

# The St. John's Review

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## Introduction

The essays collected in this special issue of the *St. John's Review* are dedicated to the memory of David Rapport Lachterman, who studied at St. John's College from 1961 to 1965. At the kind invitation of the editor, we have solicited memorial essays from several of David's former students and colleagues. These essays reflect not only the range and breadth of David's scholarly interests, but also the scope of his influence on those who knew and loved him.

David Lachterman was born in Alabama in 1944, and he spent his formative years in Falls Church, Virginia. He was admitted to St. John's College at the age of sixteen, and he completed his brilliant career of undergraduate studies four years later; he was awarded highest honors in the College. Upon completing his studies at St. John's, David pursued graduate studies in Philosophy and Classics at Harvard University and Oxford University. He received his doctorate in Philosophy in 1984 from the Pennsylvania State University. David taught Philosophy and Classics at Syracuse, Swarthmore, and Vassar. At the time of his death in 1991, he was Professor of Philosophy and Classics at the Pennsylvania State University.

David was known throughout the world as a scholar of extraordinary breadth and versatility. Fluent in eight languages, he was considered an expert in such diverse fields as Ancient Philosophy and Classics, Jewish and Arabic philosophy, the history of mathematics and the exact sciences, modern philosophy, German Idealism, renaissance Platonism, literary criticism, and postmodern thought. His many lectures and essays reflect the unparalleled range of his erudition and scholarship. Although diverse and far-reaching, David's intellectual interests centered on a common theme and project: he had embarked upon an ambitious genealogical analysis of modernity, hoping eventually to articulate a unified, definitive account of the epoch as a whole. In 1989, he published an enormously influential book with Routledge, *The Ethics of Geometry*, which not only traces the transformation of ancient to modern mathematics, but also locates in this transformation the roots of modern philosophy. At the time of

his death, David was preparing a sequel to *The Ethics of Geometry*, which he had provisionally entitled *The Sovereignty of Construction*.

We begin this issue of the *Review* with a transcription of one of David's most famous lectures, "Torah and Logos." In this lecture, David investigates the real and perceived tensions that obtain between the Hebrew concept of *torah* and the Greek concept of *logos*. As David's opening remarks indicate, this lecture represents his life-long attempt to reckon (and partially repay) his debts to his teachers and students. Although well known to many of David's friends, colleagues and students, "Torah and Logos" has never before appeared in print.

In "Autonomy and Authenticity," Daniel Conway challenges the popular reception of Friedrich Nietzsche as a teacher of autonomy and the champion *par excellence* of individual authenticity. Conway argues that the familiar exhortatory rhetoric of Nietzsche's post-Zarathustran writings is tempered by an equally prominent critique of voluntarism, which calls into question the very possibility of autonomy and authenticity. Nietzsche's model for "How one becomes what one is" thus involves elements of volition and cognition, of self-creation and self-discovery.

Jacob Howland next takes up the question of the ambiguous nature of the philosopher. In his essay "The Eleatic Stranger's Socratic Condemnation of Socrates," Howland undertakes an investigation of the Eleatic Stranger's famous condemnation of Socrates in Plato's *Sophist*. While critical of the Eleatic Stranger's verdict, Howland concludes that it nevertheless captures the paradoxical nature of the Socratic philosopher.

Pierre Kerszberg too addresses the myth of the reversed cosmos, illuminating Plato's cosmology in the light of contemporary physics. In his essay "The Myth of the Reversed Cosmos in Contemporary Physics," Kerszberg demonstrates that contemporary physicists attempt to fix time's arrow in a prospective direction, even though the laws of nature are perfectly consistent with the position of time's arrow in a retrospective direction. Plato's myth of the reversed cosmos furnishes clues that help us to recover a sense of human life within any abstract reconstruction of experience.

Gregory Schalliol next investigates the complex relationship of the philosopher to the human community. Taking as his point of entry Nietzsche's complicated praise of solitude, Schalliol excavates the paradox that underlies the philosopher's attempts to found communities and societies. In order to prepare oneself for the founding labors of philosophy, Nietzsche argues, one must retreat into solitude and husband one's strength and vitality. As Schalliol points out, however,

this sort of solitary self-transformation serves to distance the philosopher further from those individuals who are likely to constitute any human community.

In his essay "From Rationalism to Historicism," Carl Page charts the dialectical relations that obtain between the positions of rationalism and historicism. Exposing the supposed oppositions between rationalism and historicism as merely apparent, or dialectical, in nature, Page unearths the common root from which these disparate plants have grown and bloomed.

We would like to express our gratitude to the *St. John's Review* for affording us the opportunity to honor David Lachterman in such an appropriate forum. In particular, we would like to thank Elliott Zuckerman, who worked tirelessly with us to bring forward this special edition of the *Review*. On behalf of our fellow authors, we present these essays in the memory of our friend and colleague, David Rapport Lachterman.

D.W.C.  
P.K.  
State College, PA

\* \* \* \* \*

To the essays introduced above, we have added Eva T.H. Brann's essay on Hegel and Time, also presented in honor of David Lachterman.

E.Z.



# Torah and Logos

David R. Lachterman

Every speech has a long ancestry, even if it was composed for a novel occasion. It may help to clarify my purposes in today's speech if I say a few words about its genealogy and genesis. Its remote ancestor was my undergraduate teacher, Simon Kaplan, a learned and pious man. I recall vividly the day he admonished me in a thick Russian accent—I can't successfully mimic it: "Mr Lachterman, you spend all your time with the Greeks, none with the Jews." Although he prepared a reading list of traditional Jewish authors for me, it was many years before I undertook to read the list. I was, however, able to repay a small portion of the extravagant favors he did for me, as teacher and as friend, by helping him with the English translation of Hermann Cohen's *Religion of Reason*, a book about which I shall have more to say later.

The more proximate ancestor of today's speech was the presentation of some similar remarks to a group of Jewish undergraduates of Swarthmore College, who had decided to read and discuss Jewish works. Remembering Simon Kaplan's admonition, I chose four sample classical texts, in the hope that one or more would capture their imagination.

I should tell you that that presentation had two by-products. First, the students voted unanimously to read and discuss *Portnoy's Complaint* instead of *The Guide of the Perplexed*. Second, some years later I met two of the students in that original audience who were then college teachers themselves and, strangely, recalled the talk I had given, under the title "Torah vs. Logos." One was sure that I was defending Logos; the other was equally convinced that I was on the side of Torah. Accordingly, I have altered the title of my talk today to "Torah and Logos."

My title, "Torah and Logos," expresses a duality, a tension between alternatives which I take to be decisive for Jewish, and perhaps not only Jewish, identity, or self-understanding. This same tension is also conveyed by the better-known historical phrase "Athens and Jerusalem," the two cities symbolizing philosophy and exact science on the one hand, and the Biblical teachings on the other. As Hermann Cohen

wrote in reply to an open letter published by Martin Buber: "as ardently as I feel 'from Zion comes forth the Torah,' so do I feel with equal earnestness 'from Hellas, that is, from Greece, comes forth science.'"

Let us look at this contrast more closely. If Torah means in Hebrew "teaching" or "instruction," thanks to the Greek translation, the Septuagint, it has come to be understood as Nomos, as Law. Logos is the most many-sided and essential of all Ancient Greek words. The word is, of course, well known to all of us thanks to its presence in our word "logic" and in the family of English terms ending in "-logy": "biology," "psychology," "anthropology," for instance, to say nothing of "technology" and "ideology." It is hardly an exaggeration to say that the self-understanding of modern Western man, to the extent that it is inseparable from the sciences and the technical endeavors made possible by the sciences, still carries the seal of the Greek experience of *logos*. The Greek dictionary will tell you that *logos* can mean, among other things, sentence, speech, discourse, reason, and reasoning, as well as the rational pattern brought to light by speech and reasoning. It signifies, in general, the power and the products of intelligence and, more specifically, a telling account that tallies with the real nature of things.

The first thing to be stressed here is that the exercise and pursuit of *logos*, of a true account of the world, is "autonomous"—that is, it is a law unto itself, or, put differently, it acknowledges only those "laws of reason and reality" it can discover under its own power, without guidance or control by anything or anyone else. This already brings into view the fundamental contrast between Greek philosophy and traditional Jewish belief, a contrast made clearer by the following two anecdotes:

The most important Greek philosophical work prior to Socrates is the poem by Parmenides entitled "Truth." It begins with a scene of "revelation" in which a mysterious and anonymous goddess puts forth for Parmenides' benefit a doctrine of what truly "is," as distinct from what merely *seems* to mortal men to be. At the crucial turning-point in her speech she addresses these remarkable words to him:

But you must test by *logos* the very controversial proof arising from what I say [κρίναι δὲ λόγοι πολύδηριν ἔλεγχον ἐξ ἐμέθεν ῥηθέντα].

What this means is that human *reason* is and must be the touchstone, the final criterion, of the veracity of what the goddess "reveals."

In starkest possible contrast stands a traditional story about the giving of the Torah to the Jews. According to this story, to be found in

the *Stfre on Deuteronomy*, God went from nation to nation offering to each his "teaching," his commandments, with the promise to show special favor to the nation that accepted his covenant. Each nation, in turn, requested to hear what these commandments were, *before* deciding whether or not to *obey* them. Each, in turn, having heard God's commands, found reason to reject the divine offer. Finally, God turned to the Jews, who immediately replied, "We shall do and we shall hearken" (*kol asher dibber adonai na'aseh ve-nishma*, see Exod. 24:7). That is, the commitment to obedience is prior even to the knowledge of what will be commanded; God's *authority*, as manifested in the very fact that He has revealed himself, eliminates both the necessity and the possibility of questioning Divine commands, of weighing by human reason whether or not these commands are sensible or feasible.

So, the first contrast is that between the autonomy and independence of *logos*, and the authoritativeness of Divine Revelation: When God commands Abraham "Take now thy son, thine only son, whom thou lovest,...even Isaac,...and offer him... for a burnt offering" (Gen. 22:2), Abraham rose *early in the morning* to do God's will; when Socrates is told by Chaerephon that the Delphic Oracle has declared that no one in Athens is wiser than he, he promptly makes the oracle a junior partner, so to speak, in a Socratic dialogue, questioning and analyzing what could have been meant by that statement, convinced, from the start, that the statement, as it stands, is dubious and probably false. Socrates' wily *daimonion*, the surrogate for oracles and their gods, is worlds apart from Abraham's simple reply to the divine nomination, "'Avraham' : 'hineni'"—"Here I am" (Gen. 22:1).

A second contrast is closely associated with the first: No Greek thinker believed that *logos* is easily discovered or achieved; coming to knowledge of the world's rational nature rather involves an arduous struggle to surmount ignorance and misguided preconceptions, particularly those underwritten by prevailing and authoritative opinions, the shared consensus of the community. If comprehensive *wisdom*, *sophia* in Greek, is always the *goal* of rational inquiry, the movement towards that goal can only be called *philosophia*, the love of wisdom, where it is understood that love arises from a *distance* between the lover and the target of his love. It is characteristic of the best among mortal men that they *seek* wisdom, not that they already have it or can readily secure it.

What the Bible calls *hokhmah*, the Hebrew term for *wisdom*, is a rather different matter. Divine Wisdom expresses itself in the "statutes and ordinances" (*huqqim ve-mishpatim*) transmitted to Israel by Moses

from Mt. Sinai; human wisdom consists in the unwavering fulfillment of these commands—"Observe therefore and do them," Moses says in Deuteronomy 4:6, "for this is your wisdom and your understanding [*binah*] in the sight of the peoples, that, when they hear all these statutes, shall say: Surely this great nation is a wise and understanding people."

While it would be *false* to say that wisdom, according to the Bible, is effortlessly achieved, it *is* true that wisdom is always available if a pious Jew makes the effort to grasp and to put into practice what God has authoritatively demanded from him. This seems to be the basic teaching of the famous lines from the Book of Proverbs concerning *hokhmah*:

Trust in the Lord with all thy heart  
And lean not upon thine own understanding.  
In all thy ways acknowledge Him  
And He will direct thy paths.  
Happy is the man that findeth wisdom...  
Her ways are ways of pleasantness  
And all her paths are peace.  
She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her  
And happy is every one that holdeth her fast.  
(Prov. 3: 5-6; 13-18)

This Biblical version of "wisdom," as conformity to, and confidence in, God's understanding of the world and of man, circumscribes the horizons of human "inquiry," both practical and theoretical.

This remains the case, or so I suggest, even in the so-called Wisdom—or sapiential—literature in the Torah and the non-canonical books where Greek influence has long been suspected and where *hokhmah* is personified much in the way *sophia* is personified in contemporaneous Greek writings. To cite only a single example, from the apocryphal *First Book of Baruch*: "Wisdom was God's possession, but he gave her to his servant Jacob. This [i.e., Wisdom] is the book of God's eternal law; to follow it is life, to abandon it, death." A constant refrain in the Wisdom literature, canonical and non-canonical, is the line from Psalm 111: "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of Wisdom" (*tehillat hokhmah yir'at adonai*).

Once again the contrast with the Socratic tradition is strikingly salient. In a medieval Arabic manuscript recently edited by L.V. Berman and Ilai Alon, the spirit, if not the letter, of the original Greek tradition is finely captured. "The indications which point to the fact that philosophy is better than religious law [*shari'ah*] are many... first: the perception of things by wisdom [*hukmah*] comes about through

their natures, whereas their perception by religious law comes through their appearances."

Plato calls the summit and goal of practical inquiry, inquiry into the best human life, the Good, or the look of the Good; he maintains that the Good is the greatest subject of study, perhaps only dimly glimpsed at the climax of relentless philosophical investigation. The Bible, on the other hand, declares "It has been told thee, O Man, what is Good" (Micah 6:8). As for theoretical inquiry, the Greek philosophers were in constant search after the first or primordial principles of reality, the *archai*. The traditional Jewish attitude is nicely illustrated by a Talmudic discussion provoked by the question why the first letter of the first word of the first verse of the Torah, namely, *bereshit*, "in the beginning," is not *aleph*, the first letter of the Hebrew alphabet, but *beth*. Since everything in the Torah is there according to divine plan, this departure from mathematical symmetry must carry some message: since the design of the letter *beth* points ahead to what follows rather than back to what, so to speak, preceded God's decision to create the universe, the alert reader is aware that inquiry into those ultimate matters is pointless and perhaps contrary to divine intention. This attitude is further illustrated by the following passages: "Whosoever reflects on four things, it were better for him if he had not come into the world—what is above, what is beneath, what is before, and what is after" (Hagigah 2: 1 of the *Mishnah*); and "The process of creation may not be expounded before two" (Hagigah 116).

What matters are the human *actions* required by the covenant sealed at the foot of Sinai. Moses was allowed to see only the "back-side" of God—which the tradition interprets as the Divine attributes of action—justice, charity, compassion, and so on, which are the exemplars of appropriate human behavior.

Much more needs to be said about both of these contrasts. However, I am obliged to pass on to one further theme that additionally complicated and, at many times, embittered the encounter between Athens and Jerusalem, between Logos and Torah.

For Jewish tradition it is not divine revelation pure and simple that claims authority over autonomous human reason, but divine revelation given uniquely to a particular people at a particular place and time. The uniqueness of the revelation given at Sinai goes hand in hand with the doctrine that the Jews are "the chosen people," "the 'pick' of humankind," as Yehuda Halevi will write. Outside the perspective of traditional Judaism, this doctrine often appeared to express the intolerant and intolerable "exclusivism" of the Jews, their

willful separation from the unanimously, or at least widely, shared convictions and preoccupations of non-Jews.

Once again the contrast between Jewish religious belief and Greek philosophical attitude could not be more pointed. *Logos* has no particular "place"; it is not the possession of a particular people. We traditionally speak, therefore, of the *universalism* of Greek philosophy, at least in respect to its highest intentions. A contemporary of Plato, the orator Isocrates, makes the general point quite clearly when he writes:

Those who share in our education have more right to be called Hellenes [Greeks] than those who have a common *descent* with us.

Socrates himself more than once calls attention to his disregard of place, his "outlandishness," as we might say. While Socratic conversations begin in a particular place with particular persons, their aim is to outstrip and leave behind the contingencies and limitations of their particular origins. For the Jew, on the contrary, even in a condition of actual dispersion and exile, religious belief and practice make constant reference to an original place: "If I forget thee, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget her cunning. If I do not remember thee, let my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth: if I prefer not Jerusalem above my chief joy." Whether being the Chosen People is Israel's burden or its glory, in either case, the covenant with God implies a special relationship, not shared by other peoples. In particular, the "ceremonial observances" commanded by the Torah are the outward symbols of the inward obligations impressed on the Jewish soul by this covenant.

Needless to say, believing Jews have never been oblivious or insensitive to the competing demands of particularism and universalism. Let me simply mention two fundamental ways in which this competition makes itself felt in the Jewish tradition itself.

What the Hebrew Bible calls "the end of Days" will be the reign of universal justice and universal brotherhood. This profoundly *universalistic* vision of the Messianic times inspires the well-known lines: "On that Day, the Lord shall be One and His Name shall be One." And yet, according to the teaching of the prophets, Jerusalem will be the focal point of the Messianic future and the non-Jewish nations will be under the dominion of the restored Israelite kingdom. Maimonides, in the final section of the *Mishneh Torah* known as "Laws of Kings and Their Wars," emphasizes that all the commandments of the Torah, including the law of animal sacrifice in the Temple, will be obeyed in the days of the Messiah.

A second instance is the doctrine of the "Sons of Noah" and the so-called Noachide commandments. The Talmud discusses at some length the moral and social duties God requires of all mankind as such, even without the benefit of more detailed revelation. The Rabbis specified seven such "commandments for the sons of Noah," including the prohibition of homicide and adultery and the establishment of courts of justice or *bet din*. Then the question arose whether those who obey these Noachide commandments, the "pious among the peoples of the earth," as they are called, merit eternal life, or "the world to come" (*'olam ha-ba*), as do Jews who fulfill *all* the commandments of the Torah. Maimonides, in his authoritative code, makes a significant distinction at this point. If a man performs the Noachide commandments because of a decision of reason, or from purely human ethical conscience, he "has no share in the world to come." Only if the non-Jew respects those commandments as testifying to the existence and following from the will of God are his actions meritorious. We can conclude that Biblical morality, even in its minimal form, presupposes both the existence and the self-revelation of the Biblical God. As Nietzsche was to see with overwhelming clarity: when the God of Sinai is presumed to be dead, "everything is permitted." Furthermore, to quote Emil Fackenheim: "If revelation must go, with it must go any possible *religious* justification for the existence of the Jewish people. In the absence of a binding commandment supernaturally (that is, extra-rationally) revealed to a particular people, it makes as little sense to have a Mosaic religion for the Jewish people today, as, say, a Platonic religion for the modern Greek nation."

Fackenheim's analysis demonstrates how the two lines of reflection and opposition I have been pursuing ultimately converge: traditional Judaism presupposes the miracle of an historically particular revelation, while classical Greek philosophy insists upon the universality of the conclusions reached by natural reason. If I have today a thesis, or better said, an hypothesis, it would be: "Extremes diverge."

I have deliberately set out the contrasts between reason and revelation, universalism and particularism, in an extreme manner so that the seriousness of the debates these themes generate can be fully visible. In any case, I hope that what I have said so far begins to throw some light on a characteristically fierce and exaggerated exclamation made by Spinoza, of whom I shall have more to say later: "The Jews despise philosophy."

A recent author, Jacques Derrida, attempts to respond to this ———\*, only to widen its form, its heart-wrenchingness. In the context of Levinas, Derrida writes: "Are we Jews? Are we Greeks? We

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\* The manuscript has the Greek word *διεπνεα*, which is a mistranscription. [E.Z.]

live in the difference between the Jews and the Greeks, which is perhaps the unity of what is called history. We live in and of differences, that is, in hypocrisy." Or as Joyce put it in *Ulysses*: "Jewgreek is greekjew." The two terms meet. Or do they meet?

The tensions and polarities I have been discussing first became historically prominent in the Hellenistic period of Judaism, the period in which the successors of Alexander the Great exercised political control over the Jews living in Jerusalem and Judaea. The historical sources reveal, in a remarkably prophetic way, a pattern of cultural and intellectual confrontation that will define the situation of European Jewry for the next two millennia. The Greeks were both characteristically curious to explore the claims of Jewish monotheism and prompt to assimilate what they had learned to their own tradition. The Jews, on the other hand, displayed a marked ambivalence which, in the end, led to extreme social disruption: some Jews, especially those from the upper levels of society, were eager to imitate the institutions of their Greek masters, to establish schools of the liberal arts and gymnasia along Greek lines and to endorse the identification of the Biblical God with the Greeks' Zeus Xenios, "Zeus who is hospitable to strangers." Other Jews were much more wary, especially when they realized that this cultural assimilation was not simply a matter of abstract ecumenicism, but entailed, as well, the abandoning of religious practices sanctioned and demanded by the Torah. Thus, even an otherwise sympathetic Greek observer of Jewish belief found reason to denounce the "misanthropic and xenophobic life" of the Jews, while, at roughly the same time, other Greeks were praising the Jews as "a nation of philosophers" because of their adherence to the unique (celestial) God. Some of the ambivalence marking this epoch is shown in an old tradition which makes Pythagoras, Socrates, and Plato acquainted with the Torah, from which the "Lion's share" of Greek philosophy was allegedly taken.

This conflict came to a head in a relatively brief period, from 169 to 167 B.C., when the pro-Greek party within the Jewish community, the "Hellenizers," as they were called, made common cause with their Greek masters, to the point of requesting from the king, Antiochus IV, a decree suppressing the practice of Judaism. This event directly provoked the Maccabean revolt, which Jews commemorate in the *Hanukkah* ("dedication") festival. This festival recalls the day (25th of Kislev, 164 B.C.E.) of the cleansing of the Temple, the destruction of the pagan altars on the same day on which pagan worship had been instituted three years before. Originally called *Sukkot* ("Tabernacles of the month of Kislev"), it is now celebrated with eight days of kindling

the lights. The record of this revolt is punctuated by expressions of extreme distress at the willingness of fellow Jews to be "seduced by the flattery of those who violate the covenant," in the words of the Book of Daniel (11: 32). Clearly it was the lingering and painful memory of this period that inspired a later Jewish writer, in 65 B.C., when yet another civil conflict had been ignited between Hellenizers and traditionalists, to say, favoring the traditionalists:

Cursed be the man who rears a pig and cursed be those who instruct their sons in Greek wisdom [*hokhmah yevanit*].

We could compare the same point as made in another Rabbinic source (*Babylonian Talmud*, Menahot, 99b [? ed.]), with a characteristic Talmudic pose.

The lessons of these initial encounters between Athens and Jerusalem are many and multiply ironic. Chief among them: the price exacted for *acknowledgment* of what was distinctive in Jewish thought proved to be nothing less than the abolition of its very distinctiveness; the edict prohibiting Jewish worship in Jerusalem aimed at having "Jews forget the law and do away with all their holy ordinances," as the apocryphal First Book of the Maccabees puts it.

Once Jewish monotheistic belief had been recognized as *rational* (i.e., "logical") by the Greeks, it was generally expected that the Jews would free this belief from its entanglement with the particularistic claims and rituals underwritten by the *revelation* on Sinai. The Hellenizers within the Jewish nation draw the general implication: "Let us go and make a covenant with the Gentiles [that is, the Greeks] round about us, for since we separated from them many evils have come upon us."

At all events, the pattern established during this period, as I suggested earlier, preoccupied and fascinated Jewish thinkers thenceforth. Needless to say, the Alexandrian Greek empire as such soon vanished from the scene of world history; the imperialism of Greek *logos* continued to hold sway, especially after it had been juxtaposed to, or absorbed within, Christianity. Let me simply allude to two key instances of this state of affairs:

Hegel, whose ambition was to articulate nothing less than the universal and unique *logos* of the whole of reality, including the reality of human self-consciousness and human history, experienced Judaism, especially the perpetuation of the Jewish people in the modern age, as a "thorn in his side." Modern Judaism, in his eyes, is an anachronism for two interrelated reasons:

(1) While Jewish monotheism affirms the universality of the One God, the God of heaven and earth, Jews simultaneously believe that

God's "real work" consists only in maintaining the "external, political, ethical existence" of one people. This "particularism," according to Hegel, is overcome by the historical advent of Christianity and its universalistic gospel.

(2) Secondly, what Hegel regards as the cultic form of Jewish religious existence is exhausted in unwavering and unthinking obedience to positive, God-given laws.

This "positivity" of the Mosaic law, as he calls it, leaves no room for the exercise of rational freedom through which all human beings secure moral dignity. The Jews play the role of slaves to God their master. Hegel here follows St Paul, for whom the "law of the heart" overrides the written law of the Torah.

I do not have time, on this occasion, to enter into the complex history of the interpretation of, and practical response to, Judaism furnished by Hegel's real and self-styled disciples. In the name of a "humanized world of liberated men" to be achieved in the near future, Feuerbach, Arnold Ruge, Bruno Bauer, and Karl Marx felt themselves obliged to comment, if not to reflect, on the contemporary social and political situation of the Jews in Christian Europe. One quotation from Marx's essay "On the Jewish Question" will have to suffice here as an indication of the principal direction their comments took: "In the final analysis, the emancipation of the Jews is the emancipation of mankind from Judaism."

However, even in the absence of overt, external conflict, the "civil war" between Athens and Jerusalem, between universal reason and particular revelation, was reenacted time and again within the soul and intellect of individual Jews. Is this an eternal fratricidal conflict, or a battle of shadows in a hall of mirrors?

I won't venture to answer this question. In place of an answer I shall offer today very brief portraits of four thinkers—Yehuda Halevi, Baruch Spinoza, Moses Mendelssohn, and Hermann Cohen—whose responses to the dilemmas I have been discussing are exemplary: "exemplary" *not* in the sense of furnishing cut-and-dried solutions, but in the sense that their life-work *exemplifies*, in very different ways, the intensity and poignancy of the issues they had addressed, and that we continue to address. They are, in the most exacting sense of the term, our contemporaries. A thinker of high caliber is never content to have the calendar or accidents of birth determine his partners in dialogue; the only relevant criterion is the seriousness with which others have argued their positions, whether they did so yesterday or a thousand years ago.

Let me, then, turn to the earliest of the four thinkers whose works are so many concrete variations on the general theme with which I began: Torah and Logos.

### Yehuda Halevi

Yehuda Halevi, born in Spain in the eleventh century, was the greatest lyric poet of the Jewish Medieval period. He was also the author of a most remarkable work, *The Book of the Khazars*, a dialogue between the king of the Khazars, a powerful tribe in the Southern Caucasus which did in fact convert to Judaism, and representatives of pagan philosophy, Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. The dialogue begins when the king has a dream in which he is told: "Thy way of thinking is indeed pleasing to the Creator, but not thy way of acting." The king summons the spokesmen of the four traditions so that he might learn how to change his way of acting and begin leading a "God-pleasing life." The emphasis falls, from the first, on right practice rather than on accurate theory.

The king is dissatisfied with the speculative accounts offered to him by the Aristotelian philosopher, the Christian, and the Moslem. He had not even intended, he says, to speak with a Jew, since he was "aware of the Jews' reduced condition and narrow-minded views, as their misery left them nothing commendable." However, once he decides to talk with the haver, the scholar, he is greatly surprised to hear him begin, not with a statement of belief in a Creator of the world or with a discussion of those attributes of God that serve as universal evidence for every believer, but rather with the declaration: "I believe in the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, who led the children of Jacob out of Egypt with signs and miracles... who sent Moses with His Law and subsequently thousands of prophets, who confirmed His Law by promises to the obedient and threats to the disobedient."

The haver's starting-point contains the key to Halevi's fundamental teaching: It is continuous tradition and not reason or argument that serves as "evidence" for the existence of the Biblical God and as the basis of faith. According to Halevi, there is an unbroken chain that links the Patriarchs to the contemporary Jew, thanks to the continuous teaching and interpretation of the Torah. What was first a matter of direct personal, usually auditory, experience for the Jews at Sinai is now a matter of knowledge based on that uninterrupted tradition. The persuasiveness of this sort of knowledge, Halevi claims, does not fall short of the original, firsthand experience.

The arguments of the philosophers, on the contrary, are only satisfactory in part and are, as Halevi says, "still much less capable

of being proved." Tradition is decisive and authoritative where speculative reason is incomplete and uncertain.

This leads to a second aspect of Halevi's fundamental teaching: The king of the Khazars is only fully persuaded at the end of the third book of the dialogue, in which the haver has expounded in considerable detail the ceremonial laws of the Torah. Thus, what seems to stand furthest apart from the necessary conclusions of autonomous reason, what appears to be solely a reflection of historical and local contingencies—sacrifices on the altar, the wearing of *tefillim* and fringes, and so forth—proves to be, according to Halevi, the unique and unambiguous route to piety and justice. We could interpret this to mean that the terms of the covenant between God and the Laws are not discretionary, that is, the pious man cannot pick and choose among the Divine Commandments, eliminating those that do not answer to the criteria of purely human reason. "Covenantal existence," to use Fackenheim's phrase, gives man's life a total sense which the flawed and incomplete demonstrations of reason cannot rival.

At all events, this brief summary explains, I hope, Halevi's general position in regard to the "Greeks," as expressed in the poem which concludes *The Book of the Khazars*:

See, yea, see my friend, and avoid pitfalls, nets and snares. Let not Greek wisdom entice thee, which has no fruit, but only blossoms... If you listen to the misleading words of its adepts, built upon frail foundations, thou wilt turn away with a heart empty and faint, and a mouth full of dross and thorns. Why should I seek crooked ways, and forsake [the Torah] the mother of paths?

### Spinoza

I now leap from Yehuda Halevi in the eleventh and early twelfth centuries, to Baruch Spinoza in the seventeenth. In my judgment one cannot find a more potent symbol of the conflicts I have been trying to describe. This might be brought home by the following reflections: while the names of Halevi, Maimonides, Mendelssohn, and Cohen, to mention only these, are likely to be familiar to serious students of *Jewish* thought, Spinoza is surely known to, and usually studied by, everyone acquainted with the history of Western philosophy. Because he is the most prominent philosopher of Jewish *origin*, his views on the nature and shortcomings of Judaism have always been especially interesting to Jews and non-Jews alike.

Moreover, one episode in his career continues to be the focus of general attention. On July 24, 1656, a *herem*, a sentence of excom-

munication and anathema, was pronounced against Spinoza by the elders of the Jewish congregation of Amsterdam. In part this document reads:

May he be cursed in the day and cursed in the night, cursed in his lying down and cursed in his rising up. Cursed in his going forth and cursed in his coming in; and may the Lord not forgive him...

The force of emotion manifested here is matched by the heart-felt attempts made by many modern "enlightened" Jews to have the excommunication lifted. Hermann Cohen, for example, responded, negatively, to one such attempt by German Jews in the early twentieth century; but as recently as 1948 David Ben-Gurion campaigned to have the ban annulled.

What Spinoza signifies or symbolizes is, for me at least, rendered most impressively and poetically in a scene in Isaac Bashevis Singer's greatest novel, *The Family Moskat*:

His hero, Asa Heshel Bannet, the son and grandson of Chasidic Rabbis, is shown arriving from cosmopolitan Warsaw in the remote provincial town of Teresphol Minor. He steps from a third-class compartment of the train dressed in a flimsy gabardine jacket, carrying a cheap basket in place of a leather suitcase. "In his pocket," Singer writes, "rested a worn volume, *The Ethics of Spinoza* in a Hebrew translation."

All of the conflicts and tragedies of Asa Bannet's subsequent career are prophetically crystallized in this initial image. For example, when he returns to his native village and confronts his pious grandfather, he is told:

Good night. A simple life, I tell you, that's the best. No questions, no philosophy, no racking your brains. In Germany there was a philosopher and he philosophized so long that he began to eat grass.

What is it in Spinoza's thought that has evoked such extreme and extremely disparate responses? What accounts for his becoming so apt a symbol of the lacerating tensions within the soul of the modern Jew?

Asa Bannet carries with him a copy of Spinoza's *Ethics*; however, it is in another book, *The Theological-Political Treatise*, published anonymously in 1670, that Spinoza sets out his position vis-à-vis Judaism most trenchantly. In the present context I can do little more than state that Spinoza's chief targets are the twin pillars of traditional Judaism as it was understood both by Spinoza himself and by his

Jewish forebears: the doctrine of revelation, on the one hand, and the doctrine of ceremonial or ritual obligations, on the other. Spinoza carries out this attack in the form of an *historical* interpretation of the Torah; what has *since* his day become a familiar and commonplace program of scholarship was *in* his day a radical innovation—namely, the effort to understand the Bible as the product of human, not divine, authorship, taking stock of all the uncertainties, ambiguities, contradictions, and “ulterior motives” to be expected in any work produced by human hands—in this case, many different human hands.

