interpretation

A JOURNAL OF POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY

May & Sept. 1986 Volume 14 Numbers 2 & 3

155 Joseph Cropsey — The Dramatic End of Plato's Socrates

177 Charles Griswold, Jr. — Philosophy, Education, and Courage in Plato's *Laches*

195 Thomas J. Lewis — Refutative Rhetoric as True Rhetoric in the *Gorgias*

211 Thomas F. Curley III — How to Read the *Consolation of Philosophy*

265 Joseph Masciulli — The Armed Founder versus the Catonic Hero: Machiavelli and Rousseau on Popular Leadership

281 William Mathie — Reason and Rhetoric in Hobbes's *Leviathan*

299 Peter Emberley — Rousseau versus the Savoyard Vicar: the Profession of Faith Considered

331 Mackubin Thomas Owens, Jr. — Alexander Hamilton on Natural Rights and Prudence

353 Peter Simpson — Autonomous Morality and the Idea of the Noble

Review Essays

371 Ernest L. Fortin — Faith and Reason in Contemporary Perspective Apropos of a Recent Book

389 Joseph J. Carpino — On Eco's *The Name of the Rose*

415 Nino Langiulli — Affirmative Action, Liberalism, and Teleology: on Nicholas Capaldi's *Out of Order*

431 Robert R. Sullivan — The Most Recent Thinking of Jürgen Habermas

Book Reviews

441 Will Morrisey — *Jerusalem versus Athens* by Paul Eidelberg

448 *How Does the Constitution Secure Rights?* edited by Robert A. Goldwin & William A. Schambra

Short Notices

455 Will Morrisey — *Freedom of Expression* by Francis Canavan

456 Joan Stambaugh — *Philosophical Apprenticeships* by Hans-Georg Gadamer

interpretation

Volume 14 numbers 2 & 3

Editor-in-Chief Hilail Gildin

Editors Seth G. Benardete • Charles E. Butterworth • Hilail Gildin • Robert Horwitz • Howard B. White (d. 1974)

Consulting Editors Joseph Cropsey • John Hallowell • Wilhelm Hennis • Erich Hula • Harry V. Jaffa • David Lowenthal • Arnaldo Momigliano • Michael Oakeshott • Ellis Sandoz • Leo Strauss (d. 1973) • Kenneth W. Thompson

Associate Editors Fred Baumann • Patrick Coby • Christopher A. Colmo • Derek Cross • Edward J. Erler • Maureen Feder-Marcus • Joseph E. Goldberg • Pamela K. Jensen • Will Morrisey • Charles Rubin • Leslie Rubin • John A. Wettergreen • Bradford Wilson • Catherine Zuckert • Michael Zuckert

Manuscript Editor Laurette G. Hupman

Design & Production Martyn Hitchcock

Annual subscription rates individual $15; institutional $18; student (3-year limit) $7.50. There are three issues of INTERPRETATION a year.

Address for correspondence INTERPRETATION, Queens College, Flushing, N.Y. 11367, U.S.A.

Authors submitting manuscripts for publication in INTERPRETATION are requested to follow the *MLA Style Sheet* and to send clear and readable copies of their work.

Copyright 1986 • Interpretation

The Dramatic End of Plato's Socrates

JOSEPH CROPSEY
University of Chicago

How does the structure of a philosophic exposition contribute to the meaning of a philosophic argument? I shall try to say something about the question in a context that is special and limited but not trivial—the context of a segment of the Platonic corpus. The dialogues to which I want to draw attention are those between the *Theaetetus* and the *Phaedo*; and before doing anything else, I must explain what I mean by "between." That explanation will serve to introduce the particular meaning of structure that will appear in the rest of this paper. The dialogues "between" the *Theaetetus* and the *Phaedo* would be, by one conventional reckoning, the ones that Plato wrote in that order. Of course, the order in which the dialogues were written remains largely conjectural, and whatever depends on a firm determination of that order is equally in doubt. There is, however, another order into which a number of the dialogues, especially those "between the *Theaetetus* and the *Phaedo*," can be placed with much greater certainty, namely, a dramatic order. If the order of composition may be called the poietic order of the dialogues, the order in which the conversations are depicted as occurring may be called the dramatic order. Of the poietic order one might say that it reveals the author's intellectual development; the dramatic order reveals his intention. I am going to suppose not only that Plato's intention is more distinctly inferrable from the dramatic order in which he placed his inventions than any poietic order is inferrable from any evidence that survives, but also that his intention is more important to our comprehension of his thought than is his development as a thinker. I concede with regard to the latter point that significant truths about an author's intention may lie concealed within his development; after all, his development is the growth or decline of his intention; yet even if only to follow the course with the less speculative premise, I shall throughout consider "structure" to mean dramatic order.

The *Theaetetus* is a Socratic dialogue that is recounted by one man to one or more others, some number of years after the words being reported are represented as having been spoken. The dialogue ends with Socrates' saying that he must go to the *stoa* of the king in order to answer to Meletus's indictment, but that he expects to meet the company again in the morning to continue the conversation. By ending the *Theaetetus* with this brief passage, Plato indicates that the trilogy of *Theaetetus*, *Sophist* and *Statesman* is at least a quartet that includes the *Euthyphro*, the dialogue that takes place at the porch of the king. The same concluding passage makes plain that the quartet occurs within weeks or months of

Prepared for delivery at the 1979 Annual Meeting of the American Political Science Association.

the end of Socrates' life. (Also indicated is the need to interpret the *Euthyphro* as a component of the quartet into which Plato cast it. This means that the argument on the civil and theoretical implications of piety toward gods and fathers should be articulated with the arguments presented in the neighboring dialogues.)

It follows from the connection of *Theaetetus, Sophist* and *Statesman* with the trial of Socrates that that group of dialogues is linked in dramatic time with the other famous trilogy of *Apology of Socrates, Crito*, and *Phaedo*. In crowding these seven works upon each other in time, Plato signifies his conception of them as a unity of some kind, a unity that it is convenient to call the dramatic end of Plato's Socrates.

Of course one wonders how the supposition of this "structure" could contribute to the interpretation of the texts and the disclosure of Plato's thought. An easy conjecture is that Plato has devised an account of Socrates' end—his indictment, defense, condemnation and execution—that transcends the limits of the *Apology, Crito*, and *Phaedo*: an enhanced version of the trial of Socrates. This speculation assumes that the quartet should be drawn towards the trilogy for interpretation, that the center of gravity of the seven dialogues is the judgment of Socrates in a sense that is dominated by his civic indictment even though it transcends his public accusation and his own defense. I shall try to show, in the bulk of what follows, that useful though this conjecture may be, it needs to be stated differently. When the seven dialogues are examined concretely, they point to a still larger structure of Platonic dialogues, a larger structure that interests us because it does contain a judgment of Socrates, but on so broad a plan as to leave the trial as such shrunken by the expansion of the horizon within which it is viewed.

Specifically, the reader of the first trilogy will be aware that the three dialogues are, in different ways, penetrated by the presence of two famous rivals of Socrates, Protagoras and Parmenides. Protagoras is important to the argument of the *Theaetetus*, so important that Socrates impersonates him in a long speech in which Socrates does justice to Protagoras' views on perception, motion and knowledge with such success that Theodorus expresses his enthusiastic admiration. Theodorus, an active if sometimes reluctant interlocutor, is himself a Protagorean though apparently with reservations. His pupil is Theaetetus, who also appears to be Protagorean, although very docile to the argument of Socrates, perhaps because Protagoreanism is not a bad preparation for Socratism. (Of Simmias and Kebes, the Pythagoreans, similar things will be said below when we turn to the *Phaedo*.) As one might say, the *Theaetetus* is suffused with the spirit of Protagoras; but it is not for that reason an un-Socratic dialogue, rather if anything the reverse: Eucleides reports that he wrote this conversation down and that in the course of doing so, he would consult Socrates whenever he needed help in clearing up a doubtful point. This consultation would have to have taken place in the short and presumably preoccupied period between the indictment and the execution of Socrates. Besides embodying the active collaboration of

Socrates in its written preservation, the *Theaetetus* contains an autobiography of Socrates, what one might call his obstetric autobiography, with a view to its content and also in order to distinguish it from the autobiography in the *Phaedo*—another superficially un-Socratic dialogue.

A point has been made of the Protagoreanism of the *Theaetetus*; but there is a dialogue called *Protagoras*, in which the thought of Protagoras is obviously prominent. Do the Protagoreanisms of *Theaetetus* and *Protagoras* harmonize? Why are two Protagorean dialogues necessary? Whatever the answers to these questions may be, the *Theaetetus* and *Protagoras* gravitate toward one another, and the *Protagoras* becomes attached to the basic structure of the septet by a line of filiation. In the same way, a line of attachment develops between the *Sophist* and *Statesman* on the one hand and the *Parmenides* on the other, for Parmenides is as actively present in the latter dialogues through the Eleatic Stranger as Protagoras is in the *Theaetetus*. The recurrence of themes in the Platonic dialogues is a familiar fact that would lead to the attachment of the *Meno* to our growing structure by the link of the doctrine of anamnesis, employed prominently in the *Phaedo*. Many other examples could be given. If carefully pursued, the dramatic, thematic, and personal ligatures would include some large part, perhaps all, of the Platonic corpus.

I have not come so far in order to suggest that there is a Platonic cosmos, but rather to speculate on what guided Plato in the construction of it. Raising the question is meant to set aside the routine reply that the shaping of the Platonic cosmos was governed by the shape of the real one—not because that is not true but because it is not what the already discerned structure indicates most pointedly, namely, that a great weight of non-Socratic thought presses on Socratism and must be reckoned with. The presence of non-Socratic thought defines the horizon in which the transpolitical or philosophic critique and apology of Socrates may be found. The cosmos to which the Platonic cosmos corresponds is to a surprising degree the theoretical, not the natural cosmos.

Taking advantage of the privilege claimed by introductions, I will introduce the body of the argument to come with an as yet unsupported assertion: it would not be wise to assume that Plato fashioned his world and populated it with non-Socratics merely to mirror the intellectual milieu that Socrates inhabited and, while sketching that world, to set the scene for Socrates to deflate every living and dead pretender to understanding beginning with Homer. It cannot be denied that Socrates is shown slaying his thousands; but his antagonists often have little enough to say for themselves and are not of great stature. Plato does cause his Socrates to put the armies of the fee-takers to the sword, but he also shows him at times occupying their towers without a proclamation to announce the appropriation. Most surprising, Socrates occasionally goes into direst battle armed with weapons borrowed from unidentified armories that belong to other champions whom Plato's contemporaries could and did name and who are recognized even by us. I have in mind, to give one striking example, the doctrine of invisible and

most real intelligibles by which and by which alone the phenomenal world is to be understood. This was Pythagorean tradition by Socrates' time, though likely to be thought of by us as Socratic idealism. It is worth recalling that, in the *Parmenides* (130b), when Parmenides asks Socrates whether the ideas are his own invention and whether he thinks that there is likeness and unity and plurality apart from the concrete things that participate in these ideas in themselves, Socrates says yes, but his response appears directed to the second question, the first going unanswered. When Aristotle sets out, in *Metaphysics* I, to give the history of thought about causes, he sketches a picture of Greek intellectual life that should remind the reader of the mosaic panorama of the Platonic dialogues. In Aristotle's history, Plato looms large, as Socrates does in Plato's. Aristotle says that Plato was a Heracleitian both early and later in life, for he saw the world of phenomena as always in flux (*Metaphysics* 987^{a}34). Is it not surprising that one could construct Plato-Socrates out of Pythagorean idealism and Heracleitian flux? In brief, there is a view of Plato and Socrates, and Aristotle is the greatest depictor of it, according to which Plato and Socrates are intimately bound in with and must be discussed as belonging to the milieu of that host we call pre-Socratic. In that view, the recognition of Plato-Socrates' preeminence does not sever their historical connection with their predecessors, nor does it entail their freedom from debt to those predecessors. The Platonic corpus seems at first like a depiction of the same pre-Socratic landscape, with Socrates included in it, but in a completely different perspective from Aristotle's. Those thinkers whose thought Aristotle diligently distills and criticizes appear, when they exist as personae of Plato's dialogues, like mere foils for the virtuosity of Socrates. Plato's perspective seems to make Socrates a giant among mediocrities and a luminescence among the dim or semidim. Did Plato not see Socrates on a human scale even as Aristotle saw Plato, who was called divine in his own lifetime? I believe that Plato's perspective was not less detached than Aristotle's, and I shall try to show this. But if it was thus clear-sighted, why was it given the appearance by its author of being the apotheosis of Socrates, the perfect philosopher with no debts, no peers, no errors, the man who cannot even proclaim his ignorance without adding luster to the testimonials of his wisdom? What was the unprecedented achievement of Socrates that justified so extraordinary a portrayal? The closing words of the *Phaedo* do not constitute an adequate answer. What follows here is an attempt to move toward an explanation, through the interpretation of a few elements of the *Theaetetus* and the *Phaedo*. My general intention is to argue that the Platonic corpus contains—perhaps simply is—the appraisal of Socrates; and that one of the instruments of appraisal is the depiction of Socrates as a man in the company of all those with whom it is useful to compare him, whom he taught, whom he could not teach, whom he refused to teach, and from whom he learned or conceivably even refused to learn.

The *Theaetetus* is recounted in Megara (whither Plato is said to have gone after the death of Socrates). In the recounted dialogue proper, Socrates is engaged

in conversation with Theodorus, who is a geometer, an associate of Protagoras, and a teacher of Theaetetus. According to the tradition, he is someone with whom Plato himself studied in Cyrene. Theaetetus is introduced into the dialogue as the youth in the middle of a group of young men who are approaching. It becomes known that one of the others in the group is Young Socrates, the interlocutor of the *Statesman*. There must have been at least one more youth in order for Theaetetus to have been "in the middle," but no other youth is named or otherwise identified. Theaetetus is described as resembling Socrates in appearance, Young Socrates resembles him of course in name. Plato maintains silence in all respects about the conjectured third youth. Socrates begins his interrogation of Theaetetus by enumerating, in the form of a question, the subjects that he supposes Theaetetus to be studying with Theodorus: geometry, astronomy, harmony, and arithmetic (145c, d), which the youth confirms. This list is the same ("music" being substituted for "harmony") as the list of arts that Protagoras recites when, in the *Protagoras*, (318e) he derides the vulgar sophists who force their pupils back to the distinct conventional arts rather than teaching them, as he himself does, good counsel in domestic and civic affairs so that they may be as effective as possible in the city both in action and in speech. Protagoras is said to look at Hippias while speaking; it may be understood that he would look as pointedly at Theodorus. In pursuing the interrogation of Theaetetus, Socrates asks whether the increase of knowledge is the same as increase of wisdom, and whether knowledge and wisdom are the same. Now arises the chief question of the dialogue: what is knowledge? Theaetetus answers by referring to Theodorus's curriculum of the arts, adding also the productive arts such as shoemaking. Socrates turns this answer back because it gives examples instead of saying what the thing itself is; it adduces a many where a one is wanted. This is the same objection with which Socrates confutes Meno's definition of virtue (*Meno* 72a, b). What might be called the routine position of Socrates, namely, that the intelligible is a unity to which the multiplicity must be referred, bears an unexpected resemblance to Protagoras's apparent reason for disapproving of the ordinary sophists; they offer an assortment, he purveys wisdom itself in its unity.

Theaetetus admits to a concern over the meaning of knowledge and Socrates encourages him to take heart and go forward, offering to put his own peculiar powers at Theaetetus's disposal during the investigation. This becomes the occasion for a lengthy statement by Socrates about himself, a statement that might be called his obstetric autobiography because he discloses in the course of it that he is a midwife of thoughts. His self-description is a curious mixture of depreciation and pretension, for he appears as a barren god, incapable of generating a thought but able to deliver a man of those he has within, distinguishing the pregnancies that isue in progeny from those that have spurious fruit and, like a god in his beneficence, fostering the true and exposing the false offspring. It is worth noticing that this characterization of his dialectic pedagogy differs from the one set forth in the *Meno*, where Socrates claims to be able to elicit all knowledge from

all men by appropriate questioning: everyone knows everything by virtue of the immortality of the soul, and needs only to be reminded. There is a tacit withdrawal from that doctrine in the *Theaetetus*, where memory plays indeed an important part, but the memory in question is of the ordinary, earthly kind and depends on perception rather than on immortality of the soul or on the availability of ideas as objects visible in a realm above. This is the more in need of consideration because the *Theaetetus* begins the sequence that ends in the *Phaedo*, the place where Socrates argues the immortality of the soul partly on the premise of anamnesis. In any case, the *Theaetetus* ends inconclusively, aporetically, for the question what is knowledge is not answered. Socrates does not repeat the success of the *Meno*, where he induces the boy to discover, i.e., to discover in himself, an application of what we call the Pythagorean theorem. If the *Meno* tends to argue that through the application of the right method all normal men can be shown to possess all knowledge, the *Theaetetus* can be said to show that the quest for knowledge even about knowledge itself staggers through an arduous process of trial and error and reaches the edifying conclusion that failure in the investigation will make Theaetetus gentler with others and better able to avoid believing that he knows what he does not know. How important this wisdom might be is demonstrated in the immediately subsequent conversation of Socrates with Euthyphro, in the next dialogue. Whether the practical circumstances surrounding Socrates' end and the willfulness of the men who brought it about have anything to do with Plato's intention in closing the *Theaetetus* with aporia would require a separate investigation. For the present, it is necessary to inquire into the path by which Plato brings the *Theaetetus* to the conclusion it reaches.

Stimulated by Socrates, Theaetetus replaces his first suggested definition of knowledge with another, which is that knowledge is perception. Socrates immediately identifies this as Protagorean, and as tantamount to the formula of Protagoras that runs "Man is the measure of all things, of the things that are that they are and of the things that are not that they are not." Socrates interprets this to mean that each man is the judge of the coldness, hotness and other qualities of the things he perceives, and there is no way to go beyond the perceived appearance of things to their being in truth. In an unobtrusive remark, Socrates raises (152c) what will prove to be one of the most difficult points that he and Theaetetus will have to contend with throughout the dialogue, and which they will not be able to settle: What is error? The issue arises because, if what every man perceives is true for him and there is no truth beyond the truth of perception, or how things appear, no judgment about a thing can be wrong. By the end of the dialogue, the interlocutors have succeeded no better in accounting for or defining error than in defining knowledge. In this sense, "the problem of error" is an element of the discourse that survives to the end of the dialogue. This problem, which arises out of empiricism-relativism, survives the refutation in the dialogue of the original premise, namely, knowledge is perception (or "man is the measure") out of which it grows, which is surprising in the highest degree. Particular

importance should be attached to whatever in the argument survives unrefuted or unresolved through to the end because, in an argument that ends formally in aporia, one must ask whether the work has in fact no affirmative conclusion or whether perhaps the conclusion consists somehow of whatever has been introduced into the argument but has not been eliminated from it by refutation. The *Theaetetus* especially calls for the consideration of some such hypothesis because the dialogue consists overwhelmingly of trial and error, of three major tentative definitions of knowledge, all of them overthrown when shown by Socrates to be untenable. It is possible that in such a case, some part of what survives must be sought in the negations, the statements of objections that effectually eliminate the affirmations which are cast out of the discourse. Obviously, a negative that eliminates permanently some factor of the argument and is not itself contradicted should be counted as permanently affirmed in the discourse as a whole. Collecting those negatives belongs to the fullscale interpretation of the dialogue and not to the present paper. I note, however, that in reflecting on what an aporetic dialogue may be said to affirm formally, one might have to include the undisposed of issues raised by refuted positions, and the contradicting arguments by which refuted proposals are eliminated.

I doubt it will have escaped notice that this dialogue, in which the participants fail to find the meaning of error, was described above as proceeding throughout by trial and error—seemingly teaching in act what the obstetrician and his patient labor in vain to bring forth. If the dialogue were thus to present its teaching in act, then the judgment that the work as a whole ends in aporia would have to be modified: the genuine resolution of the issues would be embedded in the action or structure of the discourse as a whole. The dialogue has the appearance of being an enactment of error which fails in its efforts to articulate error or to define it in words. Because the definition of error and the definition of knowledge are mutually dependent, the dialogue inevitably has also the appearance of being an enactment of knowledge which fails in its efforts to articulate knowledge or to define it in words. If the *Theaetetus* were designed to present its own action or "structure" (i.e., Form) as the paradigm of knowledge, it would be offering a serious alternative to the doctrine of ideas as *νοητά* that are remembered by an immortal soul and that are drawn out of latency through a method of interrogation. It would be presenting knowledge and therewith learning as well as teaching in a purely terrestrial medium, within the realm of experience as one might say, linked to perception and ratiocination. However far this is from *defining* knowledge, it does indicate that the definition is to be expected to lie in some realm of being that is not out of touch with perception or appearance. One can only wonder if this speculation is to any extent supported by Plato's causing Theaetetus to reply with "it appears" (or, "it seems so") when Socrates argues provisionally, on behalf of the Protagorean view, that perception is always of what exists and, qua knowledge, cannot be false (152c).

Let us hold in abeyance the surmise that the aporia of the *Theaetetus* might be

resolved in the retained elements of the argument and in the action or Form of the dialogue as a whole, and let us return to the progress of the argument. Theaetetus, as was said, proposes that knowledge is perception (151e). Socrates, unnoticed and without explanation, reverses the order of the terms and then proceeds to the identification of "perception is knowledge" as Protagorean and as tantamount to "man is the measure." By this understanding, each thing is as, and what, it is perceived to be by the one perceiving it, and error or falseness in apprehension becomes impossible. Socrates now asserts that this doctrine is the view that "nothing is one and a self-same thing itself" but everything proceeds from movement and the mixing of things: nothing ever is, but is always becoming (152d). On this, he says, all the philosophers except Parmenides—that is, Protagoras, Heracleitus, and Empedocles—concur, as well as the loftiest poets of the two kinds of poetry, Epicharmus in comedy and Homer in tragedy. It is surprising that there is no mention of Pythagoras. Socrates offers in support of this position, which he will attempt eventually to weaken, that motion does go with being and life, and rest with nonbeing and dissolution; and that heat and fire, the source and support of other things, is caused by motion. However provisional this advocacy might prove to be, a very important part will ultimately be played by heat or fire in Socrates' unretracted thought as brought out by the end of the *Phaedo*.

Socrates elaborates in considerable detail (156a–157c) the "Protagorean" doctrine that all perception is born of the motion of the endlessly moving percipient and object of perception. Attached to this "kineticism" is the notion that perception, the vital concomitant of motion, cannot be "wrong." One can only say about perception that it occurs. Apparently in order to refute the kineticism of Protagoras, Socrates moves to attack the infallibility of perception by referring to the state of dreaming, insanity, and illusion, arguing that we have "perceptions" in those states that can surely be called false. Socrates pursues the theme of dreams in his further refutation of Protagoras, asking Theaetetus how he would prove that the two of them were not dreaming their actual conversation. Theaetetus allows that the thing is too hard to prove. This paltry sophism is followed by the astonishing remark of Socrates (158d) that the previous point gains in weight because we are asleep and awake for equal periods of time. I take it that when an assertion is refuted by the use of feeble or false contentions, it may be regarded as having survived the refutation. In any case, the frivolity of this and other arguments in the vicinity is implied by Socrates when he begins to speak (166a) in the name of Protagoras, delivering a defense to which we will soon turn. For the present, two points seem to emerge: first, that in some indistinct way the Protagorean or materialist-kineticist ascription of special importance to heat retains its force, and with it so much of the Protagorean doctrine of motion and multiplicity in the all as must accompany it; and second, that for reasons at present at least equally unclear, the Protagorean view that man's perceptions are the measure of the being of things is also permitted to remain alive in

some small degree. It should be made emphatically clear that nothing that has been said is intended to mean that Plato's Socrates is a crypto-kineticist. There is a very energetic denunciation of the Heracleitians or "Ephesians" (179e–180c), which happens by the way to be delivered by Theodorus, and which is mildly resisted by Socrates, who suggests that those sectarians perhaps speak differently in private and in public. He enlarges on the theme of dissimulation, distinguishing the ancients, who concealed their kineticism from the many with poetry (apparently Homer, 180d), and the moderns, who blurt out their wisdom so that the very cobblers will abandon the commonsense belief that some things are in motion and other things are at rest. He reminds himself that there are those who teach the opposite, namely, that all is one and at rest, a doctrine that can apparently be published without harmful effects, for nothing is said about the wisdom of concealing it. Whether this has anything to do with Socrates' own arguments and positions is exceedingly hard to judge. He goes on, however, to refute radical kineticism by showing the impossibility of saying anything about anything if all things are always moving and changing, that is, becoming rather than being. He concludes not only the critique of the theory of motion but of the associated Protagorean doctrine of "man the measure" by rejecting that formula *except if the man be sensible* (*φρόνιμος*) (183b,c). To see how far this insight constitutes a rejection or refutation of Protagoras, we must return to an earlier point in the dialogue.

Beginning at 166a, Plato causes Socrates to deliver a remarkable speech in which he impersonates Protagoras rebuking Socrates for the levity of his disputation to that point and then going on to present Protagoras's understanding with unimpaired seriousness. "Protagoras" asseverates his belief that every human being is unique and will perceive and "know" idiosyncratically, in a literal sense "idiotically", but this flatly does not mean that there is no such thing as wisdom and the wise man. The wise man is precisely he who can so deal with us that when bad things appear and are to us, he can cause good things instead to appear and to be. The first illustration is the sick man and the physician. To the sick man, food tastes and *is* bitter. The physician will bring on a change in him to a condition in which food will taste and *be* sweet. The sick man is not ignorant nor is the healthy man wise because of the unwisdom or wisdom of their opinions; that is, the correction of the sick man is not a matter of rectifying his thinking: to make a man wiser is impossible, says "Protagoras." The required change is from a condition that is not good to one that is better. Physicians do this with drugs, teachers of wisdom (*σοφιστής*) with arguments or words (*λόγοις*). "Protagoras" argues that it is not a matter of making a man who thinks (*δόξασαι*) falsely think truly but rather of remedying a bad condition (*ἕξις*) of the soul so that the man will experience perceptions (*φαντάσματα*) that are better, but not more "true." The Socratic "Protagoras" now makes a remarkable observation: physicians are those who correct the condition of the body with a view to improving its perceptions or sensations, and farmers are the ones who treat sick plants, replacing bad

perceptions in them with good, healthy and true perceptions (*αἰσθήσεις*) (167c). Wise and good orators make the good rather than the wicked seem just to the cities. It is to be noted that in each case, the word for "good" in the expression denoting the perception of the better condition is not *ἀγαθός* but some form of *χρηστός* which has an overtone of "useful" Socrates' impersonation of Protagoras continues with interesting assertions that we can omit from the present discussion. What has emerged is this: in the first place, Protagoras insists on the difference between wisdom and the absence of it. There is such a thing as a wise man, he differs from ordinary people, and his perceptions of the world might be the measure of it if his wisdom qualifies him as the *φρόνιμος* of Socrates' remark (183b,c) referred to earlier. While the wise man's wisdom far exceeds the vulgar understanding, the two have something in common. "Protagoras" sees the good as tinged with the beneficial, needful, useful as any man could readily understand those terms. There are good conditions, and health is a paradigm of them. So also is possession of abundance of wealth—Protagoras sees no reason to be apologetic about his own fee-taking. His moral standpoint is that of the ordinary man with his average perceptions, perceptions that would be called natural if natural means primary and unmodified by belief in any force or criterion higher than perceptible experience, either gods or eternal ideas. Nothing further from his thought can be imagined than Socrates' depreciation of life and body in favor of death and soul, as in the *Phaedo*, which would seem to him demented. "Protagoras" speaks of soul and its *ἕξις* or habitual condition (167b1), but his curious references to the perceptions or sensations of plants are indicative of a strong tendency toward materialism in his doctrine, a tendency which would harmonize with his belief in motion as primary. He appears at first to alienate from each other Good, Truth, and Wisdom, which Socratic philosophy strives to reconcile or to amalgamate; but in fact his philosophy reconciles them, though on the plane of the empirical, terrestrial, and natural. His thought reflects energetically on experience, but it remains on the level of its own objects: transcending and even despising mere opinion, it does not hypothesize any entity that opinion—the prephilosophic conclusions from experience—cannot encompass. In an earlier passage, (162d) Socrates presents a reply that Protagoras or someone speaking for him might have given to Socrates' injection of the gods into the discussion. The reply is to the effect that the being or nonbeing of gods is excluded from Protagoras's speech and writing. One might say that he has no need of that hypothesis, nor of ideas either. No standard higher or more enduring than man and his experience comes to sight, and the soul itself has no pronounced primacy.

"Man is the measure" and "knowledge is perception" may prove to be untenable propositions, but they have so deep a foundation that they have reasserted themselves in one shape or another down to our own time. Socrates' numerous refutations of them and of their implications are uneven in their gravity, as he admits while impersonating Protagoras. To determine precisely the details of his judgment on Protagoras would be a considerable task, but it seems as if one

might say that Socratism clashes seriously with Protagoreanism on the issue of the practicality of wisdom. Protagoras seems to replace "truer" with "better;" his wise man is a healer or improver of bodily or psychic conditions. One thinks of Socrates as teaching the natural impulse of the philosopher to recoil from the world of practice, beginning with politics and including acquisition and other affairs of business. The simplicity of this pattern is disturbed by Socrates' demonstrations in various places that the true king, the true rhetor, and—if Xenophon is to be believed—the true proprietor of an estate (and the true teacher of generals) is the philosopher. I believe there is another conflict between Socrates and Protagoras, a disagreement that might be called practical, that might serve to keep them apart as effectually as most other differences. Protagoras teaches that what seems good to the city is so for as long as the opinion holds, just as each man is the measure for himself. Whatever one might superimpose on this by way of distinctions between the wise and the others, this doctrine must put it into the mind of every city and every man that he or it *knows* (176d, 177a). If all the world were Protagorean, the hope of persuading anyone of the importance of knowing that or what he does not know must inevitably decline. How this point bears on the argument of the *Euthyphro*, the next dialogue, is too obvious to say. How it bears on the *Apology of Socrates* and on Athens itself is if anything more obvious. While the empiricism, materialism, and apparent atheism of Protagoras, and their underlying premise of universal motion, might not make it impossible to name or discuss anything, they do help to democratize the polis and obstruct the rule of the wiser sort. Protagoras's wise man is capable of becoming rich, a sign that his wisdom recommends itself to the many, or at least to those who can pay, as a thing of value. The wisdom of Socrates brought him of course a very different compensation, which is foreshadowed in the last lines of the present dialogue.

Is the relation between Socrates and Protagoras one of unrelieved disagreement? Probably not. The argument of the *Theaetetus* is much too complex to be summarized, and for the present purpose only a few points need be mentioned. After extensive efforts at defining knowledge, Theaetetus recalls (201c,d) having heard someone say that knowledge is true opinion together with reason, and that the things that are not subject to reason are not knowable. Socrates replies curiously, offering one dream for another, something that he thought he heard some people say, in exchange for what Theaetetus heard someone say. (A dream seems to have something in common with a rumor—speech emanating from an anonymous source. Cf. page 162 above, on dreams.) What Socrates heard is that the primary elements or components of ourselves and of all composites are not subject to reason or to being explained or accounted for by reason. That is, Socrates addresses first that part of Theaetetus's formula that introduces the unknowable. Clearly, if there are things that are unknowable by virtue of being intractable to reason (whatever that might mean), then about such things there could be at best only true opinion. How one could know that the opinion about

them is true is not clear, but that the argument is drifting toward the problems of the *Euthyphro*—piety and the gods—seems likely. At any rate, Socrates turns the discussion to the question whether the primary elements of things are unintelligible or are more or less intelligible than the composite things into which they enter. He concludes that the primary irreducible things (πρῶτα), of which the letters of the alphabet and the musical notes are illustrations, are if anything more intelligible than the composites made up of them: the things of perception, the things we see and hear stand high in the order of knowability (206a,b). Socrates reaches the conclusion that the syllable, the paradigm of a composite, even if regarded as "some one indivisible idea" (205c) and "one idea," (205d; also 203e, 204a) is saved from unintelligibility by the intelligibility of the letters, those particles known to us in the only way in which they can be known, not by explanation but by perception. There seems to be some sense in which knowledge is perception and perception knowledge.

Socrates turns now (206d) to the question "what is reason intended to signify for us?" Without the formality of asking Theaetetus, he lays it down that reason—that which is to be added to true opinion to form knowledge—means one of three things: the verbal reflection of thoughts in speech; rendering an account of things in terms of all of their elementary parts; explaining something in terms of the characteristic that distinguishes it from everything else. Socrates proceeds not by supporting or refuting the claim of any of the three to be the definition of reason but rather by showing that no matter which definition prevailed, true opinion plus reason would not be a tenable definition of knowledge. He does this by showing that the possession of reason in the first two senses is incompatible with error, and that the third involves tautology (209c): the peculiar snubnosedness of Theaetetus will not enter into combination with my (true) opinion that that is Theaetetus until it has already been distinguished in my mind from all other snubnosednesses that I have ever seen—and this by its having been impressed on my memory in the first place in its difference from all others; and similarly with all the other characteristics of Theaetetus. Once that impression in terms of singularity has occurred, meeting with you again tomorrow, i.e., seeing you, will remind me and cause me to have right opinion of you. In brief, Socrates has come round again to perception plus memory quickened by a renewed perception. He seems to have rediscovered Protagoras's empiricism and terrestrialized collection.

We turn next to the *Phaedo*, a dialogue that shows Socrates demonstrating the immortality of the soul during his last hours, and in the course of that demonstration exalting the soul over the body while maintaining that death is preferable to life (59b). In order to accomplish his purpose, Socrates introduces his familiar theory of ideas, the intelligible and eternal archetypes, of which we retain revivable impressions as we pass through our disembodied toward our incarnated states. Contributory to his showing the immortality of the soul is an argument to the effect that things are brought into being by their contraries, as pleasure fol-

lows pain and life itself is consequent upon death. By the time the dialogue has run its course, the reader has been made to wonder how far Socrates himself believed the soul to be immortal, to what extent he considered the soul to be independent of the body, and whether he had not admitted ponderable variations of the orthodox idealism always associated with his name.

The conversation is related by Phaedo, who was present, to Echecrates, a Phliasian who is remembered as a Pythagorean and who shows a sympathetic interest in Socrates. Also present at the death of Socrates was a sizable group of Athenians and others, of a variety of philosophic persuasions. It is made explicit that Plato was not there: "Plato was, I think, sick" (59b). Whether or how this mention of Plato's absence is to be connected with Phaedo's remark, after Socrates' account of the ideas as causes, that "all who were there" thought Socrates had made the thing wonderfully clear, must remain more or less conjectural (102a). Eucleides and Terpsion, the Megarans of the recounting of the *Theaetetus*, were there. So also were Simmias and Kebes, two Thebans who are described by Socrates as pupils of Philolaos (61d). Philolaos is the Pythagorean who is said to have sold the written report of the esoteric tenets of Pythagoreanism to Plato himself. Simmias and Kebes are the principal interlocutors of the *Phaedo*, together with Socrates, and their reservations and doubts, as well as their unquestioning concurrences, are instruments that Plato uses in giving the argument much of its shape. As the thought of Protagoras moves in the *Theaetetus*, so that of Pythagoras affects the *Phaedo*, in ways that I can only illustrate here with great incompleteness.

I should like to begin by asking why Simmias and Kebes are made the partners in discourse of Socrates during most of the dialogue. I believe that an indication of the answer is to be found in the following places rather early in the conversation.

First, at 64c, Socrates asks Simmias whether death is anything but the separation of the soul from the body. Without hesitation Simmias replies that it is nothing but that. This is a begging of the question that forms the context of the exchange, for if it were known that death consists of such a separation, it would be known also that the soul is capable of and has an independent existence, a point which Socrates in fact attaches to the question to which Simmias has given an affirmative answer. Simmias sees nothing arguable here.

Next, at 70a, Kebes wishes to hear dispelled the common fear that the soul disintegrates upon being separated from the body. He would like some assurance that the soul exists and has any power and intelligence (φρόνησις) when the man has died. Socrates refers to "some ancient account that we remember" to the effect that the souls go from here to the infernal region and return and are born from the dead. And if this is so, he asks, if the living are born again from the dead, how might our souls not exist there? The support for the affirmative is to be found in the doctrine of the generation of all things from opposites. As pleasure is born of pain and everything that becomes becomes from the opposite of what it

turns into, so also living arises out of being dead just as dying follows living. Kebes accepts this astonishing mixture of an old story and a flimsy analogy without a murmur, although he is not generally a passive interlocutor. Strengthening this argument with another, Socrates declares that if there were not a universal reciprocation between opposite states, the universe would collapse into ubiquitous death. Kebes is persuaded, and Socrates makes an unusually strong statement, declaring that it seems to him that it is altogether exactly thus, and that return to life and the birth of the living from the dead and the existence of the souls of the dead are the reality (72d). Kebes agrees and confirms all of the foregoing by introducing a favorite Socratic doctrine, that of anamnesis, as an additional proof. Of course, if the soul carries forth into life various impressions that it received before birth, it must have lived on somewhere. Simmias would like to be reminded of the proof of this position, and Kebes furnishes it with notable economy. Human beings can answer well-put questions about anything, which they would not be able to do if the knowledge were not within them. In order to reinforce Kebes' argument from anamnesis, Socrates refers without explanation, as if it were self-evident, to a man's knowledge of things as gained through seeing, hearing, or other perception (73c). The aporia of the *Theaetetus* seems to dissolve in the tacit acceptance of the spurned Protagorean suggestion.

Returning to the question why Simmias and Kebes are made the chief collaborators of Socrates in this ultimate dialogue, I think that Socrates' description of them as pupils of Philolaos, which means Pythagoreans, gives a clue that gains in plausibility by their conduct in the exchanges just summarized. Their easy acquiescence in the most problematic assertions apparently comports with their Pythagorean training, which would have put those conceptions, thought to be peculiarly Socratic, well within the range of the familiar or the authoritative. As one might say, Plato could not find more agreeable interlocutors with Socrates on questions of immortality and the migration of souls than Pythagoreans. The same indoctrination would prepare them equally well to accept the theory of generation of opposites by opposites, at least if Aristotle is to be believed when he ascribes to the Pythagoreans the belief that "contraries are the first principles of things" (*Metaphysics* 986^b3). All of this is said without intending to minimize the weight of the objections that Simmias and Kebes will oppose to the doctrine of the eternal vitality of the soul as distinguished from its capacity to survive the body for a limited time. Perhaps Simmias and Kebes are imperfect Pythagoreans, as Theodorus was a deviating Protagorean. It is not possible now to try to clarify these relations of detachment on the part of certain members of philosophic sects when they contemplate their orthodoxies. It is well worth noticing, though, that Simmias and Kebes make objections to Socrates' doctrine of immortality, and that, upon the completion of the statement of those objections, the whole party is disconcerted by the inroads that have been made on what was thought to be an unassailable position, to such an extent that doubts about reason itself arise. Beginning at 88b, Phaedo breaks into the account in his own charac-

ter with certain remarks to Echecrates. Phaedo relates how Socrates caressed him, and drew a parallel between misanthropy and misology: both arise out of misplaced trust too readily given, followed by repeated disenchantment until eventually hatred of all men or of all reason ensues. The lesson is caution, not dogmatic skepticism. What this speech that Plato puts in the mouth of Socrates betokens for Plato's own understanding of philosophic sectarianism is necessarily matter for speculation. At any rate, here at 90d, Phaedo concludes his exchange with Echecrates and resumes the report of the argument proper, ending what might be called the Phaedo section. If one were to wonder why this crucial work was named after a character who did nothing in the dialogue but serve as addressee of the admonitions just related, I think one might plausibly conclude that Plato attached much importance to the chief point of the Phaedo section. Those who find the location of a given passage in a text significant will wish to know that the Phaedo section divides the dialogue as a whole into very nearly equal parts.

Let it be supposed that Plato has injected Pythagoreanism into the elaboration of Socratism in a way that indicates some congeniality of the one doctrine to the other. By these tedious evolutions, we seem merely to be rediscovering the judgments of Aristotle on Plato's provenience, although doing so by concrete reference to the dialogues, which Aristotle does only on occasion. There is, however, another feature of Plato's critical method of constructing the argument to which one must pay attention in order to interpret the texts. It seems that with regard to some weighty issues, Socrates makes powerful representations which he himself unobtrusively qualifies, certainly presents with the utmost tentativeness, or perhaps even seems at last almost to reverse. In order to observe this, we must follow an argument that develops after Kebes has shown a need for a proof that the soul not only preexists the body but is altogether imperishable (95b et seq.). Socrates declares that this is tantamount to a demand for a thorough investigation of the cause of generation and corruption. Socrates now gives a remarkable account of his intellectual experiences as a seeker after knowledge about causes. He relates how his explorations into natural philosophy, apparently on materialistic principles, led him into confusion and discouragement, causing him eventually to forget even what common sense had plainly if insufficiently taught him. Then he discovered Anaxagoras, whose dictum that mind is the arranger and cause of everything delighted him. He reasoned that mind does all that it does with a view to the good: mind causes the generation and corruption of each thing in order to procure what is best for it. Thus the study of generation and corruption is really the study of good. Great was his disappointment when Anaxagoras went on to introduce air, aether, water and many other foolish things as causes, i.e., to vitiate his doctrine with matter, as if any such could explain why (that is, with a view to what good) anything came into being or happened. Anaxagoras, in mixing matter with mind, lost sight of the distinction between cause and the conditions necessary for the operation of a cause. He and others ignore the good,

more powerful than any other power to keep the whole together. Now Socrates describes his second or post-Anaxagorean voyage in search of the cause. He begins by stating his method of inquiry. He adopts each time some explanation (λόγος) as a hypothesis that he judges to be the strongest, and he posits as true whatever agrees with it and rejects as untrue whatever does not (100a). Now he will hypothesize the existence of the beautiful in itself, and the good, and the great and all the others. "If you grant me this and concur in the being of these things, I hope to be able to demonstrate cause, and to prove to you that the soul is immortal." Astonishingly, Kebes grants the existence of the things themselves without a question. We might notice at this point that the doctrine of ideas, at least in the present context, is subordinate to the theory of cause and the demonstration of the immortality of the soul.

