens starts out by painting in some detail the intellectual currents of the German-Jewish milieu of the 1920’s that the young Strauss found himself in. In this milieu the theological-political problem did not present itself merely on a theoretical plain. To hold any one of the various Zionist positions current at the time was to take a position on the theological-political problem. As a young man Strauss was committed to political Zionism as the answer to the plight of the Jews. Drawing on Strauss’s early writings, Janssens shows that Strauss saw clearly that political Zionism was premised on a “critique of religion,” for it proposed a this-worldly solution to Jewish exile. Even as he supported political Zionism, Strauss applied the critical mind of a philosopher to his own position. He realized that political

Zionism, while based on a critique of religion, in assuming the label “Zionism” had to define its relationship with the tradition. The intellectual coherence of political Zionism depended then on finding a new reading of the tradition. In his search for such a reading Strauss was led to the writings of Hermann Cohen, who had inspired a new Jewish theology promising a reconciliation with the Jewish tradition.

Janssens shows that Strauss’s examination of Cohen’s thought revealed to him the questionable “fundamental presuppositions” of this new theology. This work, Strauss found, assumed the soundness of the critique of religion, a critique ultimately derived from Spinoza’s *Theologico-Political Treatise*. The new theologians had accepted too easily the critique of religion and this turned Strauss away from them. Strauss argued that the return to the tradition that the new theologians sought could be effected “only if Spinoza was wrong in every respect” (Strauss 1965, 15).

Janssens offers a detailed account of Strauss’s engagement with Spinoza. He shows that Strauss questions the fundamental premise of Spinoza’s biblical science. Spinoza takes as his starting point a literal reading of the Bible in order to show the contradictions within it. Strauss argues that this starting point already constitutes a conception of the Bible different from that of the orthodox understanding. Spinoza’s starting point therefore already commits him to his conclusion; by beginning with a literal reading he has already rejected the orthodox reading, which is not a literal reading. In a striking reversal of Spinoza’s claim, Strauss shows that Spinoza’s biblical science presupposes the critique of religion, rather than the other way around. Likewise, Spinoza’s critique of Maimonides succumbs to a similar fault; he counters Maimonides’ position on the insufficiency of reason only by presuming its sufficiency.

Despite the fact that Strauss points out the above flaws in Spinoza’s critique of religion, Janssens characterizes the results of Strauss’s examination as “undecided” (76), for even after revealing the deficiency of Spinoza’s critique Strauss did not embrace orthodoxy. But did Strauss’s resistance to orthodoxy stem from his encounter with Spinoza? To resolve this question Janssens has recourse to powerful personal testimony from Strauss. In a letter to Gerhard Krüger after the publication of the Spinoza book, Strauss wrote, “To me, only one thing was clear: I cannot believe in God.” But Strauss did not leave his unbelief unexamined; he goes on, “I had to justify myself before the tribunal of the Jewish tradition” (75). That Strauss resists embracing orthodoxy, and that Spinoza’s critique of religion does not provide

sufficient justification for this rejection is clear. What remains obscure, however, is the source of Strauss's resistance.

Following his encounter with Spinoza, Strauss continued his examination of modern philosophy. The central conclusion of Strauss's examination of modern philosophy was that it ended by building a cave under the Platonic cave. Janssens shows that Strauss's engagement with the thought of Friedrich Heinrich Jacobi and Moses Mendelssohn alerted him to the fact that modern philosophy's rejection of tradition led not only to a rejection of the prophets but also of the ancient philosophers, and in particular of "Socrates-Plato." Modern philosophy, through the discovery of the historical consciousness, not only built a second cave, it also assured the occupants of this second cave that they have been rid of all their prejudices. Both these factors render the occupants of the second cave oblivious of their ignorance and thus of the fundamental question: "How are we to live?"

At the same time, Strauss, searching for an alternative to modern rationalism, was led to a reexamination of medieval political philosophers. Janssens relates how Strauss found in the medieval philosophers a deep understanding of the theological-political problem. The placement by the *falasifa* (an Arabic word derived from the Greek *philosophos*, used to refer to the medieval Islamic philosophers) of prophetology over philosophy reflects their understanding of Socratic philosophy not as a doctrine but as a "questioning." Socrates' fate exemplifies the danger that the philosopher is exposed to. With Plato the philosophers find a means to protect themselves through the discovery of the "art of writing." Strauss thus discovers through Maimonides and the *falasifa* what he considered the central hermeneutic tool required for understanding the writings of past philosophers.

Fresh from his encounter with Maimonides and the *falasifa* Strauss turned to Hobbes, and found that what lies at the core of Hobbes's project is a moral concern. Hobbes's ethical and political views, Strauss argues, do not follow from naturalistic foundations. As with Spinoza, Strauss finds that science comes after the critique of religion and only to bolster the critique. For Hobbes the Leviathan lords over the "sons of pride," and fear forms the basis both of the state and of morality. By making fear the basis of morality Hobbes effects a definite break with ancient morality and gives birth to bourgeois morality. Furthermore, Janssens reveals how Strauss saw Hobbes's politics as tied to the fight against the "kingdom of darkness" (165). Thus, Strauss's study of Hobbes is situated within the compass of his examination of the theological-political problem.

With this Janssen closes the overview of the European Strauss, and briefly examines one of Strauss's central intellectual concerns once he was in America—the question of Socrates. In closing the book Janssens remains reticent about where he finally sees Strauss as standing between the two poles of Athens and Jerusalem. He only states that Strauss “remained determined to ascertain whether and how the philosopher would be able to face revelation while remaining a philosopher after the example of Socrates” (194). But for Strauss, to remain a philosopher is to assert against revelation that the “one thing needful” is the life of philosophy rather than the life of faith. While it may be that the conception of philosophy as a “questioning” precludes the possibility of definitively answering revelation, it is also true that Socratic philosophy understood as a way of life responds to the fundamental question. Yet that the question of the viability of the philosophic life is posed against the life of faith is testament to the fact that the theological-political problem lies at the heart of Strauss's thought.

Strauss spoke of Athens and Jerusalem as the two roots of Western civilization. The deployment of this organic metaphor would suggest both a harmony and an inextricable connection between the two. While Strauss granted the latter, he argued that the roots “are in radical disagreement” (Strauss 1989, 238). This radical disagreement presents a stark choice—one must either be a philosopher or a theologian. Highlighting the seriousness with which Strauss grappled with this choice while never advocating easy compromises or unthinking allegiance to either side, is the greatest service that Janssens's account provides. His book will ably serve both as an introduction to Strauss's thought and as an intellectual biography of the early Strauss.

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