This *historical* approach to the Bible had, for Spinoza, as it does for many of his present-day heirs, two major consequences:

(1) First, nothing in the Bible can be taken as *evidence* of Divine Revelation, since, after all, the deeds and the speeches ascribed to God and to the patriarchs, Moses and the prophets, were “invented” or “concocted” by other human beings, more particularly, by human beings who addressed their readers’ primitive imagination, not their mature philosophical intelligence.

Furthermore, miracles are as such impossible since they would interrupt the completely deterministic order of nature which Spinoza believes has been put beyond question by the modern science of physics.

(2) Second, the human, all-too-human, authorship of the Torah furnishes a new, more sophisticated explanation of the “ceremonial laws,” the statutes and ordinances commanded from Sinai. The rationale behind these is narrow, and above all political: the priests of the original state of Israel used them to secure or to enforce social unity and ethical unanimity among its citizens. This consideration permits Spinoza to argue that once the Jews were exiled from the land of Israel the Mosaic laws lost their binding force. In particular, the Jews no longer have any justification for remaining “a nation apart” from the Gentile majority.

In the light of these two implications of Spinoza’s re-interpretation of Judaism it is scarcely surprising that his co-religionists were deeply offended. As one seventeenth-century reader was led to say about the *Theological-Political Treatise*, it is a work “forged in Hell by a renegade Jew and the Devil.”

### Moses Mendelssohn

I come now to the third of my four “exemplary” thinkers. Moses Mendelssohn, who lived from 1729 to 1786, has been plausibly called “the first modern Jewish philosopher,” or, even more incisively, by the poet Heinrich Heine, “the Jewish Luther.” His writings, but even more

strikingly his career as a whole, illustrate the precarious position of a Jewish thinker in the modern era. For Mendelssohn was, above all, a "child of his age," and his age was the age of the Enlightenment. The central claim of the Enlightenment was that human reason, once freed from the shackles of external authority, both theoretical and institutional, could define and eventually achieve moral and political goals which all mankind would spontaneously endorse. "Progress," progress sponsored and promoted by reason, by *logos*, alone, became the watchword of European thinkers in the eighteenth century; it was this watchword that gave life to the notion of "universal tolerance" embraced by the "progressive" thinkers of that era.

Mendelssohn seemed to his Christian contemporaries to have arrived providentially on the scene, inasmuch as he was a Jew whose philosophical work fell squarely within the compass of the Enlightenment program. It is impossible to read eighteenth-century accounts of Mendelssohn without detecting again and again the note of surprise that accompanies the praise bestowed on his achievements: that a thinker of Jewish birth and commitment could prove so "reasonable," so much in harmony with the agenda of the Enlightenment, seemed to underscore and confirm in *practice* the *theoretical* postulate of universal tolerance. Accordingly, Mendelssohn was welcomed into the "inner circle" of Christian progressives (although his nomination to membership in the Prussian Academy of Sciences was vetoed by Friedrich Wilhelm the First, then King of Prussia).

Mendelssohn won his special standing in the eyes of European intellectuals in large measure because his Jewish origins did not appear to affect his philosophical opinions. The God whose existence he set out to prove (for example, in his book *Morgenstunden*) is not the God who revealed himself on Sinai, but the necessary deity at which unaided natural reason arrives when it considers the contingent character of the world. Similarly, the principal moral teachings of the Bible are truths which each and every person will accept if reason is allowed to take its natural course.

And yet, Mendelssohn remained sentimentally or emotionally a Jew. In doing so he exposed himself to a curiously, if not predictably, baneful process that led from "universal enlightenment," through the social and political "emancipation" of European Jewry, to the seemingly rational demand for Jewish assimilation, that is, conversion. A Christian interlocutor, Lavater, decided to challenge Mendelssohn's enduring commitment to Judaism directly; he asked him either to refute publicly certain arguments in behalf of the compelling superiority and rationality of Christianity or, in case he found them irrefut-

able, to become a Christian himself. Mendelssohn, unable to turn aside from this explicit challenge, eventually wrote his major work in religious philosophy, significantly entitled *Jerusalem*.

In this book Mendelssohn shows himself to be a disciple of Spinoza—whose “pantheism” he elsewhere esoterically abjured—in at least one decisive respect. The particular “laws and ordinances” issuing from the revelation on Sinai and thereby setting Jews apart from non-Jews still have an instrumental and transitory value, even if they lack an absolute and transhistorical value: the threat of “polytheism and anthropomorphism,” in a word, “idolatry,” is a genuine threat, at least so long as all men are not equally enlightened:

genuine theists must maintain some kind of unity among themselves, in order to prevent the forces of darkness from trampling everything underfoot.

Adherence to the ceremonial laws is thus a symbolic and, as it were, political act designed to uphold the claims of reason against the challenge of unreason, even though the advocates of reason recognize that these ceremonial laws are not *in themselves* reasonable. Thus, in the end, Mendelssohn's account of the place of Judaism differs only in detail and emphasis from that furnished by his Christian admirer Lessing, whose seminal tract, *The Education of the Human Race*, consigned Jewish beliefs to a primitive and long outmoded stage in the progressive history of rational mankind.

Let me try to summarize what we have learned from these first three exemplary thinkers:

Yehuda Halevi tries to demonstrate that the superiority of reason over tradition is indemonstrable; hence, the only trustworthy basis for a “God-pleasing” life is the tradition which demands fulfillment of “statutes and ordinances” on the grounds that Divine revelation shows these to be obligatory.

Spinoza, having tried to cut the ground from beneath the very notion of revelation, rejects the possibility that such particularistic “statutes and ordinances” could be binding on the free and rational mind.

Mendelssohn attempts to find some middle ground between these two extremes; the particularism of the ceremonial laws is justified only as a “holding action” against the threat of irrational idolatry; when the latter is irreversibly defeated, the non-moral or ceremonial “statutes and ordinances” will no longer be valid.

## Hermann Cohen

I have left myself little time to discuss Hermann Cohen in any but a superficial way. The following reflections will have to suffice. Cohen, who was born in 1842 and died in 1918, lived an uneventful life as far as external episodes are concerned—for most of his adult life he was an exceptionally prominent professor of philosophy, first in Marburg and then in Berlin. Inwardly, his life was a single dramatic event, an "inner dialogue between his philosophy and his religion, between reason and piety," as his English translator, Simon Kaplan, has written. Let me quickly examine each of these aspects of Cohen's career. He owed his prominence chiefly to his work as an interpreter of Kant's philosophy; his commentaries on Kant's major texts became the basis for the so-called Marburg School of Neo-Kantianism, which had a wide influence in academic philosophy until it was sublated by Heidegger during the 1920s. His commitment to Kantianism was buttressed by an equally deep interest in Plato, especially in Plato's theory of forms and his conception of mathematics. According to Cohen, Plato's Forms are anticipations of Kant's notion of the ideas of reason which serve as regulative hypotheses in the sciences; the Forms understood as such hypotheses provide the motive-power for open-ended "research programs" directed upon the discovery of the ultimate principles of reason and, hence, of reality. It is apparent that Cohen annuls any significant differences between Plato and Kant, or, more generally, between the ancient and the modern versions of rationalism.

Plato and Kant thus share the merit of establishing philosophy on a purely scientific basis. Science, for Cohen, means a thoroughly rational account of the universal and necessary principles underlying all domains of human activity, scientific activity, sense, ethical activity, and, finally, aesthetic activity. "Universalism" and "rationalism" are, for Cohen, the two sides of a single coin. Only what reason, acting autonomously, comes to certify as true carries validity for all human beings without exception; in science, necessary laws of nature; in ethics, moral imperatives commanding the respect of every rational agent. This is the thesis that sustains Cohen's own "system of philosophy," which he articulated in an imposing trilogy: *The Logic of Pure Cognition*, *The Ethics of Pure Will*, and *The Aesthetics of Pure Feeling*.

Cohen was, at the same time, a deeply committed Jew. Unlike Mendelssohn, however, Cohen was not content to relegate his Judaism to the domain of sentiment; on the contrary, at the heart of his philosophical labors is his attempt to demonstrate the fundamental

identity between the teachings of Plato and Kant, on the one hand, and the teachings of Judaism, especially prophetic Judaism, on the other. He pursued this first attempt in a pair of important essays, "The Inner Relations of Kantian Philosophy to Judaism" and "The Social Ideal in Plato and the Prophets," and then in his crowning work, *The Religion of Reason out of the Sources of Judaism*. His efforts towards this goal are marked by a characteristic generosity of spirit; thus, Cohen acknowledges and then discounts Kant's insistence that the "euthanasia" of Judaism will benefit all people, "not least the Jewish people itself." Similarly, Cohen treats Plato's "elitism," that is, the claim that not all men are equally qualified to become philosopher-kings, as a contingent defect in Plato's system, easily corrected by reference to the moral egalitarianism of the Biblical prophets.

Cohen's undertaking brings him face to face with both of the essential tensions I have been trying to explore with you today: the conflict or apparent conflict between reason and revelation, and the discrepancy between what is universal to all human beings and what is particular to one group of human beings. His own sense of these tensions arises in the form of the question: What place is there, if any, for religion within the *system* built up by autonomous reason? Kant's work, "Religion within the Limits of Reason Alone," thus serves as the prototype for Cohen's "Religion of Reason out of the Sources of Judaism."

Cohen came to see that systematic philosophy, precisely in virtue of its universal validity, leaves out of account the *individual* as such. This can be seen most readily in the domain of ethics—the moral duties endorsed by reason apply to all rational agents alike and make no distinction among individuals. To quote Simon Kaplan once again, "the general law of duty falls helpless and silent in the presence of the individual with his imperfections and frailties, confusions and fears." The task of religion is to establish and to make meaningful a direct connection between each individual and the ideals of moral self-perfection by which we measure and suffer over our moral shortcomings. Moreover, this connection must be such that from it the individual can discover or rediscover the universal application and truth of those moral ideals. These thoughts are at the root of Cohen's central concept of the "correlation" between man and God: On man's side, correlation takes the form of repentance, the acknowledgment of transgression and the desire for forgiveness; on God's side, correlation means God's promise to redeem the individual, to cleanse him of his sins and fulfill his desire for self-perfection. In the language of Leviticus: "Ye shall be holy, for I the Lord thy God am Holy." (Lev. 19:2)

Furthermore, the individual who recognizes this correlation between himself and God is at the same time conscious that the God who promises him salvation promises it to mankind as a whole, that God treats all individuals in the same way and requires that they treat one another in accordance with the twin demands of love and justice.

In fact, correlation, far from being an isolating and ultimately egoistic relationship is, in Cohen's argument, the source of the discovery that all men are my *fellow-men*, rather than those who merely share the world with me in a contingent and meaningless way. Thus, the individual's love of God must express itself concretely as his love and devotion to his fellow-men, or, in other words, the search for perfect social justice is equivalent to the worship of God. The exemplary instance of the fellow-man is the poor man, whose poverty is undeserved; consequently, social justice entails the abolition of poverty. This is the foundation of Cohen's abiding loyalty to non-communist socialism.

These arguments lead Cohen to "resolve" the fundamental tensions within Jewish thought; his solutions would command respect and deserve the closest study even if they should prove, in the end, less than fully persuasive. I can only mention his proposals here:

(1) Revelation is not a single episode that occurred at Sinai; it is, in Cohen's words "the creation of human reason" itself; that is, the capacity that distinguishes humans from animals and makes them receptive to uncompromising ethical demands. Consequently, the particular "statutes and ordinances" announced in the Torah have, at best, a secondary status; the progress of human reason over the course of history justifies their reform or even, as in the case of animal sacrifices, their elimination. The insights of reason, not ceremonial duties, bear witness to the "correlation" between man and God.

(2) Analogously, Israel's election, its status as "the chosen people," in no way licenses Jewish self-righteousness or pride. Instead, the role of the Jews is to suffer in behalf of the truth of monotheism, to "pass through history like a Job" as Cohen writes, suffering not in punishment for its sins, but in order to keep alive the hope and the promise of the ultimate redemption and unity of all mankind.

The particular condition of the Jews is that their historical mission has universal significance. Cohen took seriously the words of Balaam in the Book of Numbers: Israel "shall dwell alone and shall not be reckoned among the nations" (Num. 23:9) and on this basis he opposed Zionism. The *diaspora*, the loss of political nationhood, is the only appropriate condition for a people whose destiny is to symbolize the trans-national brotherhood of all peoples. The Messianic age,

which was for Cohen the central notion of prophetic Judaism, is the goal of historical existence in its entirety; "the unity of humankind," Cohen argued, "is the eternal value of the human race," for this human unity is the best possible image of the unity and uniqueness of God himself. Cohen followed Kant in describing the achievement of this Messianic age as an "infinite task." Progress toward it is never-ending.

I will have done Cohen and his themes a grave injustice if my sketch has left you with the impression that he was simply an academic or scholastic thinker interested in system-building for its own sake.

First of all, the dilemmas to which Cohen wanted to make a systematic response are real and deeply embedded in the history of Jewish thinking. Secondly, the central position of the individual, particularly the suffering individual, in Cohen's religious philosophy, exempts him from the kind of charge a Kierkegaard, for example, lodges against the Hegelian "system." It cannot have been mere accident that Cohen's most ardent and most thoughtful student was Franz Rosenzweig, frequently and rightly called the "Father of Jewish Existentialism." Furthermore, Cohen is extraordinarily sensitive to the living forms of Jewish religious practice; you need only read the pivotal chapter on the significance of Yom Kippur, The Day of Atonement, to become convinced of this. Here, as elsewhere in the *Religion of Reason*, his writing displays a singular beauty, beauty of the sort achieved only when the whole soul is engaged with and by the most vital questions.

I have conscientiously refrained from offering an explicit assessment of Cohen's ambitions, since my aim was rather to bring to light the concerns to which those ambitions were addressed. It would be extravagant simply to apply to his work the phrase he used to characterize Kant's *Religion Within the Limits of Reason Alone*—a "*gewagtes Spiel*," "a daring game"—just as it would be insufficient to point to the fact that Cohen's rejection of Zionism, in the name of the universal mission of Judaism, went hand in hand with his belief, expressed in 1907, that "Germany... is the motherland of culture for European Jewry in general."

Nonetheless, it seems to me appropriate to conclude by delineating, in the sketchiest way, the lines of inquiry one might take if Cohen's hypotheses were to prove artificial or inadequate.

To free Jewish "particularism," "parochialism," of the onus history has imposed upon it, one would have to show *either* that the Greek understanding of universal *logos* is itself parochially or specifically "Greek" or that the genuine universalism of Greek *logos* underwent a profound transformation when it was wedded first to Christianity and then to modern science. The modern version of *universal* rationality

may turn out to be indistinguishable from a kind of *totalitarianism* in which the particular, far from being reconciled to, and within, the whole, is irrevocably canceled.

The first line of potential inquiry still assumes the superiority of the claims of reason, whether Greek or modern, over the claims of Biblical piety and observance of revealed commandments. A second line of inquiry would have to confront their respective merits. One path it might follow is to explore the differences between the *eros* of which Plato speaks—an *eros* which leaves behind both fellow-men and the institutions they share, as it moves towards knowledge of the Beautiful Itself—and the *love, ahavah*, of which the Jewish tradition speaks. Cohen himself makes this love the central theme of his religious philosophy: "The love of God must unify all the things and all the problems of the world." Or, in the words of the seventy-third psalm: "But as for me, the nearness of God is my Good."



# Autonomy and Authenticity: How One Becomes What One Is

Daniel W. Conway

γένοι' ὅλος ἐσσι μαθών

Become who you are.

—Pindar, *Pythian Odes*, II, 73

Nietzsche's fascination with Pindar's imperative endured throughout his entire productive career. He toyed with variations of the slogan, placed it in the mouth of his "son," Zarathustra, and recommended it fondly to Lou Salomé just before their final estrangement.<sup>1</sup> Nietzsche thought so highly of his borrowed maxim that he inscribed his "autobiography," *Ecce Homo*, with the subtitle, *Wie man wird, was man ist* (How one becomes what one is). Despite his fascination with this cryptic teaching, however, Nietzsche offers his readers very little in the way of illumination, and he neglects to explain how exactly one sets out to "become what one is."

Nietzsche's uncharacteristic silence has heightened, rather than dampened, the enthusiasm of his readers for this cryptic slogan. Perhaps no other philosopher is so warmly received as a champion of autonomy and authenticity, and the "existential" Nietzsche, originally lionized by Anglophone readers in the fifties and sixties, is in fashion once again. Various ingenious interpretations have been advanced recently of Nietzsche's Pindarian motto, and readers once again view him as a laconic guide in their own quest to become what they are. In this essay I would like to temper somewhat the enthusiasm for Nietzsche's call to authenticity, by drawing attention to several counter-currents resident within his thought. While Nietzsche is widely hailed as the champion *par excellence* of authenticity, he also stands as one of the greatest critics of voluntarism. In light of these counter-currents, it would appear that "how one becomes what one is" is a matter that lies largely beyond one's control.

### Nietzsche's Critique of Autonomy

The term "autonomy" rarely appears in Nietzsche's post-Zarathustran writings, and never with reference to his own moral philosophy. This absence is surprising not only because Nietzsche wrote in the shadow of Kant and German Idealism, but also because his books apparently promote a moral "ideal" that bears at least a family resemblance to autonomy. Nietzsche routinely praises triumphs of self-command, self-legislation, self-overcoming, self-mastery, self-reverence, self-control, and self-creation. He is widely received, especially within the tradition of existentialism, as the champion *par excellence* of self-reliance and autonomy, of the willful creation of an authentic self.<sup>2</sup> Nietzsche translates Kant's injunction to unite subject and sovereign in a kingdom of ends into a more lyrical call for the integration of creator and creature within a single soul:

In man *creature* and *creator* are united: in man there is material, fragment, excess, dirt, nonsense, chaos; but in man there is also creator, form-giver, hammer-hardness, spectator-divinity, and seventh day. (BGE 225)<sup>3</sup>

Despite such familiar sentiments, however, Nietzsche has good reason to resist both the term "autonomy" and the concept itself, especially as a normative moral ideal, for he has no means of verifying the authenticity (or inauthenticity) of any given self.<sup>4</sup> He consequently does not exhort his readers toward authenticity, and he furthermore constructs a compelling case against the promotion of autonomy as a normative ideal. While Nietzsche occasionally deploys a strongly voluntaristic rhetoric, the ideal of self-creation that is popularly attributed to him is simply incompatible with the diminished volitional resources of late modernity. The frustrations of Nietzsche's own life and career vividly demonstrate the futility of the voluntaristic ideal popularly ascribed to him.

Part of the confusion here is attributable to Nietzsche's designation of himself as an "immoralist," as a philosopher who takes his stand "beyond good and evil." While this designation perhaps suggests that Nietzsche has somehow freed himself from the Western moral tradition, nothing could be further from the truth. In fact, if we view autonomy as a departure from, or transcendence of, conventional morality, then the case of Nietzsche militates *against* the promotion of any such normative ideal. Nietzsche indicates that the achievement of autonomy is simply incompatible with his historical situation:

We have been spun into a severe yarn and shirt of duties and cannot get out of that—and in this we are "men of duty," we, too. Occasionally,

that is true, we dance in our "chains" and between our "swords"; more often, that is no less true, we gnash our teeth and feel impatient with all the secret hardness of our destiny. (BGE 226)<sup>5</sup>

The mysterious "philosophers of the future" may succeed in achieving (and promoting) genuine autonomy, but Nietzsche and his fellow "free spirits," imprisoned in the heteronomy of conventional morality, can do little more than rattle about in their chains.

The primary problem with autonomy as a moral ideal lies in the difficulty involved in verifying its supposed achievement. This problem derives from the more basic problem of verifying the authenticity of any "ideal" self advertised as "higher," or more "genuine" than one's current, empirical self. Any alternative "I" with which one might come to identify is always itself a product of the same historical conditions that produced one's current self. The idea that one can adopt a verifiably genuine or authentic self, upon which the ideal of autonomy is founded, is philosophically indefensible. Nietzsche consequently rejects the pursuit of autonomy, as well as the distinction between "authentic" and "empirical" selves, upon which it trades.

Nietzsche's readers often point to *Toward the Genealogy of Morals* as advocating a recovery of the natural, instinctual self whose repression represents the opportunity cost of human civilization. He speaks, for example, of the "splendid *blond beast*" within us as a "hidden core [that] needs to erupt from time to time," and as an "animal [that] has to get out again and go back to the wilderness" (GM I:11). While the philosophical anthropology articulated in Essay II of the *Genealogy* may appear to disclose a primal animal nature that might somehow serve as a standard of authenticity, the *Genealogy* also reveals that such a "nature" (if intelligible at all) is forever lost to us, by virtue of our irreversible acculturation. Nietzsche ridicules the Stoics for wanting to live "according to Nature" (BGE 9), and he argues (ostensibly against Rousseau) that any attempt to identify the authentic self with the noble savage resident within oneself is hopelessly romantic, implicating one in "the return to nature *in impuris naturalibus*" (TI 9:1; cf. 9:49).

From a Nietzschean perspective, then, it comes as no surprise that self-proclaimed champions of autonomy—Rousseau, Kant, Rawls, Rorty, *et al.*—fail to proffer a non-circular method of identifying a self that is more genuine, more real, or more authentic than the empirical self that one currently is. The achievement of autonomy is either impossible (as Hegel argued against Kant), or political (as in the social contracts drawn up by Rousseau and Rawls), or trivial (as promised by the currently popular strategy of narrative re-description).<sup>6</sup> These

strategies succeed only in steering agents toward those "techniques of the self" (to borrow Michel Foucault's term)<sup>7</sup> that more closely cleave to a specific cultural or political ideal. Such "techniques of the self" may secure for their practitioners various rewards and privileges, but they do not deliver their practitioners to genuine autonomy. Philosophers and moralists generally praise certain individuals as "autonomous" not because they are genuinely autonomous, but because their heteronomy instantiates favored political ideals. Nietzsche thus contends that genuine autonomy is not a moral ideal at all, for "autonomous' and 'moral' [*sittlich*] are mutually exclusive" (GM 2:2). What is usually called, and applauded as, "autonomy" is in fact the antithesis of genuine, supra-moral autonomy. Self-proclaimed champions of "autonomy" in fact want nothing to do with genuine, supra-moral autonomy, and they have rigged their respective social contracts in order to ensure that "autonomy" conforms in practice to conventional morality.

Nietzsche thus exposes autonomy as a disguised moral ideal, which trades on the misleading promise of freedom from *all* ideals. Like all ideals, autonomy functions to constrain moral development rather than to promote its unbridled development. Here it is important to bear in mind that Nietzsche's celebrated "immoralism" constitutes precisely his opposition to *all* ideals. Nietzsche views idealism in any form as "cowardice," as a "flight from reality" (EH:destiny 3), for ideals necessarily place pre-established constraints on the forms of life that might emerge. "All idealism," Nietzsche maintains, "is mendaciousness in the face of what is necessary" (EH:clever 10). As an "immoralist," Nietzsche refrains from proposing a single ideal in accordance with which all must be domesticated, and he instead encourages an untamed proliferation of rare and exotic individuals.<sup>8</sup> Nietzsche's general aversion to idealism thus places him in opposition to the philosophical ideal of "autonomy" as well, for the pursuit of one's authentic self necessarily devaluates the embodied, non-autonomous self that one currently is.

Nietzsche's critique of autonomy is linked inextricably to his diagnosis of modernity as an age beset by advanced, irrecoverable decadence. The feats of self-transformation required to deliver one to autonomy are simply incompatible with the diminished vitality of the age. Nietzsche does not indicate whether autonomy was attainable in bygone ages, but he makes it quite clear that the achievement of genuine autonomy outstrips the residual vitality of agents representative of late modernity. What modernity calls an "individual," the pride of the Enlightenment, is nothing more than a "moral milksop,"

a domesticated animal that has internalized the demands of culture and consequently operates under the illusion of self-legislated freedom. If we measure ages by "their positive strength," then "that lavishly squandering and fatal age of the Renaissance appears as the last great age; and we moderns...appear as a weak age" (TI 9:37). Even the "sovereign individual," who possesses "the *right to make promises*," owes his "rare freedom" to his "*conscience*," which, Nietzsche shows, is itself an implant of socially enforced heteronomy (GM 2:2). The conscience, a fiercely vigilant homunculus that relentlessly reckons one's debts and obligations, represents the final—and most forbidding—barrier to genuine autonomy.

Nietzsche snickers at the idea that the right to make promises stands as evidence of genuine autonomy, for he views the conscience as the internalized, mnemonic distillation of socially enforced punitive and carceral practices. Whereas the noble savage and blonde beast require sturdy cages or constant external surveillance, "men of conscience" are sufficiently disciplined to police themselves. The closest thing we know to genuine, supra-moral autonomy is not the debt-paying, promise-keeping, originally positioned author of the social contract, but the criminal, the monster devoid of conscience. Nietzsche defines "the criminal type" as "the type of strong human being under unfavorable circumstances: a strong human being made sick" (TI 9:45). Manu, the architect of the Hindu caste system, understood the need both to exclude the chandalas *and* to render them politically impotent, lest their exclusion strengthen and embolden them (TI 7:3).

Under the influence of Christianity, the institutions of Western civilization have for the most part implemented what Nietzsche calls "moralities of taming" (TI 7:3). Social practices of self-formation have succeeded in sickening (and thus domesticating) those individuals whose "virtues are ostracized by society." The conscience thus prevents individuals from straying far from the internalized norm, and the institutions of modernity marginalize or stamp out those rare, exotic plants that do manage to blossom. On a rare occasion, however, "a man proves stronger than society: the Corsican, Napoleon, is the most famous case" (TI 9:45). Napoleon thus represents the closest approximation known to Nietzsche of genuine autonomy, for Napoleon approached the task of lawgiving (relatively) unconstrained by conscience and tradition. He consequently describes Napoleon as a "return to Nature," which he defines as

an *ascent*—up into the high, free, even terrible Nature and naturalness where great tasks are something one plays with, one *may* play with. (TI 9:48)

### Self-creation vs. Self-discovery

Nietzsche's critique of autonomy thus furnishes us with an insight into what he does *not* mean by human flourishing. The determination of a positive account of human flourishing is complicated, however, by his apparent recommendation of two separate models of self-perfection. As we have seen, he is best known for apparently promoting a volitional model of self-creation that entrusts the project of self-perfection to the will. Speaking on behalf of his unknown "friends," he proclaims,

We, however, *want to become those we are*—human beings who are new, unique, incomparable, who give themselves laws, who create themselves. (GS 335)

Nietzsche tends to convey this model of self-creation through a cluster of aesthetic metaphors. In an oft-cited passage, he recommends the project of self-creation by issuing an "imperative" to fashion one's life into a work of art:

To "give style" to one's character—a great and rare art! It is practiced by those who survey all the strengths and weaknesses of their nature and then fit them into an artistic plan until every one of them appears as art and reason and even weaknesses delight the eye. Here a large mass of second nature has been added; there a piece of original nature has been removed—both times through long practice and daily work at it. (GS 290)<sup>9</sup>

This strongly voluntaristic model of self-creation is further reinforced by Nietzsche's apparent ridicule of the Socratic/Enlightenment ideal of self-knowledge, which presupposes that some inert self lies waiting to be discovered. Nietzsche counters the Delphic injunction by calling into question the very possibility of a definitive self-knowledge:

"Everyone is most distant from himself." All who try the reins know this to their chagrin, and the maxim "know thyself" addressed to human beings by a god, is almost malicious. (GS 335)

The "object" of self-investigation continually changes as a result of the investigation itself: "Learning changes us; it does what all nourishment does which also does not merely 'preserve'—as physiologists know" (BGE 231). Every gain in self-knowledge contributes to who or what one is, thus continually displacing one's "true" self and indefinitely postponing a conclusive self-discovery. Proponents of this volitional model of Nietzschean self-perfection thus conclude that because no inert self lies waiting to be discovered, it must be the case that we create ourselves.<sup>10</sup>

For all the textual support in its favor, however, this model of self-creation fails to capture Nietzsche's account of human flourishing. First of all, the project of self-creation runs aground on the shoals of idealism. Any attempt to fashion a more authentic self necessarily involves a flight from the empirical to the ideal. The determination that one's empirical self is inadequate, unsatisfactory, or defective implicates one in the metaphysics of morals that Nietzsche's "immoralism" ostensibly opposes. Second, this model of self-creation is overly voluntaristic, for it fails to take into account the general limitations of one's creative capacities. One does not "become what one is" simply by dint of an act of will, and to preach otherwise verges upon cruelty.<sup>11</sup>

For these reasons, perhaps, Nietzsche also promotes a cognitive model of human flourishing, which sanctions a process of self-discovery. Especially in his post-Zarathustran works, he cautions against the misleadingly voluntaristic model of self-creation for which he is currently hailed, warning that

at the bottom of us, really "deep down," there is, of course, something unteachable, some granite of pure spiritual *fatum*, of predetermined decision and answer to predetermined selected questions. (BGE 231)

Nietzsche's fatalism, which plays an increasingly important role in his post-Zarathustran writings, thus mitigates the optimism and exuberance conveyed by his rhetoric of self-creation.<sup>12</sup> This "spiritual *fatum*" comprises those intractable, relatively permanent elements of one's identity that one cannot readily change. It is crucial that we discover this spiritual *fatum*, for it effectively restricts the sphere of self-overcoming, thereby limiting the range of selves we can become. On this strongly cognitive model, the task of self-overcoming will apparently require a healthy reverence for that *fatum* within oneself that proves resistant to aesthetic rehabilitation. Nietzsche consequently proposes *amor fati* as his "formula for greatness in a human being" (EH:clever 10).

While Nietzsche may appear simply to vacillate between these models of human flourishing, his actual goal is to propose a synthesis of the two. His term for this composite model of human flourishing, which combines elements of both self-creation and self-discovery, is *self-overcoming*. Describing his resistance to the powerful influence on him of Wagner, he writes,

You want a word for it?—If I were a moralist, who knows what I might call it? Perhaps self-overcoming [*Selbstaufhebung*].—But the philosopher has no love for moralists. Nor does he love pretty words. (CW P)

One "becomes what one is" by overcoming oneself, which involves elements of both cognition and volition.

As we have seen, Nietzsche's readers customarily define self-overcoming through a process of elimination: authentic selfhood is a matter either of creation or discovery, and we have good reasons for eliminating one of these options. Proponents of the model of self-creation, for example, arrive at their determination of Nietzschean self-overcoming not by way of actually creating themselves, but by way of their doubts concerning the possibility of self-discovery. It is Nietzsche's intention, however, to expose the distinction between self-creation and self-discovery as sheltering a false dichotomy.<sup>13</sup> One "becomes what one is" only by combining elements of cognition and volition, discovery and creation. If, as David Lachterman suggests, "construction is the mark of modernity,"<sup>14</sup> then Nietzsche is simultaneously representative of modernity and resistant to it. While his voluntaristic rhetoric suggests the construction of selfhood, his fatalism recommends the discovery of the self.

The composite nature of self-overcoming is crucial to Nietzsche's program of political education, for only the combination of self-creation and self-discovery engenders the *cruelty*—both to oneself and to others—that ensures the nomothetic impact of self-overcoming. On their own, self-creation and self-discovery both fail to fascinate and to arouse. Both are eminently safe (and fatuous) strategies for "becoming what one is," and they are likely to seduce no one.<sup>15</sup> Only the volatile mixture of volition and cognition, which the philosopher's experiments cruelly detonate, can engender that dimension of Dionysian excess that simultaneously galvanizes and jeopardizes the economy of the soul. This potentially mortal expenditure in turn guarantees the self-inflicted violence that others find so compelling, so erotic. In order to become nomothetic, and thus political, a strategy of self-overcoming must combine elements of both volition and cognition.

### Genealogy and Self-overcoming

Nietzsche's composite model of human flourishing is embodied in his practice of genealogy, which combines invention and discovery to deliver a compelling account of how he has "become what he is." For example, Nietzsche's account in the *Genealogy* of the "slave revolt in morality" is best understood as both an invention and a discovery; it is neither purely fictitious nor adequately supported by empirical and historical evidence. It combines Nietzsche's indefensible, pre-genealogical prejudices with a plausible "scientific" account of the historical trends that inform modernity.

Nietzsche's own quest to "become what he is" exemplifies a type of life informed by genealogical self-knowledge. We might think of genealogical self-knowledge as a by-product of genealogical investigation in general, or as the dividend that accrues to the self-referential implications of one's investigations. Genealogical self-knowledge combines elements of both volition and cognition, thereby eliding any sharp distinction between self-creation and self-discovery. By the time one gains genealogical insight into "oneself," this cognitive act has already reconstituted—and thus postponed—one's self. In fact, it is this admixture of creation and discovery that propels the self ahead of one's investigations of it. The more directly one seeks self-knowledge through genealogical investigation, the more certainly one ensures the failure of this quest, especially if one assumes that the self is an inert, fixed datum awaiting discovery.