Briefly, each thing is, or rather is made to be, what it is by that "thing itself" in which it participates. A beautiful thing is made beautiful by beauty itself, by its "participation" in the beautiful. Socrates calls this "the safest answer I can give" to the question "what is the cause?" (It must be said immediately that a few pages later, Socrates will call this account not only safe but stupid. So we must not jump to conclusions about his naïveté.) Socrates praises the clarity of the results of his method, and Echecrates breaks into Phaedo's report to join in the praise. Phaedo replies, as was said above, with the remark that everyone there thought Socrates had clarified everything amazingly. Now Socrates shows how a man can be larger than one man but smaller than another: *he* can participate in the great and the small, which can simultaneously cause him or be present in him, but neither the great nor the small, the thing itself, can admit or participate in its opposite without being destroyed. When the opposite approaches its opposite, one of them must either withdraw or be destroyed. The importance of this for the life of the soul will appear soon.

Now an unnamed interlocutor notices that beauty's being the cause of beauty means that like is caused by like, which contradicts the earlier doctrine that generation is by opposite of opposite, as pleasure out of pain. Socrates easily distinguishes "things" from "things in themselves:" the former are generated through opposition, the latter as has just been said are repelled or destroyed by contrariety. Socrates takes the next important step by distinguishing heat and fire, cold or coldness and snow. Heat and coldness are what they are in themselves, fire and snow are not heat and coldness but hot and cold. His point is that the things in themselves have surrogates which behave like them but differ from them. Thus, if fire approaches snow, one or the other must withdraw or be destroyed; neither can tolerate its contrary. Sometimes, Socrates says, "not only the idea itself (αὐτὸ τὸ εἶδος) deserves the same name forever and ever, but also something which, while not being that idea, always whensoever it exists has that form" (103e). For example, three may always be called three, but although it is not The Odd, it may also always be called odd. Now three will oppose anything Even just as strenuously and eternally as Odd itself would do, because three contains the

idea of odd. Obviously, Socrates has prepared a position that goes beyond his first argument that something beautiful is made so by Beauty itself. Socrates now says (105b,c), "If you ask me, what causes something to be hot, I will not give you that safe but stupid answer that it is Heat, but rather out of our present work a more sophisticated reply, that it is fire; and if you ask what causes the body to be sick, I will not say Sickness but fever" (in Greek, something like "fieriness").

All this comes to an immediate head in a brief passage in which Socrates shows that the soul is to Life as fire is to Heat. Soul is not Life itself but Life's surrogate, and it and death are opposites that must flee one another or be destroyed. Thus it follows that when death descends upon the body, the soul must flee, and thus its survival of the body is proved. The reason that the soul must flee death and cannot stay to be destroyed by its opposite, as snow is by heat, is given thus: if the deathless is also indestructible, the soul cannot be destroyed when death approaches it (106b). One thought that the question was precisely whether the deathless is necessarily also indestructible. The demonstration now seems to take the form "if something is deathless, its vitality is the same as or is the sign of its insusceptibility to destruction." What must live must be. But does this formula mean, what must live must be alive as long as it exists, and it cannot exist once it no longer lives; or must the formula mean, life is of the thing's essence, it must be in life and there is no way to think of it without implying its life and thus its existence? This latter formulation will certainly remind of a particular kind of proof of the existence of God: if there is a being such that existence is of its essence, then there is no way to discuss it without acknowledging the necessity of its existence. In either case, as the demonstration is left by Socrates, it has something of the appearance of begging the question. Is the immortal soul indestructible? is answered with the assertion that what cannot die cannot pass out of existence. That this conclusion is as interesting to gods as to men is made explicit (106d). At any rate, it could have been asserted as well at the beginning of the argument as at its end, for nothing in the argument proper visibly addresses this issue.

The demonstration of the soul's imperishability is puzzling also in that, while the soul is characterized as the carrier or surrogate of Life, death acts for itself, capable of approaching and, presumably but only for a while, withdrawing. Is death the surrogate of a larger Idea, or is there a Death Itself, the Idea of Death? Is not death simply a negative, the privation of life? What is the ontic status of privations? Are they nothing? If death is ontically nothing, a nonentity, does it for that reason cease to be discussable or cease to be a source of anxiety? The dialogue never suggests that death is not discussable or that it is not a source of anxiety to man and perhaps even, if rarely, to Socrates. The status of privations is not an explicit theme, but it is an active one, in ways that I cannot take up here and of which I will give only a single example. At 106a, the cold is called the heatless or unhot and the hot is called coldless or uncold. Socrates says nothing about how far one can go in translating anything into the privation of its oppo-

site. If heat and cold can be named by some process of reciprocating privation of negatives, can death and life be similarly named? After all, the absolutely living is called in Greek as in English the deathless, and Socrates says of "the very idea of life" (*αὐτὸ τὸ τῆς ζωῆς εἶδος*) that it is "deathless" (106c). There is a special reason for raising the question through the particular conjunction of the examples of heat and cold alongside life and death, as will appear. I think it is fair to infer from the foregoing that Plato presents Socratism as both affected with Pythagoreanism and as being developed by Socrates in ways that differ from the simple orthodoxies of Socratic idealism. A question opened up by this inference, but especially by the second branch of it, is how far the conjectured attributes of Socratism belong to Socrates' thought and how much to Plato's. On this difficulty I shall have nothing to say now.

In what direction does the Platonic Socrates seem to withdraw from the rigidities of the ideas and even perhaps of the superiority of death to life? I can give only one suggestion, one that arises out of the place of Crito in the world of Socrates. Crito is Socrates' interlocutor in a famous dialogue in which Crito tries to persuade Socrates to save himself from death. In the present dialogue, Crito resists Socrates' death to the very last moment, urging him to use any small means to prolong life—and this after the colossal efforts of Socrates on behalf of death. One inclines spontaneously to say in spite of, but I mean to suggest that one should perhaps say because of Crito's imperviousness to the radical depreciation of body and life, Socrates shows him a marked and touching affection. I wonder whether Socrates doesn't like him for his common sense, healthy humanity, and his unshakeable adherence to the simple dictate of natural experience. Nothing can make Crito see death as anything but fearful, bad, and to be avoided as long as possible, and he cannot feel anything but unashamed grief over the loss of one he loves. Socrates does not spurn him because, I suspect, for all his manifold abstractions from body and contradictions of natural experience, Socrates was not completely in accord with his own orthodoxy. Blinding ourselves to this, we will probably be poor readers of Plato's Socratic dialogues. I find some imponderable support for this speculation in two facts included by Plato in the *Phaedo*: when Socrates' bonds were removed from his legs by the jailers, he put his feet on the ground and sat thus until the time came for him to die (61d); and when his wife came to bid her seventy-year-old husband a last farewell, she was carrying a babe in arms.

However this may be, the argument of the dialogue is not yet over. Having shown that the soul is imperishable as well as immortal, Socrates desires to depict its fate after its emancipation from the body. This requires him to give a description of the nether regions, a description that unobtrusively becomes a description of the whole world. Socrates presents it as something of which he was persuaded by someone unnamed. To begin with, and stated conditionally, if the earth is round and is in the middle of heaven, it needs nothing to support it but the homogeneity of heaven and its own equilibrium or equipoise (*ἰσορροπία*).

The earth does not fall because it is in a place and condition of perfect opposition of forces, and thus of rest. As for the earth itself, it is a body whose surface is indented and whose interior is hollowed and channelled with an intricacy of passages like a system of arteries and veins. The bulk of Socrates' myth of the earth describes the fluids—primarily water, air, and aether—that lie in and over the pitted surface and that circulate through the great passages within the body of earth. It is a scene of endless flux and oscillation brought on, as he says, by the bottomlessness of the fluids. The cause, he says, is that the fluids have, in the Greek term, no "basis" or step, nothing on or with which to stand. There is a reciprocating rush of fluids from side to side, and out of this melange of fiery, muddy fluxions comes an equipoise. Socrates, who professed his dissatisfaction with Anaxagoras as a doctor of causes, appears to have lapsed into Anaxagoreanism or some form of Heracleitianism at the last moment. The subversion of body has drifted toward a hypothesis of body as cause. What he admits as cause is simple mechanism of matter, and it would be straining credulity to maintain that the cause of that intricate contraption of fluids in motion is the good, namely, the just accommodation of departed souls, rather than the equilibration of spherical earth that must hang without support in the heavens. The cause of the world order is certainly not the good if the good is tantamount to or implicated in the good of man.

There is one last conjunction of notions in the *Phaedo* to which I should like to draw attention. Early in the conversation, (63d) Socrates notices that Crito has been trying to say something, and he asks him what it is. Crito replies that the man in charge of the poison was trying to admonish Socrates to talk less because speaking warms one up and the heat counteracts the poison. Later (105b,c), when Socrates is transcending the safe but stupid dictum that the cause of heat in something is The Hot, he gives as an illustration of the improved conception the statement that what causes the body to be sick is not the presence in it of Sickness in Itself but rather of fever, i.e., fieriness, or heat to excess. In the last sentences of the dialogue, the effect of the poison on Socrates is described as a growing coldness beginning in his feet and rising, like death itself, through his limbs until it reaches his heart, when not only his members but himself died. I wish to suggest that life itself is portrayed as some condition of a man or rather of his body, indeed of any animal or its body, in which heat and cold are in a state of equilibrium or rest, an equilibrium that can be upset by things introduced from without such as drugs, and that can be affected, at least in some men, by an activity of the mind such as speech. (It is not clear whether Socrates in fact required the double or triple dose.) How far the life of man can be understood through the *Phaedo* as a mechanical thermal equilibrium, a microcosm of the fluid equilibrium of the world, is problematic. One would like to know what significance, if any, to attach to the fact that the Greek word for soul is ψυχή and for cooling ψύχω. Can one be certain that Socrates' last words, the reminder to Crito to pay the debt to Aesculapius, were not a mark of his gratitude to the great druggist for a pain-

less death through cooling numbness rather than for release from life as if it were a disease? What the text does seem to make clear is that the intention of Plato cannot be discerned unless his Socrates is seen in his depth, free from the bonds of an exoteric dogmatism that is, after all, incompatible with his famous irony.

The Socratic dialogues of Plato portray a large variety of philosophic schools, human types, and professions. To understand Plato is to grasp the outcome of the many dramatic meetings in which those actors are brought together for talk. How the reader perceives the outcome of those many discussions should lead him to Plato's premises; but we are tempted to reverse the process and to derive the outcome from some prejudgment of Plato's premises. I have tried to examine some parts of Plato's work presupposing as little as possible about his judgment of Socrates; and I have done so for the sake of understanding what Plato's true judgment of Socrates was and therefore, from Plato's perspective, what Socrates was. I have tried to keep an open mind on the question whether Plato kept an open mind, and I was led to conclude that he had done so. I do not find that Plato blinded himself any more than Aristotle would do to the ligatures that bound Socrates to the thought of his predecessors, or that he believed that alone among men Socrates had no origins to speak of. Nor does it appear that the doctrines for which Socrates is most famous were held by him as dogma or without regard to their value as exoteric.

What entitles Socrates to the encomium of Phaedo at the end of the dialogue —that Socrates was the best and wisest and most just man of that time of whom those about him had experience? Perhaps the answer lies in this: that he achieved the decisive translation of Greek philosophy onto the plane of sobriety. He seems to have taken Pythagoreanism with its cultic and other extremes and domesticated it for prudent men. This domestication included a drastic reformulation, toward restraint, of philosophy's political pretensions. On the other hand, he appears to have elevated Protagoreanism by reminding it of soul and heaven, of which the Pythagoreans were only too frantically aware. Socrates seems to have moved among the schools and professions of the Greeks like a judge in the midst of enthusiasts, pedants, mountebanks, thinkers, climbers, connivers, poets and others. After he had done his work, the stage was set for the seriousness and restraint of Aristotle. That the achievement of Socrates was a historical achievement seems to be some part of the burden of Plato's Socratic corpus. How much of that achievement was in fact Plato's is an enormous question that must remain present to the mind of anyone who hopes to understand Plato.

Socratism appears as a turning point in Greek and thus in all thought, as the cautious deradicalization of its extremes of spiritualism, cultism, and metaphysical dogmatism, accomplished through a careful sifting of the best resources available. There is reason to think that the history of philosophy in the modern age has been a record of the radicalization or intensification of the primary conceptions, a course opposite to that which came to a climactic point with the

philosophizing of Socrates. If this observation were to prove correct, it would indicate that the decline of society is compatible with the most contradictory evolutions of man's theoretical existence. One must be singularly devoted to truth, to be cheered by this discovery.

Philosophy, Education, and Courage in Plato's *Laches*

CHARLES L. GRISWOLD, JR.
Howard University

A very popular error: having the courage of one's convictions; rather it is a matter of having the courage for an *attack* on one's convictions!!! Nietzsche[1]

I

When we consider the relation between philosophy and courage, three issues arise immediately. The first concerns the philosophy of courage, that is, the philosophical attempt to say what courage is. Plato, for one, thought this attempt interesting enough to focus a large section of a dialogue on it (the *Laches*), in addition to passages of other dialogues. The second issue concerns the question as to whether the pursuit of philosophy requires courage. At first glance, the answer to this question seems contingent upon historical circumstances. If a Socrates risks punishment by persevering in philosophizing, he is to be congratulated, perhaps, on his courage. Indeed, students of the *Apology* and *Phaedo* sometimes wax poetic about the uncompromising manner in which Socrates met his punishment. A Bertrand Russell, by contrast, has *relatively* little to fear from a modern liberal democracy, and courage does not seem to be a prerequisite of philosophizing under such tolerant conditions. Yet might not the pursuit of philosophy nevertheless require another sort of courage regardless of the political consequences? Having the courage "for an attack on one's convictions" might be a case in point. So too, in fact, might be the courage required to sustain one's conviction that it is worth philosophizing. We might refer to both of these as cases of the courage of the philosopher. Thus a species of the philosopher's courage might be required to say what courage itself is, as Socrates suggests at *Laches* 194a. The third issue, finally, is whether all courage requires philosophical knowledge if courage is to be beneficial. However difficult it may be to defend, Socrates' position on this last issue is fairly clear: courage must be combined with knowledge if it is to be beneficial (e.g., *Meno* 88b, *Prot.* 359c–360e).

In this paper I shall focus on Plato's view of the second of the issues just ad-

Drafts of this paper were presented at Prince George's College, Maryland (Feb. 1, 1982), Mary Washington College, Virginia (Feb. 29, 1984), and Malboro College, Vermont (April 4, 1984). I am grateful to Professors Edward Regis and David Roochnik for their helpful criticisms of an early draft of this essay.

1. *Gesam. Werke*, 23 vols. (Munich: Musarion, 1920–29), vol. 16, p. 318. The translation is W. Kaufmann's; see his *Nietzsche*, 3rd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1968), p. 19. I have used R. Sprague's translation of the *Laches* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1973), with slight emendations. Unless otherwise noted, Stephanus page numbers included directly in the text advert to the *Laches*. Except where noted, when I refer in this essay to Socrates, Laches, or Nicias I am adverting to these characters as Plato portrays them.

umbrated, though I must necessarily say something about the other two issues since all three are interrelated. For example, if something like "courage of the philosopher" exists, it would presumably be covered by the definition of courage as such, and the definition of courage was the first of our issues. Since the *Laches* is the only Platonic dialogue in which courage is a major theme, it is a logical place to begin an investigation into the nature of philosophical courage, and I shall therefore discuss the issue in terms of this dialogue. Moreover, our first two issues are connected in that, as already noted, the effort to define courage philosophically seems to require the courage to philosophize. We might then characterize the relationship between our first two issues as follows. The *Laches* is, among other things, an effort to give a *λόγος* of what courage is; the deed (*ἔργον*) of giving this *λόγος* requires courage. Thus the definition of courage, and the philosopher's courage, stand to each other as word to deed. As it turns out, the relationship between words and deeds (and in particular the need for a "harmony" between the two levels) is itself a prominent and explicit theme in the *Laches*. These two strata of meaning throw a considerable amount of light on each other, as we shall see.

Our third issue, namely the necessity for philosophical knowledge in every sort of real courage, is also connected to the effort to define courage (our first issue). Indeed, one of Nicias' definitions in the *Laches* (which Nicias says he has often heard from Socrates) is that courage is a kind of wisom (194d). If philosophy itself requires a form of courage, then our second and third issues are also connected. I would prefer to concentrate on the matter of the philosopher's courage, but for the reasons just adumbrated, discussion of the other two issues (particularly of the definition of courage) is unavoidable.

It is worth noting that the view that all sorts of courage require philosophy is initially less plausible than the view that the philosopher requires courage to philosophize. Of all the virtues, courage seems to be the furthest removed from any connection with knowledge. Unphilosophical men and women have performed, it seems, very courageous acts. Not just the ability to act courageously, but also to recognize instances of courage, seem widespread and in little need of the philosopher's help. Only the effort to say what courage is seems to require such help. Thus while he cannot say what courage is, Laches believes that he knows what it is (194a–b), a claim Socrates does not dispute. However, Socrates points out that if we cannot say what courage is even though we are ourselves courageous, then our deeds and words are not harmonized. For in that event, the deeds but not the words "participate" in courage (193e). The ability of human beings to "participate" in courage at all, even if in an inarticulate way, would seem to be a prerequisite of our ability to give a *λόγος* of courage. The very accessibility of courage might ease the philosopher's task considerably; indeed, the ability of the philosopher to "already know," in some sense, what is good or noble would seem to be a prerequisite of his ability to say what virtue is. This is a point to which I shall subsequently return.

Before delving into the *Laches* I would like to consider why the issues of education and the philosopher's courage are worthy of reflection. They are intimately connected with several general philosophical questions of the utmost importance. In necessarily brief terms, this point may be stated as follows. As the word implies, "philosophy" is the love of one of the four Platonic virtues, namely wisdom. If we accept the teaching of Socrates' *Symposium* speech the "philosopher" loves what he lacks, not the lack itself. Love or desire (ἔρως) compels him to move away from the lack by attaining what he wants, that is, wisdom (203b–204b). A prime question for the interpreter of Plato, if not for the philosopher as such, concerns the "justification" of this erosophy. Plato must show that the love of wisdom is "good," not just because someone has the desire for it, but because wisdom is good in itself and for its possessor. And this assumes that wisdom *is* possessable, at least to some extent. In my opinion, the description of philosophy actually conveyed in Plato's dialogues is not an unambiguous one.

For example, the way in which philosophy is practiced in the dialogues makes it look simply negative and even skeptical, to the point that the refutation of arguments is substituted for sound arguments which establish positive results. The numerous myths and images to the effect that philosophy is a beneficial enterprise yielding some degree of ἐπιστήμη are themselves not examples of ἐπιστήμη. They might be taken as expressing the hope that philosophy is a defensible enterprise, but hope is not an argument.

In the *Symposium*, moreover, Socrates also says that ἔρως is "courageous" (203d5) as well as being a "philosopher through all of life, a clever enchanter and sorcerer and sophist" (203d7–8). Socrates concludes his encomium by saying that now as before he praises "ἔρως' power and courage" (212b7–8). Socrates does not link any of the other virtues to ἔρως. Ἔρως is the courageous ἔργον (work, deed, act) of the philosopher. If one were to emphasize this line of thought to the exclusion of others in Plato, then it would seem that the "virtue" of the philosopher's ἔρως is just the strength and perseverance it supplies, the "courage." But then philosophy would ultimately become a Sisyphean, or rather, a Quixotic enterprise. It would be reduced to the decision of desire, that is, to the self-conscious choice and resolution to fulfill a desire in the face of nonexistent paradigms. Philosophy becomes a meditation on the agony of desired decision; or the celebration of the power to create or will what we desire; or, more simply, just the subjective preference of its practitioner. The recent history of philosophy abounds with proponents of these conceptions, or reductions, of philosophy. The pivotal "ontological" role of "Entschlossenheit" (resoluteness) in Heidegger's *Sein und Zeit* is a good example of such a conception.[2] Courage plays a prominent role in Nietzsche's writings, as well as in Camus' *The Myth of Sisyphus*.[3]

2. See, e.g., *Sein und Zeit* (Tübingen: Niemeyer, 1972), pp. 297ff.

3. For a discussion of the issue in the context of Camus, see my "The Myth of Sisyphus: a Reconsideration," *Philosophy in Context* 7 (1978), pp. 45–59.

Despite the important differences among the thought of Nietzsche, Heidegger, and Camus, it is safe to say that in their writings courage occupies a very important place and that its meaning is much closer to endurance (with which Laches' second definition has to do; 192b9–c1) than to wisdom (with which Nicias' first definition has to do; 194d4–5). "Courage" under these conditions becomes the ability to create choices and to hold to them in the face of an unfriendly universe.

This conception of courage and of its relationship to philosophy is tied to a larger picture of man and world. In general terms, from the standpoint of the "existentialist" thinkers just mentioned there exists no "wisdom" in the Platonic sense, since no soul, no Whole (or cosmos), and no natural harmony between man and eternity. The "Whole" is thought of as the multiplicity of parts, coming together and dissolving through history in unanalyzable ways and for unknowable ends. The Platonic counter to this view requires a very complex thesis about the connection between ἔρως and reason, soul and reality, and finally about the "goodness" in the sense of "intelligibility," "harmony," and "measure" of the cosmos in itself and for us.[4] This is the sort of thesis Plato presents in dialogues such as the *Phaedrus, Republic*, and *Philebus*.[5] While the *Laches* does not offer a comparably comprehensive discussion, it does in the ways I shall specify point us to a connection between philosophy and courage, the presuppositions of which are defended in the just mentioned dialogues.

The *Laches*' efforts to define courage are undertaken in the more restricted context of a discussion of education. The issue of courage does not explicitly arise until the dialogue is half over, and at the conclusion of the *Laches* the theme of education once again becomes explicit. The nominal connection between the controlling theme of education and the subsidiary theme of courage consists in the thesis that the purpose of education is to put virtue in the soul, courage being a virtue. While there are contextual reasons for the selection of courage rather than one of the other virtues (in particular, Laches and Nicias are generals and are presumed to know what courage is), I shall argue that the *Laches* suggests a deeper, albeit restricted, connection between education and courage. To anticipate, the philosopher's effort to understand is essentially an exercise in pedagogy and ψυχαγωγία (*Phaedrus* 261a8, 271c10), not just in that it is an effort to teach others, but more importantly in that the philosopher is above all concerned with educating himself—with self-knowledge. The issue of the philosopher's courage is finally the same as that of philosophical education, and the questions previously discussed in this paper about the nature of this courage are also questions about the possibility of education in Socrates' peculiar sense.

4. For an extended criticism of the "existentialist" position and an argument in favor of the "Platonic" position see S. Rosen's *Nihilism* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1969). Rosen argues that Heideggerean/Nietzschean "courage" leads to "nihilism," a disastrous consequence to be avoided by restoring wisdom as a partially accessible object of love (*Nihilism*, p. 221 and context), and so by restoring the by now "classical" notion of education.

5. I examine the *Phaedrus*' formulation of this thesis in *Self-knowledge in Plato's Phaedrus* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1986).

In the next section of this paper I shall discuss the problem of education as it is formulated in the *Laches*. In section III, I turn to the definitions of courage, and in the final section I discuss the connection between education and the philosopher's courage, again in terms of the *Laches*.

II

Plato deftly sketches the topic of education, as well as the problems it involves, by means of the drama of the dialogue. Two parents, Lysimachus and Melesias, are trying to find teachers for their children, Aristides and Thucydides. They recognize that they themselves are not qualified to educate their children. That they cannot be educated to do so becomes obvious when Lysimachus unself-consciously confesses that he is not suited to philosophical discussion: for he often forgets the questions he intended to ask, and then forgets the answers too, along with any other arguments that are brought up in the conversation (189c–d). He and Melesias will listen to the conversation and then do whatever Laches, Nicias, and Socrates recommend. Lysimachus and Melesias have this in their favor: they know that they are ignorant and incapable of either learning and teaching. Yet their knowledge of ignorance seems wholly unsuited to providing a basis not just for educating their children themselves, but for choosing the teachers for their children as well as the kinds of subjects the children should learn.

Here again the drama is revealing. Lysimachus and Melesias selected two prominent generals, Laches and Nicias, as advisors in the task of finding the appropriate teachers. They take the generals to a display of armor fighting put on by Stesilaus. The parents' choice of advisors and subject area has a common-sense quality to it: select prominent people of great reputation who seem to possess a τέχνη which is eminently useful.[6] As it turns out, both the selection of the advisors and the selection of the subject area (military science, in effect) are ill thought out. Indeed, the generals show themselves to be incapable of defining the very virtue on which the success of their art depends, namely courage. It is of the utmost importance to note that Lysimachus and Melesias did *not* select Socrates as an educator or advisor, even though Lysimachus had often heard about Socrates from the children and had known Socrates' father well.[7] Socrates appears to be in the vicinity by chance (180c).

6. The dramatic date of the dialogue, somewhere between 424 and 418, would make the utility of military science and the reputations of the historical Laches and Nicias especially visible. The *Laches* may take place before or after the "Peace of Nicias" (421); in either case, the Peloponnesian war cannot be far from everyone's mind. For further discussion of the dramatic date, see R. G. Hoerber, "Plato's *Laches*," *Classical Philology* 63 (1968), pp. 95–96.

7. Lysimachus says that he never had a single difference with Socrates' father (180e), a remark which suggests that they did not engage in any philosophical discussions with each other. Lysimachus' father was a distinguished man, but his virtue did not pass on to Lysimachus (179d; cf. *Meno* 94a). The case is the reverse for Socrates, since he possesses a character not equalled, so far as we know, by his father.

Further problems arise with Lysimachus' and Melesias' program for educating their sons. They have all just watched Stesilaus' demonstration of his fancy fighting techniques. Stesilaus is allegedly an expert. But it turns out that appearances are deceiving, since the technique he is demonstrating made a fool out of him in an actual combat situation (183d–184a). Simply because one has the reputation among nonexperts for being an expert (and as Laches points out, Stesilaus does not demonstrate his art in Sparta where he would be surrounded by real experts; 183b), one is not necessarily an expert. To make matters worse, the two experts in warfare who are present, namely Laches and Nicias, disagree as to whether Stesilaus' technique is or is not a good thing for the boys to learn. They each cite at some length their reasons for their views. How is a nonexpert to decide between them?

The initial answer seems obvious enough: consult a third expert. Socrates has been accepted as an expert by both Laches and Nicias. For one thing, Socrates spends his time conversing with youths (180c) and has already advised Nicias on a suitable music teacher for his son (Damon). Moreover, Laches points out that Socrates distinguished himself in battle at Delium (181b), and for Laches deeds speak louder than words. The inclusion of Socrates as an expert in the matter of education and in particular the matter of educating by means of Stesilaus' technique has a certain irony to it, for Socrates will claim that he has no knowledge of these matters, only knowledge of his ignorance of them. In any event, the experts have recommended to nonexperts another expert.

At this point Lysimachus invites Socrates to settle the issue by casting the deciding vote (184d); when the experts disagree, let the disagreement be decided by majority vote. Socrates wastes no time in showing why this procedure is unacceptable. But his analogy to gymnastics (184e) seems question-begging given what has already transpired, since it merely indicates that we should consult the experts rather than take a vote. He adds, however, that we must also investigate whether anyone present is an expert (τεχνικός, 185a1) in the matter at hand, and if none is an expert we should find someone who is. Until this is done, the actual educating of the children cannot go forward. And as a matter of fact the boys have exactly one line in the dialogue (which they pronounce in unison; 181a3), and no attention is given to educating them.[8] First we must discover who the educators are.

Socrates clearly has in mind here some procedure quite different from the one the parents used in selecting Laches and Nicias. Yet any such procedure for discovering the experts seems vitiated at the outset. The impasse or puzzle (ἀπορία) concerns the ability of nonexperts (among whom Socrates classifies

8. At the end of the *Laches*, Lysimachus prevails upon Socrates to come and see him the next day to discuss the education of Aristides. Evidently he succeeded in persuading Socrates to try to educate Aristides; at *Theae.* 151a Socrates says that Lysimachus' son Aristides left his company too soon and so failed to bear good thoughts (also *Theages* 130a). At *Laches* 200d we learn that Socrates has refused to educate Nicias' son Niceratus. Niceratus is, though, said to be present in the *Republic* (327c2).

himself) to pick out the experts. For precisely by being nonexperts they are not qualified to do so: only experts have the knowledge to distinguish charlatans from experts. We thus seem to end up with a version of Meno's paradox (*Meno* 80d): if you are a nonexpert, you will never find the true expert, and even if you chanced upon an expert you would not know that he possesses the knowledge you are looking for. If you are an expert you either have no need of finding true experts or you disagree with other experts about who the true experts are. The *Laches* begins to look like a species of comedy, a story about the blind who know they are blind leading the blind who do not know they are blind. I shall refer to this situation as the "ἀπορία of education." The ἀπορία is, differently put, to determine how those who are in need of education are to make an educated choice about who will give them or their children an education.

An assumption underlying Socrates' suggestion—that they look to the experts rather than take a vote—is that there is a τέχνη of education comparable, say, to the art of gymnastics. However, this assumption is nowhere justified in the *Laches*, and indeed the dialogue gradually casts doubt on it (below). The assumption is nevertheless a commonsensical one, and parents might well think themselves in desperate straits without it. Perhaps this is why parents (including Melesias and Lysimachus) did not send their children to study with a man like Socrates who claimed not to be an expert. As so often in Plato's dialogues, however, progress is made by starting with assumptions thought to be true, and gradually showing that they are not. In the *Laches*, true education turns out to be not an art but the artless practice of Socratic dialogue.

The interlocutors of the *Laches* begin by assuming not just that there is a τέχνη of education, but that the τέχνη concerns the art of fighting in armor. That is, they are implicitly defining "education" by means of an example of it, a mistake which Socrates immediately focuses on. The parents have not yet thought through what the experts they are seeking are supposed to be experts in. The choice of what sort of experts we want may not suffer from quite the same ἀπορία which infects the choice among experts of a given sort. Indeed, the decision as to what we want experts to be experts in is not itself a decision which can be made by an expert without begging the question. The decision is a metatechnical one, as it were. It requires reflection, in a general philosophical sense, on what education is for, and therefore reflection on the value of understanding things as well as on the nature of the persons to be educated. Somehow nonexperts must orient themselves before consulting the experts.

Socrates proceeds by pointing out, once again by analogy with the arts themselves, the difference between means and ends implicit in them. Just as we go to the doctor not for the sake of the medicine but for the sake of health, and in general just as we consult an expert not for the sake of his τέχνη but for the sake of the τέχνη's ends, so now we are considering the art of education for a certain end (185c–e). This end is the care of the soul of young men (185e). Now, this statement is very controversial. Even though no one present objects to it, the fact is

that many people either reject it or subject it to such varied interpretations as to empty it of definite significance. Not surprisingly, the effort to defend the view that the purpose of education is cultivation of the soul, and to specify the meaning of "education of the soul," is a pervasive theme in the Platonic *corpus*.

The introduction of the "soul" at 185e2 means automatically that techniques for caring for the body, including Stesilaus' technique of fighting in armor, are to be considered only as means to a further end. Hence they are dropped from the discussion. One would expect Socrates to go on to say that it is necessary to define what is meant by soul if we are to determine who is qualified to care for it. He does not do so and that fact severely limits the scope of the *Laches*. Moreover, there is no definition of virtue in the *Laches*. These limitations are almost inevitable given the level of the interlocutors. One should not begin pottery on a wine jar, as Socrates says (187b; cf. 190c). In any event, an upshot of the means/ends argument is that the interlocutors are freed from having to concern themselves explicitly with *τέχνη*. Instead, the argument will focus on what the educator is to put into a soul to make it educated, not how he is to educate it. The "how" question will, however, receive an answer in terms of the *ἔργον* of the dialogue.

Socrates returns to the issue of finding an expert, and suggests two further strategies for deciding whether any of those present is an expert in the matter of education: first see whether anyone present has had successful teachers, or if not, see what their products (*ἔργα*) are (185e). In this case, the products are, presumably, students (186b). Both strategies are question-begging. For if one knows what a "good" student or teacher is, one would already be expert in the field. Moreover, Socrates explicitly claims that he has not had any teachers on the present subject. We are not told whether or not he has had any outstanding students or whether he has made anyone better (cf. *Apol.* 31b–c, 33a). Surely the reader is meant to ask whether or not conversations such as the present one make Laches and Nicias better. Socrates also claims in no uncertain terms that he has not discovered the art of education himself (186c5) and thus that he is not competent to decide which of the claimants to expertise is speaking the truth (186e). We seem, then, to have reached a dead end: for how is Socrates to ascertain the competence of putative experts (Laches and Nicias) when he knows he is not an expert himself?

It seems to me that Socrates' abrupt redirection of the argument at 189e1 is a response to this *ἀπορία*. Socrates suddenly says that instead of looking at our teachers and students there is another path which will bring us to the "same point" (that is, which will inform us who the true experts are among those present) and which begins somewhat more nearly from the beginning. It had already been established that education is undertaken "for the sake of the souls of young men" (185e). Socrates now argues, again by analogy with the art of medicine, that the specific way in which education cares for souls is by putting "virtue" in them (189e–190b). How does this inquiry about virtue (*a*) bring us to the same

point as the previously projected inquiry? and (*b*) how does it start "more nearly from the beginning"?

The answer to (*a*) lies in the *ἔργον* of the dialogue. In the *Laches*, the inquiry itself demonstrates that Nicias and Laches are not in fact competent to educate the young, contrary to their own initial evaluations of themselves. This is established in a way that does not beg the question; so clear are the results that Laches and Nicias voluntarily disqualify themselves as educators. The deed of attempting to define courage has spoken louder than words (e.g., Laches' words to the effect that the definition is not difficult; 190e). We have thus been brought to the "same point" about the competency of Nicias and Laches; we know that they are *not* the experts. One might say that the test of competency has proceeded in accordance with the criterion Socrates offered at 185e, namely the criterion of the quality of one's "ἔργον"—now interpreted as "philosophizing" rather than with reference to one's students. We are also closer (*b*) to the beginning (*ἀρχή*). The issue of virtue is closer to the *ἀρχή* in the sense of the "ground" or "fundament" which constitutes the true beginning point. This *ἀρχή* of education is the soul (see 185e, 190b), and thus education is for the sake of the soul. In talking about virtue, that is, the soul's excellence, we are more nearly at the *ἀρχή* than we would be if we discussed who Nicias' and Laches' teachers are. Paradoxically, Socrates ends up looking like the expert they were seeking, and at the end of the dialogue Lysimachus overcomes Socrates' protests and presses him to agree to visit his house the next day for further discussion about educating the children.

Immediately before the abrupt shift in the discussion Nicias and Laches speak at some length about their willingness to be examined by Socrates. Nicias has had previous experience with Socrates' words, and can testify that anyone who converses with Socrates will be compelled to answer questions about his present and past manner of life (187e–188a). Laches has had experience with Socrates' deeds in war but not his words. Unlike Nicias, Laches insists that when a man discusses virtue he must be in deed worthy of his words, else a Dorian harmony between deeds and words is lacking and the man is not truly musical. Laches' principle is not just that deeds and words should be harmonized, but that deeds speak louder than words. In the *Laches*, Nicias stands for the priority of words, and Laches the priority of deeds, as is evident from their respective definitions of courage.[9] It is obvious that neither Laches nor Nicias exhibits the desired har-

9. For further discussion of the characters of the *Laches* see R. Hoerber, "Plato's *Laches*," pp. 100–101; and M. Blitz, "An Introduction to the Reading of Plato's *Laches*," *Interpretation* 5 (1975), pp. 185–225; and S. Umphrey, "On the Theme of Plato's *Laches*," *Interpretation* 6 (1977), pp. 1–6. I add that Laches does most of the swearing in the dialogue (swearing by Zeus four times and by the gods once), while Nicias does none of it (Socrates swears once by Zeus, and Lysimachus once by Hera). Laches' *ἔρως* is strong but relatively inarticulate, while Nicias' *λόγος* is relatively complex but not animated by the desire for truth. Nicias' attitude towards Socratic dialogue is revealing. He claims to be acquainted with its inevitable turn to self-knowledge, and regards it as "not a bad thing to be reminded" of one's faults. It is "not unusual and not unpleasant" for him to be questioned by Socrates (188a–b). Yet at 185c he is surprised by the typically Socratic turn of the discussion. This, as well as his comments at the end of the dialogue, suggest that he does not take seriously enough the

mony between words and deeds in this matter of courage. Laches has a partially true opinion about what courage is and can identify true courage (as his remarks about Socrates show) as well as the sham (as his remarks about Stesilaus show); but he cannot say what it is. Laches, as we also know, served honorably in battle and died a soldier's death (in 418, at Mantinaea). Nicias is far more articulate than Laches, but in the deed of battle (in the expedition to Syracuse of 415) he relied on the advice of seers and so led the expedition to disaster. As if to drive home the point, Plato has Nicias defend the seers as those who have the knowledge necessary to courage (195e).[10] Nicias relied on words ungrounded in deeds; he too is not "musical." At least initially, Socrates looks more like Laches than like Nicias, for he distinguishes himself in battle but claims to know only his own ignorance. Indeed, in the *Laches* Socrates offers no definition of his own. This seems odd at first glance, since Nicias' bent towards λόγος and knowledge seems closer to philosophy than does Laches' bent towards deeds. Socrates, moreover, does not insist that his interlocutors prove themselves in deeds before he will speak with them (as the *Charmides* shows especially clearly). Yet there is something sound about Laches' position and something unsound about Nicias' position, a point which will help us to understand the sense in which Socrates exhibits a harmony of words and deeds.

Whatever may turn out to be the case with Socrates, it is clear that neither words nor deeds can stand independently of each other. Correspondingly, Laches' and Nicias' definitions mut be combined to yield an adequate definition of courage. Let us turn now to these definitions.

III

The *Laches* contains four main definitions of courage, two of which are compelled to undergo several modifications before being passed over for the next. None of these definitions is decisively refuted; instead, each is shown not to be the *whole* definition of courage. This leaves open the possibility that they may be parts of the definition, though this possibility is never made explicit in the *Laches*.

The first definition (190e4–6) is of the wrong logical form. Laches defines the courageous man in a specific situation, not courage itself. The definition would not even account for the courage of Socrates' retreat from Delium which Laches praised. However, nothing is said to disprove Laches' contention that the man

working of Socratic questioning and so is not truly in ἀπορία. Nicias fails to exhibit in deed what he praises in word. Correspondingly, Laches twice accuses Nicias of "adorning" himself with words (196b, 197c). Nicias is speaking like a "sophist" (197d6–8; cf. the sarcasm at 200c2), like a rhetorician in a law court (196b). Laches certainly does not want to run the risk of speaking like a "typical Aexonian" (197c8–9) himself.

10. For an account of these events see Thucydides, Books VI and VII. At *Laches* 199a Socrates reminds Laches and Nicias that the general should command the seer, not vice versa.

behaving in the way described could in fact be courageous. We learn instead that to know *why* he is courageous a more philosophical grasp of courage as such is required.

Laches' second definition of courage is "endurance of the soul," which is rapidly modified into "wise endurance of the soul" (192c–d). Laches is unable to specify satisfactorily what he means by "wisdom." Having uncritically accepted a conception of wisdom as an *ἐπιστήμη* or *τέχνη* of how to do X successfully, Laches contradicts himself by admitting that a man enduring in knowing how to successfully master a situation is not courageous. For such a man would eliminate all risk to himself. Laches also admits that those who endure in facing great risk seem foolish, since they lack the knowledge to minimize the risk. But foolishness is something bad and courage something good. Even though knowledge was included in the definition of courage precisely to ensure that courage not become foolish endurance, that is, something bad, the very inclusion of knowledge seems to make courage risk free and so not courageous. The root of this dilemma is the equation of knowledge with *τέχνη* (art, skill), an equation which we must therefore reject. The "knowledge" a truly courageous man possesses is not analogous to the technical "knowledge" a physician has, or to that which an expert in archery has (see 192e–193c). This point is of capital importance. I note that the necessity of "endurance" and "wisdom" (in a sense other than *ἐπιστήμη* or *τέχνη*), as well as risk to oneself as components of courage is not questioned.[11] It is at this point that Socrates invokes philosophical courage; we must stand fast in our search for the definition, and endure—else we will not have harmonized our words and deeds.

The third definition is proposed by Nicias, and it picks up on the issue of the kind of wisdom courage requires. It is first formulated as "if a good man is courageous, it is clear that he is wise" (194d4–5; note that again the man, not the quality, is defined, a mistake which parallels the error in Laches' first definition). The definition then becomes "courage is knowledge of the fearful and the hopeful in war and in every other situation" (194e11–195a1). The insistence on knowledge as a key element in courage means that, contrary to popular opinion, animals and children are rash, not courageous (197a–b). Nicias successfully avoids the pitfall of identifying wisdom with instrumental *τέχνη*; it is, rather, knowledge of what is good and evil for a man and so of when life is worth living and when not (195c–d). That is, if there is to be courage, life cannot be the highest value without qualification. On the contrary, the person who holds life to simply be the highest value is the coward. The knowledge of when life is worth living and when not is, of course, the knowledge which Socrates claims is the most important for a man to possess. Again, the third definition of the *Laches* is, at worst, too narrow since it does not include other elements I have mentioned; but it is not

11. Cf. G. Santas, "Socrates at Work on Virtue and Knowledge in Plato's *Laches*," *Review of Metaphsics* 22 (1969), p. 439: "Not everything in the answers [to the 'what is courage' question] is refuted."

completely without merit. Courage is, among other things, knowledge of the fearful and hopeful.