Nietzsche thus begins the *Genealogy* by pre-emptively dashing any lingering hope that his investigations might unearth a genuine, authentic self:

We are unknown to ourselves, we men of knowledge—and with good reason. We have never sought ourselves—how could it happen that we should ever *find* ourselves?...So we are necessarily strangers to ourselves, we do not understand ourselves, we *have* to misunderstand ourselves, for us the law "Each is furthest from himself" applies to all eternity—we are not "men of knowledge" with respect to ourselves. (GM P1)

Paradoxically, then, genealogy yields a type of self-knowledge, but only to those genealogists who do not directly seek it. Through genealogy, Nietzsche himself becomes what he is, even if there is nothing that he is.

Much of the self-knowledge gained via genealogical investigation is negative, as one becomes gradually disabused of the prejudices one previously harbored about oneself. Nietzsche ridicules the "pride" of the "English [sic] psychologists" who preceded him, for it prevented them from subjecting their own methodological "idiosyncrasy" to critical scrutiny (GM I:2). Genealogy liberates one not from the past, but from certain oppressive or counterproductive interpretations of the past that presently hold one captive. Genealogy does not banish the contingency of one's historical development, but it transforms "mere" contingency into an intelligible—and thus interpretable—condition of one's identity. One remains a creature born of contingency, but genealogy can "redeem" this contingency by illuminating alternative (and potentially enabling) accounts of the past.

By exposing the contingency of the dominant "techniques of the self," genealogy liberates one (in theory) from calcified conceptions of the limitations and possibilities of human "nature." Genealogy re-acquaints one with the plasticity of the human soul and thus reclaims an expanded range of self-overcomings. Of course, whether or not one is practically free to implement these genealogical insights is another matter. In addition to disclosing historical contingencies, genealogy also reveals the historical sedimentation that encrusts contingency in quasi-necessity. For example, while the *Genealogy* reveals that the hegemony of the ascetic ideal is, strictly speaking, contingent, Nietzsche harbors no hope that he might somehow exploit this historical contingency to enshrine an alternative ideal. The political significance of Nietzsche's genealogy of morals thus lies not so much in its (dubious) account of the development of Western morality as in its exemplification of an alternative ascetic practice that may succeed in inoculating us against the redemptive metaphysical yearnings that threaten our demise. Nietzsche's achievement of genealogical self-knowledge, a goal he attains but never pursues, exemplifies a model of self-overcoming that is consistent with the depleted volitional resources of late modernity.

### Resistance and Self-experimentation

The goal of self-experimentation is neither to overthrow the ascetic ideal, nor to reverse the advance of decadence, but to illuminate and implement "forgotten" techniques of the self. These experimental techniques of the self must remain irreducibly ascetic in nature, but they may afford a greater, or variant, range of affective expression than more familiar techniques of the self. Convinced that what passes for autonomy is simply socially rewarded heteronomy, Nietzsche rails against those elements within himself that most closely correspond to socially inscribed ideals:

What does a philosopher demand of himself first and last? To overcome his time in himself, to become "timeless." With what must he therefore engage in the hardest combat? With whatever marks him as a child of his time. (CW P)

Nietzsche thus places himself in opposition to modernity as a whole, and he resists his age by resisting its reflections within himself. The point of Nietzsche's combat is not to eliminate those elements of his identity that "mark him as a child of his time," but to digest them, to incorporate them within the "manifold whole" of his self:

Facing a world of "modern ideas" that would banish everybody into a corner and "speciality," a philosopher...would be compelled to find the greatness of man, the concept of "greatness," precisely in his range and multiplicity, in his wholeness in manifoldness. He would even determine value and rank in accordance with how much and how many things one could bear and take upon himself. (BGE 212)

One "becomes what one is" not through the castrative practices sanctioned by Western morality, but through a constant process of incorporation and integration. From this resistance of one's age emerges a self that is not newly created, but newly configured.

Which selves should the philosopher embody? While all techniques of the self are equally heteronomous, some will prove more advantageous in the pursuit of some pragmatic end. Nietzsche, for example, is intent on discovering those "techniques of the self" that will prove most resistant to the advent of the "will to nothingness"; he consequently privileges those ascetic disciplines that promise to retard the deterioration of the affects. Since he does not know *a priori* which specific ascetic practices will be least threatening, he resorts to self-experimentation. Nietzsche thus probes the resiliency of decadence, implementing and embodying selves that accommodate an increasingly greater range and depth of affective expenditure. He "guesses what remedies avail against what is harmful," a gambit that proves that he "has turned out well" (EH:wise 2). If successful in his guesses, he may seduce other fellow travelers to their "forgotten" next selves, and perhaps help them to resist their own decadence. If unsuccessful in this guessing game, he may reinforce the hegemony of the ascetic ideal and thus inadvertently hasten the advent of the "will to nothingness."

Nietzsche consequently combats danger with danger. He can offer no assurance that self-experimentation—either as a general strategy or in his own specific experiments—actually succeeds in retarding decadence. It may be, as he suggests in his more pessimistic moments, that the project of resisting the decadence of modernity is simply futile. Or it may be, as he suggests in his more exuberant moments, that philosophers can successfully wage war with their age and thus resist those strains of idolatry to which they are most vulnerable. All he "knows" from his genealogy of morals is that the available range of selves has been artificially and dangerously circumscribed in late modernity, and that the predilection for self-destructive technologies of the self threatens the very survival of the will. Nietzsche thus hopes to contribute to a proliferation of rare and exotic selves whose identities he cannot begin to predict. In this respect, his experiments represent a desperate gamble, for he may contribute to the production

of frightening monstrosities. It is perhaps fitting, then, that Nietzsche announces, "It is only beginning with me that the earth knows great politics" (EH:destiny 1).

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## Notes

1. Nietzsche closes his letter of June 10, 1882, with the sentence: "Pindar sagt einmal, 'werde der, der du bist!'" Friedrich Nietzsche, *Sämtliche Briefe, Kritische Studienausgabe in 8 Bänden*, ed. G. Colli and M. Montinari (Berlin: Walter deGruyter/Deutscher Taschenbuch Verlag, 1986), Vol. 6, #239, p. 203.
2. For a thorough reckoning of Nietzsche's debts to Kant, and of his influence on the development of existentialism, see Frederick Olafson, *Principles and Persons* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1967).
3. With the exception of occasional emendations, I rely throughout this essay on Walter Kaufmann's translations and editions of Nietzsche's books for Viking Press/Random House. Numbers refer to sections rather than to pages, and the following key explains the abbreviations for my citations. BGE: *Beyond Good and Evil*; CW: *The Case of Wagner*; EH: *Ecce Homo*; GM: *Toward a Genealogy of Morals*; GS: *The Gay Science*; TI: *Twilight of the Idols*.
4. On the relationship between autonomy and authenticity, see Agnes Heller, *A Philosophy of Morals* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1990).
5. This confession of heteronomy appears under the title "We Immoralists!"
6. Richard Rorty claims to borrow and adapt from Nietzsche the idea that one achieves autonomy by fashioning for oneself a "final vocabulary" that differs in some way from the "final vocabularies" one has inherited. *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1989), ch. 5. Rorty's use of the term "autonomy," however, carries a positive rhetorical charge that his model of self-creation has not earned. If, as Rorty believes, one is obliged to create oneself from the existing vocabularies of one's historical epoch, then either everyone is autonomous or no one is. Since original self-creation is ruled out by Rorty's historicism, he has no defensible means of distinguishing between those who achieve autonomy and those who do not. In order for Rorty to propose autonomy as an ideal achieved by some, but not all, he must suspend his historicism and appeal to some metaphysical standard whereby genuine autonomy can be distinguished from "mere" reflections of the historical epoch in question.
7. Foucault explains his interest in techniques of the self in an interview entitled "On the Genealogy of Ethics: An Overview of Work in Progress,"

collected in *The Foucault Reader*, ed. Paul Rabinow (New York: Pantheon, 1984).

8. Nietzsche distinguishes himself from the "whole European and American species of *libres penseurs*," who "still believe in the 'ideal.'" Declaring himself "the first *immoralist*," Nietzsche thus implies that immoralists no longer want "to 'improve' humankind, in their own image" (EH:um 2).
9. Although readers often treat this passage as decisive, as representative of Nietzsche's mature thought (see Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press] p. 227), Nietzsche subsequently abandons (or transforms) this Apollinian model of self-perfection. In his post-Zarathustran writings he applauds "the constraint of a single taste," but *only* insofar as it enables the soul to accommodate that dimension of excess that Nietzsche associates with the Dionysian. Strictly two-dimensional, self-contained souls attest to an irreversible dissipation of will, to an irrecoverable advance to decadence.
10. Rorty apparently derives his account of self-creation from his anti-essentialism and historicism. *Because* no authentic self exists to be discovered through cognitive processes, he reasons, the self is *therefore* a construct (see Chapter 2). Rorty's reasoning is valid, of course, only in the event that his guiding disjunction—discovery vs. creation—is both exclusive and warranted.
11. I develop this point further in my essay "Disembodied Perspectives," *Nietzsche-Studien*, Band 21, 1992, pp. 281-89.
12. Nietzsche's revision of the motto he adopts from Pindar perhaps reflects this growing emphasis on self-discovery. "Become who you are" (GS 270) is replaced by "Become what one is" (EH). See also GS 335.
13. Nehamas claims that Nietzsche never decides between the discovery of truth and its invention (p.234). In his account of the "aestheticism" he ascribes to Nietzsche, however, he leaves little room for self-discovery, and he ventures no sustained account of the cognitive component of self-overcoming.
14. David R. Lachterman, *The Ethics of Geometry: A Genealogy of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 1989), especially Chapter One.
15. This would be fine with Rorty, who confines the pursuit of self-perfection to the private sphere precisely so that it will not spill over into the public sphere, where it may cause harm to others. In keeping with the tenets of his "liberal ironism," Rorty would rather forego the potential benefits of a self-perfection that exceeds the bounds of the private sphere than endure the inevitable harm it would cause. "Cruelty is the worst thing we do," he maintains (p. xv), and any incursion into the public sphere of an individual's private pursuit of self-perfection is potentially cruel.



# The Eleatic Stranger's Socratic Condemnation of Socrates

Jacob Howland

(Note: The following article concerns a topic, the philosophic trial of Socrates, that was first suggested to me by David Lachterman in an Honors seminar he taught on Ancient and Medieval Political Philosophy at Swarthmore College in the Spring of 1979. I studied with David throughout my undergraduate years and wrote a Ph.D. dissertation, also on the philosophic trial of Socrates, under his supervision at Penn State. David Lachterman is truly the father of my *logos*, but is responsible, like Socrates' gods in the *Republic*, only for the good in it. My gratitude for his gifts as a teacher is inexpressible, but I cherish most of all the memory of his friendship.)

In order to understand the *Statesman* one must begin by noting its central position in the heptalogy *Theaetetus*, *Euthyphro*, *Sophist*, *Statesman*, *Apology*, *Crito*, and *Phaedo*, a dramatically and substantively unified series of dialogues that depicts the last days of Socrates.<sup>1</sup> Socrates' encounter with the Eleatic Stranger occurs on the day following the preliminary proceedings of his public trial. While Plato leads us up to these proceedings in the *Euthyphro*, he substitutes the *Sophist* and *Statesman* for the judicial hearing that takes place inside the Stoa of the King Archon. This narrative substitution confirms Socrates' initial suspicion that the Stranger has come to condemn him (*Soph.* 216a-b). Yet Socrates himself invites a philosophical version of the public indictment by asking the Stranger to speak about the natures of the sophist, statesman, and philosopher (*Soph.* 216d-217a). In the *Sophist*, the Stranger sets out to substantiate the intertwined accusations of bad theorizing and bad citizenship that together constitute the charge of sophistry he brings against Socrates.<sup>2</sup>

The ensuing philosophic drama is not without twists and turns. In the *Statesman*, the Stranger seems to retract the accusation of bad theorizing in the course of formulating that of bad citizenship. This retraction is connected with changes in the manner or method of his inquiry that serve to establish his own Socratic character. Most

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important, the Stranger mirrors Socrates' impure and prophetic dialectics in reorienting the process of *diaeresis* with a great myth that emphasizes *phronēsis* and the concept of due measure. Yet the Stranger's acknowledgment of his philosophical kinship with Socrates does not amount to acquittal on the charge of sophistry. The Stranger's final position seems to be that the philosophical goal of *phronēsis* is accessible only through Socratic inquiry, but that Socrates' own practice is deficient in *phronēsis* precisely to the extent that his unrestrained devotion to inquiry unravels the bonds of political community. The Stranger's verdict is thus disturbingly ambiguous. Socrates turns out to be a sophist just to the extent that he embodies pure philosophic zeal. Put another way, the most perfect available instance of the *eidōs* or *genos* "philosopher" is no longer a philosopher. Conversely, the genuine philosopher falls short of the perfection of his own *eidōs* by suppressing his own philosophical nature: he forgoes the full acquisition of *phronēsis* in the name of *phronēsis* itself. The philosopher is thus a radically paradoxical being: he is the being whose proper understanding of his own nature leads him to retreat from his own nature, or who becomes what he is only in being less than what he is. The Stranger's philosophical parricide of Parmenides (*Soph.* 241d), which was deemed necessary to capture the sophist, seems also to have anticipated the essential negativity whereby the philosopher evades eidetic definition.

# I

Who, or what, is Socrates? The heptalogy frames its focal question in political, religious, and theoretical terms. Socrates begins the *Theaetetus* by identifying himself as a patriot who feels care and friendship for his fellow Athenians (*Tht.* 144d), yet he narrates the dialogue to Euclides from his prison cell. He also intimates in the *Crito* that his true home is Hades.<sup>3</sup> Is Socrates at home or a stranger in the Athenian political community?<sup>4</sup> The ambiguous character of Socrates' devotion to elenctic discourse increases our perplexity. At his public trial he offers the story of Chaerephon's visit to Delphi as proof of his piety, but then explains that he immediately set about trying to refute the oracle (*Ap.* 20e-21c). Socrates proclaims his Delphic or Apollonian moderation (*Ap.* 23a-b), but the "terrible *erōs*" for naked dialectical exercise to which he admits in the *Theaetetus* (169c1) is nothing if not extreme. And while Socrates asserts in the *Apology* that he is concerned above all with virtue (*Ap.* 29d-30b), in the *Theaetetus* he speaks of his philosophic *erōs* as a disease and accepts Theodorus's comparison of him with certain savage and monstrous criminals (*Tht.* 169a-b).

Is Socrates a model of *aidōs* or *hubris* (cf. *Soph.* 216a), moderate humility or extremism, healthy virtue or criminal sickness?

Socrates' association with the god Apollo, whose arsenal includes afflictions as well as cures, underscores the religious dimension of the problem he poses to his fellow citizens. In the *Phaedo*, Socrates compares himself with the swans who serve Apollo (*Phdo.* 84e-85b), but in the *Apology* he associates himself with the gadfly, a species of pestilence (*Ap.* 30e-31a). It is unclear whether Socrates is a heaven-sent blessing (cf. *Ap.* 30a) or a plague upon the Athenians. This issue is raised most sharply by Socrates' proposal to the judges that he be boarded in the Prutaneion, as befits one who has greatly benefited the city (*Ap.* 36d-e). Socrates' proposal seems implicitly to suggest that he may serve the community better in death than in life, for meals at the Prutaneion were also granted to the *pharmakoi* who were to be expelled from the city during the Thargelia, a festival of civic *katharsis* in which the Athenians cleansed themselves of religious pollution. It seems more than coincidental in this connection that Apollo presided over the Thargelia, and that Socrates was supposed to have been born on the very day of this festival.<sup>5</sup>

The virtually inseparable themes of political infection and religious impurity are connected with further ambiguities that center upon Socrates' strange combination of knowledge and ignorance. In the *Theaetetus* Socrates paradoxically presents himself as a midwife of the soul who is himself utterly inexperienced in giving birth to wisdom, but who is nevertheless capable of judging the wisdom of the offspring of others (*Tht.* 150b ff.). Socrates is thus apparently both less than "the god" to whom he owes his maieutic art and more than human, for he asserts that "human nature is too weak to grasp an art of whatever it is inexperienced" (*Tht.* 149c1-2).<sup>6</sup> A positive image of the power of philosophic anticipation or foreknowledge presupposed by Socratic inquiry is furnished by the association throughout the heptalogy of Socrates with prophecy.<sup>7</sup> In the *Theaetetus*, however, the paradox noted above is presented in a distinctly negative light. The issues of *aidōs* and impurity arise here once again: Socrates admits to Theaetetus that their manner of conversation has been "shameless" (*anaidēs*) and "impure" (*mē katharōs*), and that they are consequently "no good" (*phauloi*), since "We've said thousands of times 'We recognize' and 'We don't recognize,' and 'We know' and 'We don't know,' as though we somehow understand one another while still being ignorant of knowledge" (*Tht.* 196d10, e1-5; 197a4). Although the context of these remarks may strike the reader as narrowly theoretical, this passage foreshadows Socrates' perception of the Stranger, who

appears to him to be a "refutative god" come to punish him for being poor (*phaulos*) in speeches, much as Zeus the god of strangers is shown by Homer to exact retribution from men who lack *aidos* and are marked by *hubris* (*Soph.* 216a-b). In thus linking his theoretical impurity and shamelessness with the theme of arrogance and injustice toward gods and men, Socrates anticipates the Stranger's own strategy in exploring the most perplexing question of all: Is Socrates a philosopher or a sophist?

## II

In the *Sophist* the Stranger progressively hunts down Socrates, although he urbanely forbears mentioning the old Athenian by name.<sup>8</sup> The Stranger's criticism of Socrates emerges most clearly in the sixth diaeresis of the sophist, which ostensibly defines "the sophistical art that is noble in kind" (*Soph.* 231b). The first cut of this diaeresis allows the Stranger to identify his own philosophic method as a branch of the separation of like from like, as opposed to the discrimination of the worse from the better by the art of purification (*hē kathartikē*) within which he locates Socrates' practice of removing by means of refutation the vain conviction of wisdom that impedes genuine learning (*Soph.* 226b ff.). The Stranger's attempt to define Socratic sophistry is nevertheless itself an act of political as well as theoretical purification,<sup>9</sup> as is evident from his suggestion that we fail adequately to guard against the savagery of the sophist in assigning him the honor properly accorded to the philosopher (*Soph.* 231a).<sup>10</sup> Because it seeks to draw fixed distinctions between contrary formal elements that do not combine with one another, the method of bifurcatory diaeresis that the Stranger employs throughout the *Sophist* and in the first third of the *Statesman* seems to offer a promising way in which to isolate the impure element of sophistry.<sup>11</sup> Yet Socrates' impure practice of philosophical purification itself promises to resist unambiguous classification. The results of the sixth diaeresis are therefore problematically mixed. The Stranger ultimately suggests that Socrates is noble insofar as purgative refutation is in fact prerequisite to the acquisition of wisdom (*Soph.* 230d-e), but that he is a sophist because—in spite of his claim to be a philosophical midwife—he lacks the positive ability to replace refuted opinions with more adequate teachings. Specifically, Socrates suffers from what the Stranger later characterizes as "some ancient and uncomprehending idleness among men of old regarding the diaeresis of *genē* according to *eidē*" (*Soph.* 267d5-6).<sup>12</sup> The method of diaeresis, the Stranger implies, would allow Socrates finally to overcome the theoretical impurity attaching to his knowledge of

ignorance. Yet it must be emphasized that in the sixth diaeresis the Stranger does not adequately distinguish his philosophic method from its Socratic rival, for in order to give the *nobility* of Socratic refutation its due he is forced to combine the separation of like from like with the discrimination of the better from the worse. It appears that philosophy cannot isolate the mixed *eidos* of noble sophistry without being compelled to share in it. The Stranger is thus himself open to the charge of theoretical impurity when judged according to his own practice of eidetic division.<sup>13</sup>

The sixth diaeresis explicitly affirms the philosophical value of Socratic refutation while criticizing Socrates' lack of a positive philosophical method. There is, however, an implicit criticism of Socratic refutation that comes to light when we compare the actual results of his philosophical practice with the Stranger's description of these results. While the Stranger asserts that those who have been purged of seeming-wisdom by noble sophistry "are harsh on themselves and grow tame before everyone else" (*Soph.* 230b8-9), all evidence—including Socrates' own remarks to Theaetetus—suggests otherwise.<sup>14</sup> The Stranger is uncertain whether human beings are tame or wild, and specifically whether Socrates is a gentle dog or a vicious wolf (*Soph.* 222b, 231a; cf. *Tht.* 169a-b). The latter question is surely connected with the issue of Socrates' effect upon those who undergo his refutations: he claims to have made Theaetetus "tamer" (*Tht.* 210c3), but exposure to Socratic dialogue seems generally to make men more savage. As we shall see, the Stranger develops this implicit accusation of bad citizenship in the *Statesman*. Yet he also abandons the accusation of bad theorizing set forth in the sixth diaeresis, in that he comes to acknowledge that Socratic inquiry is necessary for the acquisition of positive philosophic insight. Let us now see how Socrates himself motivates the Stranger's partial recantation of the charge of sophistry.<sup>15</sup>

### III

The Stranger is of course not alone in critically questioning the political implications of Socratic discourse. In the conclusion of the *Clouds* Aristophanes seems to predict that the Athenians, aided by their gods, will punish and perhaps execute Socrates for the rough treatment they have suffered at the hands of youths who have spent time with him.<sup>16</sup> At his public trial Socrates numbers Aristophanes foremost among his first accusers, and the links forged by the comic poet between Socratic sophistry, harshness, and savagery seem to stand behind the Stranger's philosophical indictment as well.<sup>17</sup> The

Stranger's teaching is connected with that of Aristophanes also through the political image of weaving first introduced by the manly woman Lysistrata, the character that best exemplifies within the dramatic universe of Aristophanes the balance between courage and moderation recommended by the Stranger himself.<sup>18</sup> Unquestionably, however, it is the Stranger—at least prior to his telling the myth of the reversed cosmos—who bears the clearest resemblance to Aristophanes' Socrates. Both of these dramatic characters employ the technique of *diaeresis*, utilize the relative measurement exemplified in mathematics to the exclusion of due measure "relative to the becoming of the mean" (*Pol.* 284c1, d6), pay equal attention to things big and small but seem to ignore (if not to disdain) the intermediate domain of human things, and obfuscate the distinction between men and animals.<sup>19</sup>

This ambiguity of identities is nothing new in the heptalogy. Indeed, upon meeting the Stranger Socrates assumes that he is in disguise, and goes on to emphasize the many apparitions of the philosopher (*Soph.* 216a-217a). Furthermore, the Stranger cannot convict Socrates of sophistry without establishing his own philosophical credentials. I have suggested that he did not succeed in doing so in the *Sophist*. These reflections help us to understand, first, that Socrates is implicitly criticizing the Stranger when at the beginning of the *Statesman* he chastises Theodorus for supposing that the relative worth of human souls is susceptible to mathematical measurement, and second, that when he goes on to emphasize the importance of refamiliarizing ourselves through speeches with those who are akin to us in soul Socrates is implicitly challenging the Stranger to remove his sophistical disguise of epistemic precision and disclose the proper measure of self-knowledge (*Pol.* 257a3-8, 258a2-3).<sup>20</sup> This, I submit, is just what the Stranger proceeds to do.

#### IV

The Stranger responds to Socrates' challenge by setting forth a series of divisions that exemplifies the shortcomings of bifurcatory *diaeresis* with regard to the knowledge of human things. As Mitchell Miller observes, the definition of the object of statesmanship as a cousin of the pig or a featherless biped (*Pol.* 264e-266e) isolates the kind or class of man without revealing "the essential character—the *eidōs* in the fullest sense of this term—of man."<sup>21</sup> In particular, these definitions overlook the power of *logos* without which neither political community nor philosophy could come to be.<sup>22</sup> The absence of *logos* helps to explain why *erōs* and *thumos* possess merely physiological

significance in the divisions, and so cannot serve as differentia of the human species.<sup>23</sup> Yet it has also been argued that the unique "potentiality" or "freedom" of man eludes definition *via* an enumeration of formal elements, and in particular that such elements can express human erotic or thumotic striving only insofar as they are employed as images of that which man in his intermediate condition aspires to be, i.e., that which he literally is not but nevertheless is like.<sup>24</sup> When applied to the human soul the method of diaeresis freezes that which is essentially in motion, for it seeks to replace the fluid relationship of likeness with a rigid opposition between what man is and what he is not. While diaeresis masks the ambiguous intermediacy of the human soul, poetic *eikasia* uncovers it.<sup>25</sup> These arguments are in my view confirmed by the Stranger's subsequent use of mythical images to express the uniquely unfinished, open, and malleable nature of the human animal.

The Stranger's employment of a prophetic myth to correct the base results of a technical treatment of the human soul should be compared with Socrates' similar conduct in the *Phaedrus*.<sup>26</sup> As in the *Phaedrus*, talk about the soul leads to non-certifiable, "inspired," or theoretically impure discourse about the Whole.<sup>27</sup> Just as the myth will serve as the basis for subsequent divisions (Pol. 268d-e), human life must be guided by intelligent insight into the contexts of speech and deed, or what the Stranger will call *phronēsis*. *Phronēsis* is not diaeresis—for it is knowledge not of *eidē*, but of due measure—yet the Stranger indicates that it must guide *diaeresis*.<sup>28</sup> If further confirmation of the Stranger's kinship with Socrates is needed, it is provided by his explicit identification of philosophy with the acquisition of *phronēsis* by means of Socratic dialogue. In the reversed cycle of the cosmos—the era of Cronos—philosophizing would amount to "learning by inquiry from every nature whether each with its own kind of private capacity was aware of something different from all the rest for the gathering and collection of *phronēsis*" (Pol. 272c2-4). The residents of the reversed cycle, however, are able directly to observe the model of *phronēsis* provided by their divine shepherds, whereas in the current cosmic cycle—the era of Zeus—these divine caretakers have withdrawn (Pol. 272e-273a) and our perceptions of the fitting, the opportune, and the needful bear the impress of cultural history. To acquire *phronēsis* in the current cycle therefore involves more than gathering together perceptions: it requires that one critically sift through opinions in order to separate that which is justified by nature from that which rests upon *nomos* alone. Furthermore, in the current cycle *logos* is restricted to human beings, and the potentially dialogic diversity of

the many species of animals is narrowed to the diversity of the families or kinds of human souls. In sum, one might say that the philosophical zoology of the reversed cycle finds its cosmic counterpart in a distinctly Socratic anthropology.

Given that *phronēsis* is the power by which humans are to govern themselves in the current cycle, the myth would seem to vindicate Socratic philosophizing both theoretically and politically.<sup>29</sup> Yet the paradoxical ambiguity that is associated with Socrates throughout the heptalogy attaches to him here above all, for the myth ultimately suggests that Socrates, like his Aristophanean double, pays insufficient attention to the human origins and the human context of his own philosophical activity. In particular, his refusal to allow anything but death—and perhaps not even death (cf. *Ap.* 41a-c)—to limit his dialogical pursuit of *phronēsis* effectively ignores the distinction between the human beings among whom he lives and their brutalized cosmic twins.

It would appear that philosophy in general, and Socrates in particular, could not exist during the reversed cycle.<sup>30</sup> For one thing, *eros* and *thumos* seem to require as a spur to activity the harshness of nature that emerges only at the beginning of the current cycle and that compels human beings to attend to their literal and metaphorical nakedness, the vulnerable condition of their psyches as well as their bodies.<sup>31</sup> Necessity now forces us to weave protective webs of myth as well as defences for the body. The "indispensable instruction and education [*paideusis*]" and the arts of survival that enable us to do so are said to be gifts of the Olympians (*Pol.* 274c5-d2), but the active involvement of gods in the current cycle conflicts with the Stranger's mythical cosmology. Stories about philanthropic gods are presumably an essential component of the indispensable *paideusis* to which the Stranger refers.<sup>32</sup> Socrates, however, seems curiously unaffected by current psychological and physiological exigencies. Like a resident of the reversed cycle he is protected by a *daimōn*, disdains warm clothing (including woven wool), and sees no conflict between leisurely inquiry and the unrelenting pace of work and political life.<sup>33</sup> Most important, he treats others as if they were as independent and thick-skinned as he himself is.<sup>34</sup> Socrates' philosophical anthropology involves the persistent attempt to think *ex archēs*, or to uncover the beginnings of the human things (*Tht.* 151d, 200d). According to the Stranger, however, our natural beginnings are so harsh as to be humanly unbearable. It is not sufficient to say that Socrates forces his interlocutors to strip off the covering of *nomos* that protects them from this harshness (cf. *Tht.* 169a-b), because the Stranger later suggests that

the soul itself is a web of natural elements woven in accordance with *nomos*.<sup>35</sup> In unraveling this interior web, the Stranger implies, Socrates upsets the psychic and political balance of moderation and manliness at which statesmanship aims above all, and thereby exposes human beings to the pre-political savagery of their own unbridled *thumos*.<sup>36</sup>

## V

There can be no doubt that the Stranger has Socrates in mind when he later argues for the absolute authority of the rule of law as a "second sailing" in the absence of a god-like king who possesses *phronēsis*.<sup>37</sup> Socrates' own second sailing involved a turn toward *logoi* for the sake of protecting the soul from damage resulting from a direct confrontation with physical nature (*Phd.* 99d-e), but Socratic *logos* conflicts with the analogous defensive function of *nomos*. The employment of *phronēsis* conflicts with its fullest acquisition. Judged by the myth of the reversed cosmos, the philosopher is not a god, for his own being is characterized by an internal tension and opposition that resists logical resolution. Rooted as it is in the nature of the cosmos, this paradox is inescapable.<sup>38</sup>

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## Notes

1. Except where the context indicates that I am discussing the character of "Socrates" in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, all references in this essay to Socrates are to the "Socrates" of the Platonic dialogues.
2. The notion that Plato presents a philosophical version of Socrates' public trial in the *Sophist* and *Statesman* has been advanced most recently by Cropsey (1986). Similar views may be found in Benardete (1983), Klein (1977), Miller (1980), and Rosen (1983). One should observe that the intertwining of Socrates' public and philosophical trials reconfirms the dramatic and substantive integrity of the heptalogy. It is clear over the years he was composing these dialogues. Plato was always guided by a sense of the unity of these concurrent trials: in dramatic time the intervals between these dialogues consist of a few days, a day, or, in the case of the transition from the *Theaetetus* to the *Euthyphro*, perhaps only minutes. Speculation about the order in which the dialogues of the heptalogy were composed is therefore irrelevant to the study of Socrates' philosophic trial. Most important, the Socrates who argues with Euthyphro, addresses the jury of Athenians, and discourses with friends in his prison cell is for our

purposes the same Socrates as the one who meets the Stranger. Chronological speculation is in any case open to serious criticism: See Howland (1991).

3. See *Crt.* 44a10-b2 with Strauss (1983) 55.
4. This question is raised at the very beginning of the heptalogy by implicit contrast between the condemned Socrates and the wounded Theaetetus, whom Euclides deems *kalos k'agathos* (*Tht.* 142b7). Compare Euthyphro's initial uncertainty about whether Socrates is pursuing or meeting an indictment (*Euthphr.* 2a)—an uncertainty that is borne out by the accusatory tone of Socrates' defense speech in the *Apology*.
5. One should also note that "the yearly theoria to Delos which delayed the execution of Socrates must have taken place in Thargelion, the month of the Delian Apollo" (Thesleff [1982] 26 n. 24). On the practice of feeding and keeping the *pharmakoi* in the Prutaneion, see Ar., *Eq.* 1405, together with the scholiast on *Eq.* 1136. Socrates' birthdate is recorded at Diogenes Laertius 2.44. This evidence is cited in Jane Harrison's useful discussion of "The Pharmakos," in Harrison (1955) 95-106. Compare the treatment of the Thargelia in Moulinier (1952) 94-99 and of purification in Burkert (1985) 75-84. The expulsion of *pharmakoi* at the Thargelia amounted to the removal beyond the borders of the city of a contaminating poison, pestilence, or sickness, with the result the old life of the city could begin anew after this purifying separation. According to Harpocration (cited at Moulinier [1952] 95 and Harrison [1955] 102). Istros traced the origin of the Thargelia to a crime committed against Apollo by an individual named "Pharmakos." For a stimulating discussion of Socrates as *pharmakos* see Derrida (1981) 128-34.
6. Quotations in English from the *Theaetetus*, *Sophist*, and *Statesman* will be drawn from Benardete 1983), with modifications where appropriate. Benardete discusses the present ambiguity in his commentary on the *Theaetetus* in the volume cited above, I. 99-100.
7. Socrates' prophetic character is alluded to at *Tht.* 142c, *Euthphr.* 3b-c, *Ap.* 39c, *Crito* 44a-b, and *Phd.* 84e-85b. Yet his powers of divination are apparently not flawless: he seems to miss the mark in predicting that younger and harsher men—men whom he is allegedly restraining—will besiege the Athenians after the execution (*Ap.* 39c-d). In particular, neither Plato nor Xenophon fits this mold.  
Socrates raises the theme of philosophic prophecy frequently in the Platonic corpus: compare especially *Phdr.* 242c with *Resp.* 505d-506a and *Symp.* 210d ff. An account of the central importance of this theme in the *Republic* may be found in "Sun, Line, and Cave: Philosophical Imagination and Prophecy," ch. 9 of Howland (1993).
8. Theodorus's comment that the Stranger is more "measured" (*metiōteros*) than Socrates suggests it is partially supported by the Stranger's own

reluctance to act in a way that is *axenon kai agrion*, "unbecoming a stranger and savage" (*Soph.* 216b8, 217e6-7). Perhaps the fullest proof of the Stranger's philosophical moderation lies in his measured criticism of Socrates in the *Statesman* (see below).