When pushed by Socrates, Nicias agrees that what is fearful is bad, and what is hopeful is good, and that while fear and hope are directed to the future, the knowledge of what is good and bad is knowledge of things as they are in the past, present, and future. His definition must thus be corrected and restated (I refer to this as Nicias' second definition, that is, the fourth of the dialogue): courage includes knowledge of "practically all goods and evils put together" (199c5–d3; cf. *Charm.* 174a–c). This almost amounts to saying that courage is the knowledge of what is good and evil as such.[12] If such knowledge is part of courage, then even the most ordinary sorts of courage require philosophical knowledge.

The last definition is not modified or refuted on its own grounds at all. Rather, it is shown to contradict a separately agreed to premise—the courage is a "part" of virtue. For we now seem to have supplied a definition of the "whole" of virtue. Indeed, the contradiction is generated only because Socrates quickly replaces the qualification "practically" (199c6) with the unconditional "all" (199d5–6) and gets Nicias' ambiguous assent to the question suggesting that having such wisdom is a sufficient condition for being temperate, just and holy.[13] Socrates does not himself answer the question, and the truth or falsity of this last definition is not examined further.

On the surface the *Laches* ends in *ἀπορία*. It is therefore referred to at times as a dialogue whose outcome is "negative," the point having been to refute various definitions of courage and correspondingly to show that Nicias and Laches are *not* experts in the matter. To take that position is, however, to overlook the role of the reader as a partner in the dialogue. The *Laches* supplies us with a splendid example of something which is true of all the dialogues; namely that they must be understood as pedagogical *texts* aimed towards the reader by Plato, and so that they must be read on at least two levels. The first level is that of the oral dialogue which is (in the fiction) taking place between the characters. The second is the dialogue taking place between Plato and reader by means of the written text. Thus Plato, like Socrates, may well (for pedagogical reasons) intentionally withhold the solutions to *ἀπορίαι* posed in the dialogues, so as to force his (Plato's) interlocutor (the reader) to find the answer for himself. To introduce considerations of this sort is to invite a discussion of irony, Platonic rhetoric, and a host of other considerations. Without going into this controversial matter any further, however, it can fairly easily be seen that the *Laches* does supply the key to the *ἀπορία* about courage, and in a sense to the deeper *ἀπορία* about education.[14]

12. The "Ideas" are not actually mentioned in the *Laches*, but the passage under examination comes close to doing so—especially if there is an "Idea" of evil (consider *Rep.* 475e–476a).

13. Nicias' assenting phrase is (literally translated): "You seem to me to be saying something, Socrates" (199e2).

14. I am of course assuming a number of important exegetical principles, the detailed justification for which may be found in the introduction to my *Self-knowledge in Plato's Phaedrus*; in the Introduction to S. Rosen's *Plato's Symposium* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1968); the Intro-

An adequate but still rough definition of courage, along with the reasons for the definition, can be arrived at by gathering together elements of the four attempted definitions offered in the *Laches*. This definition would be something like the following: 'courage is an endurance of the soul, in a situation containing risk to oneself, endurance accompanied by knowledge (which is not a *τέχνη*) of goods and evils hoped for and feared, that is to say, by knowledge of good and evil in the sense of knowledge of when life is worth living and when not.' I do not pretend that such a definition solves all problems, of course. But in general it is a fairly good definition, and is in fact quite close to Aristotle's.[15]

IV

In the final section of this paper I would like to return to the meaning of the philosopher's courage, as well as the solution to the *ἀπορία* of education. We have seen that the two are closely connected. The philosopher's courage, that is, the courage to keep on searching for (in this particular case) a definition of courage, is mentioned once in the *Laches* explicitly (194a1–5). But it is never defined for us explicitly, anymore than the above mentioned definition of the whole of courage was made explicit. The very formulation of the point at 194a suggests that we may use the definitions of courage as elements in the definition of the philosophical courage it took to generate the definitions themselves. We must hold our ground and endure in the search for courage, Socrates says. We cannot help but to think of Laches' first two definitions of courage (holding one's ground in the face of the enemy, and endurance of the soul). The formulation of the nature of the philosopher's courage is to that extent quite Lachean.

However, Nicias' two definitions (courage is a kind of knowledge of the fearful and hopeful in all situations; courage is also the knowledge of all goods and evils put together) must also be part of the nature of the philosopher's courage. For the philosopher cannot undertake his quest unless he is animated by the hope for wisdom and the fear of ignorance. And in order to search eagerly he must understand that ignorance is evil and self-knowledge good, and so that life is not the highest value without qualification. As Socrates says in the *Apology*, the "unexamined life is not worth living" (38a). In sum, the "deed" of the *Laches* itself, considered as an effort to say what courage is, supplies us with a basis for formulating a *λόγος* of the philosopher's courage. But, we want to know next, is this kind of knowledge in fact available to the philosopher? Can the philosopher in fact get anywhere in his philosophizing? If not, as I said at the beginning of

---

duction to J. Klein's *A Commentary on Plato's Meno* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1965); and the Introduction to R. Brague's *Le Restant: Supplément aux Commentaires du Ménon de Platon* (Paris: J. Vrin, 1978). For an extended discussion of Platonic and Socratic irony see my "Irony and Aesthetic Language in Plato's Dialogues," in *Literature as Art: Essays in Honor of Murray Krieger*, ed. Douglass Bolling (New York: Haven Press, 1987).

15. *Nicomachean Ethics* Book III, vi–vii.

this essay, his "courage" comes down to *mere* endurance in the face of an unintelligible universe.

The answer to these questions are withheld from the λόγος of the *Laches*, but are once again given to us on the level of the ἔργον. For the dialogue *does* in fact make progress. Points about the nature of definition *are* established, as is the partial falsehood of definitions. And for the reader, much more than this is gained. We are given grounds for formulating our own definition of both courage in general and of the philosopher's courage in particular. The deed of the *Laches* teaches among other things that *there is learning*, and thus progress in philosophizing. This may seem an insignificant fact until we recall the "ἀπορία of education" discussed above.

Still further, the *Laches* shows us the solution to the ἀπορία of education. The solution to the problem of nonexperts selecting experts in the matter of education is that the nonexperts must themselves become educators by educating themselves. We educate ourselves by learning to ask the right questions. And this is to be done by engaging in the kind of dialogue the *Laches* exhibits. The education one thereby receives is not, however, education in an art comparable to medicine or carpentry. Consequently, the solution is that one should become a philosopher. And this is of course what Socrates is bent on bringing about, both with respect to himself and others. The *deed* of the *Laches*, as I said, is the "proof" that education in this philosophical sense is possible, and so that the philosopher's courage is not a matter of foolish endurance or of defiant proclamation of one's desires in the face of an absurd world. Of course, good explanations of this ability to get anywhere in a conversation are not easy to formulate in detail, and the *Laches* does not attempt it. But like so many Platonic dialogues the *Laches* does seem designed to show us that the deed of learning speaks louder than the skeptic's words to the effect that learning is impossible. We know that we know something about courage, for example, by experiencing the search for it, realizing that some definitions will not do, that others are better, and so forth. At the end of this dialogic experience we know our way about the issue of courage, so to speak. And if we are willing to reflect on what we have done during the process, we will also know our way about the issue of education. None of this is something that could be proven to a skeptic prior to his undergoing it.

Similarly, in the *Meno* Socrates says that although he is not sure that learning should be called "recollection," he is prepared to do battle "in word and deed" for the proposition that we shall be "better, braver (ἀνδρικώτεροι), and less idle" if we think it necessary to look for or search out that which we do not know (86b6–c2). Indeed, Socrates refutes Meno's pardox with a demonstration of the deed of somebody learning something, not with a theoretical attack on the paradox. Now Laches, we recall, is the proponent of not just a harmony between words and deeds, but of the foundational nature of deeds. We have seen that the *Laches* points to a solution of the ἀπορία of education through its deeds. This ob-

servation helps to explain Plato's decision to name the dialogue after Laches rather than Nicias.[16]

As it turns out, then, the education of the soul for which we are seeking is gained through the *search* for the educator. We thereby become in large part our own educators. But how, more specifically, can the search be conducted by someone who has not reached the end of the search? That is, let us grant that philosophical conversation is not an art; how are we to carry on such a conversation? Socrates knows only his own ignorance and yet is able to both inquire and show others that they too are ignorant. He knows how to proceed. This knowledge is what Socrates calls (using the word "techne" in an equivocal sense) his "erotic art" or "knowledge of erotic matters" (*Phr.* 257a, *Symp.* 177d–e). It is the ability to ask questions which arouse and guide *ἔρως*. Since Socrates can do this, his words participate in the philosopher's courage. His deeds too, as Laches suggested, participated in courage (though only at *Symp.* 219d5 is Socrates explicitly called "courageous"). Socrates thus exhibits a harmony between word and deed. Any effort to explain Socrates' erotic dialectic must consider a number of complex metaphilosophical questions. I must limit myself here to making some suggestions about these questions with reference to the *Laches*.[17]

The progress of the dialogue depends very heavily on a variety of opinions, particularly opinions about the noble and the base and on opinions about what constitutes "knowledge," as well as on an immense stock of information which every human being possesses by virtue of being a resident of a civilized community. For example, the modification of Laches' second definition explicitly depends on agreement with the opinion that courage is "a fine and noble thing" and ignorance "harmful and injurious" (192c–d). Had this not been admitted, the connection between courage and knowledge could not have been drawn. Yet no arguments in favor of these judgments about value are offered. Similarly the arts which are called upon repeatedly in the second half of the dialogue are the foundations for Socrates' analogical reasoning. It is assumed that these arts are kinds of knowledge; but there is no attempt to prove that they *do* constitute knowledge. Many more examples of the reliance on opinion could be mentioned.[18] They in-

16. Hoerber explains Plato's choice of title as follows: "Plato no doubt named the treatise after Laches because Laches represents the level of the masses in need of education, and does make a better showing than Nicias at the conclusion of the composition by attacking Nicias with some success." "Plato's *Laches*," p. 104. For still another explanation, see Blitz, "An Introduction," p. 209.

17. The metaphilosophical questions are explored at greater length in my "Plato's Metaphilosophy," in *Platonic Investigations*, ed. D. O'Meara (Washington: Catholic University of America Press, 1985), pp. 1–33.

18. Even the selection of courage as a theme is based on what "seems" to be the case to "everyone" (190d) in the light of Stesilaus' demonstration. In spite of the fact that we learn right from the start that we are to define not the courageous man or act but rather the single quality of courage itself, instances of courage are repeatedly adduced as a means of deciding whether or not a given definition is adequate. Also, Socrates refutes the first definition by citing counterexamples of behavior opined to be courageous. Laches' second definition leads to a contradiction because Socrates cites six examples

dicate that the dialectic of the *Laches* is thoroughly embedded in *δόξα*, and so in the perceptions and judgments about the nature and worth of things and deeds. Opinion is a kind of "already knowing" or "pre-judice." It seems clear that without shared opinions the discussion could not progress. But if the discussion progresses on the basis of "mere" opinions, then the "education" we have been discussing would not amount to much. The opinions must be grounded in some truth if they are to be more than mere dogma.

Plato's talk about "recollection" (*ἀνάμνησις*) is meant to explain just this phenomenon, namely, the groundedness of some opinions in truth. Of course, the people holding the opinions in question may not know this. But dialectic consists at least in part of "reminding" ourselves of the truth which we "already know" and speak in an opinionated way. The *Laches* does not refer to *ἀνάμνησις*. However, the word/deed distinction may imply the same doctrine. Laches' principle that deeds speak louder than words and that deeds are the necessary basis for the seriousness of the corresponding words could be given, in this context, the following interpretation. The nature of courage, among other things, is partially present to the soul in a prediscursive way, and this is the basis of the soul's ability to articulate something true about it.[19] That is, the *ἔργον* of courage is visible in part through our actions and in part through our opinions, but the philosophical logos is difficult. Without the grounding *ἔργον*, however, the *λόγος* would be *merely* an opinion.

The point I am making is implicit at the crucial juncture in the *Laches* in which the issue of the philosopher's courage is made explicit (194a). Laches complains that although he knows what courage is he does not know how to articulate it adequately. Socrates never denies that Laches does know, in some way, what courage is. The superiority of Laches to Nicias lies in just that fact. Nicias, by contrast, may have "forgotten" (failed to "recollect") what he is talking about; this is why, in effect, his answers are too discursive, too verbal. Laches is not altogether wrong in suggesting that Nicias speaks like a sophist,

of actions that meet the specifications of the definition but which are not popularly thought to exhibit courage (192e–193c). Nicias is compelled to specify what he intends in his first definition by "wisdom," by means of a series of examples produced by Laches (195b). Nicias does so by getting agreement to the opinion that in some cases it is better to be dead than alive (195c–d). One would expect fighting men such as Nicias and Laches to readily assent to some such proposition, but no proof for it is offered. The requisite knowledge is thus that of goods and evils to be feared and hoped for, that is, that death is not the *summum malum* and that loss of liberty is more fearful than death. Nicias is led to modify his definition by means of reflection on the examples of medicine, farming, and generalship (198d–e). The knowledge of goods and evils lying in the future requires knowledge of practically all goods and evils as such. Having arrived at this result on the basis of (undemonstrated) opinions and analogies, Socrates makes his final point to the effect that having such wisdom entitles one to temperance, justice, and holiness.

19. Yet there is no talk in the *Laches* or, so far as I know, in any of the other dialogues about an "*εἶδος*" or "*ἰδέα*" (in the sense of "Form" or "Idea") of courage. For an interesting attempt to connect Socratic dialogue with the notion of "anamnesis" see G. Vlastos, "The Socratic Elenchus," *Oxford Studies in Ancient Philosophy* 1 (1983), pp. 27–70.

that is, as someone whose talk is clever but not founded on sound insight. Even Nicias, though, has *some* sense of what courage really is; and so do most of us. Thus although the search for a definition of courage is, on the surface, unsuccessful, no one concludes that courage does not in fact exist. Similarly, while in the *Lysis* two young people are unable to define friendship, Socrates terminates the dialogue by observing that they are nevertheless friends. In the *Laches* Socrates repeats his usual view that if we know something we must be able to state it (190c6). But, as I have been suggesting, it is not simply true that if we cannot state it we do not know it. For in some sense we must already know what we are discursively searching for in order to search for it.

The whole Socratic search for wisdom, as well as the related notion of education, makes sense only on the assumption that what is being searched for is not a semantic definition but the thing itself. The corresponding notion of recollection implies a complicated view of man's place in the cosmos, a view fundamentally opposed to the "existentialist" view adumbrated at the start of this paper. I am suggesting now that Plato's opposing view is implied by the *Laches*, and in particular by the "priority" of *ἔργον* to *λόγος*. Laches associates deeds with truth (183d1–4). Socrates holds to a philosophical version of the same point, and this is why he is in the final analysis closer to Laches than Nicias, in spite of the latter's greater verbal sophistication. The "knowledge" which the Socratic dialectician has is thus in part nonpropositional or intuitive.[20] It requires insight. One might ask why, if this is true, speech is required at all. The partial failures of the definitions in the *Laches* give us an indication of the answer. Simply put, our insights are unclear. It may be that we cannot talk without in some sense knowing what we want to say, but at the same time it is true that we do not know what we think we know until we have subjected ourselves to questioning. The gradual process of refining and tying down our insights is, Plato wants to say, recollection (*Meno* 97e–98a). Recollection does not furnish a complete "revelation" of truth unambiguous in its clarity and meaning.

The *experience* of recalling and sharpening one's insights has no substitute. Socratic dialectic is able to bring this experience about through the powerful means of questioning. Plato performs a similar operation on his readers. He does not *tell* his readers the solution to the problems of education and courage, he *shows* it to them in a way that invites them to articulate it for themselves. In undergoing the work of philosophizing they discourse about their insights into the deeds of men and so receive an education in philosophical courage.

20. A very strong version of this view is argued by W. Wieland in his *Platon und die Formen des Wissens* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck und Ruprecht, 1982).

The Journal of Philosophy

SUBSCRIPTIONS

Individuals	$20.00
Libraries and institutions	$25.00
Students, retired/unemployed philosophers	$15.00
Postage outside U.S.	$ 5.00

BACK VOLUMES

Published bi-monthly 1904–1976, monthly thereafter.

All back volumes and individual issues are available, also a Cumulative Fifty-year Index, 1904–1953 and a Ten-year Supplemental Index, 1954–1963. Back volumes 1976–present also available in microform.

Please inquire for price lists and shipping charges on back orders.

720 PHILOSOPHY HALL, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY, NYC 10027

Refutative Rhetoric as True Rhetoric in the *Gorgias*

THOMAS J. LEWIS
McMaster University

Plato explores the subject of rhetoric in a number of dialogues, but the *Gorgias* and the *Phaedrus* contain the most extensive examinations of rhetoric. However, the differences between these two dialogues have led to a great deal of perplexity about Plato's view of rhetoric. As Edwin Black observes, in the *Gorgias* rhetoric is denounced in satirical, contentious, and refutative language, whereas, in the *Phaedrus*, Plato offers a constructive and affirmative judgment of rhetoric.[1] Black notes the usual two responses to these differences: That Plato changed his mind about rhetoric between the time he wrote the *Gorgias* and the *Phaedrus*, or ". . . that Plato did not mean by "rhetoric" in the *Gorgias* what he meant by "rhetoric" in the *Phaedrus*."[2] But Black rejects both responses. He presents the two dialogues as expressions of different, but complementary, aspects of Plato's understanding of rhetoric. He argues that the *Gorgias* is refutative, because Socrates is mainly concerned to define and to condemn false rhetoric; and that the *Phaedrus* is constructive, because Socrates is engaged in defining true rhetoric and in demonstrating at least one of its practical applications—the persuasion of a young man such as Phaedrus to commit himself to philosophy.[3]

I agree that the two different forms of rhetoric can be accounted for by the different dramatic circumstances. In the *Phaedrus* Socrates is alone with one able and inquisitive young man, who is readily attracted by an alluring image of philosophy. In contrast, in the *Gorgias* Socrates is confronted with three interlocutors defending Gorgias' art, and two of these, Polus and Callicles, are willing to go on the offensive—to impugn Socrates' character, and his way of life, if he challenges the propriety of Gorgias' art. Thus, Socrates' task in the *Gorgias* is to denounce and refute the defenders of the false rhetoric which serves as a competitor to philosophy. In both dialogues Socrates' rhetoric, be it constructive or refutative, is appropriate to the particular circumstances.

However, there appears to be one important fact that does not fit the view of the two forms of rhetoric as complementary. In the *Phaedrus* Socrates' rhetoric is successful; Phaedrus is drawn to philosophy; whereas, in the *Gorgias*, there is no evidence that Gorgias, Polus, or Callicles have been convinced by Socrates.

1. Edwin Black, "Plato's View of Rhetoric," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 44 (1958), 361–74.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 361.
3. *Ibid.*, p. 374. Black's interpretation of the use of rhetoric in the *Phaedrus* and the *Gorgias* has served as a basis for further work by Rollen Quimby and David Kaufer. See Quimby's "The Growth of Plato's Perception of Rhetoric," *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 7 (1974), 71–79; and Kaufer's "The Influence of Plato's Developing Psychology on his Views of Rhetoric," *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, 64 (1978), 63–78.

At best each has been overpowered and silenced but not persuaded. Socrates' failure to persuade his interlocutors appears to lead to the conclusion that Plato is depicting the unsuccessful use of refutative rhetoric in the *Gorgias*, and it is difficult to see how unsuccessful refutative rhetoric can be the complement of constructive rhetoric. Indeed, Charles Kauffman's assessment of the extent of the failure of Socrates' rhetoric in the *Gorgias* appears to undermine Black's view that Socrates' use of refutative and constructive rhetoric are complementary.[4]

Socrates does fail to persuade his interlocutors in the *Gorgias*, however, I suggest that this fact is not itself evidence of the failure of his refutative rhetoric. It is not evidence of failure because I believe Plato does not portray Socrates as attempting to persuade them; rather, he portrays Socrates as manipulating Gorgias, Polus, and Callicles in order to persuade a very different audience—the group of young men who have assembled for Gorgias' display of words. In the *Phaedrus* it is appropriate to judge the success of Socrates' rhetoric by its impact on Phaedrus, because he is both the interlocutor and the audience. But the dramatic structure of the *Gorgias* is more complex. If the primary audience for Socrates' refutative rhetoric is this group of young men, then it may be sufficient for Socrates to only silence his interlocutors in order to persuade this audience.

I suggest that by silencing his interlocutors Socrates discredits Gorgias' rhetoric in the eyes of the primary audience, and that this discrediting is the initial step in attracting the audience to philosophy. Thus, his refutative rhetoric does serve as a complement of the constructive form of true rhetoric in the *Phaedrus*. In addition, his refutative rhetoric illustrates his prowess in a public forum, for despite Socrates' disclaimers, in the *Gorgias* Plato portrays him as more than able to hold his own in public debate.

To appreciate the intent and the force of Socrates' refutative rhetoric it is necessary to identify his primary audience; to articulate the shaming tactics Socrates uses to discredit Gorgias' art in front of this audience; and to explicate the way Socrates covers up his rhetoric by presenting himself as someone who speaks only the truth regardless of the consequences.

THE PRIMARY AUDIENCE IN THE *GORGIAS*

The *Gorgias* consists of three conversations and an exhortation in which Socrates urges Callicles to abandon rhetoric and to take up philosophy. There is also a brief exchange between Polus and Chaerephon, which provides a transition between the opening pleasantries surrounding the arrival of Socrates and Chaerephon and the initial conversation between Socrates and Gorgias.

The dialogue begins with the arrival of Socrates and Chaerephon in the inter-

4. Charles Kauffman, "Enactment as Argument in the *Gorgias*," *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 12 (1979), 114–29.

lude between Gorgias' formal demonstration of his art and the second part of his public display where he will take any questions from the audience. But the second part of Gorgias' demonstration does not take place. It is replaced by the conversations that make up the *Gorgias*, and these conversations take place before the same audience. The first part of the *Gorgias* provides good evidence that the presence of the audience is not incidental, but rather that Socrates wants the audience to be present. He wants a public conversation, and to get it he injects himself into the proceedings at the appropriate moment.[5]

Callicles acknowledges Socrates' arrival with the comment that Socrates has come as " they say you should take part in warfare" (447a).[6] Socrates allows that he has arrived late, and Callicles informs him that he has missed a feast of words by being late for Gorgias' display. Socrates does not comment on Callicles' depiction of Gorgias' speech as a feast, but he allows this evaluation to stand by blaming Chaerephon for his late arrival. Chaerephon accepts his culpability and offers a remedy. He claims that since he is a friend of Gorgias he can arrange another display either now or later, whichever best suits Socrates. Callicles expresses his surprise: "What, Chaerephon? Is Socrates anxious to hear Gorgias" (447b). Chaerephon responds: "This is the very reason why we are here" (447b). Clearly Callicles and Chaerephon have different views of Socrates' interest in Gorgias' feast of words. Callicles is surprised that Socrates would be interested; Chaerephon insists that Socrates is interested; Socrates does not commit himself either way.

Callicles then invites Socrates and Chaerephon to come to his home, where Gorgias is staying on this visit to Athens, and where they will be treated to a special display of rhetoric by Gorgias (447b). Socrates thanks Callicles for this offer, but he gently demurs. He asks whether Gorgias, instead of providing an exhibition, would be willing to converse with them about the nature of his art and just what it is that he teaches (447c). Callicles suggests that Socrates ask Gorgias himself, since Gorgias has just said he is open to all questions. Socrates is pleased to have his concerns raised with Gorgias, but he presses Chaerephon forward in his place: "Splendid! Chaerephon, ask him" (447c). Chaerephon does not know what to say and relies on Socrates to formulate the question (447d). When Chaerephon finally does manage three questions along the lines suggested by Socrates, Polus, who rudely injects himself into the conversation, answers in place of Gorgias (448a–c). Socrates, not Chaerephon, states that the answers are unsatisfactory and Gorgias asks for an explanation from Socrates for this conclu-

5. There has been disagreement about the location of the conversation. Some commentators have interpreted the text to indicate that the conversations take place at Callicles' home. There is now general agreement that this view was mistaken and that the conversations are at some public place. For a summary of this controversy and the basis for the current agreement on the text see E. R. Dodds, *Plato's Gorgias* (Oxford, 1959), p. 188.

6. Citations from the *Gorgias* are from the translation by W. D. Woodhead in *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, eds. Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns (Princeton, 1961).

sion. Socrates clarifies his criticism of Polus' answers and invites Gorgias to tell them what his art is and what it should be called. Gorgias says it is the art of rhetoric (449a), and the conversation between Socrates and Gorgias is underway.

What is to be made of this beginning? First, Socrates appears to have come to meet Gorgias for his own reasons; he has not, for example, come at the instigation or insistence of his companion Chaerephon. Second, Socrates has come late with the feeble excuse that Chaerephon detained him by insisting that they stay in the market. There seems to have been no real impediment to Socrates either coming alone or insisting that the obliging Chaerephon quit loitering.[7] We may conclude that Socrates has chosen to come late, which is entirely consistent with Callicles' expression of surprise at Chaerephon's presumption that Socrates would be anxious to hear Gorgias' exhibition. Choosing to come late indicates that Socrates wants a conversation about Gorgias' art. Socrates says this explicitly (447c), but what he does not say is that he wants the conversation to be in the presence of the audience that has just feasted on Gorgias' words. Notice that Callicles invites Socrates and Chaerephon to a relatively private exhibition by Gorgias at Callicles' home. Socrates raises the possibility of a conversation instead of an exhibition at Callicles' home, and it is with that possibility in mind that Callicles invites Socrates to question Gorgias. But the question that Socrates has Chaerephon ask Gorgias is not whether Gorgias will discuss his art with them in lieu of a second exhibition at Callicles' home; instead, it is a question about his art. The possibility of an exhibition or a discussion at Callicles' home is not raised again.

Socrates initially questions Gorgias about the art of rhetoric in a polite and inoffensive manner (449a–455a). He then briefly summarizes what they have covered and says that because he is not yet clear about the art of rhetoric they will have to go at the matter in more detail (455a–c). Then he suggests a way of thinking about his relationship to Gorgias and the audience.

> And so, imagine that my interest is on your behalf, for perhaps some of those present are anxious to become your disciples—there are some, I know, quite a number in fact—who would be bashful perhaps about questioning you. And so, just imagine that when I inquire, they too are asking, What shall we gain, Gorgias, if we associate with you? On what subjects shall we be able to advise the city, about right and wrong alone, or the subjects just mentioned by Socrates? (455cd)

Socrates offers to serve as an agent who can, if Gorgias is willing to employ him, facilitate Gorgias' purpose. Gorgias wants to be questioned in order to display his ability. He may simply wish to bask in public acclaim, but Socrates suggests that he also wishes to recruit disciples or students. Socrates flatters Gorgias by suggesting that his exhibition has been so impressive as to risk being self-defeat-

7. Commentators have generally not remarked on the problematic nature of Socrates' late arrival. However, it is noted by Arlene W. Saxonhouse in her recent article "An Unspoken Theme in Plato's *Gorgias:* War," *Interpretation*, 11 (1983), p. 140.

ing. According to Socrates, Gorgias appears so grand that these young men are embarrassed to question him, and thus they may be denied the opportunity of fully appreciating the advantages of associating with him. Gorgias accepts this method of self display as a substitute for direct questions from the audience.[8]

Gorgias' audience is portrayed as young and ambitious. These young men are interested in prominent public positions, and Gorgias responds by holding out the achievements of Themistocles and Pericles as examples of what they can aspire to if they master his art (455c). To be sensitive to the potential persuasiveness of Socrates' refutative rhetoric, we must be aware that the primary motive for seeking public office was *φιλοτιμία*, "love of honour" the desire for recognition as a man who directs the city on the most important matters.[9] To "advise the city" a man must be able to prevail in a public forum, and Gorgias claims that his art provides the means to speak and to prevail.

Socrates' conversation with Gorgias produces agreement on a number of aspects of rhetoric: the scope of rhetoric is to persuade the soul of the listener (453); there are two forms of persuasion, one that produces conviction on the basis of knowledge, and another that produces conviction without knowledge; the latter is practiced in courts of law and assemblies because the combination of large numbers and shortness of time precludes the use of the former (454e, 455a). Socrates suggests that to the extent that rhetoric does not require a knowledge of the truth of its subject it is inferior to other arts and perhaps it is not an art at all (459bcd). He also suggests that since Gorgias teaches his pupils how to convince others about what is just and unjust and noble and base, a student must either have knowledge of the just and unjust and the noble and base before his instruction in rhetoric, or Gorgias must begin by instructing his students about such matters. Otherwise one who learns rhetoric from Gorgias would appear to have knowledge when he does not, and would appear to be a good man although he is not (459de). Gorgias allows that he does instruct his students in this manner and he agrees with Socrates that the true rhetorician must also be just (460c). But then Socrates reminds Gorgias that he previously allowed that, if a student of rhetoric were to misuse his skill, the teacher of rhetoric was not to be blamed for he had taught the skill only for good use (457bc). Socrates concludes that Gorgias seems to be saying that by his very nature the rhetorician must be just and do just actions, but also to be saying that the rhetorician may misuse his skill. Since there seems to be an inconsistency here Socrates suggests it will require a long discussion to determine the truth of the matter (461ab). Polus sees the inconsistency that arises from Gorgias' admission that knowledge is a necessary condition for becoming a student of rhetoric. He contends that Gorgias was simply

8. Socrates' role as an interviewer of Gorgias before a composite audience of the silent dramatic audience and the reader is noted by Steven Rendall, "Dialogue, Philosophy, and Rhetoric: The Example of Plato's *Gorgias*," *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 10 (1977), 165–79.

9. K. J. Dover, *Greek Popular Morality in the Time of Plato and Aristotle* (Oxford, 1974), 226–34.

ashamed to say otherwise, and that Socrates is tasteless to have taken advantage of Gorgias' sense of shame (461cd).

Socrates displays a somewhat skeptical tone throughout his conversation with Gorgias, but his irony is gentle and he adopts a tone of puzzlement and even a spirit of camaraderie. There is an underlying mockery in Socrates' words, but overall he speaks politely to Gorgias, and Gorgias maintains the gracious and dignified pose befitting a man of his age, experience, and reputation, who has given yet another impressive performance.

The dramatic setting provides the reason for Socrates' politeness. Socrates' part in the conversation is dependent on Gorgias' sufferance. Both by prior arrangement and by virtue of his impressive performance the audience belongs to Gorgias. He is free to decline further questions or to simply invite questions from someone else. Thus, if Socrates is not to lose access to the audience he needs Gorgias' auspices. If Gorgias is treated too roughly he may simply call it a day, and Polus has already provided an adequate excuse by explaining that Gorgias has had a long day and is tired (448a). After a fairly lengthy conversation with Gorgias, but still with no answer to the inquiry in sight, Socrates raises the possibility of ending their discussion. Gorgias' response is revealing. He says he is willing to go on but that he is concerned that the audience may not wish to hear more; they have already heard a long demonstration and may have other things to do (458b). Gorgias' concern for the audience seems exaggerated; he appears to be looking for a graceful way to end the discussion, but he does not succeed. Chaerephon indicates that the audience is eager to hear more (458c). The wording of Gorgias' agreement to continue indicates his waning enthusiasm. "It would be disgraceful of me to refuse, when I personally volunteered to meet any question that might be put" (458d). Gorgias' concern for his public reputation makes it possible for Socrates to oblige him to continue.[10] Socrates has first wheedled his way in front of Gorgias' audience and then by appealing to that audience he has made it difficult for Gorgias to dismiss him.

Socrates' effort to gain access to Gorgias' audience has a clear parallel in the

10. For a similar conclusion about Gorgias' character, see Adele Spitzer, "The Self-reference of the *Gorgias*," *Philosophy and Rhetoric*, 8 (1975), 1–22. She contends that overweening concern about how he appears to others is at the core of Gorgias' character, and that his gentleness is only a result of his fear of offending his audience (7–9). Kauffman recognizes this aspect of Gorgias' character but he contends that it does not encompass Gorgias' later comments at 497 and 506 where Gorgias urges that the conversation be pressed on to a conclusion. According to Kauffman these passages provide evidence that Gorgias is interested in the truth as he had earlier claimed (458), even if the pursuit of truth reflects badly on his reputation. Gorgias does speak as Kauffman claims, and what he says appears to indicate a different aspect of his character. However, the truth-seeking Gorgias can be reconciled with Spitzer's position if, as I have argued, Gorgias is not only expert at knowing what pleases an audience, but also if he has a sufficient degree of self-control to put this knowledge to use by always appearing as pleasing as possible. Unlike Polus and Callicles he has the good sense not to make matters worse by appearing to be a poor loser. Furthermore, he is sensitive to the audience's desire to hear and so he gives them what they want, especially if he can extricate himself, as he does, from directly suffering Socrates' cross-examination.

first part of the *Phaedrus* (227–230c). Phaedrus has been impressed by Lysias' speech, just as the audience in the *Gorgias* has been impressed by Gorgias' display. As a friend of Socrates Phaedrus would normally welcome his company. But because Phaedrus wishes to practice the speech and then use it to display his own rhetorical ability, he does not entirely welcome Socrates' presence. Only after Socrates notices that Phaedrus is hiding a copy of the speech under his cloak and surmises what Phaedrus is up to does Phaedrus give up his intended deception. Socrates accosts Phaedrus, insists on hearing Lysias' speech, and to insure an uninterrupted conversation he suggests they leave the city and walk along the river to a quiet spot.

The importance Socrates attaches to influencing Phaedrus is soon made clear by Socrates' unfamiliarity with the terrain. He describes himself as a stranger to the area and refers to Phaedrus as his guide (230d). Phaedrus responds that Socrates is the oddest of men because he so seldom sets foot outside the walls, and Socrates jokes that with speeches such as Lysias' for bait Phaedrus could lead him all around Attica or anywhere else (230e). Knowing what Socrates really thinks of Lysias' speech we may conclude that in order to counter the effect of the speech on his friend, Socrates might be willing to be dragged around Attica. Nonetheless, given Phaedrus' interest in rhetoric, his friendship for Socrates, and the absence of any complicating third party, it is relatively easy for Socrates to capture Phaedrus' attention; whereas in the *Gorgias* Socrates cannot lead the audience away physically. If he is to counter Gorgias' effect on the audience, he must do so in the presence of, indeed, with the participation of, the defenders of rhetoric.

PORTRAYING RHETORIC AS INDECENT

To counter the effect of Gorgias' display Socrates manipulates the conversation to associate Gorgias' rhetoric with shamelessness or indecency. There are two stages to this manipulation. First, Socrates induces Polus and then Callicles to enter the conversation on behalf of Gorgias' rhetoric. Second, he provokes Callicles to say things, which appear to violate the city's sense of decency.

As this process of manipulation unfolds a further complication about the audience arises. I suggest that what Socrates says to each of the interlocutors is designed to influence the assembled audience—the primary audience. However, throughout the conversation with Gorgias there is a secondary audience of Polus and Callicles, and what is said by Socrates is in part calculated to draw Polus into the conversation. Similarly, Gorgias and Callicles are the secondary audience during the conversation with Polus. But it is clear that Socrates is playing mainly to Callicles rather than Gorgias, for it is Callicles who is so astonished and frustrated by what he hears that he thrusts himself into the conversation brushing Polus aside.

The process of drawing Polus into the conversation overlaps somewhat with Socrates' effort to establish himself in front of the primary audience. Earlier Polus displayed his eagerness to enter the conversation. But the unsatisfactory nature of his responses moved Gorgias to intervene. Now, however, Gorgias is looking for a way out and appears to welcome the chance to pass the conversation to Polus. The sequence of events is important. It is at 457e that Gorgias claims that he teaches rhetoric only for good use and so he is not to be blamed if it is misused by a student. Socrates suggests that there may be an inconsistency somewhere; at the very least it will require a lengthy cross-examination to clarify what Gorgias has said. But Socrates does not launch into the cross-examination. Instead, he suggests that Gorgias may not want to continue, prompting the primary audience as well as Chaerephon and Callicles to press for a continuation, and eliciting Gorgias' agreement to go on—for it would be disgraceful to do otherwise (458e). Only after he has this agreement can Socrates afford to press hard on the inconsistency, giving Gorgias a good reason to withdraw but now without the freedom to close the conversation down.

Although Gorgias is replaced by Polus as Socrates' main interlocutor, Socrates continues to treat Gorgias' presence as a constraint on what he can say. He invites Polus to question him about rhetoric but indicates that he is hesitant to give frank answers for fear of offending Gorgias, and he waits to obtain Gorgias' permission to proceed (463). Only then does Socrates present his analysis of rhetoric as part of a general typology of flattery. Rhetoric, he says, is the false form of justice just as medicine is impersonated by cooking, gymnastic by beautification, and legislation by sophistry (463–466). Finally Socrates obtains Polus' reluctant admission that the knack or technique of rhetoric can be of no use to any man except to accuse oneself and one's friends and relatives of wrongdoing in order to expose one's wickedness and ensure punishment. Also, if it were right to harm enemies, rhetoric could be used to protect one's enemies from being punished for their wickedness (480–481b).

These assertions provoke Callicles to ask Chaerephon whether Socrates is serious or simply joking (481b). Callicles' question expresses the same mixture of surprise and skepticism as in his initial question about whether Socrates really wished to hear Gorgias' demonstration (447b). As before, Chaerephon responds that Socrates is quite serious and he invites Callicles to confirm this by asking Socrates (481b). Socrates responds to Callicles' question with a long speech (481c–482c) affirming his radical assertions about rhetoric. This is too much for Callicles; he has run out of patience with Socrates, Gorgias, and Polus. Jokes and spoofs are one thing, but if Socrates persists in spouting nonsense and neither Gorgias nor Polus can expose it for what it is, then he, Callicles, will. Here, as at the beginning of the dialogue, Chaerephon takes Socrates' words literally. Socrates initially took advantage of Chaerephon's apparently guileless nature to make excuses for arriving late, but now Chaerephon's trusting and literal accep-

tance of Socrates' assertions about rhetoric further irritates Callicles and provokes him to set things straight.

Callicles agrees with Polus that Gorgias became entangled in inconsistencies because he was ashamed to assert what he really believed. However, Callicles contends that Polus has fallen into the same trap. He was obliged to agree with Socrates' ludicrous assertions about rhetoric only because he agreed to the premise that it is better to suffer injustice than to do it; and he agreed with this premise not because he believed it but because he was ashamed to deny it (348de). Callicles boasts that he cannot be ensnared by Socrates in this way because he has the courage to admit the consequences of his assertions. Callicles has finally taken the bait; he has been goaded into the conversation, and he has been induced to say what he thinks without concern for public decency. The stage is set for the association of rhetoric with shamelessness.

Callicles rightly understands Socrates' assertions about rhetoric to be extreme or radical. If true, ". . . then surely the life of us mortals must be turned upside down and apparently we are everywhere doing the opposite of what we should" (481c). Socrates' view of rhetoric rests on the radical notion that it is better to suffer wrong than to do it. Callicles feels obliged to match Socrates' radical assertion with an equally extreme assertion:

> Anyone who is to live aright should suffer his appetites to grow to the greatest extent and not check them, and through courage and intelligence should be competent to minister to them at their greatest and to satisfy every appetite with what it craves (492).[11]

Any opposition to this way of living on the basis of justice or shamefulness is, according to Callicles, simply an attempt by the inferior to constrain the superior and to conceal their own inferiority (492bc). Callicles does not accuse Socrates of having to invoke a sense of shame to hide his inferiority. On the contrary, he says that Socrates is potentially a superior man who has been blinded to the right or natural form of human life by his preoccupation with philosophy (484cd). If Socrates would only abandon philosophy he would see the truth of Callicles' words, and he would allow his superior nature to develop fully. Indeed, if only Socrates would study and employ rhetoric he could become a useful and respected member of the community. Whereas, Callicles contends, without a

11. The views expressed by Callicles are closely related to those of Thrasymachus in the *Republic* (336b–354a). Both Callicles and Thrasymachus are frustrated and angered by what Socrates has obliged his previous interlocutors to agree to, and both thrust themselves into the conversation to set matters straight. Both are consciously provoked by Socrates to assert the benefits of radical hedonism and tyranny. In the *Gorgias* these views serve to associate rhetoric with political indecency for the benefit of the audience, whereas in the *Republic* Thrasymachus' speech serves to draw out Glaucon, who restates Thrasymachus' position in praise of the unjust life and insists that Socrates respond to it. Socrates triggers the reckless eloquence of Thrasymachus, which in turn provokes Glaucon to set out the basic position examined throughout the night by Socrates. But because there is no Glaucon present in the *Gorgias* there is no scope for a sustained examination of rhetoric.

knowledge of rhetoric Socrates can be of use to no one. He can not even protect himself from those who would drag him into court on false charges (486bc).

At the core of Callicles' assertion is the premise that pleasure is the satisfaction of appetites and that no distinctions can be drawn between pleasures that are good and pleasures that are evil. Callicles affirms this premise by allowing that he is thinking of appetites such as hunger and thirst and the pleasure that results from eating and drinking, and by analogy he extends this meaning to all other appetites (494bc). Socrates urges Callicles to hold to this position and not to falter through shame. He adds that he too will have to throw shame aside (494c). Socrates then asks whether someone suffering from an appetite such as an itch which never ceases and can be scratched forever can be said to be happy. The possibility of one such appetite as the basis of happiness is diminished as absurd by Callicles. However, having equated all appetites, Callicles is obliged to affirm that such a man would be happy (494d). Socrates presses Callicles still further:

> SOCRATES If it was only his head that he wanted to scratch—or can I push the question further? Think what you will answer, Callicles, if anyone should ask all the questions that naturally follow. And as a climax of all such cases, the life of a catamite—is not that shocking and shameful and miserable? Will you dare to say that such people are happy, if they have what they desire in abundance?
>
> CALLICLES Are you not ashamed, Socrates, to drag our discussion into such topics?
>
> SOCRATES Is it I who do this, my noble friend, or the man who says so unequivocally that pleasure, whatever its nature, is the key to happiness, and does not distinguish between pleasures good and evil? But enlighten me further as to whether you say that the pleasant and the good are identical, or that there are some pleasures which are not good.
>
> CALLICLES To avoid inconsistency if I say they are different, I assert they are the same.
>
> SOCRATES Then you ruin your earlier statement, Callicles, and you can no longer properly investigate the truth with me, if you speak contrary to your opinions (494e, 495a).

Although Callicles is pressed to affirm his position that all pleasures are the same, he does so without conviction and only to avoid inconsistency. Callicles is repelled by his sense of shame from affirming the consequence of his assertion, and like any decent person he rebukes Socrates for dragging a polite conversation into indecency. Callicles knows that he has been trapped by Socrates. Both Gorgias and Polus managed to avoid the trap; they chose decency at what is for public purposes the small price of logical inconsistency. Callicles, on the other hand, distanced himself from Gorgias and Polus with the claim that he could not be shamed into inconsistency. Further, he claimed that not to be bound by shame was the mark of the superior man—the man who understood that the morality that gave rise to feelings of shame was simply an instrument of the inferior man.

According to Callicles, all conventional morality is a false morality, a protective device used by the impotent many to chain the energy of the superior man.

For a public man like Callicles, whom Socrates describes as "in love with the demos" because of his need to pander to it, the description of the demos as the home of a sheep morality is a very imprudent statement. The aspiring politician can seldom afford to make such views public whatever his private views. But Callicles' anger and frustration have driven him to air these views. Further, although Callicles initially sides with Gorgias by criticizing Socrates, he finds himself indirectly attacking Gorgias by associating Gorgias' polite and decent behaviour with a sheep morality. However, having staked out this ground in order to best Socrates, Callicles now finds that his rash claims about the life of the superior man have led him to affirm the happiness of the life of a catamite. He is doubly ashamed: First, like any decent and conventional Athenian for seeming to approve of such a way of life; second, because of his claim of being above conventional morality, he is also ashamed of being ashamed. He is humiliated.

To this point the conversations with the three defenders of rhetoric display a common element. In each case the defense of rhetoric is shown to require a premise that is shameful or indecent, a premise that offends the morality of the community, and each is offered a choice between rhetoric and decency. Both Gorgias and Polus instinctively chose decency and seemed to be largely unaware that they had undercut the type of rhetoric they had intended to defend. To his chagrin, Callicles, determined not to be beaten by Socrates, is goaded into choosing indecency.[12] Forcing this choice is a central part of Socrates' attempt to dissuade Gorgias' audience from following Gorgias. They see rhetoric as a route for able and ambitious men to take in order to gain access to public office and public acclaim (455d). But success in public life requires respectability; one must publicly embrace the community's norms whatever they may be. Only then can a community entrust its decisions to a man and honour him for his services. If rhetoric is to be the route chosen by ambitious young men and their families it must appear respectable, otherwise it will not serve their purposes. Both analytically and dramatically Socrates has stripped off the respectable face of rhetoric.[13]

12. George Klosko, "The Refutation of Callicles in Plato's *Gorgias*," *Greece and Rome*, XXXI, (1984), 126–39, argues that Callicles' hedonism is far more extreme than is necessary to support his view of natural justice. Thus, he is more easily refuted than had he advanced the more moderate arguments suggested by Klosko. I concur with Klosko that Plato puts these extreme arguments into Callicles' mouth in order to allow Socrates to deal effectively with hedonism. However, Klosko stops with the logical defeat of Callicles. He does not explore how the shaming tactics used on Gorgias and Polus are preliminary to the more ruthless use of these tactics on Callicles, leading to the dramatic defeat of Callicles.

13. The need for a foreign teacher to take care to appear acceptable to the community he visits is explained in the *Protagoras* (316c–317c). Protagoras also pats himself on the back for successfully managing this problem for so many years. In the *Euthydemus* Plato lampoons the "wordy warfare" of Euthydemus and his brother Dionysodorus in much the same manner as Aristophanes characterizes

Socrates has offered an analysis of rhetoric as indecent pandering, and through his questioning of Gorgias, Polus and Callicles he has associated rhetoric with ideas that violate the norms of political decency, but in so doing he has provoked the allegations that he is shameless (461c, 483e, 489b, 494c, 494e), that he speaks unfairly or deceptively, and that he harangues like a mob orator (482c, 483e, 489c, 489e, 494d, 519d). At first Socrates ignores the charges. However, when he eventually admits that there may be something to them, he claims that he is not at fault; he is obliged to speak like this by the ideas or behaviour of others (494c, 494e, 519d). The final part of the conversation with Callicles (521–522) and the concluding exhortation (523–527) serve to meet these charges by presenting Socrates as respectable and pious, and philosophy as a respectable alternative to rhetoric.

The conversation has been long and very difficult for Callicles. He has lost all enthusiasm for it, and he gives no sign of wishing to restate the reasons he had originally given in urging Socrates to abandon philosophy for rhetoric. But Socrates persists; he evokes Callicles' earlier advice and urges him to specify Socrates' role in the city and what need he will have for rhetoric.

> SOCRATES Then distinguish for me what kind of care for the city you recommend to me, that of doing battle with the Athenians, like a doctor, to make them as good as possible, or to serve and minister to their pleasure? Tell me the truth, Callicles, for it is only fair that, as you spoke your mind frankly to me at first, you should continue to say what you think. And so speak up truly and bravely now.
>
> CALLICLES I say then, to serve and minister.
>
> SOCRATES Then you invite me, my noble friend, to play the flatterer?
>
> CALLICLES Yes, if you prefer the most offensive term, for if you do not . . . (521).

Having pressed Callicles to reiterate his initial position, Socrates labels Callicles' advice with the "most offensive term," curtly interrupts Callicles, and goes on to summarize the dire consequences that Callicles had previously said would befall him. Then Socrates dramatically rejects rhetoric and claims that he is well aware that this leaves him helpless in defending himself in a court of law, and that if brought to court his trial would be like that of a doctor prosecuted by a pastry cook before a jury of children (521e, 522a). He claims that all he could do in court would be to tell the truth and as a result anything might happen to him. But he insists that he would rather meet his death than save his life through the use of flattering rhetoric (522d). Socrates concludes with a tale about the afterlife and an exhortation. He claims to believe the tale and he contends that it demonstrates the correctness of his decision to reject rhetoric. The tale also provides a basis for equating philosophy with piety and justice, for the assertion that philos-

Socrates as a sophist in the *Clouds*. The *Euthydemus* also exhibits the contempt and disgust of respectable Athenians for sophistry when its practitioners fail to exercise the prudence of Protagoras (*Euthydemus* 304d–305b, 306d–307e).

ophy provides the only true qualification for public life (527d), and for the claim that philosophy is the way to happiness in this life and the life hereafter (526c, 527c).

In his original recommendation that Socrates abandon philosophy for rhetoric (484c–486e), Callicles emphasized the great difference between philosophy and rhetoric in order to show how misguided was Socrates' preoccupation with philosophy. Socrates does nothing to close this gap between philosophy and rhetoric; instead, he uses it to advantage. Socrates portrays rhetoric as indecent, allows Callicles' claim that there is virtually nothing in common between philosophy and rhetoric, and then embellishes the easy, although perhaps misleading, inference that philosophy as the antithesis of rhetoric must be respectable, decent, and at one with the community's sense of justice. Therefore, a man who chooses philosophy chooses the welfare of his fellow citizens and he finds favor with the Gods. Socrates' message to Gorgias' admirers is clear. Gorgias is really only Polus and Callicles wrapped in a veneer of respectability. Gorgias and his art are fundamentally disreputable; you follow him at your peril.

SOCRATES' REPUTATION FOR SPEAKING THE TRUTH

When accused by Callicles of employing the very techniques of mob oratory that he condemns, Socrates responds by depicting himself and philosophy as pious and respectable, and he emphasizes his courageous devotion to philosophy with the claim that he will not abandon it for pandering rhetoric even at the cost of his life.[14] But the anomaly pointed out by Callicles is now compounded. Socrates has wrapped himself in the cloak of public morality by using to good effect the manipulative techniques of persuasion in the sphere of opinion. He has used these techniques to portray himself as a man who speaks the truth and eschews such techniques. If refutative rhetoric is to be understood as part of true rhetoric, Socrates' use of manipulative speech to establish a reputation as a speaker of truth requires further analysis. The initial part of Socrates' conversation with Gorgias provides a way to approach this issue.

Early in the conversation Gorgias offered two examples to illustrate the power of rhetoric (456b–c). First, he recalled the many times he had employed rhetoric to convince patients to submit to the medical treatment prescribed by their physicians. In his second example, Gorgias considered the situation of an orator contending with a doctor before an audience. Gorgias held that the orator would always prevail over the doctor, or indeed, over the master of any other art or craft in a public forum. The second example is the one of interest to Gorgias' audi-

14. Aristotle remarks on the rhetorical force of being seen to choose the honourable as opposed to the expedient, and cites Achilles' decision to kill Hector as a powerful example, *Rhetoric* 1, 3, 1358b–1359a. In the *Gorgias*, Socrates makes his choice with no explicit reference to Achilles, whereas in the *Apology* (28cd) he does invoke the example of Achilles.

ence, for as Socrates has just indicated (455c–d), they are interested in Gorgias' art as a means to a successful public career. Socrates characterizes the second use of rhetoric as ignorance prevailing over knowledge (459b), and throughout the dialogue he castigates Gorgias' art as ignorance prevailing over knowledge by pandering to the ignorance of an audience. Socrates does not mention the fact that in Gorgias' first example the techniques of rhetoric are in the service of knowledge—knowledge of the body. But for this very reason the example is worth examining. The use of the techniques of rhetoric to implant the conviction necessary to improve the body appears to be another example of the constructive rhetoric found in the *Phaedrus*, where Socrates' rhetoric implants the conviction necessary to lead Phaedrus to philosophy and to a healthier soul.

In Gorgias' first example of the power of rhetoric the knowledge of the physician cannot be used for the welfare of his patient unless the patient is convinced that he should undergo the treatment. The physician's conviction that the treatment should be administered rests on his knowledge qua physician, but the patient does not share this knowledge so he must be convinced on the basis of opinion or belief rather than knowledge. The physician is able to speak the "truth" within the scope of his art, but because of the patient's lack of knowledge the physician is not capable of implanting the required conviction; thus, the need for the rhetorician. The rhetorician is assumed not to have the knowledge of the physician, and therefore he cannot speak the truth in the sphere of medical knowledge. The rhetorician, like the patient, is confined to the realm of opinion or ignorance, and the rhetorician must implant conviction on the basis not of his knowledge of "what is" but of "what seems to be," or "appears to be" even though it "is not." What then is the rhetorician to say? Presumably he emphasizes the seriousness of the patient's condition and the bleakness of the prognosis if left untreated, minimizes the distasteful aspects of the treatment and the convalescence, and holds out the expectation of the best possible, and therefore somewhat unlikely, recovery. In addition the rhetorician can go beyond the areas of diagnosis, treatment, and prognosis, and pander to the patient's particular appetites or desires. For example, he may appeal to the patient's vanity by emphasizing the great improvement to be expected in his appearance, or to his desire for honour and wealth by showing how his successful treatment will enhance his ability to secure both. In short, the rhetorician's persuasiveness is based on setting the prescribed treatment within the context of what the patient would like to avoid and/or obtain, and then showing the patient how the treatment would satisfy his desires.

In addition to the knowledge of the patient's hopes, aspirations, and desires, and the knowledge of how to present the treatment to make it appear to satisfy these desires, the rhetorician must also know how to secure and maintain a reputation as a person who can be trusted to give concerned and helpful advice that can be relied upon. The rhetorician needs the reputation of being a man who can be trusted, a man who would not manipulate others through distortion and decep-

tion. Thus, Gorgias' example of the power of rhetoric in the service of knowledge indicates two somewhat different tasks for rhetoric: first, the persuasion of the patient, and second, the maintenance of the rhetorician's public reputation. Because the effectiveness of the persuasion of the patient is at least in part dependent on having a reputation as a man who would not resort to the use of the techniques of persuasion, the rhetorician must attempt to implant the conviction in others that he would not attempt to do what he in fact does do. He must appear to be other than he is in order to be an effective servant of knowledge.

In order to apply Gorgias' example of the use of rhetoric to Socrates' manner of speaking, one detail must be modified without changing the essential properties of the example. In Gorgias' example the role of rhetorician and physician are each assumed by a different person. Let us suppose that the two roles are assumed by one person who has mastered both the art of medicine and the "art" of implanting conviction in the realm of opinion. Thus, the doctor can function as both a practitioner of an art based on knowledge, and as a practitioner of the technique of implanting the necessary conviction in his patients to ensure they benefit from his knowledge, all the time taking care to polish his reputation as an honest and trustworthy person who would not deceive.

Now, despite his condemnation of rhetoric in the *Gorgias*, Socrates does allow that there is a true art of rhetoric analogous to the art of medicine. The object of this art is the improvement of men's souls or characters, just as the object of the art of medicine is the improvement of their bodies. The true art of rhetoric uses words, not to gratify men, but to improve them (502e, 503a). The true art of rhetoric is the basis of statemanship, but according to Socrates it is seldom practiced (517a) and he suggests that he may be the sole practitioner (521de). Also, he claims that to practice this true rhetoric is comparable to " doing battle with the Athenians like a doctor to make them as good as possible" (521a). But he also claims that a commitment to this true rhetoric precludes the use of, or the knowledge of, the techniques of the flattering false rhetoric, thus, his fate at the hands of a jury of children prosecuted by a pastry cook.

If Socrates' commitment to a true rhetoric is analogous to medicine, then like the doctor he too is faced with the problem of convincing his patients (fellow citizens) to submit to the necessary treatment. Gorgias' presence and his attractiveness to the audience increases the difficulty of convincing these young men to undergo the requisite treatment, thus, the need for refutative rhetoric: a rhetoric which manipulates and then silences his three interlocutors. However, Socrates' manipulation of Callicles goes beyond the immediate purpose of weaning the audience away from Gorgias. Callicles sees a good deal of Socrates' persuasive technique and repeatedly accuses Socrates of engaging in mob oratory. This accusation forces Socrates to defend his reputation. Accordingly, he undertakes the task of defending his reputation for honest and plain speech regardless of the consequences. Callicles' astuteness and aggressiveness makes this defensive rhetoric necessary, for otherwise Socrates' persuasive effort may be undermined

by Callicles' exposure of Socrates' techniques of persuasion. However, Callicles also provides the raw material for Socrates defense of his reputation. Socrates manages to associate the rhetoric of Gorgias with the shameless statements of Callicles and then to piously reject this pandering rhetoric.

Socrates uses refutative rhetoric to dissuade the audience from following Gorgias, and he continues to manipulate his interlocutors to polish his reputation as someone who has no use for rhetoric. By rejecting rhetoric Socrates claims the high ground of public morality—devotion to the commonweal—regardless of the personal costs. He wraps himself in the warm embrace of civic virtue; like Achilles, he will do the noble thing come what may.

CONCLUSION

Refutative rhetoric and constructive rhetoric are complementry parts of true rhetoric. The refutative rhetoric of the *Gorgias* serves to dissuade the audience from the false rhetoric of Gorgias; whereas, the constructive rhetoric of the *Phaedrus* creates an alluring image which draws Phaedrus towards philosophy. The heavy reliance on refutative rhetoric in the *Gorgias* is necessary because of the sustained defense of false rhetoric mounted by Gorgias, Polus, and Callicles. Socrates arrives in the middle of Gorgias' demonstration and finds a way to insert himself between Gorgias and his audience. Socrates then uses Gorgias' presence to press his denunciation through to its conclusion. Callicles mounts a determined defense of rhetoric, but Socrates transforms this determination into recklessness, and then discredits Gorgias' art by associating it with Callicles' shameful hedonism. Although Callicles is eventually humiliated and silenced, he notices that Socrates is using the very techniques of persuasion that he claims to eschew, and Socrates finally does move to meet the charge of being a mob orator. To polish his reputation as a man who speaks only the truth no matter what, Socrates embellishes Callicles' distinction between rhetoric and philosophy, and portrays the philosopher as a man who would gladly face death rather than stoop to the deceptive techniques of false rhetoric.

There is no direct evidence of the effect of Socrates' refutative rhetoric on the audience, but there is a basis for inference. The desire for public honour has drawn the audience to Gorgias, from whom they hope to learn the art of prevailing in public debate. But due to Socrates' intervention they are treated to the spectacle of the defenders of the art shamed into silence by what they are pressed to say. Plato leaves us to draw our own conclusion about the impact of this spectacle on the audience.

How to Read the *Consolation of Philosophy*

THOMAS F. CURLEY III

I. INTRODUCTORY

Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, for centuries one of the most widely read and revered books in the West, is now little more than a historical curiosity. Most, but not all, educated people have heard of it; some have read it; very few seem to like it. But the reasons for the work's neglect are more significant than our common twentieth-century amnesia toward what one might term "the tradition". In the first place we are separated by a centuries-long tradition of philosophy from the intellectual context which gave rise to Boethius' synthesis of Plato and Aristotle. Minds such as Descartes and Kant have so altered the cast of western thinking that it is all but impossible, at least at first glance, to take Boethius seriously as a philosopher. What is more, the two dominant tendencies of twentieth century philosophy, the analytic school in England and America, and the continental schools of existentialism and phenomenology, are in radical disagreement with Boethius' most basic assumptions.

What, for instance, would A. J. Ayer, the author of a short and popularly accessible philosophic manifesto, comparable in scope to the Boethian text,[1] make of the following exchange between the character Boethius and Dame Philosophy at the very beginning of the work:

> Tum illa: Huncine, inquit, mundum temerariis agi fortuitisque casibus putas an ullum credis ei regimen inesse rationis? Atqui, inquam, nullo existimaverim modo ut fortuita temeritate tam certa moveantur, verum operi suo conditorem praesidere deum scio nec umquam fuerit dies qui me ab hac sententiae veritate depellat (Bk. I, pr. 6, 3–4).
>
> (Then she said, "Do you think that this world is driven by reckless and haphazard chance or do you believe there to be any rational direction to it?" And I said, "But in no way would I think that such regular phaenomena are moved by reckless haphazard; rather I know that the creator god presides over his handiwork, and there will never be a day which might drive me from the truth of this opinion.")[2]

Because Ayer dismisses metaphysical questions and answers as not only wrong but nonsensical, he could continue reading only on the assumption that he was perusing a text indicative of the philosophical errors of the past.

Thomas F. Curley III (B.A. Amherst 1976, Ph.D. Princeton 1981) taught Classics at Hamilton College and was a Mellon Fellow at Johns Hopkins University. His exploration of the relationship between poetry and philosophy, of which this paper is a part, was cut short by his death in October, 1984, at the age of thirty-one.

1. Ayer, A. J., *Language, Truth, and Logic* (1936; New York: Dover, 1946).

2. All translations are my own and are meant merely as trots for the Latin, thus I apologize in advance for their literalness which at times lapses into clumsiness.

Likewise, what would Sartre, who in an accessible manifesto of his own defines existentialism as the conviction that existence precedes essence,[3] make of the following argument in which existence is treated as a predicate like any other and derivable from the essence of the good:

> Quo fit ut, si in quolibet genere imperfectum quid esse videatur, in eo perfectum quoque aliquid esse necesse sit; etenim perfectione sublata unde illud quod imperfectum perhibetur exstiterit ne fingi quidem potest (Bk. III, pr. 10, 4).
>
> (Thus it happens that, if there should be seen to be any imperfect example of a given genus, it is necessary that there should also be a perfect example of that genus; for it is impossible to imagine whence that which is considered imperfect might come to exist, if the perfect is removed.)

In Sartre's case as well further reading could only proceed on the assumption that he was engaged in the merely academic exercise of becoming proficient in the history of philosophy.

Thus there exist significant intellectual differences to account for our neglect of Boethius' text and our failure to appreciate it. I suspect, however, that other equally important factors come into play. The *Consolatio*, in addition to being a work of philosophy, is also an intricately crafted work of literature: a dramatic dialogue between two fictional characters composed in alternating verse and prose. This blending of poetry and philosophy, categories we tend to keep strictly apart, is as great an obstacle to our understanding Boethius' intentions as is the incompatibility of his philosophical presuppositions with those of the twentieth century. We pay lip service to the clarity of certain philosophers' prose (that of David Hume and A. J. Ayer, for example) and to the wit and style of others' (Kierkegaard's and Nietzsche's, for instance); but in fact we believe that philosophic exposition is one thing, poetic invention quite another. We simply do not know how to read philosophy as poetry, or poetry as philosophy, which is precisely the response demanded by Boethius' text.

This distance from the work, both intellectual and aesthetic, clarifies the nature and limitations of Boethian scholarship in the last century. Modern research into the *Consolatio* may be dated from the publication in 1877 of Hermann Usener's *Anecdoton Holderi*.[4] In this monograph the author dismisses the *Consolatio* as an unoriginal compilation of Aristotelian and Neoplatonic sources. Usener grants as Boethius' own an introduction (up through Bk. II, pr. 4, 38) and the metra, which he rates very low; otherwise he sees the text as an amateurish pastiche of philosophical arguments better expressed elsewhere. On the one hand, Usener's approach was obviously determined by the twin tendencies of

3. Sartre, J. P., *L'Existentialisme est un humanisme* (Paris: Nagel, 1946).

4. Usener, Hermann, *Anecdoton Holderi. Ein Beitrag zur Geschichte Roms in ostgothischer Zeit*, Bonn, 1877. The fragment here analysed is claimed by the author to belong to a lost historical work by Cassiodorus. The fragment itself explicitly ascribes to Boethius theological treatises long associated with his name which, however, many found impossible to ascribe to the author of the *Consolatio*.

nineteenth century German scholarship: analysis and "Quellenforschung"; on the other, such blindness to the nature and merits of the text can only be explained on the basis of a deep lack of sympathy with Boethius' philosophic and poetic stance.

One might characterize twentieth-century scholarship on the *Consolatio* as constituting two possible responses to Usener's thesis: defense and illustration of the integrity and originality of the work or increasingly sophisticated investigation of the sources exploited by Boethius in the composition of his text. The first camp is led by E. K. Rand, who in 1904 produced a thorough and reasoned rebuttal of Usener's point of view.[5] His lead was followed by such scholars as Klingner and Reichenberger, who made considerable progress towards demonstrating the very complex structure of Boethius' work and the methods by which he made his sources his own.[6] On the other hand scholars such as Courcelle, Silk, and most recently, Gruber, have brought the analysis of the influences on Boethius to the point where it is now clear that his command of his sources was extraordinary.[7] If Boethius was a mere compiler, he was at least a compiler of the first rank.

Thus the result of the last century's researches into the *Consolatio* is, as often in the world of scholarship, the conclusion that the debate over Boethius' originality was a false question. It has turned out that in almost every line of both the prose and verse sections Boethius can be detected echoing, if not quoting, the literature and philosophy of the past; nonetheless it has become increasingly clear that he has shaped his material into a complex pattern of his own contrivance. The question then becomes, what are the dynamics of this curious work, so removed from us both philosophically and aesthetically. And in recent years a small group of scholars have begun to address this issue. L. Alfonsi has traced the relationship between the personal and the universal as dramatized in the dialogue between Boethius and Dame Philosophy.[8] More recently still, F. Anne Payne has attempted to read the work as an example of Menippean Satire, while Anna Crabbe has sought the key to the work in its essential eclecticism which embraces and transcends the responses to adversity of such exemplars as Ovid, Cicero, Seneca, Socrates, and St. Augustine.[9]

5. Rand, E. K., "On the Composition of Boethius' *Consolatio Philosophiae*," Harvard Studies in Classical Philology, 15, 1904, pp. 1–28.

6. Klingner, F., *De Boethii Consolatione Philosophiae*, Berlin, 1921. Reichenberger, K., *Untersuchungen zur literarischen Stellung der Consolatio Philosophiae*, Kölner Romantische Arbeiten, N.S. 3, Cologne, 1954.

7. Silk, E., "Boethius' *Consolatio Philosophiae* as a Sequel to Augustine's Dialogues and Soliloquia," Harvard Theological Review, 32, 1939, pp. 19–39. Courcelle, P., *La Consolation de Philosophie dans la tradition littéraire: Antécédants et postérité de Boèce*, Paris, 1967. Gruber, J., *Kommentar zu Boethius De Consolatione Philosophiae*, Walter de Gruyter, Berlin, 1978.

8. Alfonsi, L., "Storia interiore et storia cosmica nella *Consolatio* boeziana," Convivium, N.S. 3, 1955, pp. 513–21.

9. Payne, F. Anne, *Chaucer and Menippean Satire*, University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1981, chapter 3: "The *Consolation of Philosophy* as Menippean Satire," pp. 55–85. Crabbe, Anna,

The problem with this trend of criticism is that its practitioners have either limited themselves to one aspect of Boethius' manifold text or have become tendentious in championing an idiosyncratic approach to the work.[10] What has been most lacking is a comprehensive approach which takes into account both the philosophic and literary aspects of the work and seeks to demonstrate how they inform each other. This paper is intended, at least in part, to fill that gap.

Because the *Consolatio*, as many readers have pointed out, is so eclectic, I shall take this very eclecticism as my starting point and organize my argument around three aspects of the text's diversity. First of all, since the work is a philosophical treatise, it is necessary to clarify the structure and drift of its philosophical content. I shall not be concerned to label the provenance of this or that argument, a task largely completed by other more competent scholars, most notably, Gruber. I will, however, endeavor to make clear the structure into which Boethius has molded his Platonic, Aristotelian, and Neoplatonic materials. Second, since Boethius chose to cast his work in the form of a dialogue, the implications of this choice on the philosophical content must be gauged before a full understanding of the work can be achieved. To do so I shall have both to glance at the tradition of philosophic dialogue in antiquity, most importantly Plato and Augustine, and to uncover the dynamics of interaction between the character Boethius and Dame Philosophy. Finally, since the *Consolatio* is an example of that curious genre, Menippean Satire, it is incumbent on me at least to hazard a response to the question why Boethius chose to write a philosophic dialogue in the very artificial form of alternating verse and prose.

II. THE PHILOSOPHICAL CONTENT

The *Consolation of Philosophy* is essentially a dramatized therapy. Boethius is smitten with despair over his fall from fortune and Dame Philosophy endeavors to restore her pupil to a state of insight and calm. As first step on the way to Boethius' cure is the diagnosis which Dame Philosophy performs in Book I, prose 6. At the end of her examination of the patient, she summarizes his illness under three points:

> Nam quoniam tui oblivione confunderis, et exsulem te et exspoliatum propriis bonis esse doluisti; quoniam vero quis sit rerum finis ignoras, nequam homines atque nefarios potentes felicesque arbitraris; quoniam vero quibus gubernaculis mundus

"Literary Design in the *De Consolatione Philosophiae*," in *Boethius: His Life, Thought, and Influence*, ed. Margeret Gibson, Basil Blackwell, Oxford, 1981, pp. 237–74.

10. Payne attempts to read the *Consolatio* as an example of Menippean Satire, which is a perfectly reasonable endeavor; but her characterization of what constitutes Menippean Satire, especially in a sixth century context, has little if anything to do with the Boethean text. For a more detailed critique of Payne's conclusions see pp. 242–43 of this paper.

> regatur oblitus es, has fortunarum vices aestimas sine rectore fluitare: magnae non ad morbum modo, verum ad interitum quoque causae (Bk. I, pr. 6, 19–19).
>
> (For since you have been confused by forgetfulness of your self, you have complained that you are in exile and dispossessed of your own goods; and since you do not know the purpose of things, you think that worthless and evil men are powerful and happy; and since you have forgotten by what means the universe is governed, you judge that these changes of fortune are in flux and without any direction: great causes not only of illness but of death as well.)

This passage is clearly meant to be programmatic for the structure of Books II through V. The second book is concerned with loosening Boethius' attachment to the gifts of fortune and, as Dame Philosophy repeatedly points out, Boethius' vulnerability to the rise and fall of fortune is occasioned by his lack of a sense of self:

> Quid igitur, o mortales, extra petitis intra vos positam felicitatem? Error vos inscitiaque confundit. Ostendam breviter tibi summae cardinem felicitatis. Estne aliquid tibi te ipso pretiosius? Nihil, inquies. Igitur si tui compos fueris, possidebis quod nec tu amittere umquam velis nec fortuna possit auferre (Bk. II, pr. 4, 22–23).
>
> (Thus, o mortals, why do you seek outside yourselves the happiness which is placed within yourselves. Error and ignorance are confusing you. I shall briefly demonstrate to you the essence of the greatest happiness. Is there anything more precious to you than yourself? "Nothing," you say. Thus if you should be in possession of yourself, you will be in possession of that which neither you would wish to lose nor fortune be able to remove.)

Thus Book II in its long discussion of the various gifts of fortune is in fact an attempt to restore to Boethius a strong sense of identity.[11] Likewise, Book III seeks to make clear to Boethius the existence of the "summum bonum" which is the "telos" of all things. First by a kind of "via negativa" which demonstrates that wealth, fame, power, and pleasure cannot embody the highest good, and then in a more positive manner, Dame Philosophy elucidates the identity of God, the good, and happiness. Finally, Books IV and V seek as it were to justify the ways of God to man. The nature of the human self and of God as the goal of all things has been established in Books II and III; in these final two books the relationship between these two entities is depicted in all its complexity, as the dialogue ranges over such topics as theodicy, free will, determinism, and providence. Thus the most readily apparent structure of the *Consolatio* is the rather straightforward succession of three arguments calculated to address the three aspects of Boethius' illness as diagnosed in the first book: ignorance of self, of the "summum bonum", and of the relationship between the two.

But the situation is far more complex than these preliminary observations might indicate. As many scholars have pointed out, the mode or style of argu-

11. See Book II, pr. 4, 8; pr. 4, 24–29; pr. 5, 24–29; pr. 6, 16–20; pr. 7, 21–23.

mentation in the *Consolatio* changes as ame Philosophy procedes in her exposition. F Anne Payne's summary is a good example of such analysis:

> The names I give the four sections of her (i.e. Philosophy's) argument—Cynic (Bk. II–Bk. III, pr.9), Platonic (Bk. III, m.9–Bk. IV, pr. 5), Aristotelian (Bk. IV, pr.6–Bk. V, m.1), and Augustinian (Bk. V, prs. 2–6)—are not intended to indicate Boethius' literal sources for these sections, but rather techniques and points of view to which the sections allude. The analogies between Lucian and the first section have already been discussed. The Platonic section begins with a paraphrase of Plato's *Timaeus*, and two proses of the discussion on evil contain a paraphrase of the *Gorgias*. The Aristotelian section ends with an allusion to Aristotle's definition of chance. The debate about the relation of foreknowledge and free will in the final section of the *Consolation*, which contains one indirect allusion to the *City of God* (Bk.V, pr.4), is a debate always associated with Augustine.[12]

The question then arises, how is this philosophic eclecticism rendered coherent?

One answer is that the *Consolation* may be seen as a succession of three increasingly lofty and comprehensive disquisitions on the order of the universe. In Books I and II, the ways of the world are viewed as they appear to the eyes of the unregenerate human soul, that is, under the aspect of "fortuna" In Book III, the way is opened up towards a clearer vision of the universal order, that is, under its aspect of "fatum"; and in Book IV, fate's determination of events is demonstrated with great rigor and detail. Finally, in Book V, the discussion seeks to rise beyond the merely human and rational point of view and to adumbrate God's own perspective on the universe, that "providentia" which is the viewpoint of the "nunc stans" of eternity. Thus, in addition to what one might term the "personal" structure of the work, that by which the text is organized according to the personal dilemma of Boethius, there is a second structural device, the cosmological, which articulates the text according to three aspects of cosmological order: "fortuna", "fatum", and "providentia".

Finally there is a third set of structures at work in the text, that which I choose to call the "epistemological" and which is the most important of all three structural systems. At prose 4 in Book V, in her attempt to explain divine providence, Dame Philosophy makes the following observation:

> Omne . quod cognoscitur non secundum sui vim sed secundum cognoscentium potius comprehenditur facultatem (Bk. V, pr. 4, 25).
>
> (Everything which is known is understood not according to its own power but according to the capability of those knowing it.)

She then goes on to enumerate the four principal "faculties" of knowledge:

> Sensus . figuram in subiecta materia constitutam, imaginatio vero solam sine materia iudicat figuram; ratio vero hanc quoque transcendit speciemque ipsam quae singularibus inest universali consideratione perpendit. Intellegentiae vero celsior ocu-

12. Payne, *op. cit.*, pp. 69–70; also see Gruber, *op. cit.*, pp. 36ff.

lus exsistit; supergressa namque universitatis ambitum ipsam illam simplicem formam pura mentis acie contuetur (Bk. V, pr. 4, 28–30).

(The senses judge of form embodied in underlying matter, the imagination judges of the mere form without matter; reason transcends even this latter form and by a universal meditation weighs the idea itself which is present in individual things. But the eye of intellection exists on an even higher plane, for it transcends the ambit of the universe and with the pure vision of the mind contemplates that simple idea itself.)

Although this hierarchy of knowledge is articulated only towards the very end of the text, upon reflection it becomes clear that these four categories have provided a structural scheme for the work parallel to the two already described.

The fact that the work opens with Boethius writing an elegiac lament in which the physical details of his decay are dwelt upon:

Intempestivi funduntur vertice cani
 et tremit effeto corpore laxa cutis (Bk. I, m. 1, 11–12).

(Prematurely white hair covers my head and the loosened skin of my weakened body shakes.)

indicates that he is mired in the material world, reacting to the universe mainly by means of his senses. As token of this first sensual stage of perception Dame Philosophy adapts herself to Boethius' capacities and responds to his condition in terms which he can comprehend, namely, those of touch. Thus she diagnoses Boethius' initial silence and causes him to recognize her for what she is, all by touch:

Cumque me non modo tacitum sed elinguem prorsus mutumque vidisset, ammovit pectori meo leniter manum et . . oculosque meos fletibus undantes contracta in rugam veste siccavit (Bk. I, pr. 2, 5–7).

(When she perceived that I was not merely silent but mute and quite incapable of speech, she lightly touched my breast with her hand and with a portion of her garment drawn into a fold she dried my eyes which were overflowing with tears.)

The realistic detail of the phrase, "contracta in rugam veste", is very rare in the *Consolatio* and is appropriate only at this preliminary stage of "sensus"

In Book II Dame Philosophy begins to employ the next faculty in her epistemological hierarchy, the imagination. Whereas in the first book attention was focused on the particulars of Boethius' immediate situation, in the second book Philosophy leads her pupil towards a consideration of fortune in general, a step which can be taken only with the aid of imagination. The most striking example of this strategy occurs in prose 2 where Philosophy puts on the mask of "Fortuna" and interrogates Boethius on his claim to the gifts of fortune:

Vellem autem pauca tecum Fortunae ipsius verbis agitare; tu igitur an ius postulet animadverte (Bk. II, pr. 2, 1).

(I would like to discuss a few matters with you in the words of Fortuna herself. Therefore consider whether her claim is just.)

In fact Philosophy is here using one of the imagination's greatest achievements, the theater, to effect her own purposes. This recourse to the imagination is further underscored when, during her speech in the persona of Fortuna, she alludes to various works of the imagination such as legend, tragedy, and epic:

> Nesciebas Croesum regem Lydorum Cyro paulo ante formidabilem mox diende miserandum rogi flammis traditum misso caelitus imbre defensum? Num te praeterit Paulum Persi regis a se capti calamitatibus pias impendisse lacrimas? Quid Tragoediarum clamor aliud deflet nisi indiscreto ictu fortunam felicia regna vertentem? Nonne adulescentulus *δύο πίθους, τὸν μὲν ἕνα κακῶν τὸν δὲ ἕτερον ἐάων* in Iovis limene iacere didicisti? (Bk. II, pr. 2, 11–13)
>
> (Were you unaware of Croesus, king of the Lydians, an object of fear to Cyrus and then an object of pity, who, when handed over to the flames of the pyre, was saved by a miraculous shower of rain? And it has not escaped your notice, has it, that Paulus shed pious tears over the misfortunes of the Persian king, whom he himself had captured? What else does the shouting of tragedy bewail but fortune overturning prosperous kindgoms with a sudden blow? As a student, didn't you learn that "two jars, the one of evils and the other of goods" stand in Jove's threshold?)

And throughout the book Philosophy constantly urges Boethius to imagine the situation of the rich man, the powerful man, the famous man, and so on, as means towards understanding the vanity of human fortune.[13]

At the beginning of Book III the transition from "imaginatio" to "ratio" is signalled by the following statement by the character Boethius:

> O, inquam, summum lassorum solamen animorum, quam tu me vel sententiarum pondere vel canendi etiam iucunditate refovisti, adeo ut iam me posthac imparem fortunae ictibus esse non arbitrer! Itaque remedia quae paulo acriora esse dicebas non modo non perhorresco, sed audiendi avidus vehementer efflagito (Bk. II, pr. 1, 2).
>
> ("O greatest comfort of afflicted minds," I said, "how you have restored me, whether by the weight of your proposition or the delight of your singing, so that I do not think that hereafter I shall be unequal to the blows of fortune. Therefore, those remedies, which you said were slightly more bitter, not only do I not fear them, in fact I am strongly desirous of hearing them.")

The harsher remedies of strict reason are employed throughout Books III and IV to demonstrate the existence of the "summum bonum" and to elucidate its relation to the universe in general and to man in particular. In this section Boethius' borrowings from Plato are particularly frequent and particularly appropriate. The Platonic imagery of metrum 9 of Book III and the arguments drawn from the *Gorgias* in Book IV are incorporated into a rational explanation of the universal scheme of things. Furthermore, not only are the instruments of reason employed in this section, they are also reflected on in a critical way, in a fashion parallel to the criticisms of poetry to be found in Books I and II.[14]

13. See Book II, pr. 5, 3ff.; pr. 6, 1ff.; pr. 7, 3ff.
14. See Book III, pr. 12, 30–38.

Finally, Book V constitutes an attempt to explain to the highest faculty of human understanding (ratio) the nature and scope of divine understanding (intellegentia). We have been led through the various stages of human knowledge: "sensus", "imaginatio", and "ratio"; Dame Philosophy now seeks to communicate to Boethius some indication of how the universe appears to the eyes of eternity. The exposition remains strictly rational in form, but because a reality beyond the humanly rational is being described, there is a religious, almost mystical, tone to Philosophy's speech, which breaks forth, for instance, in the final lines of the work:

> Magna vobis est, si dissimulare non vultis, necessitas indicta probitatis, cum ante oculos agitis iudicis cuncta cernentis (Bk. V, pr. 6, 48).
>
> (Unless you wish to pretend otherwise, a great necessity of acting virtuously has been pronounced to you, since you act under the gaze of a judge who discerns all things.)

Thus the philosophical content of the *Consolatio* is organized according to three different but parallel sets of categories. First of all Philosophy's exposition is structured to correspond to Boethius' particular situation: she first restores his sense of self, then points to the end or "telos" of things, and finally demonstrates the relationship between the individual human reality and the Alpha-Omega of the universe, God. Second, the content also falls into the three-fold division of fortuna", "fatum", and "providentia". That is, the same cosmos is portrayed under three different lights: that of the human being as possessor of "sensus" and "imaginatio", that of the human as rational animal, and that of God as immediate and all-encompassing knower of the universe. Finally, these personal and cosmological sets of categories are set in relief by a four-fold epistemological structure: "sensus", "imaginatio", "ratio", and "intellegentia". The human being, as a human, has access to the first three modes of knowledge; the fourth can only be hinted at by the highest means at hand, namely, the rational.

The common purpose of all three sets of categories is to cure Boethius, to effect a conversion, or turning about, of his soul. The work is entitled a "Consolation"; it is in fact a "therapy" But it is a very different kind of therapy of the soul from that most familiar to us in the twentieth century, that is, psychoanalysis. Whereas in the contemporary analyst's office the patient does all the talking, in Boethius' prison cell Dame Philosophy is the principal interlocutor; and whereas modern analysis proceeds on the assumption that the higher faculties of imagination and reason are explicable in terms of unconscious drives and therefore reducible to the rank of "epiphaenomena" of "sensus", Dame Philosophy effects her cure of Boethius' soul by leading him upward from the senses, to the imagination, to reason, and at last points to the ultimate reality, "intellegentia". The problems and dilemmas of one level are resolved by proceeding upward to the next level rather than by descending backwards to a lower level. This procedure is most clearly set forth in the crucial step from "ratio" to "intellegentia" Boethius has just formulated his inability to maintain the seemingly contradictory

propositions of "providentia" and human free will; Philosophy responds by stating that a higher vantage point must be reached before this contradiction can be resolved:

> Cuius caliginis causa est quod humanae ratiocinationis motus ad divinae praescientiae simplicitatem non potest ammoveri; quae si ullo modo cogitari quest, nihil prorsus relinquetur ambigui (Bk. V, pr. 4, 2).
>
> (The cause of this obscurity is the fact that the impulse of the human power to reason cannot reach the simplicity of divine foreknowledge; if this latter could in any way be conceived, absolutely nothing would remain unclear.)

Nonetheless, it is important to note that although Philosophy resolves the conflicts of one level by appealing to the next faculty up in the hierarchy, the lower and intermediate levels are not rendered insignificant in the light of "intellegentia" or "providentia". Rather, throughout the work Philosophy is careful to accommodate her mode of discourse to the condition of Boethius' soul. What is more, the whole process is based on the assumption that although a given level surpasses that below it, nonetheless that lower level is encompassed and perfected within the wider scope of the higher:

> Superior comprehendendi vis amplectitur inferiorem, inferior vero ad superiorem nullo modo consurgit. Neque enim sensus aliquid extra materiam valet vel universales species imaginatio contuetur vel ratio capit simplicem formam; sed intellegentia quasi desuper spectans concepta forma quae subsunt etiam cuncta diiudicat, sed eo modo quo formam ipsam, quae nulli alii nota esse poterat, comprehendit (Bk. V, pr. 4, 31–32)
>
> (The higher faculty of understanding embraces the lower; but the lower can in no way rise towards the higher. For sense perception is good for nothing apart from matter, nor does the imagination contemplate universal categories, nor does reason grasp the pure form; but "intellegentia", as if looking down from above, both perceives the form and also discerns everything which lies below, but in the same manner in which it comprehends the form itself, which was incapable of being known to any of the other faculties.)