Socrates is arguably meant to appear under the penultimate cut of the dialogue's first diaeresis of the sophist, in which the erotic and gift-giving branch of private persuasion is ranged against the wage-earning branch (*Soph.* 222d-e; cf. *Tht.* 187c), and among the money-losing practitioners of eristic discourse in the final cut of the fifth diaeresis (*Soph.* 225d; cf. *Tht.* 195c). And the Stranger seems finally to have captured Socrates in the sixth diaeresis (226b-231b), and in the dialogue's seventh and last definition of the sophist as an ignorant and ironic imitator of virtue "who in private and with brief speeches compels his interlocutor to contradict himself" (*Soph.* 268b3-5). (In numbering the diaereses of the sophist I have followed Sayre [1969].)

9. Cf. *Pol.* 268c10, where the Stranger states that the goal of the inquiry is to show forth the statesman "pure and alone" (*katharon monon*).
10. This is why (in spite of his later claim that diaeresis must honor all of the arts on an equal basis [*Soph.* 227b.] the Stranger says that the angler is one of the "trivial things" (*tōn phaulōn*) in comparison with the "greater things" (*tōn meidzonōn*) among which he numbers the sophist (*Soph.* 218d8, e3). The sophist is represented as a wild beast (*Soph.* 218d3, 226a7, 235a10) and a fugitive who seeks out dark regions (*Soph.* 254a4-6), while the philosopher inhabits the brilliant region of the divine (*Soph.* 254a8-b1).
11. An especially useful discussion of bifurcatory diaeresis may be found in Miller (1980) 16-33.
12. Cf. Sayre (1969) 151 ff. Scodel observes that in the sixth diaeresis "[Socrates] is denied the ability to distinguish like from like" (Scodel [1987] 39).
13. Insofar as Socrates' sophistry is connected with his ignorance of the method of diaeresis, the criticism contained in the sixth diaeresis is deficient also in that the Stranger fails to define the method that Socrates lacks. As Scodel notes, the division of like from unlike is a part of the art of separation "which remains completely undefined so that we can only speculate about its contents" (Scodel [1987] 38). Consider also Scodel's comment on *Soph.* 226a6-8: "If the principle of grasping a *definiendum* 'with both hands' or sides of a division is not limited arbitrarily to species...the result will be that the *definiendum* can be located properly only after a comprehensive division of reality" (Scodel [1987] 39).
14. *Tht.* 150e2, 151c4-7. Consider in this connection the recommendations of "Protagoras" concerning how Socrates could get his interlocutors to blame themselves, and not him, for their own perplexity (*Tht.*

168a). The harshness of Socrates engenders is evident also in the warning of Anytus in the *Meno* (94e-95a) and his successful prosecution. Cf. also Socrates' reference to harshness at *Ap.* 39d2.

15. Rosen is half right in suggesting that the *Statesman* constitutes the Stranger's recantation of the refutation of Socrates he presents in the *Sophist* (Plato's *Sophist*, 28, 308). Rosen's suggestion is modified by Dorter, who asserts that the *Statesman* "is not a recantation in the sense of a rejection" (Dorter [1987] 106 n. 5). Dorter argues that the Stranger's eventual abandonment of bifurcatory diaeresis in the *Statesman* is consistent with his employment of this method as an instrument of Socratic pedagogy. A similar argument is presented by Miller, who maintains that bifurcatory diaeresis "overcomes" itself once it has served its purpose as "an initial help in attuning us to kinds" (Miller (1980) 79; cf. 16-21, 30-33, and 74 ff.). Both of these studies help to show that the Stranger has a Socratic sense of due measure with regard to the concrete requirements of philosophic pedagogy. The present paper, however, argues further that in the *Statesman* the Stranger condemns Socrates in accordance with the standard of due measure itself.
16. The fate of Socrates is discussed in Kopff (1977). Kopff finds a historical parallel to the ending of the *Clouds* in the fifth-century attack on the Pythagoreans of Croton, who were trapped and burned in their house.
17. As Aristophanes underscores by abundant reference to dogs and chickens, Socrates ignores that which elevates human beings above animals (*Nub.* 3, 226, 491, 660-67, 810, 847-51, 1427-31). The bonds of affection and friendship are absent from the Socratic universe: Socrates is a harsh master to his students, whose condition resembles that of captive, ill-treated beasts (*Nub.* 184-86). After studying with Socrates, Pheldippides defends his violent treatment of his father by arguing that humans differ from beasts only in that they write decrees (*Nub.* 1429).

Nussbaum (1980) connects the Stranger's description of the purification of seeming-wisdom at *Soph.* 230b. with Aristophanes' characterization of Socratic practice in the *Clouds*, and she contrasts this practice with the traditional, paternal kind of education described by the Stranger at *Soph.* 229e-230a (Nussbaum [1980] 43, 74; cf. 81, where she states that Aristophanes attacks Socrates for "his lack of a positive program to replace what he has criticized").

18. Compare *Pol.* 279a ff., 309a-c, and 311a-c with *Ar., Lys.* 568-86. Lysistrata's bold plan to end the war by seizing the Acropolis and withholding sex from the men calls for a striking combination of *andreia* and *sôphrosunê*. While she is a clever and ambitious thinker who like Socrates deprives herself of sleep in order to think her big thoughts (*Lys.* 26-27, *Nub.* 420; cf. Plato, *Symp.* 220c-d), Lysistrata

subordinates her "manly" ambition to the "womanly" goals of peace, domesticity, and the pleasures of the body. She realizes the political goals of both Aristophanes and the Stranger in that she causes the armor-making of Hephaestus to serve the weaving of Athena (cf. *Pol.* 274c, 311b-c).

- 19, Diaeresis: Consider Socrates' injunction to Strepsiades at *Nub.* 740-42 ("Cut open your thought finely and think about your troubles by little bits, dividing and examining the correctly [orthōs diairōn kai skopōn]"). Mathematical measurement: Socrates spends his time engaging in astronomy and geometry and in such activities as devising methods to measure the jumps of fleas and the anus of the gnat. (*Nub.* 144-173 with the reference to a compass [*diabētēn*] at 178). The quasi-mathematical character of bifurcatory diaeresis emerges at *Pol.* 262b, when the Stranger advises Young Socrates to employ the principle of halving or "cutting through the middle." Cf. Dorter's claim that "the method of division [by bisection] makes use only of relative measure" (Dorter [1987] 112), but consider also Miller's observation that "the notion of halving involves more than the mere quantitative equality of extensions" insofar as "halving entails finding contraries" (Miller [1980] 20-22 with 126 n. 14). Big and small: compare Socrates' equal interest in minute vermin and the heavenly bodies with the Stranger's comment that diaeresis gives equal honor to the louse-catcher (!) and the general (*Soph.* 227b; cf. *Pol.* 226d)—a distinctly apolitical perspective that pays no heed to measurement according to "the mean, the fitting, the opportune, and the needful" in human life (*Pol.* 284e6-8). Socrates' impression that the Stranger "looks down upon" (*kathoran*) human beings (*Soph.* 216b3) may be compared to with Strepsiades' impression that Socrates, who first appears suspended in a basket, "looks down upon" (*hyperphronein*) or "despises" the gods (*Nub.* 226, cf. 1400). Men and animals: on Socrates see above, note 17. The Stranger's fails adequately to distinguish men from beasts in the first third of the *Statesman* (see below).

Plato's Socrates, on the other hand, claims to be exclusively concerned with human virtue (*Ap.* 30a-b), suggests to the Athenian judges that he alone lives a life fit for a human being rather than an animal (*Ap.* 38a with 30e-31a), is especially interested in disputes that cannot be settled by the techniques of relative measurement (*Euthphr.* 7b-d), and explicitly dissociates himself from the pursuits attributed to him by Aristophanes (*Ap.* 19c, 23d). Cf. the story Socrates tells at *Phd.* 96a-99e about how he became aware of the inadequacy of exclusively mathematical and physical explanation of human phenomena. Socrates' tongue-in-cheek account in the *Theaetetus* of how the true philosopher "flies, as Pindar puts it, 'deep down under the earth' and geometrizes the planes, 'and above heaven' engaging in astronomy" (*Tht.* 173e5-6) both flatters Theodorus and underscores the

difference between his own activity and that of his Aristophanean counterpart (cf. *Nub.* 171-173, 187-194). It is worth noting that the theoretical man described by Socrates, unlike Socrates himself, cannot tell whether his neighbor is "a human being or some different nursling" (*Tht.* 174b3).

20. Theodorus associates himself with the Stranger by posing as a merchant of his teachings (*Pol.* 257a3-5; cf. *Soph.* 223c-224d). Socrates makes it clear in the first line of the dialogue, however, that the conversations of the *Theaetetus* and the *Sophist* have been worthwhile primarily because they have provided an opportunity for *gnōrīsis*, "getting to know" in the sense of "becoming familiar with" other souls (*Pol.* 257a1-2; cf. the reference to *anagnōrīsis* at 258a3). His criticism of Theodorus (which Scodel also understands to be directed to the Stranger: Scodel [1987] 44 with n. 38) thus suggests a distinction between the Stranger's methodical *epistēmē* of souls and what Griswold, in a similar context, has called Socratic "gnosis." See Griswold (1986) 261 n. 23: "I would use 'gnosis' because Socrates, following the Delphic oracle, speaks of the need 'gignoskein' himself (not 'epistasthai')."

Miller observes that Socrates' mention of *anagnōrīsis* recalls the test of kinship between Odysseus and Penelope and Odysseus and Laertes in the *Odyssey* (Miller [1980] 6). These probable allusions are prepared by Socrates' earlier association of the Stranger with Odysseus, both when he encounters the Cyclops while shielded by anonymity and when he enters his own home disguised as a beggar (*Soph.* 216a-b; cf. Homer, *Od.* 9.269-71 and 17.485-87). Plato's philosophical employment of the Odyssean subtext of homecoming thus supports the preceding interpretation of the opening lines of the *Statesman*. (The importance of this subtext for the heptalogy as a whole is indirectly suggested by Alrivié [1971].)

21. Miller (1980) 32.
22. The Stranger himself underscores this omission when he imagines that Young Socrates' separation of human beings from beasts might be disputed by "some other animal that possesses *phronēsis*," and that the statesman will have to defend his claim to rule against those of thousands of other herd-nurturers (*pol.* 263d3-4. 268b-c).
23. The pairing of men with pigs on the shorter road recalls Glaucon's "city of pigs" (*Resp.* 372d), whose inhabitants are distinguished by inhuman deficiencies of *erōs* and *thumos*.
24. See Griswold (1989) 148-49, Benardete (1963) 200 ff. Miller notes that man's uniqueness poses a special problem for bifurcatory diaeresis, for there is no positive contrary corresponding to human intelligence in some other class (Miller [1980] 32).

25. According to Benardete, "the Stranger mathematizes poetry: he employs a dianoetic analysis in a region we believe to be the preserve of *elkasia*....The likeness and unlikeness of an image is not the otherness and the sameness of a magnitude, and hence an image's relation to what is imaged eludes a method that is most at home with magnitudes and numbers." Cf. his discussion of man as "*dzōon* simply," whose "nature in its artfulness can imitate or discover the likeness to himself in any kind" (Benardete [1963] 200, 217). The myth of the reversed cosmos indicates that our very survival depends upon this polymorphism, which finds its first expression in the indispensable *technai* associated with Prometheus, Hephaestus, Athena, and the gods and goddesses of agriculture (Pol. 247b-c).
26. The palinode of the Phaedrus is Socrates recantation of his first, shameful speech (Phdr. 257a). Similarly, the Stranger allows diaeresis to disgrace itself by failing to show forth the statesman (and, by implication, the human herd) "pure and alone" (*katharon monon*: Pol. 268c10), so that shames in the face of its impure and base results becomes the motive for the subsequent mythical ascent he recommends (Pol. 268d2-3; the myth will allow for an ascent *ep' akron*: Pol. 268e1).
27. Cf. Griswold (1986) 65 ff. On the prophetic character of the myth, cf. Miller's comment the "the Stranger seems to give up self-accountable analysis for the posture of the inspired seer" (Miller [1980] 36). Only a god could know everything that is asserted about the cosmos in the Stranger's myth.
28. Cf. Griswold (1989) 155: "It seems that the mean must change relative to the context. The '*anangkaiia ousia*' (238d8) is *not* an Idea or Form, or even an *eidōs* in the Eleatic Stranger's sense. What counts as the 'mean' will depend on the situation; it will be what is timely, suitable, appropriate for the occasion. And in this sense the mean may be said to 'become.'" Rosen notes that whereas "*phronēsis* sees individual case as it is, 'diaeresis, like *nomos*, gathers together many individual cases under a common stamp" (Rosen [1979] 69; cf. Pol 258c4-6).
29. *Phronēsis* is the power by which the cosmos steers itself in the current cycle (Pol. 269d1). The parts of the cosmos must imitate the whole in ordering their own movement "in exactly the same way [*houtō dē kata t' autā*]...by a similar conduct [*homotas agōgēs*]" Pol. 274 a5-b1; cf. 274d6). Yet the *phronēsis* of the cosmos evidently differs from that of human beings. While the cosmos strives in ordering itself to adhere precisely to the instructions of the demiurge (Pol. 273b1-3), humans possess various technical skills (Pol. 274c-d) but lack precise instructions of a comprehensive sort. *Phronēsis* must consequently be acquired empirically, and in particular "gathered" through inquiry.
30. Cf. Griswold (1989) 151, and Rosen (1979) 79: "we may find it easy enough to conclude that in the absence of memory, experience, Eros

and work, there can be no philosophy." In the *Apology*, Socrates implicitly compares himself to heros, *daimones*, and mules, all of which are generated from the intercourse of different species (Clay [1972]). Such mixed beings could not exist in the reversed cycle of the cosmos, since generation is then asexual (Pol. 217a-b; cf. Benardete [1963] 1970).

31. Here again Plato seems to have borrowed from Aristophanes. Consider the attempt in the *Plutus* of Penia, "poverty" or "need" (as opposed to *ptōcheta* or abject beggary), to prove to men "that I alone am the cause of all good things for you, and that you live through me" (Plut. 468-470). Central to her argument is the claim that "If wealth [Plutus] could see again and distributed himself equally, no one among human beings would pursue either *technē* or *sophia*" (Plu. 510-512), with the result that human life would be miserable. One should also note that in the *Symposium* Eros is said by Socrates to be the offspring of Penia and Poros (Symp. 203b-c).
32. Cf. Rosen (1979) 83. The myth of the reversed cosmos even seems to soften traditional *paideusis* insofar as it rules out the possibility of strife between the gods and divine hostility towards humans. In fact, the myth adheres to two fundamental theological principles that Socrates sets forth in the *Republic* in the course of reforming the traditional stories about the Olympians and their progenitors: that gods are "not the cause of all things, but of the good things," and that "they are neither wizards who transform themselves, nor do they mislead us by lies in speech or in deed" (Resp. 380c8-9, 383a3-5). The Stranger teaches that the most divine things remain always the same, that gods do not oppose themselves or one another in speech or in deed, and that "all beautiful things" come to the cosmos from its divine composer, whereas it owes to the disorder intrinsic to its corporeal element "everything that comes to be harsh and unjust in heaven" (Pol 269d5-6, 269e7-270a1, 273b6-cl).
33. As a prophetic power that informs him when it is necessary to keep silence or refrain from action, Socrates' *daimonion* provides purely negative or defensive guidance (see Ap. 31c-d and Tht. 151a with Phdr. 242-c, Alc. I 103a, Theag. 128d, Euthd. 272e, Resp. 496C). Insofar as Socrates is cared for by his own private daimonion, his situation resembles that which would be enjoyed by the sole living member of a particular species during the reversed cycle. On the appropriateness of the weaving of wool garments as a political analogy, see Benardete (1963) 221, and Griswold (1989) 152: "Woolens are necessary when nature is most hostile, in bitter winter....Political science is the art of defending the citizens from a fundamentally hostile nature." Griswold reasonably concludes that *phronēsis* is essentially conservative and defensive: "It is the knowledge of what to do and when in order to keep the polis safe" (Griswold [1989] 152).

Leisurely philosophical inquiry would have no political consequences in the reversed cycle, nor would the concept of the opportune or critical moment (*ho katros*) seem to be applicable during that era. In spite of the contrast he sees between the tempo of philosophical discourse and the press of political business (*Tht.* 172c ff.), Socrates is ultimately forced to acknowledge the lack of leisure imposed upon him as a consequence of his own speeches (*Ap* 19a, 24a, 37a). On these issues consider the insights of Benardete (1980) I. 129-30.

34. Socrates' paradoxical combination of self-sufficient toughness and sociability, together with many of the ambiguities connected with him, are contained in Alcibiades' image of him as a satyr (*Symp.* 215a ff.).
35. Socratic philosophizing is also closely associated with stripping in the *Clouds* (*Nub.* 177-79, 497-98, 719, 856-59, 1103, 1498), in which the removal of clothing underscores in particular Socrates' reduction of human beings to animals. Compare the metaphorical significance of the theme of stripping in Book 5 of the *Republic*. On the role of *nomos* in the fabrication of the soul, consider the Stranger's paradoxical comment that citizens must be "nurtured through *las* [*dia nomōn*] to grow according to nature [*kata phusin*]" so as best to weave together the "warp" of *andreia* with the "wool" of *sophrosunē* (*Pol* 310a2).
36. The Stranger says that the latter imbalance concerns "the greatest things." and attributes to it "the most hateful sickness of all for cities" (*Pol.* 307d7-8; cf. 307e-308a). At *Pol.* 301e7-311a2, he states that "the single and whole work of royal weaving" is "never to allow moderate characters to stand apart from the manly, but by tamping them down together by means of shared opinions and honors and dishonors and reputations [*doxais*]...to entrust to these in common the offices of rule in cities."

The potential from human savagery is just below the surface in the myth of the reversed cosmos, particularly in the three myths to which the Stranger alludes in his preamble (*Pol.* 268e-269c): the stories about Atreus and Thyestes, earth-born men, and life in the Age of Cronos. Vidal-Naquet comments on the brute force associated with earth-born generations, discusses at length the ambiguous mixture of peace and savagery (including cannibalism) associated with the Age of Cronos, and aptly notes that "Plato did not have to mention those strange 'shepherds,' Atreus and Thyestes, nor was he obliged to recall the miracle that had taken place in favor of the organizer of a cannibalistic feast" (Vidal-Naquet [1978] 136). The Stranger says that upon the withdrawal of their divine caretakers such beasts as were "harsh in their natures" became "savage" (*Pol.* 274b6-7), and we can assume that the same was true of highly spirited human beings. Cf. the Stranger's comment that the manly nature who is untamed by the political art of weaving will "incline toward some kind of bestial nature" (*Pol.* 309e2-3).

37. Pol. 300c2; cf. 294a, 301d-e, 303b. Dueso (1992) has shown that at Pol. 299b-d the Stranger intends to defend Athenian democracy against the consequences of Socratic inquiry. The reference to *ad-oleschta* at Pol. 299b7 should be compared with *Soph* 225d10 and *Tht.* 195c2. Cf. Griswold's argument that according to the Statesman "*politikē epistēmē* and the virtues will best flourish in the context of a democracy ruled by law" (Griswold [1989] 162), together with the related analysis of Crosson (1963).

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# The Myth of the Reversed Cosmos in Contemporary Physics

Pierre Kerszberg

In the celebrated collection of essays that he was offered on the occasion of his seventieth birthday, Einstein discusses a certain number of criticisms leveled against the theory of relativity and its interpretation in a particularly sharp manner. His reply to a famous contribution by Kurt Gödel is certainly one of the most interesting in this series of original arguments. For in this reply, Einstein confesses that Gödel's insight forces him to think again about the problem that most seriously disturbed him at the time of establishing the theory of general relativity; he admits that he then failed to resolve the problem completely.

This problem is the following (Einstein 1949, p.687). A and B are two sufficiently close world-events, separated by point O at which the light-cone is issued. The world-line BA is time-like, that is, it is a path along which, from the standpoint of relativity physics, it is possible to have a chain of events causally related to one another (fig.1). Now, Einstein asks, would it make any sense to constrain

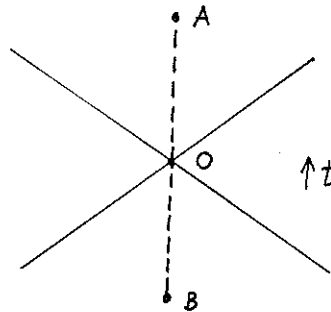


Figure 1

physical action even further than just requiring it to lie within the light-cone? In particular, is there any justification for demanding that the world-line be provided with an arrow, constraining B to be before O and A after O, *against* the inverse possibility that A be before O and

B after O? There would be no need for explicitly making such demand if physics was still Newtonian, for in this physics any arbitrary pair of events has an intrinsic, absolute temporal order. But in the special theory of relativity, the light-cone structure emerges on the basis of facts of *velocity* (namely, the constant velocity of light in all inertial frames of reference), not of time alone. Therefore, the theory by itself cannot answer the question of temporal connectibility: Is it actually asymmetrical in this theory? Whatever answer might be given to this question, it would give time a status that cannot easily be related to the already acquired concepts of relativity physics. One such concept is space. The special theory was first constructed on the basis that there appears to be simply no way of determining by experimental means that space is isotropic (symmetrical) with respect to the velocity of light (see for instance Goldberg 1984, pp. 104ff). Einstein *stipulated* such symmetry in order to obtain a meaningful definition of simultaneity. Could we proceed to the inverse stipulation of asymmetry in the case of time, or should we look for empirical evidence to support it? Special relativity is silent on this issue. Does the general theory of relativity contribute to the answer? According to Einstein, there will be essentially two types of answer that bear upon whether or not such asymmetry makes physical sense at all. (i) In the operational sense of the theory of relativity, which already formed the basis for the denial of absolute simultaneity at a distance, the test of temporal asymmetry depends on the possibility of sending a light signal passing through or in the neighbourhood of O; if it so happened that the signal could travel from B to A but not from A to B, then, as Einstein writes, "there exists no free choice for the direction of the arrow." (ii) By contrast, the asymmetry makes no physical sense if there exists a series of events that can be connected by time-like world-lines such that (a) each event of the series can be said to comply with a temporal sequence in the sense of (i); (b) the series is globally closed in itself. For in the latter case, Einstein goes on to say, "the distinction earlier/later is abandoned for world-points which lie far apart in a cosmological

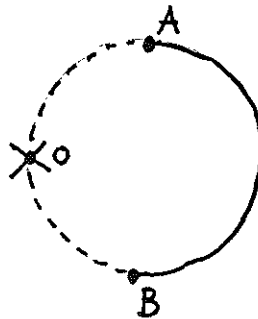


Figure 2

sense" (p.688). Finally, Einstein comments, it would be "interesting to weigh whether these [cosmological solutions] are not to be excluded on physical grounds," assuming that the sole physical basis for ascertaining asymmetry remains the propagation of a light signal.

In his own paper for the Einstein volume, Gödel (1949) had discovered just such a solution. (For a general discussion, see Horwich 1987, pp.111-28.) This is a homogeneous universe obeying the laws of general relativity, in which the local times of the observers who move with galaxies cannot be fitted together into one universal temporal order. In this model, it is theoretically possible to travel into any region of the past or future and back again.

In passing from physical sense to physical nonsense in his examination of temporal connectibility, Einstein asks us to believe that the enigma of asymmetry arises in conjunction with the transition from a local to a global system. From this point of view, the question of whether time is asymmetrical in the theory of relativity is supposed to be reducible to questions of the kind: What are the conditions required to make such a transition from the local to the global? What is it that must be postulated for preserving physical sense throughout? The essence of Gödel's metric of space-time is that the aggregate of local past/future distinctions associated with the observation of light-rays does not automatically constitute a global past/future distinction. But the failure to obtain such a distinction is independent of something like a crucial experiment that would be proposed to decide in favor of or against asymmetry. Thus, it would be certainly absurd to try to tell experimentally (for instance by monitoring a light-signal over very large spatio-temporal intervals) *when*, as the separation between two events grows larger, event A as "after" (or "effect," in the language of light-signals) turns into "before" (or "cause") of event B. Given this predicament, Einstein seems to be of the opinion that the absence of an earlier/later distinction at the global scale, which makes no sense, occurs only as a special case to be discarded without touching upon the foundations of the theory, a violation of the otherwise accepted asymmetry as a general case.

On the other hand, Gödel believes that the breakdown does make sense theoretically, precisely because only a practical impossibility is available. His calculations showed that the velocity required in order to make a complete circuit in time in his model must be at least  $1/\sqrt{2}$  that of light, which he found to be virtually forever beyond technological means. From this the theoretical conclusion follows: "it cannot be excluded a priori, on the ground of [this] argument, that the space-time structure of the real world is of the type described" (Gödel 1949,

p.561). Now, one would like to think that the more standard models of the relativistic universe, in which there is a globally distinguished direction for the arrow of time, are independent of practical restrictions of that sort. This, however, is not quite the case. Indeed, Gödel argues, in those models where an absolute time function can be defined, the actual existence of an objective duration depends on the determination of the mean motion of matter in each region of the universe. Yet, only approximations to this concept can be obtained, and moreover the particular configuration of the universe at any time remains contingent (p.562). Thus, asymmetry as a general case could be dropped altogether.

There is a substantial historical and conceptual background behind both Einstein's and Gödel's arguments. In trying to excavate it, the broader significance of the time-reversible nature of the laws of modern mathematical physics will emerge. I shall take Einstein at his word and look at the premises of general relativity of a most general character. They reflect just how much the theory was built on a problem that was not completely solved.

### 1. *Time and freedom*

To begin with Einstein's position: Do we have sufficient reason to accept as the source of evidence for the general (local) case the propagation of a fastest possible signal? As it turns out, it is not at all certain that temporal priority could ever be derivable from tests of causal connectibility such as the sending of a signal. How is the sending of a signal between two events to verify the law of causality, which, as general law, tells us that certain *classes* of events can be connected by using a certain general rule? The very knowledge that *such* an event is causally related to such other event already requires some knowledge of the spatiotemporal features of the events, if only to pick them out (Grünbaum 1973, pp.190-1; Sklar 1985, p.253). Einstein seems to imagine some kind of "pre-temporal" situation in which observers know supposedly nothing at the outset as to which of the two events precedes the other. But this situation does not support the argument in favor of asymmetry, because it ignores that observers are then allowed *too much freedom*. Their very choice of a pair of events conditions the subsequent belief that the directedness of the arrow of time could not but be fixed in a certain way. Arguably, the consideration of when a past event is converted into a future event was ruled out precisely because of this pre-determination. The relationship of observers to an already constituted world that is there *before* them cannot be ignored, since it is precisely this "before" that

informs them on the minimum of spatiotemporal properties needed in order to relate events of this world to one another.

To be sure, Einstein is not unaware that such an argument from the pre-temporal to the temporal will not quite exhaust the question of the direction of time's arrow in the theory of general relativity. Indeed, there is something more in this part of Einstein's reply. He explains that what is essential to the phenomenon of the one-sidedness of time can be brought out by way of an analogy: "the sending of a signal is, in the sense of thermodynamics, an irreversible process, a process which is connected with the growth of entropy (whereas, *according to our present knowledge*, all elementary processes are reversible)." The reference to thermodynamics reveals what Einstein actually has in mind when trying to secure the asymmetry of time in every part of the universe. For thermodynamics offers another basis to solve the problem of how to link the local to the global. The global direction of time can be established entropically inasmuch as it is subjected to statistical data; the elementary (local) processes remain reversible because they remain well below the threshold at which statistical data become significant. Now, what is it that Einstein actually wants when he requests that such a threshold be abolished in some future theory, so that entropy could be directly inspected even in the case of a pair of events? Is it in this way that his imagined pre-temporal situation will become the sought-for proof in favor of asymmetry as a general case? As long as causality was not identified with the growth of entropy, it could readily be confused with temporal priority itself; but now, the argument is intended to derive the temporal properties of events from a wholly "a-temporal" situation. To be sure, the knowledge required to establish the entropic features of a pair of events would be again the same as the knowledge needed for classes of events. But this would now be harmless, since what we want to prove, i.e., some statement about the direction of time, is not pre-empted by premises which concern entropic states. However, if the sending of a signal is subjected to such irreversibility, it would seem that the new situation is completely deprived of any means of making the point. For by contrast with the previous situation, the observer loses a minimum of control. *Not enough freedom* is allowed, because the sending of a signal from A to B is not even a possibility to be discarded by experiment. It could be ruled out of existence only by virtue of the law of causality itself, which is now a law about entropic states, not about the direction of the arrow of time. In conceding to the world that it is already there before them, the observers can only establish certain ways of verifying properties which are not purely

temporal; these temporal properties are manifestations of some other, necessarily "deeper" feature of the world.

This fundamental inadequacy of our understanding of time for the postulation of its directedness prevents Einstein from formulating a demonstration of impossibility. A demonstration of impossibility was the core of the theory of special relativity, in which faster-than-light particles were ruled out of existence by virtue of the principle of relativity. In the case of the direction of the arrow of time, a demonstration of impossibility is needed in order for the freedom of action of observers to be fixed within the practical limits of their possible actions. Einstein's opinion that the puzzle is not solved may be expressed by opposing two types of observers' relation to the world: (i) actively intervening in the course of events that are qualified as purely temporal; (ii) being dragged passively by the course of events that are not purely temporal. When Einstein argues that the earlier/later distinction is lost in the cosmological solutions in which the series of events is globally closed, his reference to thermodynamics testifies to his referring to sense (ii). That is why it is questionable whether, on Einstein's own terms, the postulated asymmetry should ever be lost. In Gödel's solution, a traveler who follows his time-like world-line never meets a point at which the direction assigned to time is reversed. Rather, his world-line is *always* oriented toward a locally definable future; in this solution, the problem of temporal priority is thus supposed to be already solved at the local scale. It is only in a non-orientable space-time, which Gödel's is not, that it should be possible to change a forward light-cone at a point into a backward light-cone without modifying the timelikeness of the vector. The case discussed by Einstein is one in which the fact that the future may be present in the past, or even act upon it, does not modify the distinction earlier/later, because the possible overlap past/future is not sufficiently constraining to determine any *change* in the past. For a change to occur, some active intervention on the part of the observer is required. But the threshold at which such action has any detectable effect cannot be fixed unless we know what freedom the observers have.

Gödel's aim is precisely to show that a well-defined type of action is necessary for the paradox to occur. He writes that if someone were to travel into the past of those very places where he has himself lived, "he would find a person who would be himself at some earlier period of his life. Now he could do something to this person which, by his memory, he knows has not happened to him" (p.561). Thus, the action required in order for the paradox to arise is a contingency that implies

an actually living person capable of memory, not just a physical apparatus capable of recording a certain number of data according to a pre-determined sequence. More recently, Hawking and Ellis have developed Gödel's argument in a more radical way. They justify the anathema of closed time-like curves by claiming that "the existence of such curves would seem to lead to the possibility of logical paradoxes: for, one could imagine that with a suitable rocketship one could travel round such a curve and, arriving back before one's departure, one could prevent oneself from setting out in the first place. Of course there is a contradiction only if one assumes a simple notion of free will; but this is not something which can be dropped lightly since the whole of our philosophy of science is based on the assumption that one is free to perform any experiment" (1973, p.189). They seem to think of the ruling out of closed time-like curves as definitive; that is, in our context, their argument works as the demonstration of impossibility that was vainly sought for by Einstein. Now, the freedom to perform any experiment anywhere at any time cannot possibly reflect the doing of an ordinary living observer, and yet Hawking and Ellis assume what they call a "simple" notion of free will. The observer's freedom of action, together with its contingencies, is now radicalized to the point of allowing him to wipe out the very possibility of memory. There is no doubt that more than an ordinary notion of free will is necessary before the desire to perform an action against his own capacities to memorize can be imputed to an observer. From the point of view of the formally universal requirements of physical laws, the freedom to perform any experiment is restricted to the *repeatability* of similar experiments. But as repetition of the same, experimentation takes place in a world which can, as a matter of fact, be dead. In trying to harmonize such formally universal requirements and the materially particular requirements of free action, what Hawking and Ellis's argument actually emphasizes (even if they don't use a consistent notion of living freedom) is that a world without at least a trace of living memory cannot meaningfully be "there" in the first place.

## 2. Time and action

Historically speaking, modern physics emerged in the seventeenth century from what was then thought to be a successful demonstration of impossibility against reversed action. The physical problem bequeathed by the Copernican argument in favor of the earth's rotation was that the earth should be conceived as a natural clock, while in Greek cosmology this function was fulfilled by the uniform revolution of the stars. (Aristotle made the point that since a circumference has

no definite beginning, middle, or end, the movement of rotation of the stars "is stationary and motionless in one sense, and moves continuously in another"—*Physics* 265b, p.401.) Now, if the time-reversible character of the latter revolution can be accepted without difficulty, a problem arises in the case of the earth's rotation precisely because of the earth's "corruptibility" and contingency. In particular, the phenomena having a direct incidence on ordinary life are not reversible. Thus Galileo could do little more than mock the suggestion, which according to his records was made in his own days, that "after a short time the mountains, sinking downward with the rotation of the terrestrial globe, would get into such a position that whereas a little earlier one would have had to climb steeply to their peaks, a few hours later one would have to stoop and descend in order to get there" (1967, p.330). Could the continuously forward flow of time built in the earth's clock be responsible for such reversed action? Galileo thwarts this fear by using the concept of homogeneous/isotropic space and the concomitant equivalence of up and down. Once this new concept of space is accepted, it does not matter whether the earth as clock moves backwards or forwards.

This example illustrates how, when conjoined with Euclidean space, the time-reversible character of the earth-bound laws of modern physics saves this physics from collapsing in the face of evidence borrowed from ordinary life. Why, then, should this same character become a problem in the context of global relativity physics? Special relativity had already destroyed the objectivity of simultaneity at a distance, that is, the notion of a same instant at two different points. Why would it not also criticize the notion of a unique direction of time, that is, the objective sequence of different instants at a point? As it turns out, the special theory does not really have the means to do so. By objectivity is meant spatio-temporal *coincidences*; the theory allows for a direct, non-obstructed access to these coincidences only (Sklar 1985, pp.268-88). But both general relativity and classical thermodynamics are based on a union of space and time which is supposed to absorb the directional properties of time.

Classical thermodynamics lent itself to the first, and probably also the most accomplished, attempt to reconcile the universal (absolute) form of the laws of nature and the particular (contingent) content of the material universe. Consider the conflict that results when the form of the Newtonian laws of motion (which claim no preferred direction of time for individual particles) is confronted with the actual existence of large aggregates of particles as described by the laws of thermodynamics. Poincaré (1893) formulated the following theorem: Any mechanical

system of motions possessing finite energy confined to a finite volume will return infinitely often to a state infinitesimally close to any past state. Such a violation of the monotonic behavior of the universe as predicted by the second law of thermodynamics would be extremely improbable, because the recurrence time for a system turns out to be fantastically large. However, if the system referred to in Poincaré's theorem can be identified with the whole universe, time travel in relativity physics would appear to be a special case of a more general situation, in which not just observers but the universe itself returns to its own past. In an attempt to interpret this result, which pre-dated relativity physics, Boltzmann wrote these famous lines with a view to rejecting the assumption that the universe is at present in a very improbable state:

One can think of the world as a mechanical system of an enormously large number of constituents, and of an immensely long period of time, so that the dimensions of that part containing our own "fixed stars" are minute compared to the extension of the universe; and times that we call eons are likewise minute compared to such a period. Then in the universe, which is in thermal equilibrium throughout and therefore dead, there will occur here and there relatively small regions of the same size as our galaxy (we call them single worlds) which, during the relatively short time of eons, fluctuate noticeably from thermal equilibrium, and indeed the state probability in such cases will be equally likely to increase or decrease. For the universe, the two directions of time are indistinguishable, just as in space there is no up and down. However, just as at a particular place on the earth's surface we call "down" the direction toward the center of the earth, so will a living being in a particular time interval of such a single world distinguish the direction of time toward the less probable state from the opposite direction (the former toward the past, the latter toward the future). (1964, pp.446-47)

The perfect overlap between the form of the laws (that  $+t$  is indistinguishable from  $-t$ , just as up and down are equivalent) and their content is achieved as a result of the universe being globally dead, that is, in steady state thermal equilibrium. By virtue of its enormous dimensions in both space and time compared with any local system, the universe is globally deprived of memory.

Through its application to such a global system as the entire universe, relativity physics has moved in the direction of the other interpretation, lending support to the view that the whole universe is a very improbable state. In special relativity the universe does not

seem to lose a memory of its past. The *young* universe can always be present to any reference frame, since time will run more slowly on faster-moving bodies and in more intense gravitational fields. In relativistic cosmology, the theory of a dynamic (expanding) universe has been developed in such a way that all physical action, irrespective of the particular reference frame, will recombine in a past which, however remote, can always be assigned. A metric for the universe (the so-called Robertson-Walker metric) which will not constantly change by virtue of the expansion (or any other large-scale dynamic behavior of the universe) is found in such a way that its most general form is compatible with the equations of motion (Friedmann's equations) and the natural hypotheses of homogeneity and isotropy:

$$ds^2 = c^2 dt^2 - R^2(t) \left[ \frac{dr^2}{1-Kr^2} + r^2 (d\theta^2 + \sin^2\theta d\phi^2) \right]$$

where  $R$  is the radius of curvature of the universe, and  $K$  defines the geometry. Clearly enough, the global geometric structure can be fixed only if all events are already synchronized in some way. That is, the geometry fixes the increase or decrease of the coordinate distance between two events if and only if these are located on a surface of contemporary events. A principle of causality governs the behavior of all world-lines in accordance with this requirement: this is the Weyl principle, which stipulates that at any point of space-time all world-lines form a bundle of diverging geodesics from a common point in the past. All light-cones of all observers thus tend to refocus in some sort of super light-cone issued from an event at the remotest past; as a point of absolute coincidence, this event fixes the natural synchrony of all clocks in the universe.

What is the status of such a world surface of contemporary events that can inflate or deflate in accordance with some specifiable physical parameters (such as matter density)? In special relativity, the relation of simultaneity is not transitive: if  $P_1$  is simultaneous with  $P_2$  relative to an inertial system  $A$ , and  $P_2$  simultaneous with  $P_3$  relative to an inertial system  $B$ ,  $P_1$  cannot be simultaneous with  $P_3$  relative to any of these inertial systems. If, in the notion of "determined reality," we want to include the temporal relation, then it seems inevitable that we should also relativize this notion of determined reality in some way (see the discussion in Sklar 1985, pp.289-304). But the principle of causality in relativistic cosmology bears the stamp of an interesting retreat before the far-reaching implications of this relativity. In order

to preserve the possibility of an absolute (unchangeable) metric for dynamic solutions, a kind of transitivity at the global scale is retrieved, and thus a rather classical sense of determined reality reappears at that scale. However, in order for this transitivity to remain physically meaningful in the relativistic context, the following fundamental hypothesis of special relativity must also be preserved: the spatio-temporal intervals relative to an inertial system are only functions of the intervals of the same events relative to another inertial system and the relative motion of these two systems. This is nothing other than the hypothesis of space-time homogeneity. Before this hypothesis could be adopted as the basis of our best kinematics of space-time (special relativity), physicists faced the following alternative: (i) reject the pre-relativistic concept of simultaneity for non-coincident events; (ii) adopt some version of the "compensatory" theories designed by Lorentz, in which the impossibility to observe the effects of some postulated reality such as the ether was ascribed to "secondary" effects, independent of the reference frame. Global transitivity seems to compel us to fall back on a compensatory theory of a unique kind: the observed motion of the galaxies is only an appearance which masks a deeper, yet unobservable reality, namely, an "ether" in motion (represented by the function  $R(t)$  in the Robertson-Walker metric) with respect to which galaxies are "at rest."

On balance, then, the relationship between classical and relativity physics can be reconstructed something like this. The Einstein-Gödel debate forced us to ask: What is the temporal structure of the world which corresponds to our picking out an event (or pair of events) from among any series of events, and to what extent is this structure dependent on whether or not the world in which we actually live is already constituted? Three cases present themselves. (i) Newton: if one event is picked out, a space can be assigned to it, all the points of which are contemporary with the event; (ii) Special relativity: this is possible only if the inertial reference frame is specified; there exists a set of events simultaneous with the one picked out relative to *this* frame only; (iii) General Relativity: it could be wholly impossible to foliate space-time into successive surfaces of contemporary events even relative to *one* observer; this would be the case if the space-time did contain closed time-like curves. The return to transitivity in standard relativistic models of the universe is a response to this threat. A Cauchy surface on a space-time allows for the definition of a global time function  $f$  which assigns to each event a pair of real numbers  $(x, y)$  such that  $f(y)$  is larger than  $f(x)$  each time a signal can propagate from  $x$  to  $y$ . In order for a space-time to have such a surface, it is sufficient

that any time-like continuous world-line crosses it only once. If the initial condition of the world can be specified on that surface, its whole past and its whole future can be specified too, if at least the laws of nature are deterministic on the large scale.

### 3. *Two times, two worlds*

From the foregoing comparison between special relativity and standard relativistic cosmology, it appears that the latter is formally a compensatory theory; this pre-relativistic feature is the price to pay for ruling out closed time-like curves. Nowadays, however, physicists agree that this standard form of cosmological model may be itself inadequate to represent the very early stages of the universe's existence. Recent work in theoretical physics has focused on the initial condition being the beginning of the world itself, not just an arbitrarily selected surface of contemporary events (see Penrose 1989). The direction for the time's arrow could be fixed if the universe were conceived as having started in a state of thermal equilibrium which still corresponded to a very low total entropy. The argument is that the then small size of the universe placed a very low ceiling on the maximum entropy it could have; at the big bang the universe was not in a state of maximum entropy though it was in thermal equilibrium. As the universe expands very rapidly in the early stages of its evolution, the expansion rate exceeds the rate at which the system is able to evolve back to a state of equilibrium, in obedience to the second law of thermodynamics. As the rate of expansion slows, however, the rate at which the universe approaches thermal equilibrium once more exceeds the expansion rate. In the terms used in reference to Boltzmann: the size of the universe at the beginning is so small that it may start in thermal equilibrium (a dead state), and yet, since its later evolution (expansion) is completely determined by the initial state, it is capable of retaining the memory of its past. The loss of memory begins only well after expansion has set in, as evidenced by the occurrence of horizon effects (the speed of expansion may ultimately exceed the speed of light). However, again by virtue of the Poincaré theorem, the universe must finally go back to its initial state, at least if it is a closed system such that the expansion may not continue indefinitely. The peculiar mystery of the initial state, which is a death state combined with further evolution, is particularly intolerable when one investigates what happens when the universe begins to contract. Supposing that the universe has then reached its maximum entropy, this entropy will get progressively smaller as the universe contracts. It must be admitted that, if the directional prop-

erties of time are grounded in entropic states, the direction of time will be reversed in the contraction era. But the events surrounding the turnaround are fraught with a paradox, in relation to both physical events and living beings.

Penrose has described the absurdities of this situation for physical events: "What does the light do when it starts going the wrong way? ...Will light rays diverge from a source prior to the turnaround, and then miraculously reconverge on some point after the turnaround?" (1986, p.41). Penrose uses the expressions "prior" and "after," as if the premise concerning one cosmic time (against which the sequence of events is organized) were absolutely untouchable. However, if the universe had reached thermic death at the end of the expansion era, the conflict between the two worlds would be even deeper, because we would have to account for two sequences of events which are not necessarily symmetrical to one another. Penrose overlooks this completely when he goes on to consider the paradoxical phenomena in connection with living creatures. He uncritically supposes that some creatures would live one part of their life in the expansion era, and another part after the turnaround. With these two distinct, yet symmetrical populations, we have the following paradox. The "contraction people," as he calls them, "will remember things that happened in what, from our perspective, is their future. If they were to be told things that had happened in what we would regard as their past,...what would then prevent them from choosing to do something different?" (pp.41-42). For instance, imagine information put by us in a container that would last through to the contraction period; the contraction people could then use it to do something about their future. On this account, we could even go one step further and conceive that, in the normal expanding universe, in deciding to do something freely, we, as it were, only remember the future. But the premise of the whole argument was that entropy determines the arrow of time, that is, this direction is caused by some physical action relative to very large aggregates of particles. How come we should now find it puzzling that the freedom of choice for a characteristically small number of living creatures will interfere with an otherwise deterministic universe?

The beings living in two worlds with inverse time direction are somewhat analogous to Maxwell's demon, who could supposedly use intelligence to influence the statistical distribution of velocities in two different parts of a sealed box containing gas in equilibrium. Through operation of a trap door placed in the hands of a diabolical creature, the temperature of the two halves would become unequal with no expenditure of energy. In 1929, Szilard was able to prove that no

violation of the second law of thermodynamics is involved here, because the work to be performed in order to discriminate between the fast and the slow particles always outweighs the work that can be performed by exploiting the temperature difference created by the demonic activity. That is, intelligence is not synonymous with absolute freedom to do anything; it is itself a significant part of the natural stream of phenomena. Why could we not argue, then, that in the case of Penrose's contraction people, the cost of implementing the strategy of informing these people of their future will exceed the possibilities of doing anything about it?

The above-mentioned absurdities have prompted Penrose to reject standard cosmological theory altogether. But he is not willing to alter anything in the premise that time should keep the same direction up till the "end." He believes that the premise is warranted by means of his hypothesis of "gravitational entropy." In the initial singularity, such gravitational entropy was zero, that is, the gravitational part of the entropy (space-time structure) was not thermalized at all (1989, pp.328-45). But gravitational entropy would start to build up continuously as the universe expands, until a final singularity which would be highly inhomogeneous and anisotropic. In other words, Penrose claims to have accounted for the unique direction of time throughout the evolution of the universe, independently of any possible contraction era. Just like Einstein, he hopes that a forthcoming theory will do the job of consolidating what is at present a speculation only; this theory is quantum gravity. This similarity in Einstein and Penrose's positions cannot be mere chance. They are both using a hypothesis to be consolidated by a future theory, instead of posing it as an independent justification to be investigated on its own merits. The strategy seems to be the price that physical science has to pay for including living consciousness within the stream of nature. We are therefore justified in trying to oppose a purely metaphysically grounded argument about the very meaning of such inclusion.

In fact, Gödel already did something like this when he justified the philosophical background of his model with a closed time-like curve. The model turns out to be a representation of a philosophical position about time. He claims that special relativity in its original meaning, undistorted by cosmological constraints, tallies with Kant's remark that the very perception of change presupposes the particular constitution of human sensibility, namely, time as pure form of intuition; time constitutes the necessary "screen" through which phenomena are given to us. Any form of cognition which is not constrained by this "screen" would also be deprived of the perception of change as a global

property of the world. Gödel argues that beings co-extensive with the Minkowski space-time of special relativity, in which time is absorbed in the space-time continuum, are living this non-specifically human life referred to by Kant as an irrepresentable sensibility (Gödel 1949, p.557n). But on the other hand, Gödel goes on to point out, "the concept of existence...cannot be relativized without destroying its meaning completely" (p.558n). Is this not what Kant seems to be doing when he speaks of putative beings with other forms of cognition? Gödel's model forces us to ask the following question: Are the intuitive world (in which a "simple" notion of free will is assumed) and the relativistic world two different worlds, or do they both derive from a unique world? In the former case, the kind of intuition prevailing in the relativistic world would be simply irrepresentable, and the paradoxes of time travel would simply reflect the irreducibility of the constructed world of relativistic cosmology to human sensibility. In the latter case, the paradoxes discussed by both Gödel and Penrose occur because the intuitive world in which we actually live could never be done away with: it is this world which, however obscure it may still be, continues to fix the very meaning of existence in the first place.

#### 4. *Two times, but only one world*

Penrose has investigated a case of "objective" reduplication of the world, without taking into account some of the natural limitations of life and their subjective foundation in existence. Following Gödel, we shall take the word "idealism" to mean a manner of representing the world that includes the non-relativizability of existence; and we shall ask whether there is ultimately an idealistic sense in which we could think of the reduplication of the world. Our clue is that it is not possible to derive the subjective perception of such objective states as entropy (i.e., entropy states as the "cause" of our sensing the moving on of time) by bestowing an immediately cosmic significance upon human subjectivity and free will. The inclusion of the potentialities of free human subjectivity in the natural world, whether of immediate intuition or of constructed theory, does not allow us to separate these potentialities from that which is universally given, as if they could be temporarily suspended and then re-activated—for example, during the examination of the fictional case of time travel. If, however, the fictional observer cannot be dispensed with in the elaboration of "normal" physical theory, then *both* worlds (intuited *and* constructed) must be stretched in tandem beyond their respective limits. This requires an exercise of reasoning that takes us outside both "natural" and "relativistic" life. In our present context, this implies that a

contracting universe is still worth investigating, even if we accept the conclusion of physics that such life involves thermodynamic contradictions.

Interestingly enough, Plato presents in the *Statesman* such an exercise of rational thought, when he deals with various ancient legends in which the question is "how the sun and the stars rose in the west and set in the east" (269a). The point is to reflect on the general principle common to these various ways of thinking about the reversed cosmos.

According to these legends, the present configuration of the heavens is the result of such a reversal following a divine action. The world is something mechanical inasmuch as it participates in bodily nature; Plato seems to view it as a sort of spinning top. Circular motion has been imparted by the divine being to the body of the universe, because this motion is what differs least from the motion of a body poised on a single point; the latter is the only motion that contains in itself the very principle of motion. The actually existing universe is, as far as embodiment permits, the closest possible resemblance to the principle of motion. But such closeness is not a continuous gradation from the less to the more. Rather, the world is the product of a logic of less and more. This is made evident by the retrograde motions of the planets, which are irregular in appearance only, not in reality (*Laws* 821b-822c). The world is thus a stage of reciprocal action of opposites, not a continuous gradation to the model of perfection, which explains that divine action itself is subjected to constraints. First, as a principle of motion, the divine being would contradict itself if, of its own accord, it were to change the direction of the motion of the universe; secondly, since motion in its own being is one, there cannot be two principles of motion affecting each other, as if two Gods were to oppose one another. The only remaining hypothesis is that the mechanical world is something like a spring tightened by the divine being, but "there is a time, on the completion of a certain cycle" (269c), when, left to its own devices, it begins to revolve in the opposite direction under the action of its own impulsion. As long as it is guided by the divine power, the world "receives life" from it (270a), but as a living creature it exhausts itself, and, once the maximal concentration of forces has been reached, it declines toward a state of no motion. Plato assumes that the direction of revolution defines the direction of time, but he obtains a much higher degree of asymmetry between the two worlds than in any of the contemporary speculations. For what is not indifferent to the direction of time is the age of those who live in this world (270d): all beings have this in common that, whether they grow

older or younger, they are bound to die (270e), but of course in the case of those who grow younger, it means simply disappearing from the face of the earth after reaching the stage of a newly born child. The question is now (271c): Given that the reversal must take place after some time in both worlds (+t and -t), to which of the two worlds do we belong now? The clue is provided by the fact that the people of the reversed cosmos have no memory at all, even though they were born old (272a); they let themselves live, as it were, because the earth gives them spontaneously an abundance of fruits, without farming. This is a time-reversed world in which, however, there appear none of the paradoxes generally associated with it (like the many fragments of broken glass that spontaneously rush together to form an ordinary glass). Such a paradox-free world is achieved by taking into consideration the absence of memory among the people in the reversed world; in fact, by virtue of what we have called above the irrepresentable sensibility of people having no (or another) perception of change, it is enough to postulate the absence of communication between the two worlds. As it turns out, we are told in due course that this stage of spontaneous generation is the stage "in which God superintended the whole revolution of the universe" (271c). Plato goes on to speculate that a sudden shock, like a mighty earthquake (273a), preceded the return to the world in which we live now. But as the world becomes master of itself, and God lets it go, it is also incumbent on its parts to grow and generate of themselves (again, as far as they can). Ultimately, we have the following asymmetry between the two worlds. In the reversed world, inert matter generates, so that people can be viewed as earth-born creatures (271b). But in our world, the principle of life cannot be other than life itself. What differentiates the two worlds is that, in the case of the reversed revolution, the mere flow of time affects inert matter, and this is sufficient to explain the course of events; whereas in our world (273c) the action of time is only responsible for the inexorable growing of forgetfulness, so that finally we can only attend to the universal ruin of the world as a whole and in all of its parts.

Even though Plato's argument is completely independent of physical theory, it remains quite relevant to our context because it develops the implications of what is probably the highest thinkable degree of interaction between mind and body, free action and embodiment (270e). It does so without relying on a future physical theory which would mitigate the natural deficiency of our present knowledge: Plato argues that the mythical character of the argument makes up for the absence of a "satisfactory reporter of the desires and thoughts of those times" (272d). When the changed direction of time is understood to

affect both the nature and the very possibility of representation, it makes no sense any more to speculate on the possible encounter of an observer with himself at different times of life. In particular, imputing to the "contraction people" the desire to do something about their own future, when they take cognizance of it by some means, assumes the existence of a universal and unchangeable means of communication extending to both worlds. Plato warns us that when, after the turnaround, all things changed, they could only imitate the condition of the whole universe, which in this instance is consistent with an irrepresentable mode of conception and generation (274a). The pure passage of time can thus only explain a reversed world, in which nothing motivates the need for superintendence of things by people (what we call "science"): not only do they have no memory, but they have certainly no reason to change their destiny since their food is growing spontaneously.

From this point of view, Gödel's argument about the practical limits preventing an observer from visiting his own past earns a valid speculative foundation. But what does mythical speculation have to do with contemporary cosmology? The myth is a particular type of historical discourse, while we would like to think of our cosmological theory as a perfectly rational way of making up for the deficiency of sensible representation. In historical discourse, the actions of the actors are reconstituted from the consequences that these actions gave rise to; freedom is ascribed to the actors only in reference to a forward-looking project that reached, or failed to reach, our own present. Inasmuch as this project "speaks" to us in some way, that is, insofar as it makes sense at all, we must be able to transpose ourselves into the past situation; historical understanding requires a minimum of such fictive participation in order to be meaningful. Thus, it is certainly not the exclusive privilege of "another" world, for instance a world in which the direction of time is reversed, to require fictive participation in order to lend itself to a minimum of intelligibility; this requirement is proper to all understanding dealing with time. My own past existence becomes other, enriched by a future which was then nothing. To be sure, the universe which is described and explained in cosmological theory is wholly constructed, so that it does not really have an intuitive plausibility in terms of situations that could be lived. Why, then, should we refuse that, in the case of time travel as with all other imaginable situations, judgment can result only from the consequences of certain actual actions? Time travel may still be compatible with our best theories of relativistic cosmology, but instead of throwing light on the ultimate origin of physical action, it reveals once

more how and why this origin remains occulted by the massive evidence of our own lives.

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# Nietzsche, Solitude, and Truthfulness

Gregory Schalliol

In 1886, after completing *Beyond Good and Evil* early in the year, Nietzsche composed prefaces for new editions of five earlier works. In the first—for *Human, All Too Human*—he reviews his life and proposes the following self-diagnosis:

And in fact I myself do not believe that anyone has ever before looked into the world with an equally profound degree of suspicion [*tiefen Verdachte*]...and anyone who could divine something of the consequences that lie in that profound suspiciousness [*tiefen Verdachte*], something of the fears and frosts of the isolation to which that unconditional *disparity of view* condemns him who is infected with it, will also understand how often, in an effort to recover from myself, as it were to induce a temporary self-forgetting, I have sought shelter in this or that—in some piece of admiration or enmity or scientificity or frivolity or stupidity; and why, where I could not find what I *needed*, I had artificially to enforce, falsify and invent a suitable fiction for myself...What I again and again needed most for my cure and self-restoration, however, was the belief that I was *not* thus isolated, not alone in *seeing* as I did...<sup>1</sup>

The "suitable fictions" he so needed as antidotes to his "profound suspiciousness," he confesses, were first his admiration of Schopenhauer and Wagner, and then the very "free spirits" for whom that book was originally written in 1878—free spirits invented "as compensation for the friends I lacked."<sup>2</sup> Nietzsche thus admits his early inability to endure the solitude born of extraordinary suspiciousness, and when total isolation threatened, the need to *invent* companions. He justifies this self-deception as "cunning in self-preservation," which allowed him to survive "the luxury of *my* truthfulness [*Wahrhaftigkeit*]."<sup>3</sup> And after reminding us that life lives on deception, as his case presumably has proven, he immediately assures us that he now sees actual free spirits coming into being and proposes to accelerate their genesis by describing their paths. The psychological evolution described in what follows<sup>4</sup> is clearly autobiographical. The

core of this evolution is the "great liberation" which occurs after the soul has encountered "a sudden terror and mistrust [*Argwohn*] of what is loved" in one's youthful obedience. The soul matures when it comprehends the aim of that liberation as the necessary prerequisite for self-mastery. Nietzsche sees himself becoming one of the free spirits he had to invent eight years earlier, and his writing serves to encourage the growth of such spirits. What he described in *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* with the image of the "Three Metamorphoses"<sup>5</sup> is retold here as direct autobiography.

But this celebration of imminent psychic health raises many questions. On the surface, it suggests that Nietzsche has overcome his solitude by his catching sight of and encouraging future "free spirits" like himself. Schopenhauer and Wagner will soon be replaced by more worthy companions. But since Nietzsche clearly describes himself as one of these nascent free spirits, this proclamation also suggests the conquest of his solitude by becoming a free spirit himself who no longer needs companions. In the former case, Nietzsche's health depends on his effective interaction with the human community. He is the political activist who sets out to transform the real world in order to secure a healthy community for himself and others. But in the latter case, Nietzsche's health depends on effective interaction with himself alone. He is the solitary wise man who transforms himself in order to find nourishment in seclusion. Which of these is Nietzsche? Moreover, what sense can be made of a "truthfulness" which sanctions self-deception in psychic therapy? These are the questions I propose to examine in what follows, for they will force us to consider the philosopher's relationship to the human community and to truthfulness.

I begin with Nietzsche's self-professed "truthfulness." This was presumably the result of his "profound suspiciousness" which, like the ideal of scientific inquiry he inherited, demanded that all convictions "descend to the modesty of hypotheses."<sup>6</sup> Suspiciousness of such severity not only threatens every conviction, including those concerning friendships; it also inevitably questions its own value. As he had suggested in *The Birth of Tragedy*, the ultimate outcome of Socratic questioning is that logic finally "bites its own tail."<sup>7</sup> The questioner is forced by his own profound suspicion to include himself in the questioning. But when suspicion questions the legitimacy of suspicion, it generates its opposite, for the question itself presupposes that questioning is not under suspicion. Moreover, given the apparent utility of ignorance in so many situations, the unqualified goodness of searching for truth—the consequence of suspicion—is not self-evident.

Science thus exposes itself as mere *faith*—indeed, as that ancient Platonic and Christian faith that “truth is divine.”<sup>8</sup>

Suspiciousness of such depth thus seems to subvert itself. It exposes itself as a servant of the unsuspecting—the irrational—thereby refuting the apparent Platonic-Socratic suggestion that reason rightly rules the soul. This ultimately irrational quest for rationality—what Nietzsche came to call “the will to truth”<sup>9</sup>—was a puzzling phenomenon. On the one hand, its self-subversiveness suggested its unreliability as permanent psychic nourishment;<sup>10</sup> on the other, its endurance in Nietzsche and the European civilization he inherited suggested a certain utility.<sup>11</sup> In the second preface he wrote in 1886—this one for a new edition of *The Birth of Tragedy*—Nietzsche called this “frightful and dangerous” matter “*the problem of science itself*,” which he had already formulated in that work sixteen years earlier.<sup>12</sup> He recognized even then, he says, that “the problem of science cannot be recognized in the context of science.”<sup>13</sup> Only by looking at science from another perspective—first *art*, then *life*—can one hope to judge its worth, for science subverts itself when it engages in honest self-evaluation.

Indeed, Nietzsche had already ventured a judgment of science from the perspective of “life” in that early work. Socratic rationalism, he suggested, may well have distracted the human will for centuries from losing its “lust for life.”<sup>14</sup> This salubrity of the will to truth is a recurring theme in Nietzsche’s later writings.<sup>15</sup> But the will to truth also risks being “a concealed will to death”<sup>16</sup>—the latest version of the “ascetic ideal” which seems destined to destroy its carriers but may infect and thereby exterminate everyone else in the process.<sup>17</sup> To avoid the latter possibility, one must recognize the pursuit of truth for what it really is. Once this is accomplished, one lives more “truthfully” than one had previously under the illusion of the will to truth. Hence, Nietzsche can say that Zarathustra is “more truthful than any other thinker” and that Zarathustra’s doctrine alone “posits truthfulness as the highest virtue.”<sup>18</sup> In this way he acknowledges how “even we seekers after knowledge today, we godless anti-metaphysicians” still honor truth; this is “to what extent we, too, are still pious.”<sup>19</sup>

*Truth* thereby becomes an ambiguous term. Nietzsche is more “truthful” because he recognizes the inherent contradiction in the search for “truth” pursued by others. His insight bespeaks a superior psyche capable not just of articulating a world, but of comprehending its own articulation of the world as part of the whole. The possession of this greater self-knowledge would presumably benefit this psyche’s efforts to care for itself. If the pursuit of truth serves the irrational,

then psychic health would seem to require that the irrational obtain its due. Without this vigilance, the pursuit of truth could destroy its hosts, for the unconscious drive to ascertain what is other than oneself might paradoxically force the investigator to conceive of himself as insignificant. Self-debasement of this kind, however, contradicts and may thereby destroy the self-preservation or -cultivation which Nietzsche takes to be the trademark of the irrational ground of life.<sup>20</sup> If that original impulse of life is weak, it is unable to rise above this trap, becoming what Nietzsche called the "modern" soul, which "says Yes and No in the same breath"<sup>21</sup> and needs deception in order to sustain the contradiction. But if the original instinct is strong, it will rescue itself from the trap and learn to pursue truth not from the perspective of science, but from the perspective of *life*. This insight liberates Nietzsche, for this evidence of his superior constitution encourages him to venerate himself, diminishing his need for external idols, whether actual or imaginary. He becomes the consciously self-affirming soul which did not previously recognize itself in its various operations.<sup>22</sup> Nietzsche no longer needs worthy companions to stimulate him to life, for he has discovered he is worthy of himself.

With this liberation, the "profound suspiciousness" which led Nietzsche to this insight is transformed into a profound gratitude working in the service of conscious self-promotion.<sup>23</sup> Pronouncing itself healthy, this liberated psyche recognizes that the cosmology it has just outgrown was sick, so it begins the *experiment* of comprehending the cosmos in a completely different—perhaps opposite—way than it had been conceived earlier. Because unhealthy cosmology had forced the individual to debase himself in the effort to apprehend an external reality, a healthy cosmology would have to glorify the individual in the comprehension of reality. This soul thereby *creates* a metaphysic,<sup>24</sup> transforming *philosophy* into the production of an exuberant artist glorifying himself.<sup>25</sup> *Science* is no longer somber but "gay," for instead of debasing himself in the investigation of the whole, the investigator confirms himself in everything.<sup>26</sup> Moreover, *truth* becomes whatever he can incorporate into this metaphysic which reflects his health. The suspiciousness which once drew Nietzsche toward despair now exercises itself joyfully as it destroys the hypocritical metaphysics of self-debasement in the act of "revaluating all values" for the honest metaphysics of self-veneration.

But Nietzsche's new "truth," like any good therapy, is not universally applicable. It is true for his kind of soul—the soul whose instinctual strength prevented it from acquiescing in the self-destructive trap of the will to truth. But it is not "true"—indeed, it is probably even

deadly—for the soul whose instinctual weakness prescribed the will to truth as desperate medication to stave off its inevitable self-destruction.<sup>27</sup> Nietzsche's "revaluation of values" is necessary because the liberation which convinces him of the heterogeneity of the human species takes place in an egalitarian age which has long ago abolished all but one universal therapy for the perverted egoism of "last men." He must find a salutary diet for *his* aristocratic health, and that requires the exposure of the prevailing morality and the reconstruction of a new one.

Yet this new suspicious/grateful soul, which dares to ask "Can *all* values not be turned round?"<sup>28</sup> strikes us as lacking suspicion toward *itself*. Therein lies the supposedly healthy self-deception of the liberated *Übermensch*, who no longer wants "to see everything naked"<sup>29</sup> and recognizes "not to indulge in psychology and curiosity in the wrong place."<sup>30</sup> As Nietzsche said with respect to his own past: life "*wants* deception, it *lives* on deception."<sup>31</sup> The higher man "knows" he can remain healthy only as long as he does not really question the health of his own instinct, because he is now convinced that such self-doubt—at least in himself—is ultimately only a passing stage to self-glorification. Wherever he turns, he sees only a radical egoism, even in the attempts to curtail or doubt that egoism. The soul which truly venerates itself exploits everything that is "other" for its own benefit, so it must conceive of life as "*essentially* appropriation, injury, overpowering of what is alien and weaker."<sup>32</sup> Lacking all self-suspicion, this soul, like a healthy aristocracy, "accepts with a good conscience the sacrifice of untold human beings who, *for its sake*, must be reduced and lowered to incomplete human beings, to slaves, to instruments."<sup>33</sup> Nietzsche's overcoming of his self-doubt becomes self-deification.