It is precisely in this harmony of all aspects of the cosmos: of the human and the divine, of the temporal and the eternal, of becoming and being, of change and order, that the central point of the *Consolatio* as a work of philosophy lies. This harmony is not achieved through the blurring of distinctions, it consists, in fact, of a hierarchical articulation of the various aspects of the universe. The particular beauty of this hierarchy is that, although Philosophy insists on a strict protocol in the relation of lower to higher, nonetheless the lower is never completely jettisoned, rather it is embraced and validated within the context of the higher.

Thus Philosophy has a double task: to make manifest the divine order in the apparent flux of the world and to validate human striving within the order thus revealed. Thus double task is indicated by certain striking verbal echoes in the text. For instance, at the end of the first book, in which the interlocutors have been in-

troduced and the nature of Boethius' illness has been diagnosed, Philosophy gives her "alumnus" straightforward moral counsel:

> Tu quoque si vis
> lumine claro
> cernere verum,
> tramite recto
> carpere callem:
> gaudia pelle,
> pelle timorem
> spemque fugato
> nec dolor adsit (Bk. I, m. 7, 20–28).
>
> (If you, too, desire to discern the truth with clear vision and to make your way along the straight path, cast out joys, cast out fear, put hope to flight, nor let sorrow be present.)

This stoical warning against the power of the passions to cloud intellectual vision, appropriate to Boethius at this stage of dismay and self-pity, is turned on its head in the final sentences of Philosophy's disquisition on the harmony of divine "providentia" and human free will, where she insists on the validity of human striving within the context of divine order:

> Quae cum ita sint, manet intemerata mortalibus arbitrii libertas nec iniquae leges solutis omni necessitate voluntatibus praemia poenasque proponunt. . . . Nec frustra sunt in deo positae spes precesque, quae cum rectae sunt inefficaces esse non possunt. Aversamini igitur vitia, volite virtutes, ad rectas spes animum sublevate, humiles preces in excelsa porrigite (Bk. V, pr. 6, 44–47).
>
> (Since this is the case, human free will remains inviolate nor do laws unfairly propose rewards and punishment for wills freed from all necessity. Nor are hopes and prayers, placed in God, in vain; as long as they are correct, they cannot be ineffectual. Therefore avoid vices, cultivate virtues, lift up your mind towards proper hopes, extend humble prayers on high.)

By way of summary, one might well point out that this central message of the work, the essential harmony between the microcosm and the macrocosm, is reflected in the relation among the three parallel structures of the work's philosophical content. The first structure is based on Boethius' three points of ignorance: of self, of the "telos" of things, and of the means by which the cosmos is governed, and as such may be termed the "personal" The second structure views the world under three aspects: "fortuna", "fatum", and "providentia", and can thus be properly labeled the "cosmic" The third structure, that of "sensus", "imaginatio", "ratio", and "intellegentia", is clearly epistemological and may be seen as the harmony of the first two structures, the personal and the cosmic. For the concerns of the microcosm, man can only be seen as in harmony with the laws of the macrocosm, the universe, when the possible epistemological relations between man and cosmos are defined, distinguished, and understood.

III. THE DIALOGUE FORM

But this philosophical content is couched in the form of a dialogue, and what is more, in the form of a very peculiar kind of dialogue. First of all, the setting, though deducible from certain scattered hints within the text, is never clearly indicated. Because Boethius at one point says to Philosophy

> Et quid, inquam, tu in has exsilii nostri solitudines, o omnium magistra virtutum, supero cardine delapsa venisti? (Bk. I, pr. 3, 3)
>
> (And why, I said, have you, O teacher of all virtues, descended from on high to enter into the loneliness of my exile?);

because at another point he gestures towards his surroundings with the rhetorical question

> Haecine est bibliotheca, quam certissimam tibi sedem nostris in laribus ipsa delegeras, in qua mecum saepe residens de humanarum divinarumque rerum scientia disserebas? (Bk. I, pr. 4, 3)
>
> (Is this the library which you yourself chose as your most fixed abode in my household, in which you often used to sit with me and discourse on the knowledge of things human and divine?);

and because at the end of his "defense" before Philosophy, as if before a court (Bk. I, pr. 4), he states

> Nunc quingentis fere passuum milibus procul muti atque indefensi ob studium propensius in senatum morti proscriptionique damnamur (Bk. I, pr. 4, 36).
>
> (Now about fifty miles away, unheard and without defense, I am condemned to death and proscription on account of my too great zeal on behalf of the senate.);

we infer that the setting is a prison cell, or some place where Boethius is being held under house arrest, at some distance from Ravenna, Theodoric's capital in Italy. And our ancient testimonia corroborate these hints within the text: it seems that Boethius fell from Theodoric's favor when he defended a fellow senator, Albinus, who was being prosecuted for treason. Boethius himself was soon accused of the same crime, tried and convicted in absentia, and executed in 524 A.D.[15] Thus the reader is aware that Boethius is in prison, under sentence of death, alone, and in exile; but we are never told for how long or where Boethius has been imprisoned, nor when he expected to die, as we are, for instance, in the case of the most obvious model for Boethius' text, Plato's *Phaedo*. This vagueness of setting, with its associations of solitude, exile, alienation, and impending doom, is clearly meant to make identification with the character Boethius all the more easy. It renders him an everyman, lost and out of touch with his real self and purpose.

15. See Gruber, *op. cit.*, pp. 8–13.

Now, the very mention of the "character Boethius" raises the question: where is Boethius in the text? Our sources and the manuscript tradition assure us that the author of the *Consolatio* is indeed the historical Anicius Manlius Severinus Boethius, an orphaned member of the Roman senatorial aristocracy, who was adopted by the Symmachi and grew up giving every evidence of extraordinary literary and intellectual ability. He married the daughter of his adoptive father and had two sons by her. While pursuing a political career as a high official under Theodoric, he conceived the enormous project of translating the respective oeuvres of Plato and Aristotle, producing commentaries on them, and harmonizing the two systems of thought. In addition to the *Consolatio* there remain extant a few theological treatises, a textbook on music, and a translated introduction to Aristotle's Organon, which seems to represent as far as he progressed in his lifelong project before his early death.[16] Thus "Boethius" is the author of the text. And because the text is such a highly wrought object, combining all manner of discourse in the alternating verse and prose of Menippean Satire, one can say something about the author based on the fact of the text. He must therefore have been extraordinarily learned, especially for this time. Not only does he exhibit a command of all possible Latin prose styles and meters, he also displays an acquaintance with Greek philosophy, not only with the Neoplatonism of late antiquity but with Plato and Aristotle as well, a phenomenon rare in an age when knowledge of Greek in the West had all but disappeared. In fact, the author Boethius stands as a lonely last citadel of the Greco-Roman tradition before western Europe enters definitively into what we rightly or wrongly term "The Dark Ages". Thus the first answer to the question of Boethius' presence in the work is that he is the author, heir by birth, breeding, and education to the twin tradition of ancient philosophy and literature.[17]

But Boethius the author is not the only Boethius present in the text. Boethius the narrator of his encounter with Dame Philosophy and Boethius the character within that narration constitute two further personae of the author. This double aspect of Boethius within the text, as narrator and as character, makes for certain striking effects. Thus the work opens with an elegiac poem spoken in the first person:

> Carmina qui quondam studio florente peregi,
> flebilis, heu, maestos cogor inire modos (Bk. I, m. 1, 1–2).
>
> (I, who in my youthful zeal composed verses, am now forced tearfully to begin sad lamentations.)

The reader naturally assumes that the speaker is the author, especially since the voice contrasts its unhappy present with a pleasant past; but at the beginning of the first prose section one discovers that the voice pronouncing the poem was being quoted by the narrator-voice of the whole work:

16. See Gruber, *op. cit.*, pp. 1–8.
17. See Gruber, *op. cit.*, pp. 24–40, for an indication of Boethius' breadth of learning.

> Haec dum mecum tacitus ipse reputarem querimoniamque lacrimabilem stili officio signarem . (Bk. I, pr. 1, 1).
>
> (While I silently thought these things over with myself and inscribed my tearful lament by means of a stylus .)

These two passages, the first couplet of the metrum and the first clause of the prose section, taken together express the complexity of the Boethian presence within the text. First of all, the character Boethius has a past, a history which has brought him to the point of despair expressed in the opening elegy. Second, upon hearing the narrative voice at the beginning of the prose section, we realize that the character Boethius also has a future ahead of him, a development which will transform the character into the narrator. The distance to be traveled in the passage from the former condition to the latter is emphasized throughout the first book. Thus the narrator describes the character's elegy as a "querimoniam lacrimabilem"; likewise the narrator dismisses the character's defense and appeal to God (Bk. I, pr. 4 & m. 5) as mere barking:

> Haec ubi continuato dolore delatravi . (Bk. I, pr. 5, 1)
>
> (When I had barked all that with uninterrupted self-pity . . .)

Clearly the distraught and preoccupied character has a long way to go before attaining the firm calm of the narrator.

Finally, the emphasis within the text upon writing as opposed to speech serves a double purpose, illustrative of the relationship between Boethius the character and Boethius the narrator. On the one hand the description of the interaction between the elegiac Muses and the character expresses his passivity at this stage of despair: both the character and the narrator depict the Muses as dictating a discourse which Boethius merely copies down:

> Ecce mihi lacerae dictant scribenda Camenae (Bk. I, m. 1, 3).
>
> (Behold the mourning Muses dictate what I am to write.)
>
> Quae ubi poeticas Musas vidit nostro assistentes toro fletibusque meis verba dictantes (Bk. I, pr. 1, 7)
>
> (When she saw the poetic Muses standing by my bed and dictating words to my tears . . .)

This passivity, whereby the character Boethius merely transcribes the words of others is strongly contrasted with the more active response demanded of Boethius by Dame Philosophy. After routing the elegiac Muses, her first action is to cure Boethius' blindness and dumbness, thus enabling him to become an active partner in the dialogue which will constitute his therapy (see Bk. I, pr. 2, 1–7, & pr. 3, 1–3). This transition from written poetry to spoken dialogue, parallel to the development of Boethius the character into Boethius the narrator, is reminiscent of the theme and dynamics of Plato's *Phaedrus*, which may well have been the source of this motif in the *Consolatio*.

But it is important to note that in this dichotomy between written verse and spoken prose, the former element is not simply negated in the face of the latter. The fairly frequent mention of writing and its products (e.g. "stili officio" at Bk. I, pr. 1, 1, & "bibliotheca" at Bk. I, pr. 4, 3) reminds the reader that what he has before him is a written text. In particular the character Boethius' mention of a library surely draws attention to the fact that the text before us is a veritable library, an anthology of all available forms of discourse and philosophic arguments, a "library" which only an author, who had spent much of his life among books, could have composed. Thus in addition to underscoring the evolution of Boethius the character into Boethius the narrator, the motif of written poetry versus spoken dialogue also hints at the further evolution of Boethius into the author of the poem which is the *Consolatio.*

To sum up the complex presence of Boethius in the *Consolatio,* one might say that the author of the text assumes the persona of the narrator in order to portray the story of the character. The character is pictured at the beginning of the text as indulging in poetry; the author of the text is obviously a poet, for the text itself constitutes a poem. But these two forms of poetry are very different and much of the dynamics of the *Consolatio* has to do with the process whereby Boethius the character develops to the point where he is identical with Boethius the narrator and foreshadows the figure of Boethius the author. In other words, Boethius must undergo the therapy of philosophy before he can handle narrative prose or imagistic poetry in other than self-destructive ways.

Thus the dialogue in the *Consolatio* must be viewed as taking place between the character Boethius and Dame Philosophy, as reported by the narrator Boethius, and as fashioned by the poet Boethius. What then are we to make of the other participant in the dialogue, Dame Philosophy? She is, first of all, the voice of being, eternity, and truth, in contrast with the character Boethius, the mouthpiece of suffering humanity, subject to the vicissitudes of time and the deceptions of appearance. That Dame Philosophy is the spokeswoman for eternity is clear not only from the fact that she guides the character Boethius towards an awareness of being in the midst of becoming but also from the description of her appearance in Book I:

> Astitisse mihi supra verticem visa est mulier reverendi admodum vultus, oculis ardentibus et ultra communem hominum valentiam perspicacibus, colore vivido atque inexhausti vigoris, quamvis ita aevi plena foret ut nullo modo nostrae crederetur aetatis (Bk. I, pr. 1, 1).
>
> (There appeared standing above my head a woman of a most dignified aspect, with eyes shining and piercing beyond the usual power of men, with a glowing complexion and inexaustible strength, although she was of such an age that in no way could it be credited of our life span.)

That Dame Philosophy is both young ("colore vivido atque inexhausti vigoris") and old ("aevi plena") foreshadows her own disquisition on eternity in Book V, where "aeternitas" is defined as:

> interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio (Bk. V, pr. 6, 4).
>
> (the completely simultaneous and perfect possession of life without beginning or end.);

that is, a state where all time is contemporaneous. Dame Philosophy's simultaneous youth and age clearly indicates that she embodies eternity's comprehension of all time.

But Dame Philosophy represents not only eternity but also a certain aspect of the character Boethius. This assertion is never explicitly made in the text, but the tradition of philosophic dialogue in antiquity, of which the *Consolatio* is the last great example, makes it evident that, when the character Boethius is in conversation with Philosophy, he is in some way talking to himself. At one point in the *Thaeatetus* Socrates describes the process of thinking as follows:

> Λόγον ὅν αὐτὴ πρὸς αὑτὴν ἡ ψυχὴ διεξέρχεται περὶ ὧν ἂν σκοπῇ. ὥς γε μὴ εἰδώς σοι ἀποφαίνομαι. τοῦτο γάρ μοι ἰνδάλλεται διανοουμένη οὐκ ἄλλο τι ἢ διαλέγεσθαι, αὐτὴ ἑαυτὴν ἐρωτῶσα καὶ ἀποκρινομένη, καὶ φάσκουσα καὶ οὐ φάσκουσα. ὅταν δὲ ὁρίσασα, εἴτε βραδύτερον εἴτε καὶ ὀξύτερον ἐπαΐξασα, τὸ αὐτὸ ἤδη φῇ καὶ μὴ διστάζῃ, δόξαν ταύτην τίθεμεν αὐτῆς. ὥστ' ἔγωγε τὸ δοξάζειν λέγειν καλῶ καὶ τὴν δόξαν λόγον εἰρημένον, οὐ μέντοι πρὸς ἄλλον οὐδὲ φωνῇ, ἀλλὰ σιγῇ πρὸς αὑτόν σὺ δὲ τί; (189e–190a).
>
> (As a discussion which the soul maintains with itself concerning whatever it is considering. I'm sure I must seem a fool, but it seems to me that the soul, when it is thinking, is engaged in nothing other than talking with itself, asking and answering questions, making claims and denials. And when it comes to a decision, whether slowly or rushing to it quickly, and is in agreement and no longer differs with itself, we call this its judgment. So that I define the process of thought as discourse and judgment as a statement pronounced, not to another nor audibly, but silently and to oneself. But what do you think?)

What Boethius has accomplished by introducing the persona of Philosophy is to dramatize this interior dialogue which is thought.

Both the Platonic and, as far as we know, the Aristotelian dialogues portrayed interpersonal dialogue and by and large the ancient tradition followed the same procedure. But in late antiquity there appear certain signs of a preoccupation with intrapersonal dialogue, that is, with thought. The phenomenon exists in Plato, as when Socrates stands meditating outside the house of Agathon (*Symposium* 174d–175b) or when his fellow soldiers take bets on how long he will remain standing, lost in thought (Symposium 220cd), but it is always portrayed from the outside, as a withdrawal of the person from interaction with others, never from the inside as a kind of interaction with one's self. However, in later works, such as Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* ("*τὰ εἰς ἑαυτόν*"), where the author is both speaker and audience, and Plotinus' *Enneads*, which often read like a man thinking aloud, one sees the roots of a systematic portrayal of interior dialogue. A link between these first tentative ventures into the dramatization of thought and its full-blown accomplishment in Boethius is to be found in Augustine's *Soliloquia*,

where the author recounts his dialogue with a personified "Ratio", who is explicitly stated to be both a divine figure and an aspect of Augustine himself.[18]

Now if Dame Philosophy is in some way an aspect of Boethius himself, just what aspect is she? Since the author Boethius is the remarkably learned man he was, when he portrays himself as talking to himself, he does so by recording a dialogue between himself and the whole tradition of Greco-Roman philosophy, as he had learned and appropriated it. Thus Dame Philosophy, voice of eternity and aspect of Boethius, is also an image, or icon, representing the centuries-long tradition of thought of which Boethius is the end point. Not only does Dame Philosophy in the course of the dialogue avail herself of every conceivable kind of philosophic argument: Stoic, Platonic, Aristotelian, and Augustinian; but also our first encounter with her in Book I clearly indicates her role as image of the philosophic tradition:

> Vestes erant tenuissimis filis subtili artificio indissolubili materia perfectae, quas, uti post eadem prodente cognovi, suis manibus ipsa texuerat; quarum speciem, veluti fumosas imagines solet, caligo quaedam neglectae vetustatis obduxerat. Harum in extremo margine "Π" Graecum, in supremo vero "Θ" legebatur intextum atque in utrasque litteras in scalarum modum gradus quidam insigniti videbantur, quibus ab inferiore ad superius elementum esset ascensus. Eandem tamen vestem violentorum quorundam sciderant manus et particulas quas quisque potuit abstulerant. Et dextra quidem eius libellos, sceptrum vero sinistra gestabat (Bk. I, pr. 1, 3–6).

> (Her clothes were made, by subtle craft, of the finest threads of an indissoluble material; and as I later learned from her own lips, she had woven them with her own hands. A certain duskiness of long neglect had darkened their appearance, as is often the case with images smudged with smoke. On the lower hem a Greek "Π", on the upper border a "Θ" was to be read inwoven; and certain embroidered steps were to be seen between the two letters in the manner of a ladder, by which there was a means of ascent from the lower to the higher letter. But the hands of certain violent individuals had rent this garment and they had taken away those portions that each was able to. Finally, she carried books in her right hand, and in her left she held a scepter.)

Furthermore, Dame Philosophy's explanation of how her garments were torn betrays a critical understanding of the history of ancient philosophy, an understanding quite in accord with Boethius' own life-long task of reconciling the two fountainheads of the tradition, Plato and Aristotle:

> Cuius (Socrates' and/or Plato's) hereditatem cum deinceps Epicureum vulgus ac Stoicum certerique pro sua quisque parte raptum ire molirentur meque reclamantem renitentemque velut in partem praedae traherent, vestem quam meis texueram manibus disciderunt abreptisque ab ea panniculis totam me sibi cessisse credentes abiere (Bk. I, pr. 3, 7).

18. For the relation of the two interlocutors, "Augustinus" and "Ratio", see the opening passage of the work: "Volventi mihi multa ac varia mecum diu, ac per multos dies sedulo quaerenti memetipsum ac bonum meum, quidve mali evitandum esset; ait mihi subito, sive ego ipse, sive alius quis extrinsecus, sive intrinsecus, nescio; nam hoc ipsum est quod magnopere scire molior ..." (Soliloquia, I, 1). See Silk, *op. cit.*, for possible influence of this text on the *Consolatio*.

> (When thereafter the Epicurean and Stoic crowd, and others, endeavored, each for his own part, to steal his (Socrates' or Plato's inheritance and when they were dragging me away as if I were booty and I shouted and struggled against them, they tore the garment which I had woven with my own hands and they went away believing that I had yielded to them the whole garment, when in fact they had only snatched tatters from it.)

Thus the figure of Philosophy, like the figure of Boethius, is also multifaceted: she is the voice of eternity, an aspect of Boethius, and a representation of the whole philosophic tradition. This refraction of the interlocutors into several aspects allows for a complex dramatic portrayal of the interior dialogue which is thought, a phenomenon which, from the outside, would appear as distant and opaque as the figure of *the abstracted Socrates*.

That Boethius, as heir to the gregarious tradition of ancient philosophy, which was almost always pursued in the context of human intercourse, be it the agora, the academy, the porch, or the garden, should be so cut off as to take refuge in the dramatization of thought, is perhaps the most poignant aspect of the *Consolatio*. Comparison with the *Phaedo* will make this point quite clear. Although condemned by the city, Socrates is portrayed as engaging in conversation with family and friends as he prepares to drink the hemlock.[19] In contrast, Boethius has to write his own swan song, for there is no one present to whom he can talk and who might preserve his memory. What is more, this solitude in prison and in the face of death is merely a concrete image of Boethius' essential solitude as someone who had digested and could manipulate the twin tradition of ancient philosophy and poetry at a time when Western Europe had all but forgotten the tradition and was plunging into the simplifications of popularized Christianity.

Now how does this peculiar kind of dialogue play itself out and how does it inform the philosophic content of the work? After the opening elegy the character Boethius falls silent until Philosophy loosens his tongue by her touch; in Book V, after expressing the paradox of maintaining both God's providence and human free will, the character Boethius again falls all but completely silent, while Philosophy delivers her disquisition on eternity which constitutes the end of the work.[20] But these two discourses and their subsequent silences are very different from one another and the process whereby the character Boethius progresses from the former to the later is the history of his progress in the therapy of philosophy.

From beginning to end Boethius the character remains the spokesman for

19. What is more, Socrates is consistently portrayed as insisting that talk with his fellow human beings is the focus of his philosophical life (*Phaedrus* 230de); he even goes so far as to speculate that perhaps a happy after-life would consist of the opportunity to spend eternity in conversation with the likes of Homer and Hesiod (*Apology* 40e–41c).

20. Except for short, perfunctory answers Boethius the character says nothing after metrum 3 of Book V (Bk. V, pr. 4, 8; pr. 4, 16; pr. 6, 19). His silence is drawn attention to by Dame Philosophy's strategy of herself supplying her uncooperative interlocutor's lines in order to keep the discussion going (Bk. V, pr. 6, 25, 37, 39).

suffering humanity. He bemoans his fall from fortune in the opening elegy and presents his case before Philosophy and God, as if in a court of law, in prose 4 and metrum 5 of the first book. Thereafter, throughout the therapy which Philosophy applies, Boethius continues to insist on, to focus attention on, the plight of man in an apparently unjust universe. In response to Philosophy's prosopopoeia of "Fortuna", in which she challenges Boethius' claim to the gifts of fortune, the character Boethius replies:

> Tum ego: Speciosa quidem ista sunt, inquam, oblitaque rhetoricae ac musicae melle dulcedinis tum tantum cum audiuntur oblectant, sed miseris malorum altior sensus est; itaque cum haec auribus insonare desierint insitus animum maeror praegravat (Bk. II, pr. 3, 2).
>
> (And then I said, "Those arguments are indeed splendid and covered as they are with the honey of rhetorical and poetic sweetness they delight as long as they are being heard; but in the case of the wretched the sensation of misfortune lies deeper, and thus, when these arguments cease to ring in their ears, an innate sadness weighs down their mind.")

This elicits from Philosophy a list of the variety of good fortune Boethius has enjoyed, but he responds with the following reformulation of his sense of suffering:

> Tum ego: Vera, inquam, commemoras, o virtutum omnium nutrix, nec infitiari possum prosperitatis meae velocissimum cursum. Sed hoc est quod recolentem vehementius coquit; nam in omni adversitate fortunae infelicissimum est genus infortunii fuisse felicem (Bk. II, pr. 4, 1–2).
>
> (And then I said, "What you say is true, O nurse of all the virtues, nor can I deny the swift course of my prosperity. But it is just this very fact which troubles me even more when I look back, for in every adversity of fortune the most unhappy kind of misfortune is to have been happy.")

This in turn moves Philosophy to catalogue the benefits of fortune which Boethius, despite his misery, still enjoys; to which he replies:

> Et haereant, inquam, precor; illis namque manentibus, utcumque se res habeant, enatabimus. Sed quantum ornamentis nostris decesserit vides (Bk. II, pr. 4, 10).
>
> (And I said, "I pray that they (the "anchors" of father-in-law, wife, and children) continue to hold, for as long as they remain, whatever the situation is, I shall stay afloat. But you see how much has disappeared of my honors.")

Although he has made some progress:

> Et illa: Promovimus, inquit, aliquantum si te nondum totius tuae sortis piget (Bk. II, pr. 4, 11).
>
> (And she said, "We have made a little progress, if you are no longer completely dissatisfied with your lot.")

Boethius the character still insists that Philosophy take his immediate pain seriously.

Likewise, later in Book II, after Philosophy has made clear the vanity of worldly glory, the character Boethius objects that he sought office not for personal glory but in order to exercise virtue:

> Tum ego: Scis, inquam, ipsa minimum nobis ambitionem mortalium rerum fuisse dominatam; sed materiam gerendis rebus optavimus, quo ne virtus tacita consenesceret (Bk. II, pr. 7, 1).
>
> (Then I said, "You yourself know that ambition for the things of this world had very little hold over me; rather in the governance of affairs I sought the occasion whereby my virtue might not grow old, passed over in silence.)

To which Philosophy replies that this desire is the last weakness of noble minds, thus acknowledging, with reservation, the validity of certain human aspirations.

After Philosophy has demonstrated the relationship between the false goods of fortune and the true "summum bonum" in Books II and III, the character Boethius stresses his private suffering less and less; but all the same he still continues to focus Philosophy's attention on the apparent contradictions of the human condition. Thus at the opening of Book IV, after admitting the validity of Philosophy's arguments, he claims that the problem of theodicy remains unsolved:

> Sed ea ipsa est vel maxima nostri causa maeroris quod, cum rerum bonus rector existat, vel esse omnino mala possint vel impunita praetereant; quod solum quanta dignum sit ammiratione profecto consideras. At huic aliud maius adiungitur; nam imperante florenteque nequitia virtus non solum praemiis caret, verum etiam sceleratorum pedibus subiecta calcatur et in locum facinorum supplicia luit (Bk. IV, pr. 1, 3–4).
>
> (But that is precisely the greatest cause of my grief, that, although there exists a good lord over things, evils are able to exist at all or to go unpunished, which fact alone you yourself judge to be worthy of great wonder. But in addition to this there is something even greater, for, while evil rules and flourishes, not only does virtue go without rewards, but it is even cast at the feet of the wicked and trod upon and it suffers the punishments due to crimes.)

This insistence on taking a paradox of the human condition seriously elicits from Philosophy the Platonic arguments, derived from the *Gorgias*, by which good men are proven to be naturally happy, evil men naturally unhappy. And Boethius the character, while granting Philosophy's points, nonetheless maintains a human, down to earth, attitude towards the issue:

> Tum ego: Fateor, inquam, nec iniuria dici video vitiosos, tametsi humani corporis speciem servent, in beluas tamen animorum qualitate mutari; sed quorum atrox scelerataque mens bonorum pernicie saevit, id ipsum eis licere noluissem (Bk. IV, pr. 4, 1).
>
> (Then I said, "I admit and I do not consider that it is said wrongly that the vicious, although they keep the appearance of their human body, are nonetheless transformed

> into beasts with respect to the quality of their minds. But I would prefer that it not be allowed them that their fierce and criminal intention rage for the destruction of the good.")
>
> Accedo, inquam, sed uti hoc infortunio cito careant patrandi sceleris possibilitate deserti vehementer exopto (Bk. IV, pr. 4, 6).
>
> ("I agree", I said, "but I strongly wish that, deprived of the possibility of accomplishing evil, they soon lack this misfortune.")
>
> Tum ego: Cum tuas, inquam, rationes considero, nihil dici verius puto; at si ad hominum iudicia revertar, quis ille est cui non credenda modo sed saltem audienda videantur? (Bk. IV, pr. 4, 26)
>
> (Then I said, "When I consider your reasoning, I think that nothing is more truly said; but if I revert to the judgment of mankind, who is there to whom these arguments would seem not only worthy of belief but even of hearing?")

Soon thereafter Boethius the character asks the decisive question, if the sun shines on good and bad alike, what is the difference between a cosmos ruled by God and a chaotic universe:

> Minus etenim mirarer si misceri omnia fortuitis casibus crederem. Nunc stuporem meum deus rector exaggerat. Qui cum saepe bonis iucunda, malis aspera contraque bonis dura tribuat, malis optata concedat, nisi causa deprehenditur, quid est quod a fortuitis casibus differre videatur? (Bk. IV, pr. 5, 5–6)
>
> ("I would be less bewildered, if I believed that everything was mixed together randomly. But now the idea of a controlling god increases my bewilderment. Since he often apportions pleasant things for the good and bitter for the bad, but also bestows hardship on the good and their heart's desire to the bad, unless some cause is apprehended, what distinguishes this situation from pure chance?")

This question leads Philosophy into a discussion of providence, fate, fortune, divine predestination, and human free will which will occupy the remaining pages of the text and which represents the height of human understanding of the universe.

Finally, in Book V, first in prose (3) and then in verse (3), the character Boethius restates the human aspect of the work's central problem, how to reconcile divine providence and human free will:

> Igitur nec sperandi aliquid nec deprecandi ulla ratio est; quid enim vel speret quisque vel etiam deprecetur quando optanda omnia series indeflexa conectit? (Bk. V, pr. 3, 33)
>
> ("Therefore there is no reason to hope for or to seek to avoid anything, for what might anyone hope for or seek to avoid, when an unchangeable order binds all objects of hope together?")

In the verse section he goes a step further and views the problem as one of epistemology:

An nulla est discordia veris
semperque sibi certa cohaerent,
sed mens caecis obruta membris
nequit oppressi luminis igne
rerum tenues noscere nexus? (Bk. V, m. 3, 6–10)

(Or is there no contradiction between truths and are they firmly connected one with the other, while the mind, buried in the imperceptive limbs of the body, is unable to perceive the subtle interweaving of things by the flame of its buried vision?)

Taken together, prose 3 and verse 3 of Book V parallel prose 4 and verse 5 of Book I. In both passages the character Boethius first explains his dilemma in prose and then again in verse. In fact, the two verse sections are composed in the same meter (Anapestic Dimeter Acatalectic), a particularly striking coincidence, for verse 3 in Book V is the first time Boethius the character has spoken in verse since verse section 5 in Book I. The purpose of this parallelism is to demonstrate that from beginning to end the character Boethius continues to focus on the human point of view in contrast to Philosophy's tendency to view the issues at hand from the viewpoint of eternity. But while remaining the spokesman for humanity Boethius does change and develop. Whereas his formulation of the problem in Book I was personal and naïve, a performance which the narrator Boethius characterized as "barking", this formulation in Book V is intellectually sophisticated and motivated less by self-pity than by an honest bewilderment at man's epistemological position in the universe. What is more, this final articulation of the problem elicits the best Philosophy has to offer, her disquisition on eternity and its relationship to temporality, with which the work ends.[21]

Let us now consider more closely by precisely what stages the character Boethius develops from the naïve self-centeredness of Book I to the intellectually sophisticated and emotionally balanced maturity of Book V When Dame Philosophy appears and scatters the elegiac Muses, Boethius the character falls into a state of speechlessness. Upon receiving the healing touch of Philosophy he immediately recognizes her and expresses surprize that such an august personage should condescend to inhabit such lowly and ignoble environs. To which Philosophy responds, by listing many examples of martyrs to philosophy, that her devotees have always been subject to unjust suspicion and punishment. The first remark by the character Boethius neatly expresses his "problem", that which he must resolve before perceiving the cosmos correctly, namely, his inability to reconcile the reality of being, truth, and goodness with the reality of human suffering and ignorance. As Dame Philosophy will sum it up after performing her diagnosis: the character Boethius suffers from ignorance of self, of the end of things, and of the means by which the cosmos is governed.

21. Likewise, the poems following these respective metra, namely metrum 6 of Book I and metrum 4 of Book V, each constitute a response on Philosophy's part to Boethius' dilemma and are both composed in glycenics.

At this preliminary stage of his therapy Philosophy insists on using mild remedies before proceeding to harsher medicines:

> Sed quoniam plurimus tibi affectuum tumultus incubuit diversumque te dolor ira maeror distrahunt, uti nunc mentis es, nondum te validiora remedia contingunt. Itaque lenioribus paulisper utemur, ut quae in tumorem perturbationibus influentibus induruerunt ad acrioris vim medicaminis recipiendam tactu blandiore mollescant (Bk. I, pr. 5, 11–12).
>
> (But since a great crowd of passions has settled upon you and pain, anger, and grief pull you in different directions, in your present state of mind stronger remedies are not yet appropriate for you. Therefore let us make use of milder ones for a while, so that those faculties, which have hardened into a tumor under the influence of disturbing passions, might, by means of a gentle touch, soften so as to become receptive to the power of stronger medicine.)

The effect of these mild remedies of poetry and rhetoric is to encourage Boethius to take his first step towards health by admitting that despite his immediate suffering Fortune has in general been kind to him. As Philosophy puts it:

> Promovimus, inquit, aliquantum si te nondum totius tuae sortis piget (Bk. II, pr. 4, 11).
>
> ("We have made some progress," she said, "if you are no longer completely dissatisfied with your lot.")

Shortly thereafter she judges that slightly stronger remedies may now be applied to her recuperating patient:

> Sed quoniam rationum iam in te mearum fomenta descendunt, paulo validioribus utendum puto (Bk. II, pr. 5, 1).
>
> (But since the good effects of my reasoning are penetrating into you, I think that I may now use stronger ones.)

And when Philosophy has reviewed all the gifts of fortune and demonstrated that they can neither really benefit nor harm Boethius in his essence, at the opening of Book III, in which she will clarify the difference between the false goods of fortune and the true good, Boethius states:

> Itaque remedia quae paulo acriora esse dicebas non modo non perhorresco, sed audiendi avidus vehementer efflagito (Bk. III, pr. 1, 2).
>
> (Therefore those remedies which you said were a little harsher, not only am I not afraid of them, in fact I am eager to hear them and earnestly beg for them.)

Thus for the first time he explicitly expresses his readiness to undergo the harsher stages of his therapy.

When Philosophy has definitively demonstrated the inadequacies of all fortune's gifts and is about to delineate the form of the true good, the following interchange takes place between the two interlocutors:

> Hactenus mendacis formam felicitatis ostendisse suffecerit; quam si perspicaciter intueris, ordo est deinceps quae sit vera monstrare. Atqui video, inquam, nec opibus sufficientiam nec regnis potentiam nec reverentiam dignitatibus nec celebritatem gloria nec laetitiam voluptatibus posse contingere. An etiam causas cur id ita sit deprehendisti? Tenui quidem veluti rimula mihi videor intueri, sed ex te apertius cognoscere malim (Bk. III, pr. 9, 1–3).
>
> ("Let the preceding suffice to show the form of false happiness; if you have clearly seen into it, the next step is to demonstrate what true happiness is." "And indeed I do see," I said, "that sufficiency cannot appertain to wealth, nor power to kingship, nor honor to office, nor glory to fame, nor joy to pleasure." "But have you also grasped the causes why this is the case?" "I think that I catch a glimpse as if through a slender crack, but I would prefer to learn more clearly from you.")

Here for the first time the character Boethius expresses a dawning ability to discern for himself, but he still needs the tutelage of Philosophy to attain full insight.

Later in Book III, when Philosophy has explained the nature of the true good and proclaimed that it is to be sought within and not without, Boethius again states that he can anticipate Philosophy's line of reasoning:

> Tum ego: Platoni, inquam, vehementer assentior; nam me horum iam secundo commemoras, primum quod memoriam corporea contagione, dehinc cum maeroris mole pressus amisi. Tum illa: Si priora, inquit, concessa respicias, ne illud quidem longius aberit quin recorderis quod te dudum nescire confessus es. Quid? inquam. Quibus, ait illa, gubernaculis mundus regatur. Memini, inquam, me inscitiam meam fuisse confessum, sed quid afferas, licet iam prospiciam, planius tamen ex te audire desidero (Bk. III, pr. 12, 1–3).
>
> (Then I said, "I am in strong agreement with Plato, since for a second time you remind me of those things, the memory of which I first lost through contact with the body, and then for a second time, because I was overwhelmed with the weight of grief." Then she said, "If you consider the points you have already conceded, it should not be very long before you remember what you recently confessed you did not know." "What," I said. "The means," she said, "by which the universe is controlled." "I remember," I said, "that I confessed my ignorance; but, although I already foresee the answer, I nonetheless desire to hear it more clearly from your lips.")

Here, too, the character Boethius expresses his ability to see into the nature of things. Even more importantly, he has reached a level of self-awareness where he can accurately describe his condition as that of one who has twice forgotten the truth, that is, the *Consolatio* portrays not the education of a neophyte but the re-education of a lapsed philosopher. Boethius' increasing insight and self-confidence are expressed in the following passage, where for the first time he reasons for himself without the aid of Dame Philosophy:

> Mundum, inquit, hunc deo regi paulo ante minime dubitandum putabas. Ne nunc quidem arbitror, inquam, nec umquam dubitandum putabo, quibusque in hoc rationibus accedam breviter exponam (Bk. III, pr. 12, 4).

("Recently," she said, "you were of the opinion that in no way could it be doubted that this world is ruled by God." "Nor do I think so now," said I, "nor shall I ever think that it can be doubted, and I shall briefly lay before you the reasoning by which I came to this opinion.)

Finally, when Philosophy makes the bold assertion that evil does not, properly speaking, exist, Boethius the character is by now an active enough interlocutor to question her reasoning and to suggest that her argument might be circular:

> Ludisne, inquam, me inextricabilem labyrinthum rationibus texens, quae nunc quidem qua egrediaris introeas, nunc vero quo introieris egrediare, an mirabilem quendam divinae simplicitatis orbem complicas? (Bk. III, pr. 12, 30)
>
> ("Are you playing with me," I said, "by weaving an inextricable labyrinth with your arguments, so that now you enter where you exited, and now you exit where you entered, or are you winding some marvelous circle of divine simplicity?")

Thus by the end of Book III the character Boethius has reached the point where he is beginning to see things for himself and to take a more active role in the dialogue with Philosophy.

As I have already pointed out, the character Boethius in Books IV and V restates the central question of the *Consolatio* in more and more sophisticated terms and thus elicits from Philosophy progressively more sophisticated responses (see Bk. IV, pr. 1, 2–5, & Bk. V, pr.3–m.3). He remains a spokesman for the human point of view, but he is no longer plagued with blindness and dumbness; he can now manipulate and determine the direction of the discourse taking place between him and Philosophy. Thus at the opening of Book V he is confident enought of his abilities to insist that she discuss the question of chance despite her claim that the question is fraught with difficulty and is somewhat irrelevant to the progress of his therapy:

> Dixerat orationisque cursum ad alia quaedam tractanda atque expedienda vertebat. Tum ego: Recta quidem, inquam, exhortatio tuaque prorsus auctoritate dignissima, sed quod tu dudum de providentia quaestionem pluribus aliis implicitam esse dixisti re experior. Quaero enim an esse aliquid omnino et quidnam esse casum arbitrere. Tum illa: Festino, inquit, debitum promissionis absoluere viamque tibi qua patriam reveharis aperire. Haec autem etsi perutilia cognitu tamen a propositi nostri tramite paulisper aversa sunt, verendumque est ne deviis fatigatus ad emetiendum rectum iter sufficere non possis. Ne id, inquam, prorsus vereare; nam quietis mihi loco fuerit ea quibus maxime delector agnoscere. Simul, cum omne disputationis tuae latus indubitata fide constiterit, nihil de sequentibus ambigatur (Bk. V, pr. 1, i–7).
>
> (She had spoken and was about to turn the direction of her speech towards treating and explaining other matters. Then I said, "Your exhortation is proper and most worthy of your authority, but what you said before about the question of providence being tied up with many others, I now experience in fact. For I wonder whether you think chance exists at all and what sort of thing it is." Then she said, "I am in a hurry to pay the debt of my promise and to open up the way by which you might return to your fatherland.

These matters, however, although useful to know, are nonetheless somewhat removed from the path of our undertaking and it is to be feared, lest, fatigued by side-tracks, you not be up to completing the right journey." "Have no fears at all," I said, "for it would be like a rest to become acquainted with those things in which I most delight. Likewise, since every side of your argument has been constructed with the strongest conviction, let there be no doubt about what follows.)

Thus we see that the character Boethius, by assuming the function of determining the course of the dialogue, instead of merely reacting to the initiatives of Dame Philosophy, is approaching the status of Boethius the narrator. What is more, by his restatement of the problem in epistemological terms in verse 3 of Book V, the only time he speaks in verse after verse 5 of Book I, the character Boethius also approaches the status of the author Boethius who can manipulate all kinds of discourse, both prose and verse, in the construction of the elaborate poem which is the text of the *Consolatio*. So by the end of the work the character Boethius, while remaining the voice of the human condition, has nonetheless undergone a transformation from a passive and prostrate victim of fortune to an active and vigorous partner in the quest for the solution to the central human dilemma: how to harmonize being and becoming.

The character Boethius' silence in the last sections of Book V and the fact that the author Boethius has not framed his vision of Philosophy with a description of her departure have troubled many readers and have led some to suspect that the work is unfinished.[22] But if my analysis of the development of Boethius the character is correct, the ending is no longer problematic; it is in fact the only possible satisfying conclusion to the work. Boethius the author has portrayed the evolution of the character Boethius into the narrator Boethius and has hinted at the further development of Boethius the narrator into Boethius the author of the text. Thus the voice of Philosophy at the end of the work, which had been contrasted with the human voice of Boethius the character and recounted by Boethius the narrator, is now seen to be one of the voices of Boethius the author. And what the voice says represents the successful completion of the work's central project, to harmonize being and becoming, for human hopes and prayers are validated within a universe under the strict determinism of God.

We have seen that just as Boethius' presence in the text is refracted into three facets: author, narrator, and character, so, too, does Dame Philosophy appear under three guises: the voice of being, an aspect of Boethius himself, and an image of the whole tradition of ancient philosophy. Likewise, just as the character Boethius undergoes a transformation in the course of his dialogue with Philosophy, so, too, does she undergo an analogous transformation from "Icon" to "Sybil". Furthermore, as I shall demonstrate, Philosophy's transformations are calculated to correspond to Boethius' specific capabilities at any given stage of his therapy.