What sense does it make to speak of "health" for such a soul? Where is the "truthfulness" of one who no longer doubts himself? These categories still make sense, I suggest, if one considers whether Nietzsche has attained a successful medical evaluation of himself. As with any medical diagnosis, its truth must be determined by the success of the prescribed treatment. Nietzsche prescribes for himself the "revaluation of all values"—the comprehensive reconception of human life based upon the radical selfishness he sees as the essence of his health. If he can carry it out—if he can *live* it—then one can say that Nietzsche has made a *true* diagnosis, for the ultimate standard for truth here is life, not logical consistency. To be sure, reason and logic are still important instruments which can serve this healthy psyche by helping it articulate a cosmology consistent with itself. If someone "with opposite intentions and modes of interpretation" from

traditional ones is able to explain the whole as will to power,<sup>34</sup> he thereby strengthens the suspicion that the cosmos is "in all eternity chaos"<sup>35</sup> which is receptive to his radically egoistic drive to appropriate it intellectually for his own glorification. Nietzsche's view of himself and the cosmos as will to power is "true" as long as he can sustain his belief in them. But to sustain this belief, he uses reason to articulate a new cosmos which at least superficially confirms his insight.

To this extent Nietzsche's thought is personal psychiatry. He dares to heal himself, for first suspiciousness, then pride, prevent him from trusting any other physician. Yet while he seems to be focused on himself as his primary object, he publishes his therapy for all to read, with frequent suggestions that he hopes to influence others.<sup>36</sup> Surely it is one thing to tend to one's own psychic health and quite another to try to change the world. However, a *suspicious* soul will not rest content with medical treatment carried out only in its head. It will, I suggest, demand to see itself confirmed in concrete life, for otherwise it would still suspect that it might be living a dream. But since Nietzsche's healthy living opposes the foundations of modern European civilization, he would see his health confirmed only if European civilization crumbles as he lives, that is, only if egalitarian society would give way to an "order of rank" consistent with his view of healthy life. In Nietzsche's case, therefore, personal psychiatry naturally leads to political revolution by the demands of truthfulness. To refrain from testing his therapy would be psychiatric pretense. To carry out the test risks the transformation of the human world.

This explains, I suggest, why someone so devoted to his private well-being was equally devoted to the publication of his self-analysis. It also explains why the author of so self-absorbed an autobiography as *Ecce Homo* could also call himself "the man of calamity" whose truths would explode the culture of his day, for "it is only with me that the earth knows *great politics*."<sup>37</sup> Moreover, it explains how the central concepts of "eternal recurrence" and "will to power" are depicted in Nietzsche's writings both as personal psychological tests for a true free spirit and as political weapons for clearing away obstacles to the new, great health.<sup>38</sup> The instruments he has used for his personal therapy will, if they are trustworthy, confirm his health when employed on others, for an essential part of his self-evaluation is that the weak instincts opposing him are themselves sick and on the verge of collapse. His writings will provide the catalyst:

A pessimistic way of thinking and doctrine—an ecstatic nihilism—can under certain circumstances be indispensable precisely for the philosopher—as a powerful pressure and hammer with which

he breaks and removes degenerate and dying races in order to make way for a new order of life or to implant in what is degenerate and wants to die a longing for the end...<sup>39</sup>

This means that the confirmation which Nietzsche seeks through the community is hardly the companionship of like souls, but rather the service their subjugation or demise can provide in confirming himself. The whole of European civilization becomes the laboratory subject of his grand experiment. If his revaluation of values succeeds in concrete reality, his relative health is confirmed, for he will have shown not only that he could think himself the center of the whole, but also that life permits him to be the center. At the same time, however, his success would confirm neither a universal truth nor a utopia. If life "permits" him to be its center, then life has no abiding structure independent of a will which creates its center. The health of Nietzsche's radical egoism will depend on his confirmation that there is no opposing "world" which will resist his will. Perhaps the best way to test this hypothesis is to attempt a revolution which tries to implement the opposite of the status quo.<sup>40</sup> If the same cosmos permits opposite orders, then there is some evidence to suggest that, in fact, the whole is "in all eternity chaos" and that "my" will is supreme.

According to this analysis, Nietzsche's ultimate psychic health lies in the solitude of a god toying with the universe. His frequent references to multiple "free spirits," "new philosophers," and "immoralists" make sense from a psychiatric perspective as uses of the royal *we* through which Nietzsche stimulates his own psychological evolution. They make sense from a political perspective only if they are recruitment devices for semi-sympathetic soldiers Nietzsche needs to implement his experiment, promising an aristocracy while his own radical egoism demands a monarchy.<sup>41</sup> Likewise, passages which suggest his concern for the fate of the human species<sup>42</sup> more likely show his concern for his own fate, even though they, too, could serve to persuade aristocratic humanists to join his revolutionary guard. Nietzsche is the lone warrior whose health will ultimately be confirmed if the world accedes to his experiment. This marriage of personal solitude and confident political efficacy is particularly evident in *Ecce Homo*, written shortly before his collapse. There Nietzsche explains how proper it is that none of his contemporaries understands him, even though these same ideas will soon produce an unprecedented upheaval of contemporary culture.<sup>43</sup> It is precisely these often perplexing juxtapositions of solitude and social conscience, or scientific

modesty and self-deification, which make sense once we see that Nietzsche is testing the health of radical egoism.

But must suspiciousness—and its outcome, truthfulness—inevitably lead to profound solitude of this kind? If it must, the consummate philosopher is condemned to isolation. What of those who claim to practice truthfulness but refrain from or stop short of self-deification? Nietzsche, I suspect, would say such men delude themselves. But does it not make sense to ask at the very beginning whether Nietzsche's trademark—his profound suspiciousness—is not already a symptom of an incurable disease? Suspiciousness already presupposes a particular "self" alienated from a usually hostile "other" and which thereby presumes that this self's well-being comes at the expense of the other. Even though Nietzsche claims to analyze himself wisely, he does so from the tainted perspective of a self which is already confidently opposed to the world. In this respect, his examination resembles the mistake he warned of concerning the evaluation of science from the perspective of science.<sup>44</sup> Even if science or suspiciousness can only be evaluated from a more primordial perspective called "life," there is no more primordial perspective from which to evaluate life, for that is the inarticulate ground of all evaluation. Life's immediate appearance in a human being is instinct, so Nietzsche's conception of instinct—first as self-preservation, then as self-cultivation—is his conception of life. But that is not a determination he has articulated from a more primordial standpoint, *for there is no further standpoint*. It is the immediate understanding of life one would expect from life which has *already* articulated itself into a particular "self" opposed to a hostile "world," i.e., into a radically egoistic cosmology. Even when such a self claims not to know itself and to be dutifully carrying out experiments of self-discovery, the mere willingness to risk "the sacrifice of untold human beings" in such an experiment betrays an already confident egoism. This is why the seemingly extraordinary transformation of Nietzsche's profound suspiciousness into the universal gratitude of "*amor fati*"<sup>45</sup> is, in the end, so easy. Both psychological inclinations stem from a radically egoistic cosmology in which a particular "self" is opposed to a homogenous "world." In the one case, the world is uniformly hostile; in the other, uniformly nutritious.<sup>46</sup>

If this is true, then Nietzsche never truly examines life, for he cannot know whether his powerful egoism is a paradigm or a perversion of its inarticulate origin. But if the origin is inarticulate, he can reverse the technique of traditional medical treatment. Rather than modifying the constitution of the patient to conform to the pre-given order of the encompassing cosmos, Nietzsche reconstructs the cosmos in order to

have it conform to the pre-given constitution of the patient. Whether he himself is a perversion or a paradigm of life thus never comes into question; it is enough that he is *alive*.<sup>47</sup> His truthfulness thus rests on a primordial ignorance—a paradoxical will to truth which spurns self-evaluation precisely because it has *reasonably* concluded that self-evaluation is impossible. Lacking self-evaluation, this particular self lives by becoming the author of the cosmos, and its truthfulness is ultimately tested by whether it succeeds in its attempt to live the life of God. We cannot help wondering, however, how wise this wise ignorance is which tries to confirm the possibility of radical egoism when its very confirmation would make it unintelligible. Nietzsche's veneration of himself would reach its consummation only if the cosmos proves to be pure chaos and he can become God for a time. Whatever proud mastery this might demonstrate in the face of other human beings, it must ultimately demonstrate insignificance in the face of an eternally and chaotically changing cosmos which ultimately consumes all of its children.<sup>48</sup> Nor can one learn much from or relish one's experiments if one knows he cannot even live to see their results, as Nietzsche knew.<sup>49</sup> The life Nietzsche proposes requires a seemingly incredible marriage of discursive sobriety and inarticulate forgetfulness—a consciousness which both knows and forgets that it is perpetually deceiving itself. It is surely open to debate whether Nietzsche was successful in actually living such a life with success. Nonetheless, as Nietzsche himself demonstrates, this is a possible articulation of life.

The purely personal foundation of Nietzsche's thought, however, permits us to consider an alternative "truthfulness" which is worthy of that name but does not entail self-deification and thereby utter solitude. If there is ultimately no perspective from which we can discern the character of life other than life, which by definition is inarticulate, then one can ask from one's own immediate understanding of life whether life is not something other than mere will to power. One can imagine, for example, a soul characterized by *wonder*<sup>50</sup> rather than *suspicion* or *gratitude*. "Wonder," like these Nietzschean alternatives, might imply an articulation of life into an individual psyche as "self" opposed to everything else as "world." But whereas suspicion and gratitude already imply a confidence in the specific character of this separation, wonder does not. This self, unlike Nietzsche's, might be uneasy with its articulated role in the cosmos, as reflected perhaps in its perpetual willingness to reconsider its own legitimacy.<sup>51</sup> It may, for example, be uncertain about its detachment from everything else which has been separated from it as "other." It may also not know

with confidence where domination, servitude, or some other response to the "other" is appropriate. This uncertainty may stem not just from the restlessness it feels from being unable to articulate its origin, but also from an inkling that life may not be a monistic force, but perhaps a composition of heterogeneous forces, among which one discerns, say, a will to power and a will to death. Wonder might well become either suspiciousness or gratitude, presuming that one's immediate understanding of life might change as one lives it. Nietzsche, in other words, is an eternal possibility in such a soul.

The truthfulness of a soul marked by wonder, however, would be exemplified not in its confident daring to confirm its own detachment from the world, but in its reluctance to conclude that it must be so detached or that otherness is homogenous and so calls for a uniform response from the self. Therein lies the *possibility* of friendship with or willing subservience to another—possibilities precluded from Nietzsche's radically detached self. This self, in all truthfulness, could respond to otherness by trying to nourish a parity between self and other, by acknowledging its humility in the face of the other, or even by extinguishing itself in favor of the other. But because it, too, finds itself detached from all others, any community it pursues will never have the confident stability of an unconscious community which was never articulated into separated egos. Moreover, since this self still questions how heterogeneous the world might be, it will not just ask whether what looks like selflessness might not be concealed egoism; it will also ask whether what looks like self-deification may not be a concealed will to death—a self ultimately seeking to dissolve itself in chaos through its attempt to replace God.

A true Nietzschean would surely respond that all of this is already a symptom of the will to power. Self-consciousness, by its very nature, is an egoistic act, and the self's attempt to distinguish "hostile," "beneficial," and "neutral" strains in the cosmos is itself also a sign at least of self-preservation, if not self-cultivation. I would not deny that these things are true—to a point. Self-consciousness is intelligible only through the distinction, and hence "self-preservation," of the self from what is other. Wonder, like Nietzschean suspiciousness and thankfulness, is relatively egoistic when compared to articulations of life in which an unconscious community emerges as a self distinguished from its world. But apart from such a possibility, which also constitutes an alternative to Nietzsche, I propose that there can be an intelligible articulation of life in which a particular self is separated from the world but which is not merely a confirmation of radical egoism. Such a self, for example, could consciously extinguish itself.

A radically egoistic self could not. Conscious suicide for Nietzsche is impossible, for as he is so fond of pointing out, the soul conscious of its egoistic supremacy transforms everything else into nourishment for its own growth.<sup>52</sup> But one could imagine a soul characterized by wonder reaching the conscious conclusion that it was a perversion of the whole and hence would extinguish itself. Moreover, a soul defined by wonder might articulate otherness not to venerate itself, but perhaps to venerate itself along with others or to venerate another above itself. Indeed, the individuation of self is a necessary prerequisite not just for radical egoism, but also for conscious friendship and devotion to another. But all of these are possibilities, I suggest, because each reflects a possible articulation of the inarticulate origin Nietzsche called life.

If articulation is a product of life, then the attempt to learn how to live life properly by first articulating it is illusory. As I suggested above concerning Nietzsche, the only way to test one's understanding of life under these circumstances would be to try to live it. The suggestion that one could judge one's own understanding of life by comparing it to that of another will not help, for the willingness even to entertain the authority of another, as Nietzsche's case makes plain, is already a reflection of one's understanding of life.<sup>53</sup> His refusal to acknowledge any authority for his own life other than himself has its antipodes in the unconscious community in which one member never questions the obedience or the authority of another. But somewhere between these extremes is an understanding of life from which both of these others are visible, though not clearly thereby accessible—a place where solitude and community both lure a self uncertain of its very self-articulation. Recognition in the reverse directions, however, seems less likely. The unconscious member of a community will find an isolated self pitiful. The radical egoist, who cannot see any other strand of life through the monotonous darkness (or brightness) of will to power, will denounce all entertainment of heterogeneous possibilities as hypocrisy. Yet despite all of Nietzsche's claims about the difficulty of solitude, the homogenous cosmology behind it suggests a simple and uniform life once the difficult initiation is over. An understanding of life which lies suspended somewhere between the will to power and the will to death, on the other hand, may present a much harder task—a task requiring the greatest struggle to avoid permanently succumbing to one of its two equally necessary but equally inadequate monistic intoxications. From this perspective, might not even Nietzsche appear to be undisciplined?—Or lazy?—Maybe a hedonist in disguise? To live this other life well, one might say, is "to be schooled

in the abridgment of ambition,"<sup>54</sup> as long as it is understood that this "schooling" is no mere training of the intellect. To claim authorship of the dualism which fires this life is to fall into Nietzsche's intoxicating monism. Rather than abridged, ambition is there deified. To abdicate authorship of it, on the other hand, is to try to retrieve the intoxicating monism of innocence. Rather than abridged, ambition is there extinguished. Each of these alternatives might be a life which we could say one might live "truthfully," if we only acknowledge thereby that it is one of the possible ways in which life actually articulates itself. But its relative blindness to the other possibilities banishes it, I would say, from philosophy.

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#### Notes:

1. HA Preface § 1. Citations from Nietzsche's published works in this paper are coded by title abbreviation and corresponding book and/or section abbreviation and/or number. The title abbreviations are: (BT) *The Birth of Tragedy*, (UM) *Untimely Meditations*, (HA) *Human, All-Too-Human*, (D) *Daybreak*, (GS) *The Gay Science*, (Z) *Thus spoke Zarathustra*, (BGE) *Beyond Good and Evil*, (GM) *On the Genealogy of Morals*, (CW) *The Case of Wagner*, (TI) *Twilight of the Idols*, (A) *The Antichrist*, (EH) *Ecce Homo*, (NCW) *Nietzsche Contra Wagner*. I generally follow Kaufmann's translations of BT, GS, Z, BGE, CW, TI, A, EH, and NCW, and Hollingsdale's translations of UM, HA, and D. Citations from the unpublished fragments are my translations, indicated by W with the division, notebook, and fragment number as they appear in *Nietzsche Werke* (1967 ff.) and are reprinted in *Sämtliche Werke* (1980).
2. HA Preface § 2.
3. HA Preface § 1.
4. HA Preface §§ 3-8.
5. Z I.1.
6. GS § 344.
7. BT § 15.
8. GS § 344.
9. Z II.12.
10. BGE § 1.
11. BGE § 24.
12. BT Preface § 2.
13. Cp. D Preface § 3.
14. BT § 15.

15. Cf. GS § 110; Z II.12; BGE § 24.
16. GS § 344.
17. GM III § 14,25,27.
18. EH "Destiny" § 3.
19. GS § 344.
20. GS § 110.
21. CW Epilogue.
22. This is the ultimate meaning of the subtitle for the autobiographical *Ecce Homo*—"How One Becomes What One Is." Cf. EH "Clever" § 9.
23. This gratitude is most evident throughout EH and is the natural consequence of someone who has learned "to crave nothing more fervently" than the eternal recurrence of all things (GS § 341).
24. GS § 347.
25. Z II.12; BGE § 211; W VII 38(13); GS § 347. The unpublished fragment cited here is particularly illuminating, given its position in this notebook next to the famous fragment which was published at the end of *The Will to Power*. The three notes VII 38(11)-38(13) suggest the logical connections between solitude, the will to power, and "noble" philosophy.
26. GS § 324.
27. BGE §§ 30,43. For the portrayal of the will to truth as desperate medication, see GM III.
28. HA Preface § 3.
29. GS Preface § 4.
30. BGE § 270.
31. HA Preface § 1.
32. BGE § 259.
33. BGE § 258.
34. BGE § 22.
35. GS § 109.
36. Recall the ambiguity between solitude and community in the first quotation of the paper.
37. EH "Destiny" § 1.
38. For the former, cf. GS § 341 and Z III.2. For the latter, see especially W VII 25(227), 26(376), 35(82).
39. W VII 35(82).
40. In this regard, the wording of BGE § 22—the first explicit "prose" account of the will to power in Nietzsche's published works after its "poetic" introduction in Z—is very illuminating.
41. Cp. Rosen (1989).
42. Especially in GM I and III.
43. EH "Books" § 1, "Destiny" § 1.

44. *BT* Preface § 2.
45. *EH* "Clever" § 10.
46. Seen in this way, Nietzsche embodies the repudiation of what he exposed as "the faith in opposite values" which made all previous metaphysics dogmatic. Cf. *BGE* § 2.
47. Cf. *HA* Preface § 1.
48. As Rosen (1989) points out (p.198), Nietzsche cannot himself avoid the nihilism he imputes to his adversaries.
49. Cf. *A* Preface; *EH* "Books" § 1.
50. Cp. Plato, *Theaetetus* 155d2-4.
51. Consider Socrates' observation that he continues to wonder whether he is a beast or not (*Phaedrus* 230a).
52. Hence, as Nietzsche makes clear in *GM*, the last men are committing suicide unconsciously.
53. Therein lies, I suspect, the significance Socrates sees in one's preference for *conversation* (*diagesthai*) or *display* (*epideixasthai*) when speaking to others. See, for example, *Gorgias* 447a-c and *Protagoras* 336a-d.
54. Lachterman (1989), p. vii.

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# From Rationalism to Historicism: The Devolution of Cartesian Subjectivity

Carl Page

Cartesian rationalism and Enlightenment conceptions of reason—with their universality, foundationalism, immediacy, and absolutism—are commonly taken to be opposed to late modern and post-modern historicist interpretations of human understanding, interpretations that emphasize contingency, finitude, mediacy, and the impossibility of closure. The contradictions, however, lie only on the surface. As the flower contradicts the bud (to recall an Hegelian image), so too does historicism contradict the rationalism that precedes it. They are in fact dialectical siblings, far too perfectly opposed to one another not to be related. My aim in what follows is to show the matrix from which they both spring, and thus to establish the meaning of their deep consanguinity.<sup>1</sup>

## I

At first sight, no two dispositions could seem more different than the hyper-rationalism of Descartes, who seeks to render the motions of his mind perfectly transparent and impervious to the effects of history, versus the hyperpragmatism of historicist thinkers who would reduce their minds to vortices in an historical flux.<sup>2</sup> It could be said, following a lead Descartes himself provides in the youthful notebook entries marked *Olympica*, that Cartesian philosophy has an Olympian spirit.<sup>3</sup> As a genus, all Olympian philosophies aspire to actual transcendence of mortal parochiality and subservience. Descartes is therefore a paradigmatic Olympian. Yet Olympian aspirations do not all have to be funded by the same source. Part of what I want to show is the continuity between Descartes's rebellious, titanic desire to take the Olympian heights and the equally titanic and hubristic assertion that the heights are unpossessible in principle and therefore the unworthy or foolish objects of mortal aspiration and endeavor.

Descartes's own supreme confidence in a *novum organum*, a new instrument for the realization of universal and primary science, now seems hopeless to his historicist descendants, but the reconception of rationality on which it was based has, despite the disillusionment, remained in place, having followed a devolution that spells out in the medium of history an intrinsic instability at the heart of Descartes's original instauration. The most recent and ultimate outcome of that primal disequilibrium is contemporary historicist philosophy.

Several outward signs of the inner, dialectical relationship may be observed.

Both Cartesianism and historicism are revolutionary. Just as Descartes seeks a radically new beginning for all responsible thought, so too does philosophical historicism define the essence of all responsible thinking in accord with its own axioms. This is more than renovating the edifice of philosophy; it is an attempt to build it anew. Philosophy's non-historicist past must either go or be transformed completely because it is mistaken about reason's perfection, i.e., about the best mode of reason's operation. Likewise, scholasticism was to be replaced by free-thinking, authority and prejudice by lucidity and self-possession. Both historicism and Cartesianism are deflationary, exclusive, and aggressive, and both presume that a mistaken philosophical ethos renders all its possible fruits corrupt.

While relying in their revolutionary mode on being doctrines of reason's self-knowledge, in their more specific character they are doctrines of reason's epistemic self-assurance. Cartesianism sets itself the task of showing how representational contents of the mind construed as modifications of a stream of consciousness can count as genuine knowledge, historicism that opinions generated within a contingent historical process of tradition can do the same. As doctrines of reason's self-assurance both visibly labor at the question of justifying objectivity, at getting beyond whatever is merely idiosyncratic in the circle of subjective ideas. That circle is in the one case bounded by the *ego cogitans* and in the other by received opinion in the human community at large, the latter being an example as it is now said of intersubjectivity.

Their revolutionary zeal follows from the combination of having identified a fragility in reason's adequacy and claiming to possess the perfect instrument or attitude for dealing with it. In the latter respect, historicists are more anxious about assuring themselves and their fellows of their philosophical virtue than Descartes ever was. The problem of reason's self-assurance is dealt with in the same general way. Having given an account of what *constitutes* reason's operation,

both go on to make *procedural* recommendations for overcoming or compensating for reason's constitutional infirmities. Thus Descartes promulgates a method, historicists discuss canons of hermeneutics and the structure of practical rationality as they vouchsafe theoretical ends. In both cases a technique, an artful procedure is being put forward as the necessary supplement to ensure reason's perfect operation.

These are outward signs that Cartesianism and philosophical historicism belong to the same *Gestalt des Bewußtseins*, the same "configuration of consciousness." The remainder of my essay speaks in more detail to the character and historical trace of this shared, underlying configuration.

## II

Auroral moderns were impressed anew with the rational seductions of the mathematical. Enthusiasm on this score amounts to a renaissance of the pagan delight in *theōria* and esteem of the liberal (as contrasted with mechanical or banausic) arts. Even more impressive was the cognitive power unleashed by the reinterpretation of mathematical understanding in symbolic rather than eidetic, schematic rather than eikonic, terms. This generated a noetically much wilder sort of enthusiasm, stimulated by the joys of constructive mastery and a vision of completeness.<sup>4</sup>

The urge to Cartesian mastery is an urge to total rational autonomy that calls not only for a reconstruction of all one's opinions from the ground up, but also for a repudiation of all one's preceptors as well. Tutelage is a compromise, whether it be to nature as the given or to the possibly good habits inculcated by family, by teachers, and by tradition. On this basis, modern philosophy becomes a story of the intellect militant, an imperialism of the mind convinced that the way to its perfection lies through an exquisite self-sufficiency—a convenient ideal, since it starts out in such solitude and alienation. As Leibniz insightfully observed, Descartes had the vanity of wishing to be a solipsist. Yet this ideal of human reason's self-sufficiency is not confined to Descartes's single, meditating self. Likewise, the intersubjective community of philosophical historicists would for the sake of their hermetic self-satisfaction throw any philosophy hinting at Olympian aspiration into the abyss where all devils belong. The call for solidarity, as if it were the highest philosophical virtue, is Cartesian solipsism in intersubjective drag.

Descartes's philosophical justification of his mathematically inspired rationalism is, by consensus, inadequate. Dissatisfaction with

Cartesian dualism is but one rather superficial sign, related to which are more specific doctrinal problems about the status of imagination in Descartes's overall account.<sup>5</sup> Another sign is the contemporary willingness to forego certainty altogether as a noetic standard, thus protecting all understanding from the Cartesian Anxiety of supposing that if certainty cannot definitively be established, all is lost to chaotic ignorance.<sup>6</sup> Perhaps history's judgment on the score of Descartes's philosophical adequacy would not especially disturb him, since it has also cast a definitive vote against Aristotelian physics—the practical result he hoped to effect with his *Meditations*. Either way, the philosophical problems of justification left over from the postulation of symbolic mathematics as a paradigm for theorizing haunt Descartes's sober confidence in the control that he trusts himself to be capable of exercising over his own imagination. Descartes cannot guarantee the identity of Eudoxus ("sound-minded" or "renowned") with Polyander ("everyman"), as the consummation of their mutual search for truth (*The Search for Truth*, ii 400 ff.).<sup>7</sup> That Descartes himself was well possessed of noetic *sōphrosynē* cannot be disputed. The question is: why self-control, rather than rapture? What justifies the autonomous, model-theoretic operation of reason as a way of epistemic knowing? Such was the question Kant posed as a critique of pure reason.

It is sometimes thought that, in comparison with Kant's sophisticated demand for self-criticism, Descartes's rationalism either neglected the issue or naively left it up to some dubious theology. In fact, Descartes perfectly well appreciated the sort of question on which Kant based his whole undertaking. In the eighth rule of the *Regulae*, Descartes talks of "investigating every truth for the knowledge of which human reason is adequate" (i 30) and revealing "what is human knowledge and what is its scope" (i 31).

If there is any immediate difference with Kant, it is a difference in tone. For Descartes, the critical enquiry is a crowning survey of reason's native domain rather than a determination of boundaries that reason is by nature prone to transgress. He is optimistic: "it should not be regarded as an arduous or even difficult task to define the limits of the mental powers we are conscious of possessing...Nor is it an immeasurable task to seek to encompass in thought everything in the universe, with a view to learning in what way particular things may be susceptible of investigation by the human mind" (*Regulae*, i 31). Kant on the other hand pessimistically describes critique as "a call to reason to undertake anew the most difficult of all its tasks, namely self-knowledge" (A xi).<sup>8</sup> It is difficult, according to Kant, because reason as he interprets it is constantly prone to seek more than noetic

sobriety permits, is constantly prone to lose itself in *Schwärmerei*. The critique of pure reason is an attempt rationally to deduce the noetic moderation Descartes possessed by nature, deployed with tact, and only partially managed to account for in philosophical speech.

Such differences of tone aside, the deep agreement between Kant and Descartes on the nature of human reason is nonetheless evident, both in the project of determining in advance reason's general fitness for knowledge and in the further projective hope that the domain of rationally certifiable knowledge may also be completely surveyed in advance. "Nothing in *apriori* knowledge can be ascribed to objects save what the thinking subject derives from itself...pure reason...is a quite separate self-subsistent unity, in which...every member exists for every other...consequently, metaphysics...is capable of acquiring exhaustive knowledge of its entire field" (B xxiii). A more straightforward statement of the hypostasis of theoretical reason could hardly be imagined. Pure reason is a system with its very own architecture (B 860); the knowledge it makes possible is open to methodical and complete survey. Kant thus interprets, along with moderns before and since, the theorizing mind as an independent source of cognitive content—knowledge from out of pure reason. Moreover, by being reason's own possessions and constructions, the conditions for such representations are entirely available to reason's self-analysis. This is the use Kant makes of the *lumen naturale*. There are no shadows in the transcendental domain, save the possible exception of that dark and to us "hidden root" that the transcendental synthesis has in imagination.<sup>9</sup> The possibility of complete critique follows from the homogeneity of the *apriori* domain.

The affiliation between Kant's image of pure, autonomous, self-critical reason and Descartes's mathematical paradigm may be discerned in Kant's analysis of modern science's cognitive success. A century after Newton published his *Philosophiae Naturalis Principia Mathematica* in 1687 (ever since an epitome) Kant published the second, B-edition of his *Kritik der reinen Vernunft*. He introduces it by asking why metaphysics or First Philosophy (which, for him, includes ontology, cosmology, psychology, and theology), unlike logic, mathematics, and now physics or Second Philosophy, has not yet found its way to the secure path of science. He proposes to repair the deficiency by re-construing metaphysics in light of the conditions that make the established sciences possible. Paramount amongst those conditions Kant identifies conceptual domination of the given through the *apriori* projection of rational order, as opposed to passive reception of what-

ever unsystematic clues nature might deign to furnish. In the controlled experiments of Galileo, Torricelli, and Stahl, he writes:

a light broke in upon all students of nature. They learned that reason has insight only into that which it produces after a plan [*Entwurf*] of its own, and that it must not allow itself to be kept, as it were, in nature's leading-strings, but must itself show the way with principles of judgment based upon fixed laws, constraining nature to give answers to questions of reason's own determining. (B xlii)

The Kantian notion of a plan or project (*Entwurf*) of reason is the proximate progenitor of theory in the modern sense, that is, of theory as a rational construct or model. It is also one of the ancestors of all our contemporary philosophical talk of frameworks, conceptual schemes, and hermeneutics. What distinctively marks Kant's picture is the presupposition that knowledge is gained in proportion to how well nature answers to laws of reason's own independent devising. That is, reason decides in advance what *could* be the rational structure of the world, and then nature answers yes or no.

This really is, as Kant proclaims, a Copernican revolution. It amounts to radically relocating the source of the order characteristically revealed by theoretical knowledge. All theoretical understanding depends on a trans-empirical moment for the conversion of the empirical and the merely general into epistemic cognition. That moment is traditionally described in terms of the universality, necessity, and primacy that mark the first principles (*archai*) or causes (*aitiai*) of the things themselves. Such order as successful science may reveal thus derives from the link between phenomena and their real causes, a link which reason may discern with varying degrees of perspicuity. According to Kant's conception on the other hand, all possible forms of system, order, and structure belong first and in advance to reason. In a word, Kant's word, all order belongs to reason *a priori*. On this alternative, science's systematic or universal character originally derives not from things but from possibilities legislated entirely by self-contained, independently operating human reason. The world of experience does not announce a cosmos to whose structure human reason reaches out. Instead it announces a disarray of discrete points of information that can and must be mastered with the aid of our rational templates. Such laws as nature then appears to follow are not so many clues to the actuality of her primary causes but so many schemes for organizing our apprehension of their ontic effects.

On the basis of what starts out as an observation about the origins of objectivity in the positive natural sciences and is later worked out

in detail as the structure of epistemic objectivity in general, Kant proposes that "we must therefore make trial whether we may not have more success in the tasks of metaphysics, if we suppose that objects must conform to our knowledge" (B xvi). The hypothetical analogy is the cornerstone of his critique. Supposing an analogous function of the intellect at the level of what he calls "experience" (*Erfahrung*), Kant undertakes to dissect the framework that is created, not by self-conscious theoretical production but by the subconscious, or what Kant calls the spontaneous, world-constituting activity of *Verstand*. This dissection is to lay bare its entire cognitive potential and therewith the limits of specifically human knowledge. This can be thought of as an analysis of the deep structure of the *ego cogitans*: "I have to do with nothing save reason itself and its pure thinking; and to obtain complete knowledge of these, there is no need to go far afield, since I come upon them within my own self" (A xiv).

So set up, the critique of theoretical reason is two-tiered. It is committed, first, to analysing the logic of knowing, and thence to demonstrating both the exhaustiveness and necessity of that logic. The structural analysis of objectivity is not itself the critique but merely an instrument of the philosophical account of reason which shows that theorizing must occur and can only occur in accord with that particular apparatus. In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, those demonstrations are to be effected through the Transcendental Deduction and the Transcendental Dialectic respectively. Thus, Kant seeks thoroughly to rehabilitate reason's natural, metaphysical urges to transcend what *Verstand* makes noetically possible.