22. For a discussion of the question about the work's ending see Gruber, *op. cit.*, pp. 414–15.

The most efficient way of making clear the evolution of Philosophy's character is by reference to the epistemological structure of the work, whereby the text follows the progress of Boethius from "sensus" to "imaginatio", to "ratio", and finally towards "intellegentia" My claim is that Dame Philosophy adapts herself to each stage of this progress and thereby presents a different appearance to Boethius the character at each of the four levels of knowledge.

Thus in Book I, where the character Boethius is portrayed as mired in the realm of the senses, reacting to the blows of fortune in a merely personal way, Philosophy, in order to make herself apparent to Boethius, uses the only means he is prepared to understand, namely, the senses. Her first appearance is that of an icon, the imagery of whose person and raiment shadow forth her nature as it will unfold itself in the course of the dialogue. Furthermore, when she has put the elegiac Muses to rout and is faced with a dumb and blind Boethius, she again avails herself of the senses, in this case the sense of touch, in order to restore his powers of speech and sight (see Bk. I, pr. 2, 7). In addition to sight and touch, Philosophy also has recourse to the sense of hearing as a means towards reaching Boethius in his present condition:

> Itaque lenioribus paulisper utemur, ut quae in tumorem perturbationibus influentibus induruerunt ad acrioris vim medicaminis recipiendam tactu blandiore mollescant (Bk. I, pr. 5, 12).
>
> (Therefore let us make use of milder remedies for a while, so that those faculties, which have hardened into a tumor under the influence of disturbing passions, might, by means of a gentle touch, soften so as to become receptive to the power of stronger medicine.)

Here "tactu blandiore" obviously refers to the gentle touch of verse, which at this stage of Boethius' therapy is one of the principal means of care.

In the second book, where Philosophy seeks to lead Boethius from an exclusive preoccupation with his personal situation and to instill in him an understanding of the nature of fortune in general, she begins to exercise his faculty of imagination, which allows the human being to perceive the general form apart from its specific embodiment in matter (see Bk. V, pr. 4, 28). Thus Philosophy puts off her persona of icon and puts on that of Muse. This transformation is strikingly signaled in the second prose section of Book II, where Philosophy, in her attempt to reconcile Boethius to his lot, employs one of imagination's most powerful instruments, the theater, by playing the role of Fortuna herself.[23] And in the course of her speech Philosophy as Fortuna alludes to various products of the imagination such as history, tragedy, and epic (see Bk. II, pr. 2, 11–13).

The transition from imagination to reason in Boethius' therapy and the analo-

23. Perhaps this procedure was suggested by Socrates' prosopopopoeia of the laws in the *Crito* (50a ff.). In both case the powers personified defend their prerogatives in a kind of "apologia". In the case of the *Consolatio* Philosophy's assumption of Fortune's role hints at what is made explicit in the last prose section (#8) of Book II, namely, that Fortune, when properly understood, is not in and of itself an evil but a great teacher.

gous transformation of Philosophy from Muse to "Magistra" is clearly marked at the opening of Book III (see pr. 1, 1–3). Boethius describes himself as enchanted by the charms of Philosophy's poetic discourse, but also ready for the "somewhat harsher remedies" of pure reason. In her response Philosophy characterizes the nature of poetry and the function it has served in a philosophic therapy:

> . eumque tuae mentis habitum vel exspectavi vel, quod est verius, ipsa perfeci . . (Bk. III, pr. 1, 3).
>
> (And I was expecting this condition of your mind or, what is truer, I myself brought it about.)

That is, she emphasizes the affective power of poetry to change moods and dispositions which was needed to render Boethius receptive to the stronger medicine of pure philosophy.

Thus throughout Books III, IV, and the opening sections of Book V Philosophy will play the role of a "magistra" instructing her "alumnus" Sometimes she delivers lectures in which she sets forth doctrines in a straightforward format (e.g., Bk. III, pr. 2, & Bk. IV, pr. 6, 7ff.); sometimes she questions her pupil so as to involve him in the process of reasoning (e.g., Bk. III, pr. 3, 5ff., & Bk. IV, pr. 7). At times, as we have already pointed out, Boethius himself comments on the argumentation, sets forth arguments of his own, and initiates new avenues of discussion. The purpose and effect of this process are concisely represented at the opening of Book IV, where Philosophy borrows Plato's image of the wings of the soul:

> Pennas etiam tuae menti quibus se in altum tollere possit adfigam, ut perturbatione depulsa sospes in patriam meo ductu, mea semita, meis etiam vehiculis revertaris (Bk. IV, pr. 1, 9).
>
> (And I shall attach wings to your mind by means of which it will be able to lift itself on high, so that, with all disturbance removed, you might safely turn back towards your homeland under my guidance, along my path, and by my conveyance.)

The image of wings and the insistent travel motif characterizes reason as a specifically human mode of knowledge. Since the human being is born into the realm of becoming, with its dimensions of time and space, the appropriately human mode of knowing must move from one point to another, must be forever in motion. But the ultimate goal of this movement is the "homeland", the realm of being and eternal rest. Thus "ratio", though it is a way towards the truth, is not the truth itself. This problem and its solution will constitute the conclusion of the work in the second half of Book V.

At the beginning of Book V Boethius the character changes the course of the dialogue by focusing on the question of chance, which focus in turn leads to the felt contradiction between the two concepts, divine providence and human free will. By redirecting the conversation and by articulating the paradox of main-

taining seemingly contradictory propositions Boethius both displays his full command of the faculty of reason and shows up the ultimate limitations of that faculty, bound as it is by the human dimensions of time and space. Thus the "wings" of "ratio" have conveyed Boethius to the frontier of his "patria", but they are incapable of bearing him into the realm of eternal being itself. To effect this final step into the realm of the eternal Dame Philosophy undergoes her final metamorphosis: she takes off the mask of "magistra" and assumes the persona of Sybil, the mouthpiece of divine wisdom.

This change of Philosophy's role, and thus by implication of the role of the character Boethius, is represented by a sudden change in the nature of the dialogue. In the first half of Book V (through verse section 3) Boethius takes a very active part in the discussion; but once Philosophy begins to speak as a prophetess, propounding the ways of God to man, Boethius says little more than a perfunctory "yes" or "no". Throughout her dazzling disquisition on the four modes of knowledge, on the difference between "aeternitas" and "perpetuitas", in the analogous distinction between "providentia" and "praevidentia", and on the two forms of necessity, Philosophy speaks as an oracle revealing divine truth to a human audience. But as she herself says concerning the four modes of knowledge, the higher does not invalidate the lower, it merely subsumes and transcends it (see Bk. V, pr. 4, 24–39). Likewise, Philosophy as Sybil is not the negation of Philosophy as Icon, Muse, and Magistra; rather she is the culmination of her former roles, roles without which her pupil would never have progressed to a position where he is able to receive her divine teachings.

Thus, although at first sight Dame Philosophy might seem an unchanging, hieratic figure, an appropriate appearance for the mouthpiece of eternity, nonetheless her most important role in the dialogue is to constitute the second voice which makes the interior dialogue of thought possible and to serve as mediator between the character Boethius and the realm of being. This Hermes-like role, whereby Philosophy adapts herself to the capabilities of Boethius and interprets being to him in terms he is prepared to understand, that is, a power neither merely human nor fully divine which acts as intermediary between the two realms.

The epithets with which Boethius the character from time to time addresses his interlocutor underscore Philosophy's function as intermediary. Upon recognizing her for the first time Boethius refers to her as "nutricem meam" (Bk. I, pr. 3, 2), that is, as his nurse. Thus Philosophy is that power which oversees his growth, his transition from intellectual infancy to adulthood. After Philosophy's prosopopoeia of "Fortuna" in Book II, Boethius adresses her as "virtutum omnium nutrix" (Bk. II, pr. 4, 1), that is, as nurse of all the virtues. Thus Philosophy is now characterized not as Boethius' own private nurse but as a force nourishing all the excellencies of the human soul. This address represents a development in Boethius' understanding of his interlocutor: he no longer sees her merely from his own personal point of view. What is more, he aptly describes Philosophy, not

as excellence itself, but as the nourisher of excellencies, much as in Plato, philosophy is not wisdom but the enamored pursuit of wisdom.[24] At the opening of Book III, when Boethius the character claims that he is cured of his addiction to fortune, he addresses Dame Philosophy as "summum lassorum solamen animorum" (Bk. III, pr. 1, 2), that is, as the greatest comfort of weary souls. Thus Philosophy as a curative means is a figure whose function is essentially "demonic" or "hermeneutic", that is, to be the guide of the soul from one state to another, in other words, a psychopomp. Finally, in the first prose section of Book IV, Boethius addresses Philosophy as "veri praevia luminis" (Bk. IV, pr. 1, 2), that is, as guide to the true light. Here Philosophy's function as guide or intermediary is most clearly expressed: she is the way towards the light not the light itself.

This "hermeneutic" aspect of Philosophy was also signaled at the very beginning of the text, where the figures embroidered on her garments were described. The pi (the practical) and the theta (the theoretic) connected by a series of steps constituting a means of ascent from the former to the latter are clear images of Philosophy's role in the text. As mouthpiece of eternity and aspect of Boethius himself she embraces "τὰ πρακτικά" of the human condition and "τὰ θεωρετικά" of divine wisdom; she further provides the means, the ladder, affording access to the higher realm from the lower. This ladder is the dialogue itself which conveys Boethius from the depths of humanity to the heights of divinity by means of discourses drawn from the whole tradition of Greco-Roman antiquity all calculated to correspond to Boethius' stage of receptivity at any given rung.

To summarize, therefore, the significance of the dialogue form of the *Consolatio*, one could say that, although firmly within tradition of ancient philosophic dialogue, Boethius' use of the genre is internalized to a degree which no previous practitioner of the genre had attained. This interiority reflects the alienation of Boethius the author, master of the tradition at a time when the tradition was in danger of being forgotten; but it also enables him to dramatize the only interaction available to him, interaction with himself. What is more, the dynamics of this interior dialogue allow him to achieve a great deal more than a simple portrait of intellectual alienation; they constitute a subtle and complex image of the individual human being's epistemological condition.

First of all, the three-fold persona of Boethius in the text: as author, as narrator, and as character, mirrors with remarkable accuracy the complexity of human self-identity. Every human being, whenever he or she pronounces the word "I", is involved in just this three-fold problem of identity. For instance, in the sentence, "I bought the paper this morning", the "I" first of all refers to the character who bought the paper within the story of that sentence. But the "I" also identifies that character with the speaker of the sentence, that is, with the narrator of the

24. Both the maieutic (*Theaetetus* 150b ff.) and the demonic (*Symposium, passim*) aspects of Socrates cast the philosopher not as the wise man but as in some fashion on the way to wisdom.

story. Finally the use of the word "I" suggests that elusive "I" which is beyond the "I" of the character and the narrator, which is always subject and never object, which determines what stories the narrator "I" will tell and in what manner. What Boethius has accomplished in the *Consolatio* is the depiction of the process of integrating these three aspects of "ego". As author he composes a text in which he, as narrator, tells the story of how he, as character, developed to the stage where he was capable of becoming both narrator and author. But it is important to note that Boethius never simply collapses the three aspects into an undifferentiated whole; rather he carefully articulates the drama whereby the three aspects interact.

Likewise with Dame Philosophy. Beyond the importance of any Platonic influence, such as Socrates' remarks in the *Theaetetus* concerning thought as an interior dialogue, the striking thing about Boethius' introduction of Philosophy as the second interlocutor in the dialogue is its accuracy as a depiction of the process of human thinking. We have all had, or nearly had, the embarrassing experience of being caught unawares talking to ourselves. The impulse to do so and the embarrassment at being observed to do so are both instructive. On the one hand, for a human being, to think implies the staging of a drama within one's self. The activity of thought can only proceed through the give and take of different voices, of different points of view. On the other hand, to be observed doing so, either aloud or silently as in the examples of Socrates in the *Symposium*, is to be considered somehow strange, either praeternaturally wise or a fool. This embarrassment is also significant, for clearly our human ability to think has as its basis our most characteristically human means of communicating with each other, language. Thus to talk to oneself, rather than to another, is in some way unusual or "unnatural"; it is the sign either of a great mind or of the failure to interact satisfactorily with our fellow humans. Thus what Boethius has accomplished by including the necessary second voice in any interior dialogue, and which had never been done quite so systematically before him, is the dramatization of the process of thought.

Now if the human "I" is three-faceted, it is natural to expect that the second voice, which we contrive in order to talk with ourselves, would also be three-faceted, depending on what aspect of the self the voice is felt to correspond to. And so it is with Boethius' Dame Philosophy. As the voice of eternity Philosophy obviously corresponds to Boethius as the author of the text, for both are in a position to comprehend the sequence of time and the expanse of space in an instantaneous and all-inclusive grasp. In a certain sense both stand outside the text: Boethius as fashioner of the story and Philosophy as the image of eternity which transcends all stories. Second, Dame Philosophy as the representative of the whole tradition of ancient philosophy can be associated with Boethius as narrator of the story. Both have a history: the narrator has his as character in the story he tells, Philosophy has hers as the history of the various schools of ancient philosophy, their rise and fall, and their interaction. Likewise both tell a story: the narra-

tor recounts the progress of the character, Philosophy unfolds the whole content of Greco-Roman speculation in a sequential order corresponding to the progress of Boethius the character. Finally, Philosophy as an aspect of Boethius himself, as that second voice necessary for interior dialogue, clearly corresponds to Boethius the character. She converses with him throughout the text and adapts herself to his capacities at every stage of their conversation.

Thus Sartre, whom in my introduction I portrayed as pursuing the *Consolatio* merely for reasons of general education, should now be reading with greater attention, in fact, with a certain fascination. For, apart from whatever dogmatic biases Boethius may hold, he has, by means of the dialogue form of the work, taken great pains to depict the existential conditions of human thought and knowledge. On the other hand, I criticized F. Anne Payne for what I felt to be her tendentious characterization of the *Consolatio* as a text signaling the absolute relativity of all human discourse and understanding.[25] By now I am in a better position to specify the terms of my disagreement. At one point in her study, *Chaucer and Menippean Satire*, she describes the final effect of the work as follows:

> There is no inevitable sequence in the subjects she (i.e. Philosophy) discusses (fortune, happiness, evil, providence and fate, chance, foresight and freewill), nor does Boethius ever reach his "home", the goal promised a number of times, partly because he keeps asking questions, partly because "home" for man is the recognition that he lives in time, that the dialogue will continue, that there will be insights, but no final answers (p. 59).

First of all, there is indeed a clear and ordered sequence of subjects discussed, as I have demonstrated in my remarks on the philosophical content. Second, as Philosophy states very early in the work, Boethius' "patria" is a special kind of homeland, residence in which or exile from which is a matter of internal disposition not external necessity:

> An ignoras illam tuae civitatis antiquissimam legem qua sanctum est ei ius exsulare non esse quisquis in ea sedem fundare maluerit? Nam qui vallo eius ac munimine continetur, nullus metus est ne exsul esse mereatur; at quisquis inhabitare eam velle desierit pariter desinit etiam mereri (Bk. I, pr. 5, 5).
>
> (Are you unaware of that most ancient law of your home city, according to which it is declared illegal to exile whoever prefers to establish his residence there. For whoever is protected by its moat and walls, there is no fear that he should ever deserve to be an exile. But whoever stops wanting to live there, likewise ceases to deserve to do so.)

Thus, if I have rightly understood the dynamics of the dialogue, Boethius the character by the end of the work has evolved to the point where he is in fact properly disposed for entrance into the city. Third, the fact that Boethius the character insistently asks questions in his role as representative of the human condition

25. See footnote 10.

does not prevent him from entering the city, indeed, the sophisticated nature of his final questions proves him ready to enter.

Finally, the claim that home for man is in time and that there are no final answers, though similar to certain strains within the *Consolatio*, is a great simplification of Boethius' stance. As a pupil of Plato, Boethius is accutely sensitive to the paradox that, although man lives in the "metaxy", that is, in the realm between pure being and utter nonbeing, a part of him is nonetheless nostalgic for another home in the realm of eternal, unchanging being. With rare exceptions the platonic tradition takes both sides of this paradox seriously with the result that at its best Platonism achieves a delicate balance of emphasis between the relativism and uncertainty of our human condition and the instinct for being, which, though never completely realized, it would be false to deny as characteristically human. Thus Boethius' refusal to depict true being in a straightforward and simplistic manner does not imply the denial of being as real, it merely represents a profound respect for the givens of the human condition, which "cannot bear very much reality" Although Plato and Boethius might fashion literary objects in which are portrayed various aspects of the human being's progress, or lack thereof, towards being, the great truth itself is always treated as a mystery, which, because it cannot be portrayed directly, must not be. Boethius, by his use of the dialogue form, exhibits an awareness, rare for a philosopher, that there is no such thing as a simple, declarative sentence, and then proceeds, informed by this awareness, to trace how one human being, cut off from all other human beings, might, in the drama of his own thought, approach being.

IV. THE MENIPPEAN-SATIRE FORM

But this highly wrought text has been elaborated in yet another fashion. Not only is the philosophical content structured according to three different but analogous sets of categories; not only is the work couched in the form of a dialogue between two multifaceted interlocutors; the text has also been cast in the highly artificial form of Menippean Satire, a medley of alternating verse and prose, which had enjoyed a long and various history before Boethius chose to appropriate it for his own purposes.

The genre seems to have originated with Menippus of Gadara, a Greek-speaking Syrian who flourished in the first half of the third century BC. He used the form of alternating verse and prose to write essays expressive of a Cynic's seriocomic attitude towards the world and mankind. It is unclear, however, exactly how the verse sections in his works functioned: they may have been original compositions or merely quotations from previous literature. Menippus was followed by his fellow Gadarean, Meleager, who produced a body of Cynic discourse in the Menippean form around BC 100. The genre was taken over into Latin by Marcus Terentius Varro (BC 116–27), who wrote 110 books of Menip-

pean satires, of which some 600 fragments are extant and in which he mocked human foibles.[26] In the first century AD Varro's lead was taken up by Petronius in the *Satyricon* and by "Seneca" in the *Apocolocyntosis*. Likewise, in the second century AD, Lucian of Samosate wrote a series of dialogues in which the Menippean influence is strong and in which "Menippus" himself sometimes appears as character. But, although Lucian shares Menippus' seriocomic stance, he does not choose to employ the format of alternating verse and prose to which Menippus had given his name.

The form then seems not to have attracted practitioners for almost three centuries; and when it reappears in the fifth and early sixth centuries AD, its characteristically cynic tone seems to have undergone a radical transformation. No longer is the genre used to poke fun at the pretensions and vanities of mankind; instead it is an aspect of the baroque complexity of composition characteristic of much of the literature produced in the Latin West during this period. Thus Martianus Capella (fl. c. 425) casts his highly elaborate allegory, *De Nuptiis Mercurii et Philologiae*, in the Menippean Satire form; and Fulgentius (467–532 AD) does the same in the first book of his collection of allegorical interpretations of classical myths, *Mitologiarum Libri Tres*. Thus by the time Boethius inherited the genre it had long lost its associations with the mocking tones of the Cynics and had taken on the status of a genre appropriate for the explication of lofty mysteries and expressive of the technical literary mastery of its practitioners.[27] The question then arises, why did Boethius choose this strangely artificial form as medium for his *Consolatio*?

The first observation to be made about Boethius' use of Menippean Satire is the systematic pervasiveness of alternating verse and prose throughout the text. Both his rough contemporaries, Martianus Capella and Fulgentius, employ the form only intermittently; furthermore, their use of verse appears merely decorative and at times gratuitous. In contrast, Boethius alternates verse and prose from beginning to end of the *Consolatio* and he endows verse with many important functions throughout the progress of the work. At times it serves to illustrate points made in the prose sections with the more vivid images of poetry (e.g., the metra of Book II); sometimes it actually advances the argument (e.g., metrum 3 of Book V); sometimes it is reserved for purposes less appropriately treated in prose, namely, prayer (e.g. metrum 5 of Book I & metrum IX of Book III); sometimes it serves to refresh Boethius the character between strenuous dialectical workouts (e.g., metrum 6 of Book IV). Finally, the effect of the verse sec-

26. The most recent edition of Varro's Menippean fragments is: Cebe, J. P., *Varron, Satires Méippées (Édition, Traduction et Commentaire)*, École Française de Rome, Palais Farnese, Rome, 1972.

27. This is my central disagreement with Payne's approach: to take seriously the Menippean Satire format of the *Consolatio* is an important task for contemporary Boethian scholarship, but one must be careful to specify correctly the characteristics of that genre as it was practiced in late antiquity.

tions in the *Consolatio* is analogous in many ways to that of the similes in the *Iliad*. In both works these respective devices interject aspects of reality not to be encountered in the stark settings of the main action. In the *Iliad*, the entire plot of which is restricted to the bleak plane running from the Trojan citadel to the sea, the similes afford glimpses of the natural world of plants and animals, and of the workaday world of humans at their domestic chores. Likewise in the *Consolatio*, all of which takes place within Boethius' prison cell, the verse sections continually present images of natural phenomena, both terrestrial and celestial, and sometimes refer to the characters of history and myth (e.g., metrum 6 of Book II; metrum 12 of Book III; metra 3 & 7 of Book IV). Thus, on first reading, the Menippean Satire format of the *Consolatio* appears more integrated than in other comparable works. But the question still stands, what end does Menippean Satire allow Boethius to achieve, which otherwise he could not have?[28]

There existed throughout Greco-Roman antiquity an inveterate feud, which even in the fourth century BC Plato could refer to as a "certain ancient dispute",[29] between philosophy and poetry. The most common expression of this tension was the repeated attack launched by philosophical critics against poetry as fictitious and false. As early as Xenophanes, most articulately in certain Platonic passages, and as late as Boethius, poetry is accused of beguiling the mind with dangerously deceptive fabrications. On the other hand, philosophy itself felt the strong pull of poetry; in fact, much of what we term ancient philosophy was composed as poetry, if not verse. For example both Parmenides and Empedocles chose to couch their thoughts in the heroic hexameters of Homer and Hesiod; Plato wrote philosophical closet dramas; Lucretius followed in Latin the example set by Empedocles; and Boethius chose the highly artificial form of Menippean Satire in which to compose his *Consolatio*. A tension between philosophy and poetry is present throughout Boethius' text; but if my understanding of their interaction is accurate, the outcome of the feud is a draw.

Before proceeding I should forestall a possible confusion of terms. Menippean Satire is often defined as a potpourri of verse and prose, which is as good a definition as any. But when I speak of the relationship between poetry and philosophy in the *Consolatio*, I do not mean to suggest that Boethius has cast his philosophy in prose and his poetic aspirations in verse. The verse and prose sections are equally poetic, or literary; the philosophy is not to be found in any one specific mode of discourse but in the arrangement of the work as a whole. Thus, although the following analysis concentrates on the functions of the metra, much the same arguments could be applied to the variety of discourse to be found in the prose sections as well.

Verse in the *Consolatio* functions as a "pharmakon", that is, as a potent sub-

28. I have treated this question in somewhat greater detail in "*The Consolation of Philosophy* as a Work of Literature," in The American Journal of Philology, Fall 1984.

29. *Republic* X 607b: "*παλαιὰ μέν τις διαφορὰ φιλοσοφίᾳ τε καὶ ποιητικῇ.*"

stance of mysterious, almost magical, properties, which can either cure or kill.[30] Who applies the pharmakon and how it is applied are essential factors contributing to its eventual good or bad effect. Thus the whole work can be read, at least on one level, as the history of the right and wrong uses of this pharmakon which is verse.

The *Consolatio* opens with Boethius the character bewailing his fall from fortune in a poem firmly within the tradition of Latin elegy.[31] Dame Philosophy then appears and scatters the elegiac Muses, but she immediately substitutes her own Muses in their stead:

> Quis, inquit, has scenicas meretriculas ad hunc aegrum permisit accedere, quae dolores eius non modo nullis remediis foverent, verum dulcibus insuper alerent venenis? Sed abite potius, Sirenes usque in exitium dulces, meisque eum Musis curandum sanandumque relinquite (Bk. I, pr. 1, 8 & 11).
>
> ("Who," she said, "has allowed these theatrical bawds to approach this patient? Not only do they not tend him with any remedies, in fact, in addition, they feed him on sweet poisons. But off with you, you Sirens sweet even unto death, and leave him to be cared for and cured by my Muses.")

Thus verse is not viewed as essentially pernicious; its effects can be harmful or beneficial, depending on how it is used and by whom. And the first book of the *Consolatio* may be read as an account of how Philosophy removes verse from Boethius' hands and appropriates it for her own uses. After expressing his inability to perceive the hand of God in human affairs in the fifth metrum of Book I Boethius the character will not speak in verse again until the third metrum of Book V. Meanwhile Philosophy will wield verse in a variety of ways, all calculated to further the progress of Boethius' therapy.

The first use made by Philosophy of verse is what I shall term "the affective" Early in Book I, after giving the stoical advice to resist fortune (Bk. I, m. 4), Philosophy asks Boethius:

> Sentisne, inquit, haec atque animo illabuntur tuo an ὄνος λύρας? (Bk. I, p. 4, 1).
>
> ("Do you perceive these things," she said, "and have they penetrated your mind, or are you as an ass to the lyre?")

30. I of course owe the concept of poetry as a "pharmakon" to J. Derrida's treatment of the theme in Plato's *Phaedrus* in "La Pharmacie de Platon," in *La Dissémination*, Éditions du Seuil, Paris, 1972, pp. 108–33.

31. Not only are the meter and many of the topoi conventional to the genre, Boethius also echoes specific well-known passages of Latin Elegy, especially from Ovid's *Tristia*. Thus the first four lines echo *Trista* v, 1, 56:

> Flebilis ut noster status est, ita flebile carmen,
> materiae scripto conveniente suae.

while lines 5 & 6 clearly allude to *Tristia* IV, 1, 19–20:

> Me quoque Musa levat loca iussa petentem,
> sola comes nostrae perstitit illa fugae.

The implication is that in his present condition Boethius is incapable of receiving the healing truth of philosophy and the mention of the lyre hints at the instrument which will be able to effect the necessary change of heart, namely, verse. Accordingly, later in Book I, Philosophy describes her use of verse as calculated to respond to Boethius' emotional state:

> Sed quoniam firmioribus remediis nondum tempus est, et eam mentium constat esse naturam ut quotiens abiecerint veras, falsis opinionibus induantur, ex quibus orta perturbationum caligo verum illum confundit intuitum, hanc paulisper lenibus mediocribus fomentis attenuare temptabo, ut dimotis fallacium affectionum tenebris splendorem verae lucis possis agnoscere (Bk. I, pr. 6, 21).
>
> (But since it is not yet time for stronger remedies and the nature of minds is so constituted that they put on false opinions as often as they divest themselves of true ones and from these false opinions there arises a fog of disturbing passions which clouds the capacity for true insight, I shall attempt for a little while to disperse this fog with mild treatments of moderate strength, so that, with the shadows of false affections removed, you might be able to recognize the splendor of the true light.)

This affective use of poetry will prevail throughout Book II, in the course of which Philosophy appeals principally to Boethius' imagination. Even when Boethius himself complains of the ultimate inability of verse and rhetoric to alleviate deeply rooted sorrow (Bk. II, pr. 3, 2), Philosophy insists that at this stage of his therapy poetry is the most he can expect:

> Et illa: Ita est, inquit; haec enim nondum morbi tui remedia, sed adhuc contumacis adversum curationem doloris fomenta quaedam sunt; nam quae in profundum sese penetrent cum tempestivum fuerit ammovebo (Bk. II, pr. 3, 3–4).
>
> (And she said, "So it is, for these measures are not cures for your illness, they are merely certain comforts preparatory to the cure of your persistent pain. For when the time is right, I shall apply those measures which penetrate deeply.")

In Book III, a second, loftier use of verse comes into play, that which I choose to call its power to illuminate. Already in Book I, in the passage recently cited, Philosophy had hinted at the power of verse to reveal, to shed light on reality. This ability of verse to illumine is most effectively exercised in the central prayer to God as ruler of the cosmos:

> O qui perpetua mundum ratione gubernas,
> terrarum caelique sator, qui tempus ab aevo
> ire iubes stabilisque manens das cuncta moveri . . (Bk. III, m. 9, 1–3).
>
> (O you who govern the cosmos with constant reason, begetter of earth and heaven, who order time to proceed from eternity, and who, while remaining stationary, enable all things to move .)

This is the only verse section in the entire *Consolatio* to be composed in dactylic hexameters; which fact taken together with the poem's central position in the text indicates its status as the acme of verse's career in the work. Accordingly it pre-

sents a cosmology, derived in large measure from Plato's *Timaeus*, in terms of which the whole philosophical content of the second half of the text will be expressed. At the very heart of a philosophical treatise, designed to demonstrate the harmony of being and becoming, Boethius has placed a hexameter poem expressing the nature of God as beginning, middle, and end of all moving things:

> . . . tu namque serenum,
> tu requies tranquilla piis, te cernere finis,
> principium, vector, dux, semita, terminus idem (Bk. I, m. 9, 26–28).
>
> (For you are the cloudless sky, peaceful rest for the good, the goal is to perceive you, beginning, conveyor, leader, path, end, all in the same being.)

But soon thereafter the status of verse as an instrument of philosophy begins to decline. Book III ends with a poem describing the descent into Hades of Orpheus in order to rescue Eurydice. The stated significance of the legend, to be found in the text of the poem itself, is that on the soul's voyage towards celestial truth it should not look back on terrestrial realities:

> Vos haec fabula respicit
> quicumque in superum diem
> mentem ducere quaeritis;
> nam qui Tartareum in specus
> victus lumina flexerit,
> quicquid praecipuum trahit
> perdit cum videt inferos (Bk. III, m. 12, 52–58).
>
> (This tale concerns you who seek to lead your mind to the daylight above, for he who is overcome and bends his sight towards the Tartarean cave, loses whatever excellence he bore, when he sees the world below.)

But because Orpheus was a stock type of the poet in much Latin literature,[32] I am sure that this description of a poet's failure to regain his wife is meant to suggest the ultimate inability of verse to grasp and keep whatever truths it might convey. Therefore, though not a definitive dismissal of verse from its employ under Philosophy, this poem does indicate the decreasing importance of verse as the therapy of philosophy advances.

Accordingly, in Books IV and V, verse will appear less frequently; nor is it insignificant that, whereas Book I began and ended in verse, Book V opens and closes with prose. Furthermore, Philosophy explicitly describes verse's diminished role at this stage of philosophic therapy. She prefaces a long lecture on "providentia" with these words

> Quodi te musici carminis oblectamenta delectant, hanc oportet paulisper differas voluptatem dum nexas sibi ordine contexo rationes (Bk. IV, pr. 6, 6).

32. For Orpheus as the type of the poet see Virgil, *Georgics*, IV, 453–527; Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, X, 1–77; *Seneca, Hercules Furens* 569–91.

> (But if the delights of musical song please you, you must defer this pleasure for a little, while I weave together lines of reasoning connected one with the other in strict order.);

and concludes the same lecture with the following remarks

> Sed video te iam dudum et pondere quaestionis oneratum et rationis prolixitate fatigatum aliquam carminis exspectare dulcedinem; accipe igitur haustum quo refectus firmior in ulteriora centendas (Bk. IV, 6, 57).
>
> (But I see that for some time now, burdened by the weight of the question and fatigued by the extent of our reasoning, you look forward to some poetic sweetness; receive therefore a draught, restored by which you might all the more firmly struggle onward.)

Verse is no longer characterized as affective or illuminating, as it had been in Books I–III; it is now merely restorative; it no longer works hand in hand with philosophy towards curing ignorance, it only serves as a rest stop on the arduous way towards truth.

But this is not the last word on verse in the *Consolatio*. Since the fifth metrum in Book I Boethius the character has not once spoken in verse. Then suddenly, as just about his last words in the text at all, he breaks into verse (Bk. V, m. 3) before Philosophy launches into her disquisition on the four modes of knowledge, on eternity and perpetuity, on "providentia" and "praevidentia", with which the works comes to an end. In Book I Boethius had complained:

> Omnia certo fine gubernans
> hominum solos respuis actus
> merito rector cohibere modo.
> Nam cur tantas lubrica versat
> Fortuna vices? . .
> Rapidos, rector, comprime fluctus
> et quo caelum regis immensum
> firma stabiles foedere terras (Bk. I, m. 5, 25–29 & 46–48).
>
> (You who govern all things with fixed purpose, it is only human affairs which you refuse to contain as ruler within the deserved measure. For why does slippery fortune turn such changes? Ruler, quiet the rushing waves, and with the same bond by which you control the great heavens, fix and stabilize the earth.)

In Book V he puts the matter as follows:

> Quaenam discors foedera rerum
> causa resolvit? Quis tanta deus
> veris statuit bella duobus
> ut quae carptim singula constent
> eadem nolint mixta iugari?
> An nulla est discordia veris
> semperque sibi certa cohaerent,
> sed mens caecis obruta membris
> nequit oppressi luminis igne
> rerum tenues noscere nexus? (Bk. V, m. 3, 1–10)

(What discordant cause has undone the bonds of things? What god has established such contention between two truths, so that the same propositions, which, when taken one by one, are valid, should refuse to be joined together? Or in fact is there no discord among truths and they always firmly cohere one with the other, but the mind, buried in imperceptive limbs, is unable by the fire of its buried vision to discern the subtle interweaving of things.)

It is important to note that these final words of Boethius the character are couched in the same meter as the last verse he spoke in Book I (Anapestic Dimeter Acatalectic) and that this latter verse section poses essentially the same question as the former—what is the relationship between the realm of unchanging being and the unpredictably various world of humanity—but that it does so in less personal and emotional terms and with greater self-consciousness and epistemological sophistication.

I interpret this development as the last stage of verse's career throughout the *Consolatio*. In the first book Dame Philosophy removed the "pharmakon" of verse from Boethius' hands much as a mother would take a potentially dangerous object from her infant child. Philosophy then proceeds to make use of that same "pharmakon" as one means among many in the course of Boethius' therapy. Thus, depending on the stage of therapy involved, verse fills more or less important functions. In the end, as token of his successful cure and new maturity, Boethius the character speaks in verse one last time, thus demonstrating his newly acquired ability to manipulate the "pharmakon" of verse correctly and beneficially.[33]

Throughout its career in the *Consolatio*, verse, as well as the variety of prose styles, is judged according to the criteria of philosophy. As Dame Philosophy puts it at the opening of Book II:

Adsit igitur rhetoricae suadela dulcedinis, quae tum tantum recta calle procedit cum nostra instituta non deserit cumque hac musica laris nostri vernacula nunc leviores nunc graviores modos succinat (Bk. II, pr. 1, 8).

(Therefore let there be present rhetorical sweetness' power of persuasion, which advances along the straight path, only when it does not abandon our precepts and while, as a handmaid in our household, it sings measures now soft, now grave in its music.)

In this regard Boethius may be seen as coming down on the side of philosophy in its ancient feud with poetry, for the value of the latter is strictly determined by the canon of the former. But the situation is considerably more complex than this, for Menippean Satire, at least as Boethius handles it, is more than a simple

33. A parallel to the character Boethius' use of verse in Book V may be seen in the first metrum of that book, where Philosophy illustrates her definition of chance in elegiac couplets. Just as the whole work opened with Boethius' lament in elegiac couplets, so, too, is the first metrum of the final book composed in that same meter. But meter is the only thing the two poems have in common; Philosophy has transformed the vehicle for Boethius' self-pity into an instrument of philosophic demonstration.

alternation of verse and prose, it constitutes a veritable encyclopedia of available forms of discourse. Elegiac verse (Bk. I, m. 1), visionary literature (Bk. I, pr. 1, 1–6), allegorical literature (Bk. I, pr. 1, 7–11), didactic verse (Bk. I, m. 2), Cynic-Stoic diatribe (Bk. I, pr. 3), prayer (Bk. I, m. 5), forensic oratory (Bk. I, pr. 4, 2ff.), philosophic dialogue (Bk. I, pr. 6), and expository prose (Bk. I, pr. 5) are just some of the many genres included in this extraordinarily eclectic work.[34] Thus the texture of the composition is one of great variety and one which displays its artificiality openly, almost proudly. That is, Boethius the author is consciously playing the whole gamut of ancient literary genres and he wants his reader to be aware of the fact. But again, to what end?

One answer, which does not really get to the heart of the matter, is that Boethius manipulates various forms of discourse according to a canon of propriety of form to content. Thus Boethius the character bewails his fall from fortune in the tones traditional to Latin elegy; Philosophy's first appearance is described according to the conventions of ancient vision literature and her rout of the Muses recalls the allegorical methods of a Prudentius; when presenting the case for his despondency Boethius the character speaks as if before a jury, employing the form and many topoi traditional to Roman forensic oratory; and so on throughout the work. Moreover this correspondence of medium to message is organized according to the same hierarchical structure which informs the philosophical content and shapes the progress of the dialogue. Thus the work opens with the character Boethius indulging in the lachrymose strains of elegy and closes with Dame Philosophy's disquisition on "providentia" couched in a lofty, almost oracular, prose reminiscent of certain such passages in Plato.[35] The evolution from one mode of discourse to another follows the same progress from "sensus" to "imaginatio" to "ratio" and finally towards "intellegentia", which we have traced in other contexts. In this regard as well Boethius is clearly subjecting poetry to the demands of philosophy and in so doing he implicitly ranks poetry on a level lower than philosophy.

But the fact that the *Consolatio* itself as a text is essentially a poem, that is, a crafted fiction which Boethius the author presents to the reader as an obviously wrought object, has further implications. At the very core of the work, in the hexameter hymn to God at the exact middle of the central Book III (metrum 9),

34. For a thorough analysis of the genres exploited by Boethius in the composition of the *Consolatio* see Reichenberger, *op. cit.*, pp. 3–34.

35. I am thinking of the kind of diction exemplified by the following passage in the *Phaedrus* (245c5–246a1): "*ψυχὴ πᾶσα ἀθάνατος. τὸ γὰρ ἀεικίνητον ἀθάνατον· τὸ δ' ἄλλο κινοῦν καὶ ὑπ' ἄλλου κινούμενον, παῦλαν κινήσεως, παῦλαν ἔχει ζωῆς* " Compare Book V, pr. 6, 2–5: "Deum igitur aeternum esse cunctorum ratione degentium commune iudicium est. Quid sit igitur aeternitas consideremus; haec enim nobis naturam pariter divinam scientiamque patefecit. Aeternitas igitur est interminabilis vitae tota simul et perfecta possessio. Quod ex collatione temporalium clarius liquet. Nam quicquid vivit in tempore id praesens a praeteritis in futura procedit. . . ." Although the Gorgianic features are more marked in Plato, both passages are alike in exemplifying a rhythmic and highly wrought philosophic prose.

Dame Philosophy addresses a prayer to the fashioner of the universe. Throughout this poem God is depicted as crafting the "mundus", which is Latin for "cosmos", that is, the universe as an orderly structured whole:

> O qui perpetua mundum ratione gubernas,
> terrarum caelique sator, qui tempus ab aevo
> ire iubes stabilisque manens das cuncta moveri,
> quem non externae pepulerunt fingere causae
> materiae fluitantis epus verum insita summi
> forma boni livore carens, tu cuncta superno
> ducis ab exemplo, pulchrum pulcherrimus ipse
> mundum mente gerens similique in imagine formans
> perfectasque iubens perfectum absoluere partes (Bk. III, m. 9, 1–9).

> (O you who govern the world with constant reason, progenitor of earth and heaven, who order temporality to proceed from eternity, and while remaining stationary endow all things with motion, whom no external causes forced to fashion this work of inconstant matter but the innate idea of the highest good lacking all envy. You bring forth all things from the exemplar on high, yourself most beautiful wielding a beautiful world and shaping it according to a like image, ordering the perfect parts to complete a perfect whole.)

Then in Book V it becomes clear that not only is God's generation of the universe an act of "poiesis", his perspective on his creation is that of an observer viewing a work of art:

> Intellegentiae vero celsior oculus exsistit; supergressa namque universitatis ambitum ipsam illam simplicem formam pura mentis acie contuetur (Bk. V, pr. 4, 30).

> (But the eye of intellect exists on a higher plane, for transcending the circle of the universe it beholds the simple form with pure mental vision.)

To God's eye the universe does not appear as a history, that is, as a sequence of events, but as a poem, that is, as a wrought object capable of being immediately and completely perceived:

> Quod igitur interminabilis vitae plenitudinem totam pariter comprehendit ac possidet, cui neque futuri quicquam absit nec praeteriti fluxerit, id aeternum esse iure perhibetur idque necesse est et sui compos praesens sibi semper assistere et infinitatem mobilis temporis habere praesentem (Bk. V, pr. 6, 8)

> (Therefore that which equally grasps and possesses the whole fullness of life without beginning or end, and from which no future thing is absent nor has the past flowed by, that is rightly held to be eternal, and it is necessary that, possessed of itself, it is always present to itself and holds as present the whole infinity of moving time.)

Finally, the *Consolatio* closes with a vision of God as eternally fashioning and eternally contemplating his creation:

> Manet etiam spectator desuper cunctorum praescius deus visionisque eius praesens semper aeternitas cum nostrorum actuum futura qualitate concurrit bonis praemia malis supplicia dispensans (Bk. V, pr. 6, 45).

(There also remains as spectator from above God who foreknows all things and the constantly present eternity of his vision is in accord with the future quality of our actions, dispensing as it does punishments for evils and rewards for good actions.)

Because within the text God is portrayed as a poet and his creation as a poem, the *Consolatio* as a poem assumes great significance. Although verse throughout the work has been criticized and subjected to the purification of philosophy, the goal of philosophy, which, in the Platonic tradition, is always a means and never an end, is the appreciation of the "supreme fiction" which is the cosmos. Thus just as God fashions the universe and contemplates his work of art, so too does Boethius the author fashion a text, the purpose of which is to guide the reader towards a perspective where he can view the world as God does, that is, as a poem. Therefore the critique and subordination of verse to philosophy within the text must be understood, not as the dismissal of an inferior technique, but as the castigation of the highest and most dangerous human capacity for not living up to its potential, for not constituting the human fiction which might adequately reflect God's supreme fiction. In the end, Menippean Satire allows Boethius to compose a kind of metapoem, that is, a poem freed from the conventional constraints of traditional literary genres, able to subordinate those genres to the demands of philosophy, and capable of reflecting on itself as an analogue to God's poem, the universe.

We have seen how the dialogue form of the work allows Boethius to portray the development of Boethius the character into Boethius the narrator; or, as Sartre might have put it, dialogue allows Boethius to portray the existential conditions of human knowledge. Likewise, Menippean Satire allows Boethius to present himself as a poet as opposed to a dogmatic philosopher. The implication of this strategy is that, unlike A. J. Ayer for instance, Boethius does not believe that philosophy's proper medium is a succession of simple declarative sentences but a highly wrought text, the many voices and tones of which interact so as to produce a pattern mirroring the complexity of the cosmos.

V. CONCLUSION

On the strength of the preceding analyses of the philosophical content, of the dialogue form, and of the format of Menippean Satire we can at last draw some firm conclusions as to how one might best approach the text, in other words, how one should read the *Consolatio*.

On the one hand it is clear that we cannot treat the text as a straightforward philosophical essay or treatise, the elements of which, such as definitions, propositions, and arguments, are best understood when read most literally and as directly expressive of the author's intention. Thus, for instance, when Boethius the character concludes the opening elegy with the statement

Quid me felicem totiens iactastis, amici?
Qui cecidit, stabili non erat ille gradu (Bk. I, m. 1, 21–22).

(Why, my friends, did you so often boast of my prosperity? He, who has fallen, proves that he was not in a secure position.)

we are not meant to assume that he speaks for Boethius the author, at least not as these words stand in their immediate context. Likewise, as we have already seen, when in the final metrum of Book I Dame Philosophy advises Boethius to cast out all hopes and fears, this exhortation cannot be simply accepted as Philosophy's last words on the subject, never mind as the opinion of the author, for the same character in the last sentences of the text will eloquently defend the validity of human hope (Bk. V, pr. 5, 44–48).

On the other hand to subject the text to a structuralist analysis or to deconstruction would be inappropriate, at least at this stage of our understanding, for both these methods arrogate to their practitioners a privileged position vis-à-vis the text and downplay or ignore the conscious craftsmanship, and thereby the intention, of the author. In the case of the *Consolatio* the foregoing pages will have given us good reason to suppose that whatever strategies we may tease out of the text were deliberately inserted by the author as elements in a larger construction. Thus, until we are confident that we understand the intended interaction of elements within the text and the intended implications of the text as a whole, it would be rash and wrongheaded to reduce the *Consolatio* to a set of structural categories or to a representation seeking to conceal or display its "difference" For example, the attentive reader will notice that the text on several occasions makes reference to the theme: "To every thing there is a season and a time to every purpose under heaven" (e.g. Bk. I, m. 1, 11; Bk. I, m. 6; Bk. III, m. 1). But to latch on to this motif as one element in an underlying structure or as evidence betraying an anxiety about the existence of an appropriate time would constitute a failure to appreciate both the generic status of the text—this "tempestivus" theme being one of the few elements which Boethius' *Consolatio* shares with more conventional examples of consolation literature[36]—and the significance of this motif within the larger dialectic of time and eternity, order and chaos. I am not claiming that a structuralist or deconstructionist approach might not uncover some fascinating material; I am saying that the elaborate intricacy of the text should indicate to us that we are up against a master of construction and instill in us a healthy humility with regard to his work.

How, then, should one read the *Consolatio*? I would respond that it requires both the mind of a philosopher and that of a poet fully to appreciate the dynamics and significance of the work. When confronted with the world the philosopher reacts by giving an account. The English word, "account", its Latin forerunner, "ratio", and the Greek archetype, "logos" all denote a rational explanation and

36. See, for example, Seneca, *Cosolatio ad Helviam Matrem* 1, 2: "Dolori tuo, dum recens saeviret, sciebam occurrendum non esse, ne illum ipsa solacia irritarent et accenderent; nam in morbis quoque nihil est perniciosius quam immatura medicina."

further connote mathematical proportion. Thus the properly philosophic mode of discourse attempts to illumine reality by coming up, as it were, with a formula corresponding to the interaction of the elements of reality. On the other hand, the poet responds to experience by telling a story. This poetic response shares certain features with the philosophic: both attempt to represent reality and the consonance of certain English words, such as "to tell" and "to tally", "to recount" and "to count", suggests that in some ways the poetic story is a kind of philosophic account. But always present and operative in the telling of a story is the mode, "it is as if"; in other words, the poet's story, although meant to reflect reality, is always a consciously fabricated fiction.

Thus the "ancient disagreement" between philosophy and poetry is a family feud. The philosopher and poet, like Cain and Abel, like Eteocles and Polyneices, desire the same end, to represent what is, but their respective means, the account and the story, although they display a common concern for the orderly arrangement of parts within a whole,[37] appear to be irreconcilable, for the philosopher's account cannot tolerate fiction and the poet's story ceases to function if read as a formula. As is true of all family feuds, the very likeness of the combatants renders the conflict all the more vehement.

Therefore the Boethian achievement and the response which that achievement demands are bold ones indeed, for they constitute nothing less than the reconciliation of philosophy and poetry. The various "stories" within the text (e.g. Boethius' elegy at Bk. I, m. 1 and his defense at Bk. I, pr. 4; Philosophy's prosopopoeia of Fortuna at Bk. II, pr. 2 and her retelling of ancient legends at Bk. III, m. 12, Bk. IV, m. 3, and Bk. IV, m. 7) are all subject and subordinate to a philosophic account expressed most clearly in the epistemological hierarchy of "sensus", "imaginatio", "ratio", and "intellegentia" (Bk. V, pr. 4, 24–39); on the other hand, that philosophical account is contained within the story of Boethius' encounter with Dame Philosophy: it is placed in a context, it is led up to by dialogue, and it is proferred not in the author's words but in those of a character within the story. The implication seems to be that to respond to reality merely as a philosopher or merely as a poet is insufficient, for being requires both an account and a story, and the tension between these modes must be endured. In the end the depiction of the universe as God's "supreme fiction" suggests a possible harmony between philosophy and poetry. Philosophy's account is required both to purge human fictions and to lead man towards God's perspective; but from this perspective the world constitutes a poem and must be read as such.

But what in practice does it mean to read a text with the dual focus of philosophy and poetry? The clearest response is to give a specific example. Thus it is very likely that the reader of this paper, and very certain that the reader of the

37. It is worth stressing this common feature of poetry and philosophy, namely, a care for the coherence of parts within a whole, in order to clarify the real difference between the two modes. Thus the issue is beauty vs. truth, for there is a kind of aesthetic operative in all philosophic accounts; rather the conflict is between two approaches to the truth.

Consolatio itself, will have realized by now that the central theme of the work is the question of the order and coherence of the universe. The question is not a new one, even for Boethius; but his means of addressing the question is novel.

The first formulation of the question is the character Boethius' distressed complaint in the middle of the first book:

> Omnia certo fine gubernans
> hominum solos respuis actus
> merito rector cohibere modo (Bk. I, m. 5, 25–27).
>
> (You who govern all things with fixed purpose, it is only human affairs which you refuse to contain, as ruler, within the deserved measure.)

His claim that order seems to reign over every aspect of the universe except that of human fortune is implicitly countered in the very next verse section, in which Dame Philosophy maintains that a universal order does obtain and that it is man's duty to conform to it:

> Signat tempora propriis
> aptans officiis deus
> nec quas ipse cohercuit
> misceri patitur vices.
> Sic quod praecipiti via
> certum deserit ordinem
> laetos non habet exitus (Bk. I, m. 6, 16–22).
>
> (God stamps the seasons, assigning each to its proper duties; nor does he allow the cycles which he himself has bound to be confused. Therefore whatever in its headlong course abandons this fixed order has no happy outcome.)

Here two opposing conceptions of man's position in the universe are simply juxtaposed. As Boethius the character sees it, mankind is in exile, because God's order does not extend to the realm of human affairs; while from Philosophy's point of view, man has exiled himself by failing to conform to the order inherent in the nature of things. What is important to note is that neither side of the question is guaranteed as the author's own; in fact, the entire *Consolatio* may be read as a dialogue between these opposing points of view.

Book II represents an attempt on Philosophy's part to convince Boethius the character not only that the gifts of fortune are not by right the possession of any human being but furthermore that the apparent flux of fortune in reality constitutes a kind of order:

> Constat aeterna positumque lege est,
> ut constet genitum nihil (Bk. II, m. 3, 17–18).
>
> (It stands firm and fixed by eternal law that nothing born stands firm.)

This law of change, according to which all sublunary creatures are destined to suffer highs and lows in the turn of fortune's wheel, when properly understood,

no longer functions as the deceptive seductress, fortune's usual persona in philosophical texts, but as an effective teacher:

> Etenim plus hominibus reor adversam quam prosperam prodesse fortunam; illa enim semper specie felicitatis, cum videtur blanda, mentitur, haec semper vera est, cum se instabilem mutatione demonstrat (Bk. II, pr. 8, 3).
>
> (Therefore, I believe that bad fortune is of more use to mankind than good, for the latter, while it seems propitious, deceives by means of the appearance of happiness, whereas the former is always true, for by its change it demonstrates its essential instability.)

This pedagogical power of fortune was foreshadowed and dramatized early in Book II when Dame Philosophy put on the mask of Fortuna herself in order to address Boethius' complaints (Bk. II, pr. 2, 1ff.). What is more, the paradox of change as the order of fortune gives rise at the end of Book II to the vision of "amor" as the principle of order in the universe:

> Hanc rerum seriem ligat
> terras ac pelagus regens
> et caelo imperitans amor (Bk. II, m. 8, 13–15).
>
> (Love, which rules supreme in heaven, and which controls both land and sea, also binds this series of things.)

Thus we have the first response to Boethius' dilemma: the very fortune which he thought chaotic turns out to function according to a law proper to it, and the universe, seen in the light of fortune's law, is governed by a tensile harmony, best described as "amor" But again, one must remember that this description of universal order is not necessarily the author's opinion; instead it represents a calculated attempt by Dame Philosophy to communicate with Boethius the character on terms which he is capable of understanding.

This point becomes all the more clear when in Book III we see that certain aspects of this first conception of universal order are called into question. The first metrum of Book III reads very much like metrum 6 of Book I, both poems preach a proper order which it is man's duty to imitate; but in the very next verse section, #2, which seeks to describe the nature of this order in greater detail, certain troubling traits begin to emerge. Dame Philosophy opens the poem by stating her intention to sing of the means by which "Natura" governs the universe. There follow three examples illustrative of nature's ability to reassert herself despite the artificial interventions of humanity: the tame lion, who once he tastes blood, recovers his wild nature; the caged bird, who, though well fed by its human captors, breaks into song when it escapes to its natural haunts; and the tree, the top of which has been bent to the ground, snapping back straight up when released. In all three cases man appears as in some way not belonging to the nature of things, for the emphasis is on nature's capacity to maintain its own course despite human interference. In addition, all three examples bear associa-

tions of violence or ingratitude which might well instill in the reader a certain unease about the operations of nature.[38] Likewise in the fourth and final example, and again in the concluding lines of the poem, the natural order described holds no place for man. The return of the sun every morning at dawn (11.31–33) is a process independent of man's control; and the concluding generalities about the "eternal return" of nature certainly suggest man's singularity in the larger scheme of things, for he is just that creature who seems unable to join his end to his beginning and thus to enter into the eternal round of nature:

> Repetunt proprios quaeque recursus
> redituque suo singula gaudent
> nec manet ulli traditus ordo
> nisi quod fini iunxerit ortum
> stabilemque sui fecerit orbem (Bk. II, m. 2, 34–38).
>
> (All things seek out their proper cycles and everything rejoices in its own return, nor is any order handed down to anything, except that it join its beginning to its end and make a stable circuit of itself.)

Thus the natural order of things celebrated in the second book is here shown to have precious little to do with the realities of the human condition. What is more, the principle of "amor" no longer functions as it did in the final verse section of Book II, where it constituted a law or bond uniting the disparate contraries of the world. In Book II the turning of Fortune's wheel and the cosmic principle of "amor" were seen as counterbalancing man's lawless appetites, his eternal desire for more (Bk. II, m. 2); thus the book can end on a triumphant note of achieved harmony between order and desire:

> O felix hominum genus
> si vestros animos amor
> quo caelum regitur regat (Bk. II, m. 8, 28–30).
>
> (O happy race of men, if the love by which heaven is ordered orders your minds.)

But in Book III nature's eternal return is suggested to be of little concern to mankind and consequently "amor" loses its status as a principle of order. When in the final metrum of Book III Orpheus attempts to rescue Eurydice from Hades, a human interference with the cycle of nature parallel to those described in the second metrum, he fails because his "amor" cannot bear to be constrained by Hades' "law":

> 'Donamus comitem viro
> emptam carmine coniugem;
> sed lex dona coherceat,

38. What is more, the literary background to some of these images conjures up very unsettling associations. Thus the image of the lion calls to mind the famous Aeschylean lion cub in the *Agamemnon* (717–36), while the bent tree echoes the grisly demise of Pentheus in Euripides' *Bacchae* (1062–75).

ne dum Tartara liquerit
fas sit lumina flectere.'
Quis legem det amantibus?
Maior lex amor est sibi (Bk. III, m. 12, 42–47).

('We grant as companion to her husband this wife, bought for a song. But let one law hedge in this gift: it is not allowed to look back until he has left the infernal regions.' Who may impose a law on lovers? Love is its own greater law.)

Thus all that has happened in the progress from Book I to Book III is the attainment of a more intense and more sophisticated sense of man's disjunction with the universe. The realm of fortune and "amor" as described in Book II are in Book III shown up as in reality excluding all properly human aspiration. But of course this is not the whole picture; Boethius the author is not a Camus, he does not envision man as in an "absurd" relation with the world. What has been lacking throughout Books II and III is a sense of man's proper place in the universe; but the answer to this lack, which will be treated in detail in Books IV and V, has already been foreshadowed in the central verse section, #9, of Book III. There, in the context of a prayer, all that will become explicit in the disquisitions of the final two books, is succinctly summarized. Man does have a "homeland" but he is in exile from it and his re-entry into it requires not only movement within one dimension, but the passage from one dimension to another. Likewise, it is possible to characterize man's place or homeland as the lack of a home, as his pilgrim status in the universe, but only with the proviso that man is on the way towards some very definite goal.

In Book IV the means of progressing towards this goal are mapped out with a certain precision. The significance of the wing imagery in the first verse section is elucidated not only in the arguments of the prose sections but, even more strikingly, in the measures of the verse sections. Thus in the fifth metrum the obstacle to man's return is declared to be, not distance, but ignorance, while in the sixth metrum the object of man's actual ignorance and potential knowledge is described in terms reminiscent of "amor" in Book II, but with certain all-important differences. God is portrayed as harmonizing the cosmos by means of "amor":

Hic est cunctis communis amor
repetuntque boni fine teneri,
quia non aliter durare queant
nisi converso rursus amore
refluant causae quae dedit esse (Bk. IV, m. 6, 44–48).

(This is the love common to all things, whereby they seek to be contained within the boundary of the good; for not otherwise are they able to endure, unless, with love turned back full circle, they return to the cause which gave them being.)

But the relation between the principle of order and the ordered universe is profoundly different from that drawn in the final metrum of Book II. There the "amor" regulating the cosmos was depicted as immanent in the world itself,

whereas here the principle of order is radically transcendent. The world, as before, is depicted as moving in eternally repetitive circles (Bk. IV, m. 6, 6–33), but, in contrast, the agent of order is exempt from this circularity, for he is exempt from all movement:

Sedet interea conditor altus
rerumque regens flectit habenas
rex et dominus, fons et origo,
lex et sapiens arbiter aequi,
et quae motu concitat ire
sistit retrahens ac vaga firmat (Bk. IV, m. 6, 34–39).

(Meanwhile the lofty creator sits in control turning the reins of things, the king and lord, the fount and source, the law and wise arbiter of justice, and what he has put into motion, by pulling back, he brings to a halt, and he stabilizes what otherwise would wander.)

Thus by the end of the fourth book Boethius the character and Dame Philosophy agree that there is an order to the universe and, what is even more important, an order which makes sense to human beings and makes sense of human activity:

Ite nunc, fortes, ubi celsa magni
ducit exempli via. Cur inertes
terga nudatis? Superata tellus
  sidera donat (Bk. IV, m. 7, 32–35).

(Now go forth, heroes, where the lofty path of the great exemplar leads. Why, inactive, do you keep your backs free of burdens? The earth once overcome bestows the stars.)

What renders this order humanly satisfying, in a way which the order described in Book II was not, is the fact that it is in some way out of nature, just as man is in some way out of nature. But this very quality of transcendence is what makes this order so inaccessible to man, for if man is in one sense out of nature, he is even more obviously bound to nature. The expression of this dilemma and of the solution to it will constitute the content of Book V.

As I have pointed out in more than one context, metra 3 and 4 of Book V strikingly echo metra 5 and 6 of Book I. The metres of the respective poems are the same; in the first of each pair Boethius the character expresses his dilemma; in the second Dame Philosophy, somewhat obliquely, suggests a solution. The real and significant difference lies in the fact that the two poems in Book I represent the mere juxtaposition of two opposing points of view, whereas in verse section 3 and 4 of Book V Boethius first expresses his dilemma in intellectually sophisticated terms, terms which eventually elicit from Dame Philosophy the epistemological poem which is verse section 4 and in which she makes a strong case for the existence of the more active and creative mental faculties. In Book I Boethius says one thing, Dame Philosophy another; there is no attempt to harmonize their respective points of view, because it will require the whole process de-

picted in Books II, III, and IV before Boethius and Philosophy can, as it were, speak the same language. The various philosophical doctrines and arguments employed are important in and of themselves, but even more important is the process whereby a human interlocutor progresses to the point where he is on the verge of viewing his human condition from a radically different perspective, that, in fact, of eternity.

For the pair of poems in Book V portray Boethius as making the decisive change of procedure from thought to critical thought and Dame Philosophy as completing Boethius' tentative venture into epistemology. Boethius first wonders why the universe is so constructed as to allow the paradox of divine providence and human free will (Bk. V, m. 3, 1–5) but immediately thereafter asks the more self-conscious and sophisticated question, is this apparent paradox merely the result of our limited powers of perception and reasoning? (Bk. V, m. 3, 6–10) The remainder of the poem is taken up with reflections on the peculiar mixture of knowledge and ignorance which is characteristic of the human mind. In the fourth verse section Philosophy continues these investigations into the workings of the human mind and claims that essential to an understanding of human mental activity is an appreciation of the mind's active role in perception, imagination, and reason. Thus in metrum 3 Boethius the character exhibits the mind's capacity for creative thought while in metrum 4 Dame Philosophy draws general conclusions from this one example as prelude to her revelation of the mysteries of eternity.

We see then that in the progress from Book I to Book V the question of the order of the universe is not handled as it might have been in an Aristotelian treatise. Instead of an exclusively rational account of the problem at hand, we are presented with a dialogue between two interlocutors who at first appear as polar opposites but who in the end complete each other's arguments. On the other hand, we are not merely presented with a story, as for instance in Hesiod's *Theogony*, of the rise of universal order; essential to Boethius' story are the various arguments contained within it and the over-arching epistemological hierarchy which structures it. By the blending of these two modes of discourse Boethius the author contrives not only to dramatize the process of thought, but even more significantly, to dramatize the emergence, on the epistemological level, or order itself. That is, Boethius not only gives an account, in fact several accounts, of order in the universe; he also tells a story about the revelation of order in the process of human thought. He seems to imply that it is inadquate merely to give an account without placing that account in the context of a story, or just to tell a story without subjecting it to the rigor of a philosophical account.

Thus poetry and philosophy, which we along with many in antiquity feel to be mutually exclusive modes of discourse, are here used to complement each other. Every story requires an explanation, an interpretation; and yet merely to explain, to interpret, or to give an account of, is by itself unsatisfying: every explanation must lead to another, better story if it is not to remain sterile. By constructing a

text in which various stories are subject to the critical account of philosophy, in which various philosophical accounts are contained within a larger story, in which that larger story is structured according to an epistemological hierarchy, and finally, in which that epistemological hierarchy ushers in the vision of God creating and viewing his creation as a poem, by intertwining all these strategies Boethius manages not only to produce a subtly nuanced and delicately balanced depiction of the human condition, he also demonstrates what is required to make such a depiction possible, namely, the reconciliation of poetry and philosophy.

Early in the same century in which Cassiodorus composed his *Institutiones*, that model of perfection for the ossification of the Greco-Roman tradition under the aegis of the Christian cult, and in which Benedict produced his *Regula* in the rough and ready patois that spoken Latin had become in the sixth century as a guide to the practice of "holy ignorance", Boethius contrives a text which avoids the complementary pitfalls of merely academic erudition and religious ignorance, which, in fact, betrays on its author's part a mastery of the ancient tradition and an ability to handle that tradition creatively. Boethius himself was no doubt nominally a Christian: for all intents and purposes there was no other cult available in the Latin West; one could not hold official posts without being a Christian; and it is as certain as these matters can be that Boethius in fact wrote the theological treatises ascribed to him.[39] But the fact that many scholars of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were convinced that Boethius the author of the *Consolatio* could not have composed Christian theological treatises together with the further fact that medieval commentators were by and large anxious about Boethius' orthodoxy, whether they expressed that anxiety in direct denunciation or by attempting to gloss over certain troubling passages,[40] suggests that Boethius' Christianity, and thus his role in the transition from antiquity to the western European Middle Ages, is an unusual and complicated one.

There are echoes of Christian doctrine and of the Christian scriptures to be found here and there in the *Consolatio*,[41] but the truly significant fact is that in the final analysis the text, though not anti-Christian, is profoundly non-Christian. Faced with his own mortality Boethius refuses to cut the Gordian knot by throw-

39. The theological treatises are *De Trinitate, Utrum pater et filius et spiritus sanctus de divinitate substantialiter praedicentur, Quomodo substantiae in eo quod sint bonae sint cum non sint substantialia bona* (or *De Hebdomadis*), *Contra Eutychen et Nestorium*. The *De Fide Catholica* is commonly agreed not to be the work of Boethius.

40. See Courcelle, *op. cit.*, pp. 333–44 for an enlightening discussion of the medieval tradition of Boethian commentaries. The information which Courcelle marshalls makes it clear that although Boethius was a standard author in the early middle ages and into the twelfth century, the monks who read the Consolatio carefully were struck and puzzled by its lack of any overt mention of Christianity and by certain arguments at variance with Christian orthodoxy.

41. For a handy list of possible references to Holy Scripture see: Beiler, L., *Anicii Manlii Severini Boethii Philosophiae Consolatio*, Corpus Christianorum Series Latina 94, Turnhout, Brepols, 1957, p. 109.

ing himself onto the mercy of a God made man; rather he carefully traces the intricacies of that knot and produces a portrait of man, ignorant and hungry for wisdom, mortal and nostalgic for immortality. Although Christianity has on several occasions appropriated philosophy and poetry as handmaidens to revelation, it is nonetheless deeply suspicious of the artifices of poetry and impatient with the slow hard work of philosophy. Boethius, in contrast, works with and through these two modes of discourse and produces a philosophical poem, which serves as one of the few examples of "doing philosophy" available to the early Latin middle ages, and which provided a store of poetic strategies to be exploited by the likes of Dante and Chaucer. The question of Boethius' personal allegiance to Christianity is probably unanswerable and is certainly in bad taste—it is just not done among gentlefolk to force simplistic statements of belief or unbelief from one another. What we do know, what Boethius allows us to know is that, confronted with death, he chose to practice philosophy and poetry.

social research

AN INTERNATIONAL QUARTERLY
OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES

VOLUME 53, NUMBER 2
SUMMER 1986

A publication of the
GRADUATE FACULTY

SOCIAL RESEARCH

SEXUALITY AND MADNESS

LOVE, SEX, AND MADNESS IN EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY ENGLAND
Roy Porter

THE CLITORIDECTOMY CRAZE
Andrew Scull and Diane Favreau

WOMEN AND MADNESS IN TUDOR AND STUART ENGLAND
Michael MacDonald

A RICHER AND A GENTLER SEX
Carroll Smith-Rosenberg

FROM POSSESSION TO COMPULSION: RELIGION, SEX, AND MADNESS IN POPULAR CULTURE
Peter Gardella

THE TRUE STORY OF ANNA O.
John Forrester

MADNESS AND SEXUALITY IN THE NEW GUINEA HIGHLANDS
Gilbert Herdt

FEMALE SEXUALITY AND MADNESS IN RUSSIAN CULTURE: TRADITIONAL VALUES AND PSYCHIATRIC THEORY
Julie Vail Brown

Individual Subscriptions: $20; Institutions: $40
Single copies available on request
Editorial and Business Office:
66 West 12th Street, New York, N.Y. 10011
Room GF354

The Armed Founder versus the Catonic Hero: Machiavelli and Rousseau on Popular Leadership

JOSEPH MASCIULLI
St. Francis Xavier University

I. INTRODUCTION

In *The Prince* and *Discourses,* Machiavelli disclosed a political education opposed to the prevailing Christian understanding that was dedicated to the renaissance of Roman republican virtue. The core of Machiavelli's doctrine of education is republican in spirit—albeit harsh, expansive republicanism. Its periphery, however, allows for the alternative of princely rule—whether kingship tied to a notion of the common good or tyranny—under some circumstances.

Most of Machiavelli's unscholarly readers, however, have concluded after reading *The Prince* that his advocacy of tyranny is the center of his consciously revolutionary teaching. A majority of Machiavelli's scholarly readers, on the other hand, have sought to explain away his simultaneous recommendation of republican statesmanship, kingship, and tyranny by viewing the latter two as subordinate means to the attainment of republicanism.[1] Rousseau was one of the first and most influential thinkers to encourage this now dominant scholarly view of Machiavelli's theory. In putting forward his own republican political education in the *Discourse on Political Economy* and the *Social Contract,* Rousseau considered Machiavelli an important ally who only feigned to give advice to kings and tyrants—the better to teach the people how to attain and safeguard their freedom.

In the following analysis, I will attempt to show that there are suggestive parallels or family resemblances between Machiavelli's and Rousseau's doctrines of popular statesmanhip, more specifically, of their notions of the armed prophet or founder, the senatorial hero, and the legislator. I will also contend, however, that Rousseau's teaching gives primacy to a tragic, inward-looking virtue which is quite foreign to Machiavelli's own preference for a daring and warlike virtue that essentially aims at overcoming the power of fortune in political affairs to the greatest extent possible.

II. POPULAR STATESMANSHIP VERSUS TYRANNY

Rousseau makes clear in the *Political Economy* that he and Machiavelli are on the same side—upholders of popular freedom and opponents of tyranny. Only

1. Cf. Harvey C. Mansfield's introduction to his translation of *The Prince* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1985), pp. vii–viii.

statesmanship based on the general will, says Rousseau, is legitimate: the kind of statesmanship characteristic of a regime in which there is "a unity of interest and will" between the people and its leaders. Nonetheless, the very opposite, tyranny, has prevailed in the historical practice of politics, and tyrannical maxims are inscribed in the archives of history and "the satires of Machiavelli" (P, III, 247).[2]

Machiavelli, Rousseau suggests, is writing on two levels: on the surface level, he teaches princes how to dominate peoples; but on a second, deeper level he censures tyrannical domination from the perspective of popular republicanism. Rousseau tells us in the *Social Contract* that he was convinced of this interpretation of Machiavelli's teaching from comparing *The Prince* to the *Discourses on Livy* and the *Florentine Histories*. This comparative analysis, he claimed, showed that "in pretending to give lessons to kings, [Machiavelli] gave some very good ones to the people." Machiavelli, the lover of liberty and profound political thinker, was the enemy of the papal court and of every other king's court (Book III, Chapter 6: P, III, 409, 1480).[3]

In his comparative reading, one would surmise, Rousseau was especially moved by Machiavelli's praise in the *Florentine Histories* for those leading Florentine citizens, who in their city's conflict with the pope, acted so as to demonstrate that they cared for their earthly fatherland more than for their souls (Book III, Chapter 7). More importantly, Rousseau could be confident of his interpretation of Machiavelli's teaching as republican in view of the latter's pathbreaking defense of popular republicanism in the *Discourses*. In this work, attempting to defend popular rule against the charges of "all the writers" (Book I, Chapter 58; p. 262), Machiavelli declares that it is

> not without reason one likens the voice of a people to the voice of God: because one sees that a universal opinion [*una opinione universale*] arrives at marvelous results in its prognostications; so much so that it seems as if by some occult virtue it [the people] foresaw its own evil and good. With regard to its judgment, when two speakers of equal skill are heard advocating different alternatives, very rarely does one find it [the people] failing to adopt the better opinion, and incapable of appreciating the truth it hears. And, if in bold things and those which appear useful, as it is said above, it errs,

2. See the *Œuvres complètes de J.-J. Rousseau*, ed. B. Gagnebin and M. Raymond, 4 vols. thus far (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1959–). P, III, 247 means vol. III, p. 247, etc.

For Machiavelli I have used the *Opere*, ed. Sergio Bertelli (Milano: Feltrinelli, 1960). References for the *Prince* and *Discourses* are to vol. I and for *Florentine History*, vol. VII.

For the *Political Economy*, I have consulted the Cole Everyman trans. and the Masters St. Martin's trans. For the *Prince*, I have usually cited Alvarez's trans. (University of Dallas Press, 1980); for the *Discourses* I cited Fr. Walker's trans., most accessible in the Penguin Books ed.

For Plutarch's *Lives*, I have used the Modern Library ed., trans. John Dryden and rev. Arthur Hugh Clough, pp. 918–60.

3. On Rousseau's relationship to Machiavelli, see the excellent survey of the works by Paolo M. Cucchi, "Rousseau, lecteur de Machiavel," in *Rousseau et son temps*, ed. M. Launay (Paris, 1968), pp. 17–35; and as background to satire, Garrett Mattingly, "Machiavelli's *Prince:* Political Science or Political Satire?" *The American Scholar*, vol. 27, no. 4 (Autumn 1958), 482–91.

> many times more errs a prince in his own passions, and these are much stronger than those of a people.
>
> It is found, too, that in the election of magistrates the people makes far better choice than does the prince; nor can the people ever be persuaded that it is good to appoint to such an office a man of infamous life or corrupt habits, whereas a prince may easily and in a vast variety of ways be persuaded to do so (I, 58; p. 264).

A people, says Machiavelli, can effectively be guided in its future actions by that universal or general opinion it has about what is good or evil for it.

Though on balance a people is less subject to blind passions than kings and less likely to choose incompetent or infamous and corrupt statesmen, still Machiavelli grants that a people can make mistakes. It can err most easily when deciding foreign affairs, when bold and useful projects are at issue. But, as well, a people can make mistakes when deliberating about domestic matters. For, Machiavelli asserts, a people will usually adopt the better opinion and be able to distinguish truth from falsehood, provided the speakers who are putting forth various alternatives are of equal skill—which, of course, is not always the case.

Thus Machiavelli stipulates that for popular rule to be defensible, the people must be "well-ordered" (*Dis.* I, 58; p. 264). That is to say, it must not be corrupt, but rather law-abiding and united. And to become united, a people needs heads or leaders (*Dis.* I, 57; pp. 260–61; cf. I, 1–2):

> in goodness and glory the people is by far superior [to princes]. And if princes are superior to peoples in ordering laws, forming codes of civic life, establishing statutes and new orders, peoples are so much superior in maintaining things once established, that it indubitably adds to the glory of those who ordered them (*Dis.* I, 58; p. 265).

In this context, by "princes" Machiavelli means the leading actors in any regime: armed prophets or founders, statesmen, and legislators. For a republican regime to be well-ordered, there must be a reciprocal, symbiotic, and dynamic relationship between the few and the many grounded on their respective needs and powers. The princely leaders have the power stemming from their virtue to order the people into an effective whole either through new orders or reformed ones. For its part, the people has the goodness to manifest its gratitude towards its leaders as it preserves their orders—new or renewed— and gives them glorious recognition in the present and future. This reciprocal relationship—in which one side contributes the conditions for order, prosperity, and independence based on imperial power, while the other side provides stable adherence and support—is Machiavelli's formula for effectual justice (*Dis.* I, 1; pp. 131–32). It is, moreover, Machiavelli's version of an implicit social contract between the two essential "humors" that constitute society: the great who wish to dominate and the common people who desire not to be dominated (cf. *Pr.*, Ch. 9).

Like Machiavelli, Rousseau sees the broad outlines of a solution to the problem of political unity in the reciprocal relationship of the exceptionally virtuous few and the many who have the potential to acquire a popular or general will. In

the introductory section of the *Political Economy,* Rousseau for the first time mentions the notion of the general will as that "common self" that gives life to the state as a moral being, caring for the preservation and well-being of the whole and of each part (P, III, 245). Conformity to the dictates of the general will provides the standard for just as opposed to tyrannical statesmanship.

The general will is derived from Rousseau's reflections on modern natural right in relation to the ancient alternative. If we judge by his first use of the term, *la volonté générale,* in the *Political Economy,* then it is clear that he intends it as an ideal standard that is meant to correct the atomistic individualism of Hobbes by the application of the Platonic-Aristotelian emphasis on the unifying character of the idea of justice (cf. P, III, 244–45, 248–49). Nonetheless, the passages that first delineate Rousseau's understanding of the general will echo and have a family resemblance to Machiavelli's teaching on the popular will in *Discourses* I, 58.

Now, in clarifying what he means by the general will in the *Political Economy,* Rousseau distinguishes a variety of associations and wills. Political society is not homogeneous, he maintains. Rather, it is composed of a variety of interrelated, smaller societies—permanent or temporary, formal or tacit—which modify in many ways "the appearances of the public will," that is, of the general will (P, III, 246). United by their common interests, these partial societies are animated by a will that is general from the perspective of its members, but particular and hence pernicious from the perspective of the whole society:

> [A person] . . can be a devout priest, a brave soldier, or a zealous patrician, and a bad citizen. [Their] deliberation can be advantageous to the small community, and very pernicious to the large. It is true that particular societies being always subordinate to those which contain them, one should obey the latter in preference to the others, that the duties of a citizen go before those of a senator, and those of man before those of the citizen; but unfortunately personal interest is found always in inverse proportion to duty, and increases to the extent that the association becomes more narrow and the engagement less sacred: invincible proof that the most general will is also always the most just, and the voice of the people is in fact the voice of God (P, III, 246).

Rousseau as much as Machiavelli claims that the universal opinion of a people is the ultimate and most authoritative source of political morality. Indeed, Rousseau is even more emphatic than Machiavelli, employing an identity instead of a simile (the voice of the people "is in fact the voice of God"). Furthermore, Rousseau is unambiguous in affirming that the declarations of the general will are only the universal opinion of that particular people as to what is just, for he contends that such declarations may well be faulty from the perspective of foreigners (P, III, 245). Though Rousseau raises the un-Machiavellian notion of the possibility of a unified earthly city with its universal general will overcoming the divisions caused by the general wills of different peoples, he quickly sets aside this notion and conducts the rest of his inquiry on the assumption of the existence of distinct popular wills (P, III, 245).

Third, like Machiavelli, Rousseau appropriates religious language to describe the popular will. Pointing with a sense of awe to the sacred character of the people's declarations, Rousseau stresses the same occult, popular excellence underlined by Machiavelli (cf. P, III, 248).

Fourth, in the *Political Economy* Rousseau echoes Machiavelli's concern that the people can be "seduced" by the eloquence of clever speakers to make bad judgments about common affairs (P, III, 246). And, later in the *Social Contract,* Rousseau repeats Machiavelli's key contention in *Discourses* I, 58 that unlike kings who choose incompetent or corrupt magistrates, "the people errs much less than the prince." For, says Rousseau the people elevates only those of true merit to head a republican government (Bk. III, Ch. 6; P, III, 410).

These family resemblances, echoes, or parallels in Rousseau's teaching of Machiavelli's premise of popular statesmanship are accompanied, moreover, by Rousseau's acceptance of Machiavelli's notion of a unity of interest and will between leaders and the people—albeit a unity grounded on a division of political labor. As Machiavelli had done, Rousseau asserts the need for a political unity that transcends the divisions of particular associations and classes. And it is only the "virtue"—that exceptional, "sublime," rare, heroic virtue—of armed founders, legislators, and senatorial statesmen which can accomplish this unifying task (cf. *PE,* P, III, 248; *SC,* II, 7; P, III, 381).

III. THE ARMED FOUNDER

Rousseau adumbrates his notion of the armed founder while explicating a maxim of popular statesmanship, "Follow in everything the general will," which he restates in the form that the government's "administration be in conformity with the laws" of the general will (*PE,* P, III, 251). The laws are the central concern; Rousseau initially seems to view the role of the *chef* or head as passive, an instrument of the laws established by the legislator. The leader must simply, it seems, learn not to employ a disproportionate amount of force to uphold the law and to retain his impartiality under all circumstances.

However, in the final, lengthy paragraph of this first section of the *Political Economy,* a Machiavellian leitmotiv emerges:

> If it is good to know how to use men as they are, it is worth much more still to make them what there is a need that they be; the most absolute authority is that which penetrates to the very interior of man, and is exercised no less on the will than on actions. It is certain that the people are in the long run what the government makes them be. Warriors, citizens, men when it wants; populace and *canaille* when it pleases it; and every prince who despises his subjects dishonors himself in showing that he did not know how to render them worthy of esteem (P, III, 251).

According to Rousseau "the great art of ancient governments" (P, III, 252) can be imitated by modern leaders; they can mold the wills of essentially malleable men

into the will to generalize—the unified popular will—of citizens who will desire the common good and fight to defend their homeland. This formation of the citizen's psyche and body is necessary because naturally men are not political. Above all, for the citizen to become political, he must learn to respect the laws; "the first of the laws is to respect the laws," but this disposition cannot be engendered by written laws (P, III, 249). What is required to make men political is a comprehensive fashioning by morals and manners appropriate to republican warriors and citizens. Addressing himself to every potentially heroic prince, Rousseau advocates a break with the mercenary politics of the age that gave rise to disunited *canaille* and masses: "form men, then, if you wish to command men; if you want the laws obeyed, make them loved" (P, III, 251–52).

Undoubtedly, in this call to the virtuous few to overcome the corruption of the age, Rousseau—albeit with some indirection—is calling for the exercise of that active heroic virtue he analyzed in his earlier *Discourse on the Virtue Most Necessary to the Hero*. In this work he stresses that the heroic founder is an expert wielder of force, although his defining virtue of strength of soul cannot properly be reduced to physical courage (cf. P, II, 1263, 1268, 1272). Rousseau contends that

> Men do not govern themselves thus by abstract views. They are only made happy by being constrained to be so, and they must be made to experience happiness for them to love it. Here lies the business and talents of the hero; it is often with force in his hand that he puts himself in a condition to receive the blessings of men whom he first constrains to carry the yoke of the laws, in order finally to submit them to the authority of reason (P, II, 1263–64).

According to this passage, the heroic leader must employ force initially in order to establish the rule of law.[4] Once the people experience the happiness or common good that results from obeying the laws, then they will learn to love them and justify them with their reason.

It is true that in the *Political Economy* Rousseau does not emphasize the use of force as he had done in the *Discourse on the Hero,* and instead stresses the use of austere and peaceful morals and manners in making the laws obeyed and loved. Nonetheless, in the *Political Economy* he is wholly explicit about the need for citizens to be warriors first and last, coming to the aid of their fatherland when it needs their arms (cf. section II, P, III, 261). To fashion warriors, however, the leader must be a warrior as well, and know how to wield force expertly (such as Romulus, who is referred to as a founder in section III).

This heroic virtue Rousseau calls for in the *Political Economy* reminds us of Machiavelli's advocacy of heroic leadership to put an end to the corruption of his

4. See David R. Cameron, "The Hero in Rousseau's Political Thought," *Journal of the History of Ideas,* vol. 45, no. 3 (July–September 1984), p. 401; and for an excellent study of the *Discourse on the Hero* that places it in its historical and literary contexts, see Diane Beelen Woody's unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, *Problématique du héros dans les écrits de J.-J. Rousseau* (University of Toronto, 1981).

times in *The Prince*. Let us read the final chapter of *The Prince* according to the interpretive mode Rousseau espouses. In it (Chapter 26, whose heading translated from the Latin original is: "Exhortation to take hold of Italy and liberate her from the barbarians"), on the surface level, Machiavelli exhorts Lorenzo de' Medici, ruling prince of Florence, to unite Italy and regain her ancient glory. What is needed, says Machiavelli, is a virtuous leader of the greatness of Moses, Cyrus, and Theseus (all viewed, along with Romulus, as armed prophets in Chapter 6). Indeed, such virtue is present in the house of the de' Medici, in Lorenzo himself, and he need only follow the examples of greatness which preceded him (*Pr.*, 102). Then Machiavelli asserts

> at present we have witnessed extraordinary happenings without example brought about by God: the sea has opened; a cloud has cleared your path; the rock has poured water; it has rained manna here; everything has run in favor of your greatness. The rest you must do yourself. God does not want to do everything, so as not to take from us our free will and a part of that glory that belongs to us (*Pr.*, 103).

If Lorenzo's supposed greatness, however, depends upon the occurrence of these extraordinary happenings without example, it is questionable. For these happenings were preceded in sacred history, and are reported in the Bible as experienced by Moses and the Jewish people on the way to their promised land.

To be sure, moreover, Machiavelli is not reporting their occurrence a second time; in fact, in inventing a second occurrence he ridicules the first. Above all, Machiavelli is making fun of Lorenzo, a petty autocrat who hardly possesses the virtue required to overcome the corruption in his native land. Indeed, this ridicule or satirical treatment of Lorenzo is not only based on the fact that the parallel between Moses' divine destiny and Lorenzo's is false. Furthermore, in likening Lorenzo to Moses in such a ridiculous fashion, Machiavelli may nonetheless be saying to Lorenzo in an ironic manner that, just as Moses did not reach the promised land, neither would he attain the goal of a unified Italy.