Although Descartes constantly remarks on the prudence of setting our hopes in manifest accord with our often infirm powers, Kant's systematic humiliation of reason's natural pretensions introduces a strongly deflationary element into the modern picture of theorizing reason. To be sure, Kant tries to hold on to the justifiability of contentful universal knowledge—how are synthetic *a priori* judgments possible?—while yet abandoning the Olympian moment, the knowledge of things in themselves. This abandonment is captured in his image of "the territory of pure understanding":

It is the land of truth—enchanted name—surrounded by a wide and stormy ocean, the native home of illusion, where many a fog bank and many a swiftly melting iceberg give the deceptive appearance of farther shores, deluding the adventurous seafarer ever anew with empty hopes, and engaging him in enterprises which he can never abandon and yet is unable to carry to completion. Before we venture on this sea...it will be well to begin by casting a glance on the map of the land

which we are about to leave, and to enquire, first, whether we cannot in any case be satisfied with what it contains. (B 294)

Kant's fear-mongering here is rhetorically continuous with Descartes's invocation of an Evil Demon, yet with the difference that Kant proposes no retrieval of what lies beyond the immanent structure of human understanding. He calls it land, but the map is really a map of the inner logic of a radically temporalized *ego cogitans*. Kant's exhortation at the end of the passage anticipates all subsequent forms of pragmatic, historicist admonishing to make do with the level of cognitive achievement supposedly vouchsafed by finite, human powers alone. His warnings against speculative metaphysics may be correlated with historicism's abuse of all philosophy that has an Olympian spirit, and in giving up the Olympian moment Kant sets the stage for the historicization and relativization of all possible transcendental structure. As Nietzsche so wisely prophesied: "if Kant ever should begin to exercise any wide influence we shall be aware of it in the form of a gnawing and disintegrating scepticism and relativism."<sup>10</sup>

The heart of Kant's transcendental strategy is the hope of being able to discern in the spontaneous, apriori construction of experience, parameters that stabilize the possibility of universal and primary knowledge. Kant's own metaphysics of experience, however, is but one interpretation of this stabilizing structure. Gadamer's phenomenology of tradition and Rorty's version of the conversation of mankind, for example, are others. Read abstractly, an analysis of the conditions for the possibility of knowledge could as well describe some ancient endeavors as well as modern ones. The real change is written into the notion of knowledge itself, whose order now in principle belongs to reason construed as a self-contained entity with its own substructure, rather than to the realities which it is reason's whole, derivative essence to work at revealing.

As it happens, Kant's critique has been found as philosophically wanting as Descartes's meditations. Outwardly, the rejection has likewise been expressed as a dissatisfaction with dualism, in Kant's case the dualism of noumena and phenomena. Inwardly, misgivings have arisen on two fronts. First, they have been occasioned by worries about the apparent parochiality of both the logic and the conceptions of space and temporality on which Kant bases the contentful aspects of his transcendental argumentation. Second, the inferences of the Transcendental Deduction and the Transcendental Dialectic have not been entirely convincing. Kant has been criticized, therefore, not so much for supposing an implausible and undefended analogy between metaphysics and positive science, between First Philosophy and all

that is later than first, as for failing to notice that the constitution of positive objectivity might well occur in more than one way, thus determining quite different worlds (though with the same old surface irritations of the organism as ever). From this train of thought follow books like Nelson Goodman's *Ways of Worldmaking* and all the fascination with the possible incommensurability of Kuhnian paradigms.

The metaphysics of human experience seems less and less to be governed by laws whose necessity can be guaranteed. Ultimately, philosophical historicism comes to suspect that autonomous human reason possesses no universals, tacitly or otherwise, that it can responsibly call its own—a not unreasonable conjecture, if indeed time is the form of all possible representation (B 50). Both transcendental idealism and historicism, however, suppose that rational order, such as it be, nonetheless derives in the first place from productive or spontaneous human ingenuity.

The transcendental turn entrenches the hypostasis of theorizing reason. By seeking a systematic account of all that could possibly belong to reason apriori, the critical philosophy is the Cartesian paradigm applied to the question of reason's self-knowledge. What Kant calls his Copernican revolution, the move already evident in the gesture of Cartesian mastery, whereby the human mind controls all the possibilities of order, is both so rationally satisfying and so visibly successful that modern philosophy is still exploring the paradise it builds, the island of mortal truth. It does so in the shadow of a general philosophical responsibility to questions of justification which remain in place irrespective of attempts to redefine their specific meanings. To stay on the island of truth, to be assured of knowledge, philosophical thought must discover the rules for the direction of its mind, its *regulae ad directionem ingenii*. On this point, Kant refines Cartesian method into architectonic, setting up the task of discerning the tacit, objectivity-conferring parameters of reason's operation.

### III

In the philosophy of this century, the stabilizing parameters of reason's spontaneous and inventive activity have been sought less in the metaphysically perplexing inwardness of the single, Cartesian subject or the phantasmagoric depths of the transcendental ego as in the outward, trans-individual, ordered realities of language and world. Both language and world stand for well-structured domains that belong to us in familiar ways; they are domains of intersubjectivity. Whether they be analyzed phenomenologically, fundamental-ontologically,

or analytically, their place at or near the center of contemporary philosophy follows from their being such promising examples of immanently accessible frameworks, apparently capable of disciplining otherwise idiosyncratic constructions. Wittgenstein and Husserl nicely illustrate the more recent form of modern philosophy's congenital immanentism.

The linguistic turn is not of course all Wittgenstein's fault. To trace, in the cases of Frege and Russell, the inner links between their conceptions of mathematics on the one hand, and philosophy as the logical analysis of language (the means of representation) on the other, would supply an important supplement to my account of modern philosophy's early debt to its mathematical paradigm. For present purposes, however, Wittgenstein's philosophical value as a representative of the linguistic turn is twofold. First, he brooded over the relation between the turn and philosophy's self-understanding, passing on to his followers the fruitful, if incomplete, image of philosophy as therapy or witch-doctoring (a function that Socrates was not above engaging). Second, he pushed the question of logical form's origin. The essentially Kantian project of the *Tractatus* was a critique of reason, based on the claim to have unearthed the ultimate logical structure of all possible representation. Later, Wittgenstein became dissatisfied with his formal analysis and sought the parameters of representation in the givens of ordinary linguistic behavior. The mysteriousness of Tractarian objects was left behind in favor of the salience of what is observably done with words.

As he ponders the operational contexts of meaningful language use, Wittgenstein conceives objectivity in terms of his famous "language-games." A language-game is the context governing the possibility and intelligibility of linguistic transactions. The basic conceptual advantage of referring to them is to get away from the picture of language as a mentalistic template, possessed as a whole and in advance by every competent speaker. At this point, hope of discovering the unique transcendental apparatus, the hope that led him to boast in the introduction to the *Tractatus* that he had found "on all essential points, the final solution of the problems," has been abandoned and Wittgenstein becomes a proto-historicist. Language-games happen to be relatively local, while the most comprehensive context for all linguistic activity is called a *Lebensform*. What generates either *Lebensform* or language-game remains undiscussed, indeed undiscussable: "what has to be accepted, the given, is—so one could say—*forms of life*."<sup>11</sup>

On this view (reminiscent of Collingwood), the structure of human understanding is adrift at the roots. There is no more reason to construe or pursue experience according to one game or form of life as opposed to any other. The realization of games and forms is at best a matter of history, at worst a matter of whim. Wittgenstein himself, however, is, like all defenders of retail sanity and interim stability, optimistic: "ordinary language is all right." Yet philosophy cannot step outside of those ordinary bounds. "The results of philosophy are the uncovering of one or another piece of plain nonsense and of bumps that the understanding has got by running its head up against the limits of language" (PI §119). Reason must learn to see how chimerical is the hope of making final sense of the pageant of fates and decisions written into its language-games. In a radical obversion of the experience of wonder, Wittgenstein's attempt to make do with interim stability leads to the declaration: "since everything lies open to view there is nothing to explain" (PI §126). Others wonder, though, that anything lies open to view at all.

The transition from the early to the late Wittgenstein is a microcosm of late modern philosophy in general. In following his path from transcendental confidence to chastened pragmatism, Wittgenstein illustrates the same movement that runs in its broadest sweep from Descartes and Kant to Gadamer and Rorty. The modern motif, formal transcendentalism to historicist relativization, repeats itself in Husserl, a thinker whose Cartesian pedigree is as clear and distinct as these things can be. Nonetheless, by the time Husserl arrives at the notion of the *Lebenswelt* that appears in the work just before his death, he finds himself treading on historicist ground.

There has been much discussion of how history comes to figure as a fundamental problem in Husserl's later philosophy, notwithstanding the inconclusiveness of his few and late texts on the *Lebenswelt* and its historicity.<sup>12</sup> Two things, however, are clear.

First, Husserl accepted historicity as a primordial phenomenon that constituted even the matrix of philosophical reflection. "We must engross ourselves in historical considerations if we are to be able to understand ourselves as philosophers and understand what philosophy is to become through us."<sup>13</sup> The theoretical ground of this procedural directive had already been articulated in the *Cartesian Meditations*: "the ego constitutes himself for himself in, so to speak, the unity of a 'history.'"<sup>14</sup>

Second, Husserl was not by temperament inclined to convert the acknowledgment of historicity into a doctrine of radical historicistic finitude: "for the sake of time we must not sacrifice eternity." He

affirmed the possibility of an absolute moment, a moment of "perfect insight" (CES 71), "a critical over-view which brings to light, behind the 'historical facts' of documented philosophical theories and their apparent oppositions and parallels, a meaningful, final harmony" (CES 73). Hegelian as it sounds at first, Husserl prefers to emphasize the meaningfulness of trying to transcend the historical matrix over actually doing so. Hence, he views philosophy as an "infinite task" (CES 72), though an infinite task whose *telos* remains perfectly intelligible and entirely worthy of struggling to realize. His English-speaking counterpart in this respect was Peirce.

The problem bequeathed by the tandem conviction of historicity's primordially and philosophy's atemporal ideals is whether its two parts can really constitute a unity. Husserl only began on such a question, but his path from the hope of establishing presuppositionless, i.e., perfectly clear, science to the perplexities of historical relativization is a matter of observable record and makes my present point. The phenomenological technique of "bracketing" or the *epoché* is yet another version of the hypostasis of theoretical reason as well as a self-conscious return, of course, to rational autonomy in its strict Cartesian form. Husserl's gambit is to do as much philosophical analysis as possible within the structure of the immanently accessible contents of consciousness, while not yet confronting the questions of justification head on. As the origins of sophisticated eidetic structures are chased down within the stream of internal time-consciousness to the level of the *Lebenswelt*, they start to look less like atemporal universals and more like the sedimentations of historical activity. Husserl's ultimate problem is that an *ego cogitans* bounded essentially by temporality runs the risk of having the sedimentations within its consciousness reduced to noetic mud.

That both Husserl and Wittgenstein followed the logic of this devolution testifies less to error than to philosophical conscientiousness. They followed with great consistency the implications of presuming order to be an immanent possession of human consciousness. In this regard, both have therefore contributed to the acute critical awareness that marks the recent, self-conscious phase of philosophical historicism. Contemporary historicists have in various ways latched onto language-games, forms of life, and the *Lebenswelt* in order to help make sense of interim stability. History as the accumulation of cognitive practise becomes the court of appeal for justifying the rational procedures by which opinions are elaborated and evaluated. Cartesian universalism has disappeared, yet the assumption that cognitive order arises originally from the projections of human

inventiveness remains, embodied in the hope of trying to discover objectivity somewhere in the stories of ingenuity's often unconscious exercise.

History in this sense is the last resort for Cartesian subjectivity because the measure of certainty or the constructive mind's self-transparency reaches a limit there. As a forum for the realization of human imagination, history remains certain to the extent that we can know exactly what we have done. This is more plausible in the domain that is the history of our thoughts than it is in the domain that is the history of our deeds. Yet, to see with the same lucidity beyond the traces of our noetic ingenuity, to see beyond to why it works, to what it might mean, to how it might be good, requires a level of insight historicism declares impossible.

#### IV

Descartes's original legacy was twofold: an image of reason's potency and an ideal for its perfection. The devolution of Cartesian subjectivity is a tale of disillusionment with the latter, played out on the stage of the former, a stage contemporary philosophy has not yet quit. Methodically achievable, ordered insight into all that is possible to know has been given up as the vision of reason's *telos*, but human reason as an independent, self-ruling, inventive source of all possible noetic order is the abiding Cartesian legacy, a legacy that the success of symbolic mathematics and the physics based on it gives no immediate reason to suspect of counterfeit.

Reason's primary mode is busyness in the work-shop of its own bright ideas, figuring out possibilities. Those constructions are, in turn, supposed to be fully intelligible in themselves. Moreover, the activity producing them is held to be governed by laws, intrinsic to reason, yet no less legitimate as guides to knowledge of what is. This amounts to a hypostatic self-involution that both frees the mind and sets the task of supplementing its free-play with assurances as to the possibility of cognitive achievement. Descartes's own confidence in his sound-mindedness and ability to get outside the circle of his virtuosity did not pass on to his epigones. Yet, so compelled have they been by the image of autonomous reason, they have remained within that circle, terrorized by hyperbolic doubt and cleaving to the preferred immanence of consciousness's subjective clarity before itself. The Evil Demon that so interfered with Descartes's meditating mind has now been reincarnated as radical historicity. It is the power that interferes with contemporary minds, differentiating them so completely as to make any universal remainder impossible. But historicity in this sense

is a ghost too, like "the phantoms and empty images which appear at night in the uncertain glimmer of a weak light" (*The Search for Truth*, ii 408).

At its most significant level, Cartesian subjectivity involves no mysterious substances, no metaphysical commitments except the reality of self-conscious human souls seeking understanding. It is a self-effected abstraction and a wholly understandable one. All theoretical stances must be abstract because reflection is not life, and all theoretical stances are understandable as attempts to see the good of things, life included, whole and clear. Cartesian subjectivity is a theoretical stance distinguished by the emphasis it places on the clarity characteristic of symbolic mathematics, an emphasis that readily, though not necessarily, generates the hypostasis of theorizing and the ideal of complete rational autonomy.

This emphasis is intrinsically unstable, for the clarity of even the symbolic domain is not a perfect guide to fully justified knowledge, not even to mathematics, let alone metaphysics. Mathematical clarity has origins necessarily obscure to the symbolic imagination or, in other words, less is available to certification by the *lumen naturale* than modern philosophers have been prone to fancy. The imperiousness of clarity in the sense of exact identification as a standard for knowledge is reflected in various attempts, driven by a sense of the lacuna just mentioned, to reduce all definitions in mathematics to convention and all axiomatics to purely formal systems. But no such reduction can be total. This fact is very nicely revealed by the limitative results of the Gödel incompleteness proofs and the Lowenheim-Skolem theorem. There is no formalization of the satisfaction relation. The interpretation of structure is not effected by more structure.

The misplaced hope of somehow managing a complete reduction to what the mind can exactly specify inevitably leads to deforming the critical question of justification towards letting a phenomenology of rational procedure suffice. Hence all the contemporary discussion of rationality, so often at the expense of truth. But this is to neglect the question of how warrants are warrants of knowledge, of why being rational guarantees noetic success. Whatever else it does, Kantian critique at least reveals the philosophical sense and necessity of such questions. Nothing practical hinges on their neglect, but they are an intrinsic part of that "most difficult of all reason's tasks, namely self-knowledge" (A xi).

Descartes was a philosophical hero in the eternal battle against the twin evils of self-satisfied dogmatism and skeptical despair. For that he is to be honored. Unfortunately, the establishment of Cartesian

subjectivity sets us up for philosophical paranoia, for being tempted to set aside *nous* and to seek perfect reasonableness in the exactitude with which we can certify the contents of our minds as its contents. There is rationality within the circle of ideas to be sure; it simply is not whole. The attempt to make it do for the whole of being reasonable becomes canonized in the Kantian project of critique, but this strategy soon begins to fall apart under the creeping realization that purely autonomous human reason operates by no parameters that can responsibly be regarded as at once proper to it yet, at the same time, universal. Once ingenuity cleverly undoes the supposed necessity of Cartesian method and the Kantian transcendental apparatus, it is not long before it begins to seem that there is no choice but to make do with the less than methodical ways by which we happen to rule our minds, with the less than necessary history that has shaped up our ability to construe experience.

Historicists take the devolution of Cartesian subjectivity to be a revelation of reason's wholesale and inevitable inadequacy to first principles. On the other hand, those whom Socrates called the "friends of the forms" take that same history to be a *reductio ad absurdum* of the original hypostasis whereby thinking became a kind of self-involved making. According to the Socratic-Platonic view, once we take serious aim at giving a *logos* there is a sense in which our minds are no longer our own.

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## Notes

1. Those familiar with David Lachterman's work will recognize that my proposed topic elaborates one of the themes raised by "Descartes and the Philosophy of History," *Independent Journal of Philosophy* 4 (1983); 31-46
2. Although historicism has several distinguishable meanings, for the purposes of this essay I confine myself to the specifically philosophical form that has emerged in the last few decades or so. Philosophical historicists include Hans-Georg Gadamer, Richard Rorty, Michel Foucault, and Alasdair MacIntyre. Quentin Skinner, Charles Taylor, Hilary Putnam, Bernard Williams, and Joseph Margolis might also be mentioned as favoring kindred views. For a careful account of historicism's several senses, see chapter one, "From the Logic of History to the Historicity of Reason," in my *Philosophical Historicism and the Betrayal of First Philosophy* (Penn State Press, forthcoming).

3. A selection of Descartes's *Olympica* are available in John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, 2 Vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 4-5. The *Olympica* ostensibly have a rhapsodic, enthusiastic quality. For an account of their rationalist subtext see Richard Kennington, "Descartes' 'Olympica,'" *Social Research* 28 (1961): 171-204.
4. The relationship between modernity and philosophical interpretations of mathematical understanding is a large and fascinating story to which I have barely alluded here. Indispensable texts for the study of this question include: Martin Heidegger, *What is a Thing?* tr. W. B. Barton Jr. and Vera Deutsch (Lanham: University Press of America, 1985 [1967]); Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, tr. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970); Jacob Klein, *Greek Mathematical Thought and the Origin of Algebra*, tr. Eva Brann (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1968), and *Jacob Klein: Lecture and Essays*, ed. Robert B. Williamson and Elliott Zuckerman (Annapolis: St. John's College Press, 1985); David Lachterman, *The Ethics of Geometry: A Genealogy of Modernity* (New York: Routledge, 1989).
5. Dennis L. Sepper, "Descartes and the Eclipse of the Imagination," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* 27 (1989), 379-403, and "Imagination, Phantasms, and the Making of Hobbesian and Cartesian Science," *The Monist* 71 (1988): 526-47; Véronique Föti, "The Cartesian Imagination," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 46 (1986), 631-42; Stanley Rosen, "A Central Ambiguity in Descartes," in *The Ancients and Moderns: Rethinking Modernity* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1989), pp. 22-36.
6. The phrase "Cartesian Anxiety" was coined by Richard Bernstein in *Beyond Objectivism and Relativism: Science, Hermeneutics and Praxis* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983).
7. René Descartes, *The Philosophical Writings of Descartes*, tr. John Cottingham, Robert Stoothoff, and Dugald Murdoch, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1985).
8. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, tr. Norman Kemp Smith (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965).
9. Martin Heidegger, *Kant and the Problem of Metaphysics*, 4th edition, enlarged, tr. Richard Taft (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1990).
10. Friedrich Nietzsche, "Schopenhauer as Educator" in *Untimely Meditations*, tr. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), p. 140.
11. Ludwig Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, 3rd edition, tr. G. E. M. Anscombe (New York: Macmillan, 1958), p. 226. Henceforth PI.

12. An extensive literature includes: David Carr, *Interpreting Husserl: Critical and Comparative Studies* (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1987), and *Phenomenology and the Problem of History: A Study of Husserl's Transcendental Phenomenology* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974); Hwa Wol Jung, "The Life-World, Historicity, and Truth: Reflections on Leo Strauss's encounter with Heidegger and Husserl," *Journal of the British Society for Phenomenology* no. 1, 9 (1978), 11-25; James Morrison, "Husserl's 'Crisis': Reflections on the Relationship of Philosophy and History," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 37 (1976-77); Helmut Wagner, "Husserl and Historicism," *Social Research* 39 (1972): 696-719; Paul Janssen, *Geschichte und Lebenswelt; ein Beitrag zur Diskussion von Husserls Spätwerk* (Den Haag: Martinus Nijhoff, 1970); Ludwig Langrebe, *Phänomenologie und Geschichte* (Gütersloh: Gerd Mohn, 1968), several essays from which are translated in *The Phenomenology of Edmund Husserl*, ed. Don Welton (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1981); Paul Ricoeur, *Husserl: An Analysis of His Phenomenology* (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1967); Aron Gurwitsch, "The Last Work of Edmund Husserl," *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 16 (1955): 380-99.
13. Edmund Husserl, *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology: An Introduction to Phenomenological Philosophy*, tr. David Carr (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1970), p. 391. Henceforth CES.
14. Edmund Husserl, *Cartesian Meditations*, tr. Dorion Cairns (The Hague: Martinus Nijhoff, 1960), p. 75.
15. Edmund Husserl, "Philosophy as Rigorous Science," in *Husserl: Shorter Works*, ed. Peter McCormick and Frederick Elliston (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981), p. 193.



# Hegel on Time

Eva T. H. Brann

This note is written in memory of David Lachterman, who was an alumnus—using the term in its fullest significance—of St. John's College, Class of 1965, when I was a young tutor. He was in my classes only in his junior year: in a preceptorial entitled "The Fragments of Parmenides and Heraclitus," and in the mathematics tutorial, where texts are studied that would continue to preoccupy David, texts pertaining to early modern mathematics and physics. Over his four years in Annapolis, we did, however, see each other continually and for various purposes. He was editor of the student journal I advised, we read together, and we discussed his annual essays. We continued this friendship sporadically but persistently over all the places where he spent his life.

An inquiry into so crucial a question as that of time in Hegel's system would have been welcomed by him, whether or not it told him anything new. And he would have liked the fact that it was meant to help students.

This paper on time in Hegel's texts is conceived in three parts.\*

I. I will begin with an exposition of the paragraphs on time in Hegel's *Philosophy of Nature* (§ 257-61). The exposition is meant to be helpful to a reader new to this text. The first and central paragraph is very difficult; in fact Heidegger intimates that it might have no "demonstrable sense" (*Being and Time* § 82a). Of course, no Hegelian meaning is ever demonstrable. It can be followed out in thought as it unrolls, but in a dialectical rather than a demonstrative mode. What I mean is that we can allow the *concepts* in question to develop their implications, but that when we participate in this spontaneous motion we are not driving home an argumentative conclusion in which some *propositions* entail others.

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\* I want to thank my colleague Peter Kalkavage for his discerning critique of this paper.

Consequently an exposition of a stretch of Hegelian dialectic will employ less argument and more quotation, paraphrase, and illustration. In the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, of which the *Philosophy of Nature* is the second, middle part (1830, with later additions from lecture notes by Hegel and students), Hegel usually begins with a succinct and purely conceptual text, which is then sometimes expanded in Remarks and Additions. The best an explainer can do is to choose key sentences, resay them in various ways, and finally find an illustrative figure. It follows that the explanation might be longer than its text, though somewhat easier. But it will also be a kind of degradation of Hegel's endeavor, for it will re-present the concept in figural garb, imaginable schemata, and intuitions, and such representations (*Vorstellungen*, *Enc.* ¶ 3) are mis-representations. They are not what Hegel means, and the reader should see them only to un-see, to *think* them. Representational thinking is falsifying even in our case, the case of Nature, where the Idea, the cosmos of thought, appears "as intuition" (*Anschauung*, *Enc.* ¶ 244; last paragraph of the *Logic*). For Nature is still the Concept, and to be intuition is not the same as to be intuited. Concepts are always to be conceived (Koyré, p. 280).

Time, it will turn out, is a kind of intuiting, indeed the matrix of all intuiting, but it is not therefore to be intuited, that is, looked at, rather than thought out. The moving pictures that Hegel himself suggests to illustrate the emerging determinations of thought are only concessions to our ordinarily representational minds, and our real effort must be, as I said, to make these sensuous fixities evanesce, leaving their conceptual life behind.

Nonetheless, in the realm of Nature concepts are somewhat more legitimately intuited than in Logic; at least the recovery of the concept from the figure is less wrenching. The broad reason is that in Nature the Idea gets away from itself and sets itself up for being "looked at" —*an-geschaut*.

There is something very unclear in what I have just said. How do we deal with the claim that in Nature the Idea is intuition? When the Idea of Logic turns itself into Nature, who is left over to *think* Nature?

Of course, we, the readers, are left over. In studying the *science* of logic and the *philosophy* of nature we ourselves are not, in that respect, Concept and Nature but we are recapitulating their development. We are asked to watch from the outside the birth of our thought, our world and ourselves. Hence each moment of the development is an autonomous activity and *also* our thinking. In the case of Nature, this dual character means that we think about Nature conceptually while

participating in Nature's intuitivity. Thus we can at once think time and illustrate that thought with our temporal experiences, both physical and psychological.

There is a less approachable difficulty, beyond the present exposition in scope: the turn of Logic to Nature. Through this turn thought becomes spatial, and on the plausibility of the transition depends the answer to the question of questions: How can thought contact the extended world? If Hegel's transition is properly dialectical the great mystery of the Idea become Nature, of the Incarnation, is solved. If, on the other hand, the transition is an abrupt leap into a new realm, from thought to non-thought, the old quandary stands. Hegel himself seems to intimate that there is such a leap, that the Idea does not just pass—thoughtfully—into Life, but resolves—willfully—to release itself freely out of itself as Nature, its image or "counterfeit" (*Wiederschein, Enc.* ¶ 244; Findlay, p. 270). If the transition is indeed abrupt, then we have a problem that will show up most immediately in the Hegelian genesis of time: If nature is abruptly the other of thought, where does its conceptual motion come from? In particular how will utter otherness, Space, generate the primeval self, Time? But more of this below.

II. The second part of the paper will consist of a brief inquiry into the reason why, within the System (the account of the developing concept), time first appears in Nature, that is, in the *Philosophy of Nature*, and where else it might be expected to appear—in the *Encyclopedia* or out of it. In particular I shall argue that Hegel's natural time, a narrowly abstract concept, is not different from the much grander Time of the last chapter, called "Absolute Knowledge," of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. In an anticipatory word: Natural time, or Negativity in Extension, is identifiable with phenomenological Time, or Spirit in the World.

III. In the third part I shall, finally, attempt a brief critique of two readings of Hegel's passage on time that are given in two books: Martin Heidegger's *Being and Time* (1927, ¶ 82) and Alexandre Kojève's *Introduction to a Reading of Hegel* (Eighth Lecture, 1938-39). Heidegger criticises Hegel as standing in the "vulgar" tradition that interprets time as an aggregate of nows. Kojève praises Hegel because his primary temporal phase is the future. I shall argue that, to begin with, Hegel does not understand time from the aspect of its phases at all, but that, if any phase is primary, it is the past of psychological time set out in the *Philosophy of Mind* (¶ 450 ff.)

## I. Time in Nature

Logic presents the development of the Idea, or the concept-world, in itself, in its own element, in thought. Nature is the same Idea in the form of its own Other, or Other-being (*Anderssein*). It is the idea as a negative of itself (§ 247). As David Lachterman puts it, the Idea "begins [its career in the sciences of the real] by exfoliating itself into external Nature" (p. 154).

There seem to be two moments in the Otherness of Nature. First it is simply thought negated, non-thought. And then, more determinately, it is externality, outsideness. The Idea outside itself is not another Idea negatively signed, the non-A of the A, but a true Other. For just as the Idea in itself expresses its self-involvement in conceptuality, so this Idea for itself—the Idea in a confronting mode—expresses its alienation from itself as self-externality. But the Idea that is external to itself is *in* itself external; it has a *new* feature: spatiality.

¶ 254. The common name for abstract self-externality is Space. Hence the *Philosophy of Nature* begins with space. Ideal or mere space is the first determination of nature as "the abstract generality of its being outside itself," its "immediate indifference." As such Space is continuous; no parts are missing and none are discernible; thought has no foothold yet. What is being conceptualized is the traditional understanding of space as "parts outside parts," or continuous extension.

What is all-important here is that space precedes time in thought. Space is the absolutely least mediated (which means least thought-developed) appearance of nature. Hence space antecedes both world and soul. It is neither a receptacle for matter (*Timaeus*) nor a form of human sensibility (*Critique of Pure Reason*), but a dialectical beginning: thought gone outside itself as the thought of outsideness. (In Hegel's earliest philosophy of nature, Jena 1803-4, time precedes space, Harris, p.244. The Jena systems are not taken into account here.)

¶ 255. Space has internal differences, indifferent, qualityless differences—the three directional dimensions. They remain in space and are intrinsically indistinguishable from it, and from each other.

¶ 256. But it develops also qualitative differences, its own negation, the same dimensions as generative of volume. The negation of space is a point. For the point is *not* space, not extended or continuous. Yet as the negation *of* space it remains spatial. Thus it cancels itself and in getting away from itself it becomes a line. A line is the extensivity or spatiality of the point. And thus on to the ideal volume, a delimited part of space (§ 257).

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Now enters time. Time is once and for all a dialectical second. It is the negation of space and therefore forever space-related. Or, more purely, more conceptually, spoken: Time is the first mediation of outsideness.

In view of the importance of the dialectical order, it is useful to set out the dialectical framework of the *Philosophy of Nature*. It is, of course, a major triad of moments: Mechanics, Physics, Organics. Mechanics, the moment in which time appears, is nature as implicit. Here externality is merely ideal; nature is apart or asunder without any explicit unity of form. Here space develops time, and both together place. At this stage arise motion and then matter. (Note, once again, the order.) The eventuation of matter is the dialectical passage into reality, and it is somewhat like that of Concept to Nature: "inconceivable for [undialectical] understanding" (§ 261). In any case, it is outside my present scope.

¶ 257. The point that, as related to space, developed into volume also appears as itself indifferent, that is, unrelated to the quiescent next-to-one-anotherness of space. It marks itself off: "Thus posited for itself, it is time" (*die Zeit*). Note well: not a point of time, but Time itself, not a now in time, but a principle of time. That the point is "posited" "for itself" means only that, in the usual dialectical movement, it becomes thought-determined (or mediated) as an other. But because the point negates the indifference of space in the sphere of self-externality, it leaves space, in its inert side-by-sideness by the way. Thus arises time as distinct from space, as the other of space.

¶ 257, Addition. Space is mere quantity: All its parts, even the termini, *subsist*—have only relative being—on the same footing. That is its defect. Its negativity is ineffective since it keeps falling indifferently apart: "Time is precisely the existence of this perpetual self-cancellation." Here "difference has stepped out of space"; the point has actuality. Whereas in space, which is externality through and through, difference is always attached to the other, time is the "negation of negation," the "self-relating negation." It negates the indifferent negations of space and therefore becomes actually distinct from space. Space is "paralysed"; time is difference in its living unrest.

These are the dialectical terms regarding time in nature. What is meant?

Let us recall briefly what negativity is. It is the inner life of concepts, their motion, through which concepts determine themselves by reaching beyond themselves to their negative. What makes dialectic self-generating is that conceptual thought spontaneously out-thinks itself,

goes beyond itself. Indeed, the German word for concept says as much, for *Begriff* first meant "periphery," and an encirclement determines inside and outside almost simultaneously.

Hegel says clearly that space *itself* goes outside itself to make the transition to time; the transition is not made subjectively by us. That transition is logically primeval in the sense that it has occurred in thought before we came on the scene. We must therefore think the beginning of our habitation before even in thought it has developed subjective thinking. We must think *through* space to time, not from its outside but from its inside. Hegel's formula for this development from space to time as we follow it is that "the truth of space is time." Truth for us is what is not immediately known but has been thought through; truth in the concept itself is what it eventually returns to after having been driven by its own life beyond itself. In thinking space through in its own terms we must refrain from "pictorial thinking," from representing a model of space to which we then also add the dimension of time: "Philosophy fights against this 'also.'" But I think we cannot help using some representation.

Imagine then, the life of a point in space. It rejects the indifferent difference that it possessed as a part of the paralytic continuum and raises itself out of space. For it insists on its own qualitative negativity and so it overcomes or negates its indifferent spatiality. I propose that the meaning for us of this formal event is: Space develops glimmers of consciousness. For us to think of space means to represent to ourselves a wide field in which, willy-nilly, some location holds our attention. But our attention wanders, from this point here to that point there. "Time is spacing" (Derrida, p.43). By that "here—there—there" space calls forth time. It is, one might say, the space-point's *capability* of being attended to. Space attended-to generates, or more radically, *is* time. This representation of the relation of time to space is humanly plausible, I think. But what happens when we are out of the picture, when there is no one to do the attending? I think we must, by hook or crook, picture the same situation minus the observer. Now space localizes itself, points pick themselves out and up: "Time *lifts up* space," as Derrida puts it (p.43); *relever*, "to re-lift," is his translation of Hegelian *aufheben*, literally "to lift up," as well as "to save" and "to cancel." Space, although it is the other of thought, is enough of a relative to thought to wish to come to life, to differentiate itself. And space actively differentiated is certainly unthinkable without time, if time is understood as the differentiation of difference, or variability in extension.

But how to grasp the notion that this activated space is time? Well what else would it be? Whence would time be added? Time is nothing but space beginning to come alive, becoming self-conscious as it goes forth on the road of recollecting itself out of its alienation from thought.

Why space becomes time through its points, why time is to be conceived as the punctuation of space, was one question. Another might be: Which point is time? This point, that point, any and all points? Hegel says in a general singular: "Negativity, as point, relates itself to space" (§ 257). Eventually time must, no doubt, acquire "the points of time," the nows. But, I think, the general point of space in which time originates is not a now or a here, not a here-and-now. It is the abstract principle of time. Hence even the picture without persons was misleading: Even in its own terms, space is not yet punctuated but has only developed to the point of being *capable* of punctuality; it is in principle punctual.

§ 258. Space sprawls while time is "the negative unity of self-externality." Space, whose parts are each outside its indistinguishable other, has developed an opposing unifying principle. What, next, is meant by unified different difference in the most abstract, formal sense? It is becoming, in which being and its own not-being are transiently at one. In becoming, differences are ever self-canceling. Here we are asked to recognize the formal identity of time and becoming. This becoming is not, however, the mere logical category of Becoming, the unity of Being and Nothing (*Logic* § 88). Becoming in externality is directly *intuited*: *angeschaut*, looked at. Here we are certainly asked to think of time in a Kantian mode, from the point of view of a cognizing subject: Time is adumbrated as becoming in the intuitional mode of representation, of *Vorstellung* (*Philosophy of Mind* § 446 ff.). Time, one might say, is the as yet unfulfilled condition of having something placed immediately before us, an unfilled form of sensibility.

§ 258 Remark. As Hegel puts it, "Time, like space, is a pure form of sense or intuition," "the non-sensuous sensuous." But whereas space is confronted as an object, time is abstract subjectivity, in principle the same as pure self-consciousness. It is the I, I, I, the monotonous continuum of mere self-awareness. Because of the abstractness, time is, for all its punctuality, like space, continuous. Thus begins, so to speak, the coming-to of Nature—right away, in the second dialectical phase.

How did we get from time as becoming-in-space to time as self-consciousness? Their formal principle is identical, that of double negativity or self-negation. But this identification can also be made

intuitive by an exercise of abstraction: Take from self-awareness all that is diversified and inward and you are left with something pure and external. One might call that product of negative intuiting an external subjectivity. As Hegel puts it: "pure being-within-self as sheer coming-out-of-self."

It is useful to point out here that the human subject is, in fact, described in terms identical to the "external subject," time, namely in the *Aesthetics* (Third Part, Third Section, Second Chapter, 1c, p. 277). The subjective inwardness of a listener—the topic is music—is there charged with doing exactly what the point did in nature: It "eradicates the indifferent side-by-sidedness of the spatial and draws its continuity together into a point of time." In this psychic context that point is the now. Later in the chapter (2a, p. 283) time is the *negative* externality; "as canceled asunderness, [it is] the punctual, and as negative activity [it is] the canceling of *this* point of time for another..."

Here, in the psychic realm, Hegel insists on two simultaneous negations: The point eradicates the indifference of extended space by concentrating it into a *time*-point. But it also negates itself as this now in favor of the next now. In nature, however, the flux of nows is derivative from the first negating activity.

The danger in trying to get at time through abstractive intuition is the false representation of time as a container *in* which things come to pass and to pass away. Not so: "Time itself is the *becoming*, ... the actually existent abstraction." The real that fills time is, of course, in a sense distinct from time but it is also identical. For like time it lives in the element of self-externality. It is limited, and so negated by another: "The abstraction of this externality and unrest of its contradiction is time itself."

Note that whereas in ¶ 257 the self-negativity or thought-likeness of time was emphasized, in the Remark on ¶ 258, its still strong space-likeness is brought out.

Here, by way of contrast, Hegel enters the eternal Concept or Idea, which is outside the power of time. Or rather, it is beyond the restless imperfection of time. The Concept has this relation to time: It is totally what time is prevented from being by its birth in externality—negative through and through, having completely brought all determinations within. The Concept is neither an abstraction from time nor "out of" time. Indeed it is "out of" nothing but totally inside itself. Nor is it after time as a futurity.

Eternity and Nature are more extendedly considered in ¶ 247, Addition. The most illuminating sentence says that Nature is essentially related to a First, and that First is the Idea or concept-world. For

Nature is the Idea in the form of the Other. Hence Nature is not eternal-temporal as a Standing Now, though it is temporally infinite, and it is not eternal-uncreated for it has its own "before."

¶ 258, Addition. Hegel reiterates that time is not a something or a power, but only the "abstraction of destruction." It is not because they are in time that things perish; time is their perishableness. He gives an ironic account of the now: It has a tremendous right—that of being nothing individual. But of course it is not universal either. It "struts" momentarily and "falls into dust." The universal of the now is duration. In duration the now-process is canceled, and what is universal, that is, identical in all the nows, prevails. But this extended status is only relative. If everything stood still, even our imaginations, there would be no time. However, things are finite and do change. The reference to our representational faculty, intuitive mind, will reveal its significance in Part II of the paper.

Hegel returns to eternity. Eternity is not the universal now of duration but absolute Presence. It is not duration in extension but, so to speak, duration "reflected into self" or self-collected, when all process has come to completion and its phases are fully present.

Two beings are out of time: the best and the worst. The worst is relatively out of time. It endures. Such is space and the now, universal duration itself, for these are too abstract to live. Such also is inorganic nature and static art, like the pyramids. The best is out of time in truth: the Idea, Spirit. These transcend time because they are themselves the Idea—the First—of time. In the world the truly alive, an Achilles, an Alexander, die; only the mediocre endure.

In this Addition Hegel chooses to speak of time as destruction, as Chronos devouring his children. But it is the destructiveness of life, negativity at work. It is therefore identical with fruition. To pass away in time is to have lived out the Concept.

¶ 259. Hegel finally comes to the phases of time, which are the dimensions of present, future, past. He connects them formally to the moments of becoming. They are "the *becoming* of externality as such," meaning that we are to conceive how externality, being what it is, becomes temporal, namely in terms of becoming. Recall that in formal Becoming, Being passes over—logically—into Nothing (and Nothing reciprocally into Being). Hegel deliberately determines at first only the Now and leaves the other phases for the Addendum.

In this passing into each other the different moments vanish "into a singularity," and this is the Now. It is exclusive of these moments and yet continuous with them; indeed it is nothing but their vanishing into each other. What this means is that Becoming, in being tempo-

ralized, or better, externalized, begins by collapsing its two logical moments into one: the Now both is and is not; it is separably formed yet belongs to the universal Now. It is a singularity because it is an individual differentiated from its universal, but an unstable one because of its evanescent, dual nature.

¶ 259, Remark. This Now has affirmative being insofar as it is distinguished from the negative moments of past and future. In nature, "where time is a Now," the other two dimensions do not properly exist. Insofar as they do, they are space, for space is negated time, as conversely, time was negated space. In other words, time gone and time to come in nature mean having left or having not yet arrived somewhere. We are coming close to the concept of place and motion. It is only for the soul, for the subjective representational mind referred to above, that the dimensions exist in their difference: in remembrance and in expectation.

Hegel now launches into an attack on mathematics similar to the one in the Preface to the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The point is to show why time, the moving externality, has no extensive science, though space, the paralyzed externality, does. The reason is, of course, precisely that space has three-dimensional configurations which hold still. Time, when similarly paralyzed by the understanding, is reduced to the repeating unit, to arithmetic.

¶ 259, Addition. The other two dimensions arise when the unity of becoming is seen under two opposite aspects. If being is the foundation and non-being secondary, we have passing-away, or rather "passed-away," "in Hades," Past. The past has been actual, as history or nature, but it is posited under the category of non-being. For the Future the reverse holds: "Non-being is the first determinant while being is later, though of course not in time." From this point of view the present as middle term is the indifferent unity of the preponderant moments of past and future: It is, because the past is not, and it is not, because the future is. The present is an indifferent unity because in it neither being nor non-being is the determinant, and it is a negative unity because it lives by the no-longer and not-yet of the other phases.

The determination of the phases completes the positing of the content of the concept of time for intuition, namely as real becoming, or becoming-in-externality.

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Space was what is often called the thesis of the mechanical triad, and time the antithesis. The reunion of both, their synthesis, finally yields what the point rising out of space had only adumbrated: The

here-and-now, space-time, or *Place*—and right away, with only a momentary lag, Motion and then Matter, the real filling of space.

¶ 260. The dialectical moments so far are these: Space in its indifferent asunderness was the concept of Otherness *in* itself or implicitly. Time was its truth, the same concept thought *for* itself. Now time collapses back into space because the unity of the negated point does not hold. For as becoming it is constituted of opposing moments that cancel each other. The point cannot maintain its exclusive negativity and finds itself back in space, so to speak. But this returned point is now posited, that is, thought through and made explicit. It is at once in and for itself. It is a point that much the richer in determinations or, as Hegel says, *concrete*. This concrete space-time point is *Place (Ort)*.

¶ 260, Addition. The exposition of the concept of duration as near-changeless time already presaged the collapse. For time, in the absence of change, is not concentrated somewhere in space but is indifferently everywhere and nowhere, and that indifference is just space. The point becomes, as we saw, universal. It is always but also everywhere Now.

¶ 261. *Place* is the singularization or individualization of the durational universal. *Place* is the posited identity of space and time. If you think it through, to be now is to be here and to be here is to be now. But this identity is also contradictory: Insofar as *place* is a singular here it is so only as a spatial now. Hence the spatiality of *Place* is indifferent, and external to it: "*Place* is simply the universal Here" (Addition). Any particular *place* negates itself and might as well be another *place*. "*This vanishing and self-regeneration of space in time and time in space...is Motion.*" Humanly understood, the intuiting mind turns every point of attention into a *place*, but no abstract *place* offers a way to hold the attention, so that the indifferent here is immediately turned into a passing now. *Place* is the reciprocal relation of space and time, and that is just what motion is: Now here, Now there.

¶ 261, Addition. The essence of motion is "to be the immediate unity of Space and Time," such that time now has real existence in a space truly differentiated by it. In motion, time and space first become actual; this means that what they are in concept and what they are in appearance coincide. In motion we first legitimately intuit the time and space we have previously only conceived. Nature is beginning to be animate: "Time is the purely formal soul of Nature..."

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Here ends the exposition of time in nature. If time, as the abstract principle of life in space, is the formal soul of Nature, we might expect it to reappear in the subjective soul of Mind. And so it does.

## II. Time in Soul and World

The next project after the exposition of time in nature is to figure out whether the time that occurs in other contexts—either within the System developed in the *Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences* or without, especially in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*—is the same as or different from the time of Nature. The question arises because on the face of it they certainly sound different: "Time [is] the negative unity of self-externality" (*Philosophy of Nature*)—"Time...is the existent Concept itself" (*Phenomenology of Spirit*). I will argue that time is one and the same in all of Hegel's thematic passages, though the dialectical stages are different. The possible value of this inquiry cannot, however, be in the claim itself, which is apt to meet little resistance, but it is merely in the descriptive comparison offered.

Where does time appear in the *Encyclopedia*? Not in its first part, the *Science of Logic*. For there the Concept is developed as it is in itself, immediately. That is not to say that the Logic is not full of mediation. Indeed, it belongs to the course of the dialectical development to unfold every conceptual simplicity, to interpose thought between every category and itself, to make its truth explicit. But throughout the *Logic* the Concept that is being drawn out stays nevertheless entirely in its own element, the ideational realm. No thought of anything other than thought is at home here. Since time develops from space, and space is the Other of thought, it stands to reason that time should not appear in the Logic. Its ideal prototype, however, does appear: Becoming. And it appears roughly in the *Logic* just where time enters in *Nature*—in the very first dialectical triad. (In fact, Becoming in Logic is its triad's third stage, whereas time in Nature is the second stage of its triad. However, Hegel calls time the truth of space, and the moment of truth is usually the third.)

It is a useful thought-exercise to consider, staying within speculative philosophy, what might be the alternatives to Hegel's development. (By staying within speculative philosophy I mean to exclude views like Heidegger's, where human temporal existence rather than ideal being stands at the beginning of the philosophical analysis.)

The chief dialectical alternative would seem to be to put Otherness right *within* the idea-world as an *archē*, a ruling principle. Then time becomes a mere epiphenomenon of change in the phenomenal world, which change is the reflection of the activity of Otherness in the ideal

world. This Platonic way, set out in the *Sophist*, has the following chief consequence. Since Otherness is not one idea alongside the others, but is by its nature dispersed through them all (254 ff., 258d), it has no dialectical progression to be mirrored in the phenomenal world; it has no history. Consequently phenomenal time, natural or human, is non-directed and unhistorical. There is neither the bad infinity of mathematical linear time, nor good infinity, the fulfillment of time in history by the negation of every finitude. When Otherness is an *archē* in the ideal world, there will be no rational temporality either progressive or just linear—only cyclical returns. That is one way to see why it is important that Time as a principle of Otherness be absent from the *Logic*.

We have seen that time makes its appearance in the very first triad of the *Philosophy of Nature*; it is Hegel's main thematic passage on time, for here time begins. It appears right after space. The secondness of time is its second most important feature: Time is space, while space is the alienated concept, non-thought. The most important feature is that time is the first appearance of negativity in Nature, the first glimmer of life-in-the-world. So Nature is, *almost* from the beginning, temporal, dialectically alive, though in a spiritless way. Hence it can work itself up to organic nature, to the living body ready to receive its cognizing soul.

The third part of the System set out in the *Encyclopedia* is the *Philosophy of Mind* (better, *Spirit: Geist*). In Nature, the Concept had reached its perfected external objectivity (§ 381). Now Spirit comes into being as the truth of Nature; Nature is the presupposition which has disappeared into Spirit. In *Spirit* the Concept outside itself as Nature returns for a reunion with itself. Spirit appears first as simple immaterial nature: the Soul (§ 388). One might say that it is a first subjectivity, still close to nature. In Hegelian dialectic the major junctures always connect and separate what is closest and farthest. Thus the subjective soul is most opposite to animate nature and yet very close to it.

When does time enter the sphere of subjectivity? If we search, in a perfectly mechanical way, for the dialectical analogue to Nature we find a disquisition on the soul in its physical alterations and on the natural ages of man (*"Anthropology: the Natural Soul: Physical Alterations,"* § 396). In the next phase, "The Feeling Soul," we find not time but an apology for its absence: Time arises with recollection, and recollection requires self-consciousness. For without a consciousness of self, the individual is a deep featureless mine, a treasury in which memories "are stored without existing" (§ 403).

Time comes into its own as subjective human time with the development of "recollection." The German word is, felicitously, *Erinnerung*, "inwardization" (§ 452). We are still within "Subjective Spirit," the first moment of the triad comprising the *Philosophy of Spirit*.

Here is how time, the external subjectivity of nature, becomes inwardly, mentally, subjective: Memory swallows, so to speak, original intuitions, that is, sense impressions, with their space and time attached. We remember objects and events as somewhere and some-when. *How* we hold natural time within is a problem treated most notably by Augustine and Husserl (*Confessions*, Bk. XI, Chs. xxvii ff.; *The Phenomenology of Internal Time-Consciousness*, Section Two). It is a problem that Hegel does not broach.

The attachment of the internalized intuition to external space and time is, in any case, only a passing moment. The time- and space-bound picture, the photographic impression, is only a brief first step (§ 455).

"Intelligence" is Hegel's name for cognizing Spirit. Here we might adopt one usual translation for Spirit—Mind—which happens to be most applicable for this stage, the stage of representational cognition. Intelligence imposes its own space and time. Or, better, in absorbing intuitions it attends to them, recollects them, and in so attending, *it* becomes their place, their space-and-time. The pictures of memory adopt the subject's time, and their existence is in it, whatever their external time may have been. Succinctly: the attending intelligence is the inner space and time of intuitions (§ 453).

Consequently the intuitions of memory become contextless and isolated. The original intuitions were bound to natural time and place, but their memory can be formed anywhere at any time. Moreover, intelligence can forget, relegate wholly to the past, what it deems unworthy and also fix in memory what it chooses for survival. Of course, it pays for the imperishableness of its memory-intuitions by a loss of clarity and freshness. The time of intelligence, Hegel observes, is the opposite of natural time in this, that the richness of original intuitions abbreviates their external time for the subject, while the richness of images expands their internal time.

Recollection ("inwardization") proper occurs when a picture is referred to an intuition, such that several particular intuitions are subsumed under one picture as a sort of universal. This reference permits intelligence to recognize feelings and intuitions "as already its own" (§ 454). Here arises the Now and the Past for a subject. For, cued by an externally present intuition, the recollected intuition is confirmed

as having had existence. And the synthesis of this intuition recollected as *existent* with the present internal *image* is a *re-presentation* proper—an inner presence reconfirmed as existent, an internal presence.

Of course, each such recognition also confirms the depth, the dark pit, where the past lives (§ 454). Recall that in natural time the temporal phases remain formal and do not reach existence (§ 259, Remark). That existence has now been supplied to the past through the recollection of the subject.

It can hardly be said that subjective time has been either essentially defined or dialectically derived. At best we can say that in the System it makes its appearance just where it should.

Hegel does distinguish subjective time from external time by one word: It is universal. Instead of the abstract linearity and particularity, the ever-collapsing here-and-now to which natural time tends, the time of the mind holds its moments together. Each internalized intuition is, as a picture, liberated from its temporal particularity and able to serve as a universal, a recollectible reference. Perhaps we might say—though Hegel does not—that subjective time *is* representational mind, the power to bring and keep memory pictures before itself as *quondam* intuition.

The dialectical connection with natural time would be as follows. In the *Philosophy of Nature* time was expounded as “a pure form of sense or intuition (§ 258).” It is the most rudimentary case of a self—the self-distinguished point—confronting an external object. Thus it is recognizably the primitive prototype of the intuition that starts mind on the way to cognitive representation. That later intuition has, instead of ideal externality, a space-time that is sense-filled.

For in the *Philosophy of Mind* intelligence begins by defining the immediate contents of its feelings as outside itself and projecting them into external space and time, the two forms in which the mind becomes intuitive (*anschauend*). In mere intuition we are outside of ourselves in the two forms of asunderness (§ 450). It is the “inwardization” of these forms that yields, as was said, recollection (§ 451). In capturing Nature, the Spirit internalizes time and negates the externality that space-born time could not escape in nature.

The passage in the *Aesthetics* (p. 277) cited above corroborates the connection, though it reverses the order of exposition. There inwardness, as the prospective subjective unity, the active negation of indifferent next-to-one-another subsistence, is for a moment abstractly empty, merely marking itself off from the object. But it immediately cancels this abstract confrontation to produce itself as a true subjective unity. Then come the crucial sentences: “The same

ideal negative activity in its realm of *externality* is time." "I is in time and time is the being of the subject itself."

Dialectically, time has appeared as an abstract form in *Nature*, and has been differentiated into objective and subjective time in *Subjective Mind*. There remains the dialectic third (*Logic* ¶ 163), the individualization of time. We might expect to find it in *Objective Mind* or *Spirit* proper. And so we will, as *History* (¶ 548-49). In history subjective mind enters the world; it becomes world-mind, and its time world-time, explicit but not merely extended, in the intuitable world but not merely external. However, the exposition is spare.

We find more in *Reason in History* ("The Progression of World History"): "It is in accordance with the Concept of Spirit, that the development of history falls into time" (p. 153). For the connection that events which we see as positive have to non-being, to the possibility that their opposite might be—that is time. Time is the abstractly sensual, which means that it is both for thought and for intuition. So both conceivable and visible change are time. Change in nature is a—sometimes cyclical—monotony; change in Spirit is always a progress since the Concept itself develops. But the higher figures of the Spirit are produced by the reworking of the lower figures, which then cease to exit. It is through time that this conceptual sequence *appears*. "World-history is thus in general the display or exposition (*Auslegung*) of the Spirit in time, as in space Nature displays itself" (p. 154).

It might seem that Hegel has here forgotten that the same negating form of sense was already active in Nature (cf. Kojève, p. 133). What is missing in Nature, though, is the part of memory that makes the science of History possible. Nature is capable of repetition (*Wiederholung*) but not of recollection. In that sense time leaves space behind.

I think that the stasis of nature in which the individual changes, but never the species, would have been maintained by Hegel even in the face of an established theory of evolution, since he regards long duration as equivalent to stasis (¶ 258, Addition; but see Findlay, p. 274; Kojève, p. 146).

And as time *was* the subjective mind in its phase so Time *is* the Spirit in its phase. Time and thought are the same negativity: "Time is the corrosiveness of the negative, but Spirit is itself in the same case—it too dissolves all determinate content" (p. 178).

The book in which this identification of Time and Spirit is made in all its grandeur, most starkly and insistently, is the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The reader meets it first in a passage quoted above from the Preface: "As for time...it is the existing Concept itself" (¶ 46). Here it

irrupts into the text out of context, so that a certain commentator, to whom nescience is second nature, takes it for a witticism.

The fuller, climactic passage comes from the last chapter, "Absolute Knowledge":

Time is the concept itself that is *there* and which presents itself to consciousness as empty intuition. For this reason Spirit necessarily appears in Time, and it appears in Time just as long as it has not *grasped* its pure Concept, that is, has not annulled Time. (§ 801)

Let me turn aside for a moment to the question: Why does time make its grandest appearance in a book that is not strictly speaking inside the System that sets forth the development of the Concept? The answer lies in the project of the *Phenomenology*, which is to tell the story of the Concept from the point of view of advancing consciousness recollecting the moments of the Concept (Hyppolite, p. 7; Verene, p. 3). Now this recollection (*Er-Innerung*), mentioned on the last page of the *Phenomenology*, is a version, raised to the second power, of the category familiar from the *Philosophy of Mind*, the one that generated the past as an intuitable phase of time. Within the System, as set out in the *Encyclopedia*, time is sparsely and formally treated at the beginning of the major phases and then goes underground. It is absorbed into events as a merely formal motor of change. At the end of the *Phenomenology* time is again brought back to light and spoken of humanly and dramatically. It is not conceptually developed—"Time is the Concept that is there" is not a dialectical exposition—but instead it is retrospectively presented. In this book the Concept itself and its intuitable motor, Time, is recollected, so that time is viewed from its own beyond, from a point where all is Past. This grand Recollection is an exaltation of the smaller recollective moment in the *Philosophy of Mind* when human time came into being. In short: In the *Phenomenology* time gains grandeur from the fact that it is thought as fulfilled and thus ended, and it regains humanity from the fact that it is all past, all for our Recollection.

It remains to state briefly what is said of time in "Absolute Knowledge" and to show how even this Time is formally and really identical with the time of the System. Spirit, as the Concept-in-the-world, as self seeking itself in Nature, is by its very meaning *there*, outside in space, intuitable: "It is [to begin with] the *outer*, intuited, pure Self which is *not grasped* by the Self, the merely intuited Concept" (§ 801, adjoining the quotation above). Therefore Spirit is formally identical with Time, "the Concept that is there." Or, speaking figuratively, Spirit must appear *in* time. For recall that time was from way

back reflexive negativity at work on its own externality—dialectic active in the element of otherness. Even at the end Hegel does not forget that time, no matter how rich its determinations have become, is, to begin with, *pure intuited concept* (§ 801).

Time must come to an end, namely when its negating activity has mastered its own alienation: When the Concept "grasps itself it sets aside its time-form." Time is therefore the destiny of the unfulfilled Spirit, not as a destination before but as a direction within—toward that complete self-recognition which is Science (§ 801).

Here, too, Time is the "I=I" that it already was, abstractly and rudimentarily, in Nature (*Enc.* § 258, Remark). For "I=I" is the formula of self-reflection (*Phenomenology* § 803), which for the time-point was called self-related negativity. This movement, whether of the abstract point or the concrete Self, always means that a thought that has denied itself has gone on to recognize itself in the denial. It follows that such a self-superseding thought "has to be expressed as Time."

The burden of the last two pages of the *Phenomenology* (§ 807-8) regarding Time is this: The externalization of the Spirit into an intuitable Time-Self, its emptying itself into Time, is a self-negation. Hence just as negating time conquered its space, so negating Spirit now conquers its Time. Thus Spirit redeems the "sacrifice" implied in its externalization, its Incarnation.

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Is the Time of the *Phenomenology* the time of the *Encyclopedia*? Heidegger answers this question incidentally but sufficiently during his critique of Hegel's concept of time (*Being and Time* § 82b, p. 435). Spirit can appear in time (or as Time) only on the basis of what Heidegger considers an empty formalism: the identity of the formal structure of Spirit and Time as negation of negation. That formalism, recall, defined time from its origin as the self-relating negativity of the spatial point (*Enc.* § 257, Addition). Heidegger scorns the abstractness of the conceptualization. But it is this very abstractness that allows time to remain self-identical through its whole development. Moreover, though abstract, the determination is not empty. Negation of negation, doubled negation, or self-related negativity—these are all terms for a completed cycle of thought, a small token of achieved selfhood.

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To recapitulate. Hegel views time under three formal aspects:

1. As dialectic motor: Under the aspect of its dialectical activity time is negated negation;

2. As abstract Concept: Under the aspect of its formal determination it is intuited Becoming;

3. As eternal Idea: Under the aspect of its annulment, it is absolute Presence (*Enc.* ¶ 258, Addition).

It is also useful to tabulate the four contexts in which time is developed:

0. In *Logic* as abstract Becoming;

1. In *Nature* as externalized becoming;

2. In *Subjective Mind* as internalized intuition;

3. In *Objective Spirit* as the Concept in the world.

Are these the aspects and contexts of one and the same Time? Absolutely. It is in the very nature of time as a force of negation that it must appear differently in different phases. For it is itself change, and is changeless only under the aspect of eternity. Since it is neither receptacle, nor flux, nor substrate, nor measure, nor any other accompaniment of events, since it is nothing more or less than the finitude, the incomplete determinacy of things—for their temporality is their objective determination (*Enc.* ¶ 258, Addition)—time will perforce participate in their variability. Indeed it is their variability. And so it must appear under as many different guises as there are categories of change.

### III. The Phases Emphasized by Heidegger and Kojève.

In accordance with their different agendas in reading Hegel, Heidegger and Kojève insist on different phases of time as primary in the texts. The one brings forward, with disapproval, the Now; the other, with approval, the Future. I shall try to show why neither of these emphases does Hegel justice.

A. The Now is, according to Heidegger's exposition in *Being and Time* (¶ 82a), the ground of Hegel's interpretation of time. Heidegger is eager to show that Hegel remains entirely within the "vulgar" tradition started by Aristotle, in which time is understood as a linear series of leveled-out Nows.

To make this point, Heidegger seizes on the central understanding of time as the negation of negation, particularly on its moment of origin out of space, when the point negates the indifference of space and elevates itself into time (*Enc.* ¶ 257). Insofar as this argument has any demonstrable sense, Heidegger says, it must mean that each point posits itself as a Now-Here, Now-Here, and so on.

Similarly his interpretations of Hegel's second view of time as intuited becoming (*Enc.* ¶ 258) is that it reveals time as understood primarily from the Now. For "becoming" means transition from being

to nothing and from nothing to being. And "intuited" means not-thought-out, simply presented to view. But the being of time is the Now, and the Now as always no longer Now can just as well be *conceived* as non-being. So when these concepts are *intuited* in extended nature, the two opposite moments of becoming appear equally as Nows, and their extended succession as a mere Now-series. At least that is what Heidegger seems to mean insofar as his argument has any demonstrable sense.

Heidegger concludes by reinforcing his point from the passages where Hegel speaks of the "enormous right of the Now" and where he also refers to time as the "abstraction of consuming" (*Enc.* ¶ 258, Addition). This last is the "most radical formula for the vulgar experience of time." (See also *Reason in History*, p. 178, on devouring and corroding time.)"

In rebuttal: Regarding the space-negating point, I have tried to show that it does not jump out as a "here-and-now" in the first instance, for it becomes a Now-here only afterwards, when it returns into space as place. The first dialectical motion yields only a phaseless punctuality, a standing out from space that is the mere possibility of attracting attention.

Regarding "intuited becoming," Heidegger begs the question, for his exposition *assumes* that the Now is the being of time. What Hegel actually says is merely that time is the being which, insofar as it is, is not and insofar as it is not, is (*Enc.* ¶ 258). And that is, formally, Becoming. His analysis of temporal becoming is in fact such that the Now is only the indifferent unity of non-being and being, the moment of intuited becoming in which neither the one nor the other predominates. Heidegger has confused the phenomenal now with this dialectical moment. The dialectical Now is by no means primary. Moreover, becoming cannot really be intuited until there is reality, that is, matter. Up to that point it is only the form of intuitability. But once the real enters, time vanishes into things: "Things themselves are the temporal" (*Enc.* ¶ 258, Addition). So there is not a trace of a linear Now-series in the text. In fact, Hegel makes it clear that the point of time is not, as are the points of space, amenable to homogenized serialization and to meaningful quantification.

Regarding Hegel's ironic reference to the "enormous right" of the Now that "struts its stuff" (*spreizt sich auf*), he is saying precisely that the Now always bites the dust; it has no being.

In fact, Hegel does not, I have argued, originally construct time from its phases at all. He prepares them through primary Becoming, which contains rudiments of past, present, future. But even on this

formal level the Now is secondary, for it is only the indifferent unity of that Becoming, called coming-to-be, in which Being is the (logical) starting point upon which Nothing supervenes with the reverse Becoming, called passing-away, in which Nothing (logically) precedes Being. He does say that in Nature time is Now, but that phrase is merely meant to underscore the fact that the phases of time, past, present, future, do not exist before there is subjective mind.

Finally, regarding the "vulgar" notion of time as a devourer, it is, of course, only a figure for Spirit's eating out of the substance of the world, its progressive resorption of Otherness. Hence the difference between Hegel and Heidegger is surely not one between vulgarity and originality. It concerns rather the relation of Spirit to Time and Existence (*Dasein*). Heidegger says, correcting Hegel: "'Spirit' does not first fall into time but *exists* as the primordial *temporalizing* of temporality" (§ 83b, p. 436). (Hegel, it happens, had not said of Spirit that it "falls" into time, but had used that phrase of the development of history, *Reason in History*, p. 153.) For Hegel the Concept passes out into Nature and then, through or as time, starts its slow return journey—whose later stages it travels as Spirit—from being-there (*Dasein*) in the world to being back with itself, canceling and also keeping its worldly existence in order to enter a new existence, a new world (*Phenomenology*, last page). For Heidegger, on the other hand, not thought but human existence is primary, and it comes to an end but not to a consummation; for him the final negation is not a fulfillment. That is the crux of their difference.

Derrida (1982) mounts a fundamental critique of Heidegger's representation of Hegel's understanding of time as vulgar.

B. The Future is the primary phase of time in the *Phenomenology* according to Kojève in his *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel* (Eighth Lecture; he was evidently inspired by Koyré's account of the Jena systems, p.281). Historical time, the time of most interest to Hegel, "is characterized by the primacy of the Future." In pre-Hegelian philosophy, Kojève claims, time was directed from the past through the present to the future; this is, I think, false for Christians like Augustine. For Hegel the order is Future to Past to Present (p. 134).

Kojève comes to this conclusion because he interprets time from the point of view of the chapter "Lordship and Bondage" in the *Phenomenology* (IV A). There Desire is the dialectical motor, and Desire causes action "in terms of what does not (yet) exist—that is, in terms of the future." The Desire of this chapter is the desire for social Recognition, and this desire engenders History. When it is satisfied Time and History cease, as does the Future.

The Present, Kojève adds, is the real, spatial moment. Desire is related to it negatively, since it is the locus of its dissatisfaction. The Past, having been equally negatively formed, determines the quality of the Present (pp. 135-36).

Kojève's emphasis on the future is not so much false in the letter as somewhat off the spirit of Hegel's texts.

To begin with, Hegel himself does not emphasize the future. We would not expect him to. For one thing, the dialectic motion is not primarily drawn on from ahead by the future satisfaction of desire. It is rather driven from within by the self-assertive pressures of implicitness. But even if each concept-moment is to be thought of as big with being-to-come, this being is not future-being, but the Concept itself, whose moments are emerging from ideality into existence. The Concept is a timeless plan; when it enters into existence it is merely repossessing the world, not goading it on. Secondly, it is only the past of which there is phenomenological or historical knowledge. The science of the Concept in existence (= Time) is History. The science of the Concept not yet or no longer in existence is Logic. There is no place for a Hegelian futurology. And third, from the point of view of "Absolute Knowledge" the future has been entirely resorbed; what is left is only Recollection of the past figures of the Spirit.

Broadly speaking, it is the Marxism of Kojève's interpretation that induces him to put the future forward. For, like Heidegger, he wishes to emphasize human finitude, whereas Hegel thinks that knowledge can be absolute and infinite, in the sense of all-inclusive. Now to a dissatisfied finite being, the temporal future is the only locus of hope. But to the infinite Spirit, the completed and recollected Past is the prelude to the Absolute Present and Presence.

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### Key

• = probably correct, but unable to verify

? = probably does not exist. I've check all the issues of the journal in question for 1988 to the present. The entry also does not exist on any of the dozen databases consulted.

Compiled by Brian Domino