Machiavelli, then, is not seriously advising Lorenzo in *The Prince*. In the following passage, addressing himself to men more capable politically than Lorenzo, he reveals what he really intends beyond his satire:

> it is no wonder if during the numerous revolutions in Italy and during the numerous manoeuvres of war, it always seemed that her military strength is extinguished. This arises from the fact that her old orders were not good, and that there was no one who knew how to discover new ones; and nothing brings as much honor to a newly rising man, as do the new laws and the new orders discovered by him (*Pr.*, 103).

What is required, according to Machiavelli, are leaders who will be political artisans and put form in the prime object of politics constituted by a whole people (in this case, the Italian people). In alluding to Roman virtue, moreover, Machiavelli shows his preference for republican modes and orders (*Pr.*, 105).

Rousseau, then, is in fundamental agreement with Machiavelli's teaching that

the art of the few is necessary to create the foundation for the life of citizens and warriors, a civic life according to the rule of laws accepted by the popular will as just, instead of a corrupt mercenary politics based on the collection and payment of money. Though Machiavelli's concern was more in the direction of foreign policy (the mercenary soldiers in Italy that precluded the attainment of national independence), and Rousseau's in that of domestic policy (monetary corruption associated with the system of taxation—as he elaborates in section III of the *Political Economy*), nevertheless both view the problem of political corruption as requiring an armed prophet to provide the initial solution.

In the *Social Contract* Rousseau leaves a place for the Machiavellian armed founder in his own theory, but emphasizes the notion even less than he had in the *Political Economy*. At the periphery of his discussion of the legislator, Rousseau hints at the necessity of an armed founder who would be a leader of warriors, and whose activity would precede that of the legislator. To found a nation successfully, he says, remember that imitative genius will not suffice. What is required is "true genius," that "which creates and makes everything out of nothing" (*celui qui crée et fait tout de rien*) (Book II, Chap. 8; P, III, 386). Unfortunately, he concludes, Peter the Great had only imitative genius, and thus failed to understand that the Russians first had to be made into warriors, then civilized with the appropriate laws and institutions (cf. IV, 4, note; P, III, 444).

IV. THE SENATORIAL HERO

The armed founder is not Rousseau's central model of popular leadership; rather, it is the senatorial, republican hero—above all as exemplified by Cato the Younger. Rousseau considers Catonic virtue to be the epitome of political virtue in the *Political Economy*. Political virtue requires that "the particular will conform to the general will" (P, III, 252). At the level of heroism such virtue demands that one act as Cato did, giving up his life to affirm the general good, even when Caesar had won the physical battle on behalf of a tyranny that negated the popular will.

It is clear from the latter formulation that for Rousseau "virtue" is simply the will to generalize one's concerns in times of peace and of war; this is the excellence of the citizen that alone interests him in the *Political Economy*. And political virtue or the will to generalize, he contends, requires love of the fatherland as its passionate fuel or energy (P, III, 254). For this love to develop among the citizens, however, first of all the leaders must act in the manner of the most virtuous and talented Roman senators, like Cato, protecting the rights and liberties of the citizens against would-be tyrants, not like modern, mercenary politicians.

Blinded by their ambition to acquire and maintain power, modern politicians confound their glory with the misery of the people, says Rousseau, and resort to using a "dark art" consisting of force and fraud (P, III, 253). This blind quest for

power and glory may result in the acquisition of power, but not of glory, for such methods produce a fragmented society of self-interested individuals unable to glorify the leader. Thus

> A herdsman governs his dogs and his herds, and is only the last of men. If it be a fine thing to command, it is when those who obey us can honor us: show respect then to your fellow citizens, and you will make yourself respectable; show respect to liberty, and your power will increase daily: never exceed your rights and they will soon become unlimited (P, III, 258).

Rousseau, we see, fully accepts the Machiavellian doctrine that political ambition and the exercise of power are good things which can be satisfied either in a competent way (e.g., the leaders of the Roman republic) or an incompetent manner (e.g., Louis XII of France) (*Pr.*, Ch. 3).

All men, says Machiavelli, seek material things and glory (*Pr.*, Ch. 25), but that political actor who decides "to kill his fellow citizens, to betray his friends, to be without faith, without pity, without religion" can acquire "imperium but not glory" (*Pr.*, Ch. 8; 42). If one wants to acquire immortal glory, *The Prince* tells us (if we read it as having a republican intention), one must cultivate that greatness and nobility of mind prevalent in the Roman senate. Even Scipio's easy nature "would have in time wronged . . . [his] fame and glory, had he continued with it in the imperium, but since he lived under the government of the Senate, these harmful qualities were not only hidden, but brought him glory" (*Pr.*, ch. 17; pp. 102–3 of the Alvarez trans.). For, when one's ambition is exercised in the context of a republican senate, the distinct strengths of each compensate for the unique weaknesses of each:

> For this reason a republic has a fuller life and enjoys good fortune for a longer time than a principality, since it is better able to adapt itself to diverse circumstances owing to the diversity found among its citizens than a prince can do. For a man who is accustomed to act in one particular way, never changes. Hence, when times change and no longer suit his ways, he is inevitably ruined (*Discourses* III, 9; Walker trans.).

Rousseau, as much as Machiavelli, then, is arguing that political efficacy *and* glory can alone be attained if one exercises power according to the model of a Roman senate that respects the rights of citizens in the assemblies (P, III, 257).

Citizens, then, will be virtuous if they love their homeland. They will love their homeland if the leaders protect and enhance their interests in life, property, and, most importantly, individual liberty. But this is not enough. In addition, love as a bond energizing citizen virtue requires the concrete examples of heroically virtuous citizens who provide a model of emulation for the others:

> everywhere where the lesson is not upheld by authority, and the precept by example, the instruction remains without fruit, and even virtue loses its influence in the mouth of him who does not practice it. But let illustrious warriors, bent under the weight of their laurels, preach courage; let upright magistrates, grown gray in purple and on the tribu-

> nals, teach justice; the ones and the others will thus form virtuous successors, and transmit from age to age to the following generations, the experience and talents of the leaders, the courage and virtue of the citizens, and the common emulation of all to live and die for the fatherland (P, III, 261).

Only when there is such concrete public education in the context of a political society that protects the rights of citizens, encourages humanity or compassion for one's own (P, II, 254–55), and satisfies the desire for rooted fraternity (P, III, 258–59), will love of the fatherland and the consequent citizen virtue develop.

To clarify the conjunction of love of the fatherland and political virtue Rousseau contrasts Cato the Younger with Socrates, Cato who opposed the tyrannical designs of Caesar and Pompey and whose example pierced Rousseau's heart to his dying day (cf. P, I, 1134).

Catonic virtue is put into relief in the *Political Economy* by being contrasted with the pure virtue of Socrates (P, III, 255).[5] The philosopher Socrates' fatherland was the whole world, says Rousseau, as he went about in search of the truth. His happiness had its source in the exercise of such pure intellectual virtue, in seeking after individual perfection, though he fought the sophists and taught a few individuals. Socrates proved his total dedication by dying for the philosophical way of life and the truth. In contrast, Cato was totally committed to his particular fatherland—Rome. Living completely for his homeland, Cato discovered his personal happiness in the happiness of his fellow citizens. As long as he was able, he defended the republic, its laws, and its liberty. Appearing like "a god among mortals," he stood his ground in the senate (Rousseau implies from Plutarch's account), uncorrupted, impervious to the blandishments of Pompey and Caesar—who sought to flatter and bribe the senators and people with the results of their foreign conquests. In the end, though, when Caesar and "his satellites" (cf. sect. III, P, III, 269) triumphed and enslaved Rome, Cato would not give Caesar his greatest victory: rather than accept (as claims Plutarch) the salvation of his life through Caesar's customary clemency towards the virtuous, he chose instead to commit suicide—after reading the *Phaedo* several times, a dialogue in which Plato's Socrates discusses death and the possible immortality of individual souls.

After developing this contrast between the individualistic Socrates and the communitarian Cato, Rousseau concludes that while a worthy student of Socrates would be the most virtuous or excellent human being among his contemporaries, a worthy emulator of Cato would be "the greatest." Though somewhat ambivalent in his judgment about the relative value of these two models of virtue, hence claiming that we should be instructed by the first and led by the second, in the final analysis Rousseau avers that we should prefer and celebrate the worthy emulator of Cato. "For a people [consisting solely] of wise men has never

5. See Claude Pichois and René Pintard, *Jean-Jacques entre Socrate et Caton* (Paris: Librairie José Corti, 1972), pp. 48–64.

been instituted, but it is not impossible to make a people happy," when such republican leaders as Cato are guiding the political community (P, III, 245).

Rousseau views Cato as the model of excellence, then, from the perspective of the happiness of the people, but in so doing Rousseau has introduced an aspect of his general "myth of antiquity,"[6] especially of the Roman republic as truly democratic and the senatorial leadership as concerned with the common people's interests. For even from Plutarch's account, it is clear that Cato cared too much about his character and dignity to court the people's votes, was the first to arrive and last to leave the Senate, and would never consent to economic measures that benefited the common people, if it was likely such measures would upset the constitutional order centered in the collective leadership of the senate under the law (*Lives*, pp. 946–47, 936, 928).

Cato's perspective, according to Plutarch, was that of the conservative senators who, to be sure, showed humanity towards the common people, but were fundamentally dedicated to senatorial ascendancy (*Lives*, p. 933). Rousseau's Cato takes his bearings by the happiness of the common people. The mediating term accounting for this mythical reinterpretation is Machiavelli's popular republicanism based on the Roman model (although I do not want to discount other influences, above all that of Bodin and Montesquieu). Rousseau, as we have seen, reflected on Machiavelli's *Prince* and *Discourses* as background material for developing his own maxims of popular leadership. And he reiterates here in his reformed model of Cato, of senatorial leadership, Machiavelli's general claim that a civil order can be firmly based on the satisfaction of the people's desires for life, property, and liberty from being oppressed by the great (*Pr.*, Chs. 9–10, 16–17). Such a popular foundation and perspective conforms to Machiavelli's general call for a politics based on "the effectual truth of the thing, than to the imagination thereof" (*Pr.*, Ch. 15). Machiavelli opposed with this realism all versions of political idealism, which he viewed as constructing "imagined republics and principates that have never been seen or known to be in truth" (*Pr.*, Ch. 15): Plato's ideal of rule by wise philosopher-kings, Aristotle's ideal of rule by wise aristocrats, and Augustine's ideal of rule by Christian princes who already partook in the spiritual community of the City of God. Machiavelli insists, however, that politicians assume simply that all men are self-centered and desire material things and personal glory.

A closer analysis of Rousseau's ideal of patriotic republicanism that is to be shared by leaders and citizens will reveal its realistic or Machiavellian basis. As we have seen, according to Rousseau love of the fatherland motivates leaders and citizens to manifest political virtue:

> It is certain that the greatest prodigies of virtue have been produced by love of the fatherland [*l'amour de la patrie*]: this mild and live sentiment which joins the force of

6. Cf. Jean Cousin, "J.-J. Rousseau, interprète des institutions romaines dans le *Contrat social*," in *Études sur le Contrat social* (Paris, 1964), pp. 13–34; and Denise Leduc-Fayette, *J.-J. Rousseau et le mythe de l'antiquité* (Paris: Vrin, 1974), pp. 103–16.

> self-love [*amour-propre*] to all the beauty of virtue, gives to it an energy which without disfiguring it, makes of it the most heroic of all the passions (P, III, 255).

But, as we now see, the essence of love of the homeland is self-love or self-regard—*amour-propre*—even though it is experienced by the political actors themselves as a "burning and sublime ardor," as the emotion a religious person feels in loving God (P, III, 255). Rousseau does not, it seems, want to emphasize the realistic psychological foundation—the self-regarding basis—of all idealistic republican patriotism, including the type he is advocating for the corrupt modern world. Nonetheless, though *amour-propre* is a self-regarding desire, it is a desire for recognition on the part of the leaders that can well result in social conditions that make the people happy, as long as the leaders are persuaded that their desire for glorious recognition can only be fulfilled when there are united citizens with a sense of liberty and the common good to give recognition.

That is to say, great leaders who love their fatherland always experience a tension between this love and their love of personal glory; citizens experience this tension to a lesser degree, since their attempt at emulating the exceptionally virtuous is not as thoroughgoing as that of actual or potential leaders. This tension exists for exceptional leaders as well as common citizens, but Rousseau's Machiavellian path prevents him from arguing for an essentially Aristotelian or Christian solution to the problem. From the perspective of the latter what is required is a struggle between our prudence and unrestrained passions or between our love of God and of ourselves. If we win the struggle, we attain moral or spiritual perfection and hence care about the common good more than for our individual interests; if we lose this internal battle, then, at worst, we become tyrants. Rousseau, however, rejects such a "perfectionist" approach that asks, he claims, most men to do what they are incapable of doing—effecitvely overcome their self-regarding passions (P, III, 259). Rather, what he advocates is a public education that leads to an expansion of the self to identify with the state or popular will:

> If . . [children] are accustomed early enough never to regard their individuality except by its relations with the body of the State, and to perceive, so to speak, their own existence as a part of it, they will be able to arrive finally at identifying in some way with the greater whole (P, III, 259).

Later on in this same passage Rousseau asserts, albeit rather vaguely in comparison to the *Second Discourse* (cf. P. III, 189, 219), that an expanded or patriotic love results from a form of habituation of man's *amour-propre* (P, III, 260).

Returning to Rousseau's central example of a model republican leader—Cato—we.will now see what, according to Rousseau's realistic psychology, allowed Cato to put the glory of Rome before his personal glory. In the *Discourse on the Hero* Rousseau remarks on the strength of soul Cato required to give a public celebration after losing the consulship instead of withdrawing into private grief (P, II, 1274), a generous act Caesar, who also possessed the heroic virtue of strength of soul, would not have performed (cf. P, II, 1264). All heroic leaders

must possess strength of soul, but those like Cato put that strength to the service of the constitutional order because of their pride in their country being first among other countries in establishing the conditions for civil freedom. Patriotism, then, has this thoroughly self-regarding side—but it is an expanded self-regard consistent with the common good of a particular nation. No sooner did Rousseau raise the possibility of a unified earthly city in the introductory section of the *Political Economy* than he quickly laid it to rest, as we saw. For republican politics based on being spiritually superior to other states could not function in the absence of particular regimes. During the civil war, fleeing among strangers, Cato refused to shave, have his hair cut, or any longer recline in the Roman manner when at table. Cato acted like one in mourning for a most beautiful beloved, for whom all other objects of possible affection are essentially inferior and hence unworthy of one's love.

V THE CATONIC LEGISLATOR

In Rousseau's account in the *Political Economy,* we have seen that Cato sought political recognition. In the end, though, he was satisfied with attaining recognition in future centuries for his total dedication to his fatherland. In the *Social Contract,* Rousseau tells us that the legislator also hopes to attain "distant glory," and like Cato has the stature of a god among mortals (P, III, 381; cf. 245).

Furthermore, the legislator relies not on force, but on his "great soul" to lead the people to the condition where they adopt laws embodying their common good, and enlists the support of myths about the will of the divine. Rousseau clearly follows Machiavelli's account of the way the legislator, with such "prudence and goodness," civilizes a people (quoting from *Discourses* I, 11 in a note to *SC* II, 7; P, III, 384). However, unlike Machiavelli, Rousseau uses Lycurgus, not Numa as his central example.

In Rousseau's portrait of him, Lycurgus made the Spartans happy, even while they were unknown to the rest of Greece. Resigning his kingship to serve as a lawgiver—a wise advisor—he took advantage of a time following revolutions and civil war to give his people a new code of laws (cf. *SC,* II, 7–8 with the *Discourse on Inequality*; P, III, 381, 385, 180).

But the portrait of Lycurgus given in the *Social Contract* leaves out the Catonic dimension Rousseau underlines in a "Fragment":

> Quand Licurgue établi ses lois, il eut à souffrir mille murmures et même de mauvais traitemens de la part des Lacedemoniens et il fut même contraint d'user de ruse et d'aller finir ses jours hors de sa patrie pour obliger ses concitoyens à conserver une institution qui les a rendu le peuple le plus illustre et le plus respecté qui ait existé sur la terre (P, III, 512).

In the *Social Contract*'s account, Rousseau simply assumed, one gathers, his readers knew Plutarch's portrait of Lycurgus and thus the requisite details of the deception to which he alludes in the preceding quotation. Plutarch recounts that Lycurgus persuaded his countrymen to swear an oath that they would not change any of the customs or laws he had given them, until he returned from visiting the oracle at Delphi. After visiting the oracle and being told that his institutions were good, he sent this oracular utterance back to the Spartans. However, to assure that his laws would never be changed, Lycurgus never returned to Sparta. Instead, he starved himself to death (*Lives*, pp. 72–73).

VI. VIOLENT CREATIVITY OR TRAGIC EQUANIMITY IN THE FACE OF FORTUNE

We have seen that in Rousseau's doctrine of political leadership, Catonic senatorial virtue is combined with the popular foundation Machiavelli advocated in his political education of new leaders; and the armed founder has a necessary preliminary function to perform to clear the way for the senatorial statesman, under primitive or corrupt historical circumstances.

Moreover, in Rousseau's teaching there is a resemblance to Machiavelli's concern with overcoming the power of fortune in political affairs, though Rousseau parts company with Machiavelli after an initial agreement.

Now, Machiavelli's philosophy leadership is a protest against the power of fortune in human affairs—a call to political men to be self-reliant and active, not tragic and passive instruments of a fate beyond their control. In describing the power of fortune, Machiavelli at first employs the image of fortune as a torrential river. If one builds embankments and dikes in quiet times—uses prudential foresight to plan for the future—then one will not be subject to fortune's power in chaotic times (*Pr.*, Ch. 25).

However, Machiavelli uses a second image to depict the power of fortune: fortune is like a fickle mistress who is effectively seduced by forceful overtures, physical strength and daring; or, politically speaking, arms and imaginative, resolute calculation and will. The armed prophets who establish republican senates such as the Roman one, and the legislators and senatorial heroes who emerge from such bodies of advisors are fortune's worthy foes (cf. *Dis.* I, 11; II, 1).

Machiavelli, one must grant, is not entirely certain fortune can be wholly conquered by human daring and adaptive calculation, though the unifying theme of his political education in *The Prince* and *Discourses* is how political virtue can overcome fortune more and more to the point of totality. Machiavelli's problem is how to inspire his readers to imitate armed founders or prophets and senatorial heroes completely—without the admixture of Christian compassion and love. For these admixtures would debase political virtue with vulnerability, weakness, and acceptance of defeat for the sake of affirming the value of idealism and the

innocent in the face of the struggles against fortune (*Pr.*, Chs. 15–17, and 25).

Indeed, even Machiavelli's passionate personal commitment to republicanism and symbiotic, popular leadership takes second place to his awe in the face of those tyrannical manifestations of creative competence that conquer fortune. Someone of "outstanding brain-power and authority," he asseverates, could convert a province suited to monarchical rule into a republic, or vice versa, or willfully found a tyrannical order (*Dis.* I, 55; 257–58; cf. I, 16, 25–26). Rare indeed, he says, are the leaders who possess such mental and physical power to carry out enterprises of this magnitude.

In his advocacy of such activism, Machiavelli defends a new political aristocracy, not the "pernicious" old ones of the rich, lazy, and cowardly "who live idly on the income of their abundant possessions without being concerned either with cultivation or necessary toil in living" (*Dis.* I, 55; 266). This new senate Machiavelli envisages is made up of leaders who are resolute in the face of fortune, who have that greatness of soul manifested by Camillus who averred: "The dictatorship did not elate me, nor did exile depress me" (*Dis.* III, 31; 469). Such resoluteness in mind and conduct results in fortune having "no sway over them." Still, Machiavelli advocates resoluteness of mind combined with resoluteness of military conduct, and all that will allow one to triumph after one has competently prepared one's forces.

In the *Political Economy,* Rousseau claims that "in public administration where fortune has less of a part than in the fate of individuals, wisdom is so close to happiness that these two objects are intertwined" (P, III, 262). Going in a Machiavellian direction, Rousseau maintains that the Catonic statesman who employs enlightened, calculating policies of parsimony, future planning, and egalitarian tax measures can assure that public needs are satisfied—hence the power of fortune minimized. In the spirit of Machiavelli's first image of fortune as a torrential river, Rousseau, first of all, encourages the construction of public warehouses to prevent famine, just as Machiavelli had done in *The Prince* (P, III, 267; *Pr.*, Ch. 10). Second, like Machiavelli, Rousseau opposes the use of mercenaries and argues instead for the establishment of a citizen army (P, III, 268–69; *Pr.*, Chs. 12–13). Third, both advocate parsimony—preventing the emergence of new governmental needs rather than increasing revenues—so as to prevent "the people [from] being crushed" with excessive taxes (P, III, 266; *Pr.*, Ch. 16). Fourth, in the *Political Economy* Rousseau attacks the tyranny of the rich and demands egalitarian tax reforms entirely in the spirit—albeit less violently—of Machiavelli's censure of the idle rich in the *Discourses* (P, III, 270–78; *Dis.* I, 55; 266).

In the *Social Contract,* Rousseau even goes some distance toward advocating Machiavellian daring in the face of fortune. In proportion as more people are involved in making governmental decisions, he says, prudence is stressed "too much, insufficient emphasis is given to fortune, so that by dint of deliberating, the fruits of deliberation are often lost" (*SC,* III, 2; P, III, 402). A head or leader

who exercises the political art well must employ prudence, but also those imaginative, swift strokes of political judgment and action that will harmonize affairs with fortune, and not make the polity subject to its vagaries. Thus, Rousseau criticizes Cicero for not employing emergency measures and hence subjecting himself to "a combination of chance factors" in dealing with the Catilinarian conspiracy. Rather, he should have appointed a dictator who could easily have dissipated the conspiracy with vigor, leaving nothing to chance (*SC,* IV, 6; P, III, 457).

Rousseau, then, thought of himself as following in the footsteps of Machiavelli's *Prince* and *Discourses* as he elaborated upon his own political education for republican statesmen in the *Political Economy* and the *Social Contract.* Rousseau did not conclude that there is a fundamental difference between his teaching and Machiavelli's—as we must—because in his republican interpretation of Machiavelli's thought he failed to see the priority Machiavelli gives to creative violence.

It is true that at times Machiavelli seems to prefer the arts of peace to those of violence: he seems to rank Numa's peaceful methods above Romulus's creative violence (*Dis.* I, 11). However, he quickly reverses his judgment (*Dis.* I, 19) and goes on to manifest little interest in that exemplary virtue of both Catos, which he admired but found wanting. Rome was so corrupt at the time of Cato the Younger, that the example of virtue—a republican politics of emulation—was insufficient to turn the tide. What was needed, he implies, was instilling men with that "terror and fear" they had known at the beginning of their regime—by a new armed founder or prophet like Romulus, but more sophisticated—so as to be able to deal with the lavish corruption of the imperial republic (*Dis.* III, 1; 382).

Machiavelli's advocacy of the priority of the action of the armed founder and of those creative commanders who imitate him puts him at odds with Rousseau's ultimate reliance on a politics grounded in the emulation of strength of soul. For Rousseau was convinced that only the Catonic model of republican leadership assures that a republic will be oriented to showing moral superiority over other regimes and not seek imperialistic mastery. The moral struggle for republicanism is more important than winning specific armed battles; compelling by exemplary dedication is more potent in the long run than the force of arms. Rousseau subordinated mere success through the competent wielding of the political art to his pure faith in the nobility and moral superiority of republicanism; Machiavelli subordinated this faith to what he understood to be "the effectual truth" of politics.

Reason and Rhetoric in Hobbes's *Leviathan*

WILLIAM MATHIE
Brock University

I

How is the student of Thomas Hobbes to treat the several systematic versions of his political teaching?[1] In every version Hobbes promotes the peace of the commonwealth by teaching the rights of sovereign power and obligation of subjects to obey the sovereign commands and laws of nature. Always he does so by appeal to that condition of equality and radical insecurity that is the consequence of man's nature and passions in the absence of sovereignty. In each statement Hobbes argues the case for monarchy and attacks the pretensions of priests and other rivals of civil authority. At the same time, there are many and striking differences in Hobbes's account of the passions, natural condition, and laws of nature; in his treatment of the generation of the commonwealth and of the forms it may take; in his response to the challenge of religious to civil authority. To ignore these differences and treat Hobbes's teaching as if it were definitively stated in any one of these versions is to forsake the invaluable help other versions seem sometimes to supply.[2] To identify as Hobbes's political science a composite of arguments found in some but not all statements of it, on the other hand, is to assume that the interpreter's task must be to reassemble the elements of a teaching which has somehow "come to pieces."[3]

If Hobbes's student can neither neglect nor exploit uncritically the several statements of his teachings, might he not find in the fact of their existence a clue as to the fundamental intention underlying Hobbes's political philosophy, if he could but understand how those statements are related? Do the succeeding versions of Hobbes's political science record a movement, or even progress, of his thought? Do we see here Hobbes's progress from a political science dependent upon a dubious and unattractive account of the human passions to one that merely analyzes "the formal structure of the relations between individuals," or a movement that jeopardizes the essential basis of Hobbes's teaching through the

1. The *Elements of Law Natural and Politic* written and circulated in 1640 was published in two parts in 1649 and 1650. *Elementorum Philosophiae, Sectio Tertia, De Cive* published in 1642, was republished by Hobbes with added notes in 1647, and translated into English and published again by Hobbes in 1651 as *Philosophical Rudiments concerning Government and Society*. In the same year he published *Leviathan*. Hobbes published the first and second parts of his *Elementorum Philosophiae* in 1655 and 1658 and a Latin version of *Leviathan* in 1668. References to these works will usually occur in parentheses in the text with abbreviations *El.*, *De Cive*, and *Lev.* as required. Page references are to Pogson-Smith's edition of *Leviathan* and Gert's *Man and Citizen* (New York: Doubleday, 1972).

2. Those opting for this method can rarely resist the temptation to import arguments from the other versions. See, e.g., C. B. Macpherson in his Introduction to *Leviathan* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968), p. 42 and notes 3 and 4.

3. F. S. McNeilly, *The Anatomy of Leviathan* (London: Macmillan, 1968), p. 13.

attempt to express it as if a result of his natural philosophy?[4] Whatever must finally be said of either hypothesis, we note that no one claims that Hobbes himself has indicated by word or deed the clear superiority of the latest version of his teaching to its earlier forms. Might the changed expression of Hobbes's political science then rather reflect his continuing effort to make that science effectual? That the form and even content of *Leviathan* could reflect its author's rhetorical, as well as philosophic, purpose is a suggestion frequently advanced though rarely pursued.[5] Yet, recalling Hobbes's bold description (in *Leviathan*) of his own political science as a proper subject for public instruction and his repeated condemnation of eloquence in public deliberations, one must consider whether Hobbes's understanding of his own enterprise and of rhetoric does not exclude the possibility we mean to explore.

That Hobbes always deplored the role of rhetoric in the commonwealth's deliberations, we may not doubt. Eloquence is central to the case against ancient democracy Hobbes attributes to Thucydides, for it led to "inconsistency of resolutions . . and desperate actions undertaken upon the flattering advice of such as desired to attain, or to hold what they had attained, of authority and sway amongst the people."[6] In the *Elements of Law* Hobbes argues that the misuse of power which can result from the passions of the sovereign will be greatest where sovereignty is in the hands of many assembled together because there every speaker will seek his own benefit or honour by "working on the passions of the rest" (2.5.4). In *De Cive*, the claim that democracy is superior to monarchy because it allows more men "to show their wisdom, knowledge, and eloquence" is compared to the objection to peace "that it is a grievance to valiant men to be restrained from fighting because they delight in it" (2.10.9). The public deliberations of great assemblies fail because success here depends upon eloquence and eloquence distorts the good, the profitable, the honest and their contraries; makes the unjust appear just; reasons from vulgar opinions rather than true principles; is shaped by the hearers' passions; and aims at victory, not truth (2.10.11).

4. While contemporary readers no longer object to Hobbes's "wicked, blasphemous, and atheistical views" now that they share them, they still strain at the "unsavoury gnat which is Hobbes's view of human nature." McNeilly hopes to extrapolate from the progress he detects in successive versions of Hobbes's teaching to a statement freed of this objection. *Ibid*, 5. Compare Leo Strauss, The *Political Philosophy of Hobbes* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1952), 6–29, 169, and *What is Political Philosophy?* (Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1959), 170–96.

5. See, e.g., A. E. Taylor, "The Ethical Doctrine of Hobbes," in K. C. Brown, ed., *Hobbes Studies* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965), 35; Bernard Gert, ed., *Man and Citizen* (New York: Doubleday, 1972), 3; Sterling Lamprecht, ed., *De Cive* (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1949), xix. The suggestion is pursued in relation to the theory of authorization by Clifford Orwin, "on the Sovereign Authorization" *Political Theory*, Vol. 3, No. 1, 32. See also Hanna Pitkin's enthusiasm for Orwin's suggestion that the theory constitutes a "rhetorical advance," *Ibid.*, 47. On the rhetoric of *Leviathan* as a whole see also Gary Shapiro, "Reading and Writing in the Text of *Leviathan*," *Journal of the History of Philosophy* (April 1980), and James Zappen, "Hobbes's *Leviathan: Logos, Ethos,* and *Pathos*," International Society for the History of Rhetoric, Madison, Wisconsin, April, 1981.

6. *English Works* VIII, xvi–xvii.

In *Leviathan* Hobbes still argues against sovereign assemblies that the advice of members, who participate by right not knowledge, is given in long discourses which commonly excite rather than govern the passions, and he adds that orators, who are the favourites of assemblies, have greater capacity to injure than defend innocent subjects (2.19, 144–45). For the most part, however, the dangers of eloquence are treated now as reasons why a sovereign should seek advice "apart" rather than from the same individuals in an assembly (2.25, 200–201). As Hobbes's comparison of the kinds of commonwealth becomes a less conspicuous feature of his political science, so he treats rhetoric now within a general discussion of the qualities of "apt, and inept counsellors" (2.25, 198).[7]

In his *Elements of Law* and *Citizen* Hobbes also views rhetoric as a necessary condition of the dissolution of the commonwealth through sedition. According to both works if there be members of the commonwealth who are discontent, disposed to believe sedition could be rightful, and hopeful of success, there is "nothing wanting to sedition and confusion of the realm, but one to *stir up* and *quicken them*" (*De Cive* 2.12.11).[8] The leaders or authors of sedition are necessarily at once eloquent and lacking in both "judgment" and "wisdom." According to the argument of the *Elements* the leaders of sedition as such show that they lack prudence, or the ability to conjecture what is to come by remembrance of things past, since of those who have led seditions twenty have failed for every one who succeeded; they display their lack of wisdom, or of the knowledge of "what conduceth to the good and government of the people" drawn from "a remembrance of pacts and covenants of men made amongst themselves," since it can be demonstrated by such knowledge or science that "no pretense of sedition can be right or just" (2.8.13). The leaders of sedition are imprudent, then, as they expect to succeed, unwise as they themselves believe one or another of those false doctrines that seem to justify sedition (*De Cive* 2.12.12). In fact, the false opinions adopted and taught by such men were already "insinuated . . by [the] eloquent sophistry" of Aristotle and others (*El.* 2.9.8). That the authors of sedition must be eloquent is shown by a consideration of their task, for they must both create or augment the sense of injury and provoke rage and indignation. They must make men believe their rebellion just, their discontents grievous, and their chance of success great (*El.* 2.8.14). The successful orators of sedition must "turn their auditors out of fools into madmen . enlarge their hopes, [and]

7. The reorganization of the argument in *Leviathan* seems to follow the suggestion of *De Cive* that the inconveniences of democracy which result from the deliberation of great assemblies would disappear if everyone within the democracy would mind his own affairs and the people "would bestow the power of deliberating in matters of war and peace, either on one, or some very few, being content with the nomination of magistrates and public ministers, i.e., with the authority without the ministration . " (2.10.15; see also *El.* 2.5.8).

8. The clearest statement of the "formal" theory of sedition in terms of discontent, pretense of right, and hope of success occurs in the *Elements of Law* (2.8.1) but the same theory is implicit in the account of *De Cive* (2.12.1, 2.12.11). See Mathie, "Justice and the Question of Regimes," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, Vol. 9, No. 3 (Sept. 1976), 452.

lessen their dangers beyond reason . . ." (*De Cive* 2.12.12). If, indeed, great eloquence can create in its hearers the passionate sense of discontent and hope of success as well as the false opinion that their sedition is, or can be, just, rhetoric as "the metaphorical use of words fitted to the passions" would seem not only a necessary but a sufficient cause of sedition and civil war. The success of a political science intended to preserve the commonwealth against dissolution will therefore depend upon its ability to render the potential auditors of such rhetoric immune to its appeal.[9]

When we turn from these to the corresponding account of political dissolution in *Leviathan* we are struck by two changes. Hobbes now holds that the commonwealth can be secured indefinitely against internal dissolution if men make use of the reason they claim to possess, and that what is at fault when commonwealths do perish of internal disorders lies "not in men as they are the matter; but as they are the makers, and orderers" of the commonwealth (*Lev.* 2.29, 247). Nor does Hobbes now mention rhetoric or eloquence.[10] Instead, we observe that Hobbes's treatment of each of the internal causes of dissolution is itself partly metaphorical; each is compared to some infirmity or disease of the individual human body. Could Hobbes's failure to mention here what he had previously treated as a necessary if not sufficient condition of sedition imply a new hope of rendering common opinion safe against the danger of eloquence and thus a basis for Hobbes's hope that the commonwealth might become "immortal"? In any case, we may observe that Hobbes does not here much alter his treatment of discontent and those opinions that can support a pretense to right of sedition.

In all versions of his political science Hobbes proceeds from the examination of the internal causes of dissolution to a discussion of the duties or "office" of the sovereign representative, a discussion at least partly directed to the political dangers just examined. In *Leviathan* this discussion is much expanded and significantly modified. The duty of the sovereign to instruct his subjects in the grounds of his own essential rights as sovereign is given much greater prominence within that discussion. This teaching of one's subjects is of fundamental

9. Hobbes illustrates the combination of folly and rhetoric and the result of this combination through the story of the daughters of Pelias who were persuaded by Medea to dismember their father and place his members in a boiling cauldron in order to restore his youthful vigor in *De Cive* as in the *Elements*, but his application of this story is altered in the later work so as to suggest a greater concern for the folly of the orator's *hearers*—"the common people." Compare *De Cive* 2.12.13, *El.* 2.8.15.

10. The false doctrines which support a pretended right of sedition are attributed to "unlearned divines" and some of those "making profession of the laws" (2.29, 249–51). Speaking of the example of neighbouring nations as a possible cause of innovation Hobbes speaks of "those that solicit <men> to change" but gives no account of these. Among the "not so great" diseases of the commonwealth Hobbes speaks of the popularity of a potent subject whose flattery and reputation may serve to draw others from "their obedience to the laws" but he does not mention rhetoric or eloquence in discussing the potency of such a subject; he speaks here of Caesar who proceeded to win the people against the Senate after he had won the army and not, as in the *Elements* and *De Cive*, of Catiline. Elsewhere, in discussing the passions that most frequently cause crime Hobbes discusses the unwisdom of "the first movers in the disturbance of commonwealth" but not of their eloquence (2.27, 228).

importance because the rights of sovereignty cannot otherwise be successfully maintained. Neither civil law nor fear of punishment can accomplish this. Those who do not already recognize themselves as obliged by the laws of nature will not acknowledge that they are obliged to obey civil law and will regard punishment or the threat of it as nothing but "an act of hostility" (2.30, 259).[11] In all statements of his political science Hobbes speaks both of the necessity that those who teach the young in the universities be themselves fully instructed in the "true and truly demonstrated foundations of civil doctrine" and of the capacity of the vulgar to entertain true doctrine through their public and private instruction by those educated in the universities (*De Cive* 2.13.9; *El.* 2.9.8; *Lev.* 2.30, 260, 264–65). In *Leviathan* Hobbes goes on to answer those who doubt the capacity of the common people to receive this instruction, that the difficulty is rather posed by the "potent" who can hardly digest "anything that setteth up a power to bridle their affections" and by the "learned" who reject anything "that discovereth their errors and thereby lesseneth their authority" (2.30, 260). The capacity of the vulgar is shown by their acquiescence in the "great Mysteries of Christian Religion"; on the basis of this evidence and/or the reasonable character of the true civil doctrine Hobbes can assert that an unprejudiced man "needs no more to learn, than to hear" this doctrine. And indeed he now offers a statement of what must be taught on the pattern of the decalogue.

Success in teaching the true civil doctrine depends upon the discovery of how "so many opinions, contrary to the peace of mankind, upon weak and false principles, have nevertheless been so deeply rooted" in the people. What is discovered thereby is that the greatest part of mankind is diverted by lack of leisure or attachment to sensual pleasures "from the deep meditation, which the learning of truth, not only in the matter of natural justice, but also of other sciences necessarily requires " (2.30, 264). Certainly Hobbes does not speak of this as a capacity for scientific instruction as such—"as for science, or certain rules of their actions, [most men] are so far from it, that they know not what it is" (1.5, 37; 2.30, 264; cf. *De Cive*, "Preface," 90). Prudence, and eloquence as seeming prudence, are among the "human powers" but the sciences are "small power" since they are possessed by few and by these in but few things and understood at all only by their possessors (1.10, 67). In *Leviathan's* "Review and Conclusion" Hobbes acknowledges that though solid reasoning is necessary to all deliberations if men are to avoid rash resolutions and unjust sentences, reason's effect will be slight "if there be not powerful eloquence which procureth attention and consent," and concludes that "reason, and eloquence, (though not perhaps in the natural sciences, yet in the moral) may stand very well together" (547, 548).

If moral science may, or must, be so presented as to combine reason and elo-

11. In *De Cive* Hobbes says it is the duty of the sovereign to root out false doctrines "not by commanding, but by teaching; not by the terror of penalties, but by the perspicuity of reason" (2.13.9). In the *Elements* he remarks only that opinions which are gotten by education, and in length of time, are made habitual, cannot be taken away by force, and upon the sudden . (2.9.8).

quence, what should be the nature of this combination? The sciences although they are the "way" of reason are "small power." Geometry which is the true mother of all sciences and "arts of public use" is least of all acknowledged. Geometry, on the other hand, has the advantage over "the doctrine of right and wrong" that it is not like the latter "perpetually disputed." Geometry is no matter of contention for it "crosses no man's ambition" (*Lev.* 1.11, 79). Lack of science, or ignorance of causes, and ignorance of the signification of words, moreover, contribute much to the power of seditious eloquence, for those who suffer from this ignorance must rely on the opinions and advice of others and even take on trust the errors and nonsense of those they have come to trust (1.11, 78–79). If lack of leisure and concern for bodily pleasures make most men incapable of science, including the science of justice, while science *qua* science is alone free of disputation, must not the successful rhetorical response to the rhetoric of sedition itself somehow resemble science?

In Hobbes's *Behemoth* one of the speakers doubts whether anything can ever alter the ignorance of the common people of their duty to the public "as never meditating anything but their particular interest" and therefore following others —"the preachers, or the most potent"—in all other things. In response to this doubt the other discussant asks why the science of just and unjust might not be taught like other sciences from "true principles and evident demonstration" and "more easily than . . . the preachers and democratical gentlemen teach rebellion;" to a further doubt as to the existence of this science and the safety of one who should try to teach it, he adds that one writer has already prepared a sufficient demonstration of the rules of just and unjust "from principles *evident to the meanest capacity.*[12] What are those principles from which the rules of just and unjust can be sufficiently derived and how exactly are they "evident" to those of the meanest capacity?

II

How a successful moral science should combine reason and eloquence may perhaps be better understood if we consider that failure of Hobbes's predecessors to create such a science which led Hobbes to proclaim that moral philosophy is no older than his own *De Cive* (*FW* I, ix). The failure of Socrates, his successors, and especially Aristotle, to establish moral science as a science would seem to be almost complete. Than much of Aristotle's *Ethics*, "scarce anything can be . . said . . more ignorantly;" the old moral philosophers do little more than describe their own passions and treat "attributes of honour" as if "attributes of nature" (*Lev.* 4.46, 522, 531). Yet if what the moral philosophers have written has entertained men's affections rather than illuminated their understandings, it is not so clear that those writings have had no effect. We have already noted Hobbes's

12. *English Works* VI, 212. (Emphasis added.)

statement that the false opinions successfully taught by the orators of sedition were previously "insinuated" by the "eloquent sophistry" of Aristotle and others. In the "Preface to the Reader" of *De Cive,* Hobbes goes so far as to suggest that the opinions of the moral philosophers which derived from their attempt "to prostitute justice . . . to their own judgments and apprehensions" have been the "causes of *all* contentions and bloodsheds" (98, emphasis added). Indeed, Hobbes does not hesitate to describe in this passage a golden age of peace that existed before "the science of justice" was "openly exposed to disputation" by the first philosophers who took this science up. Until this event, subjects recognized that their own security depended upon the preservation of the supreme power and would not "join themselves with ambitious and hellish spirits, to the utter ruin of the state." Now, apparently in consequence of the prostitution of justice by the moral philosophers, "even the vulgar" claim an equal share of that "prudence" or "civil knowledge" by which the government should be directed and its conduct judged (96).

A clue to the nature of Hobbes's own rhetoric may be furnished, we think, by reflection upon the considerable effect Hobbes here attributes to his predecessors and the ambiguous relation of this effect to the intention he also attributes to them. The moral philosophers have successfully undermined the natural or immediate authority of all who rule, and even established in men's opinions as "principles of nature" those "democratical principles" they derived from the "practice of their own commonwealths, which were popular" (*Lev.* 2.21, 165; *FW* VI, 218). The success of Aristotle and other moral philosophers as orators would thus be great were the promotion of democratic principles an adequate description of their intention, but Hobbes does not, at least consistently, maintain that this is so. Rather, Hobbes claims that Aristotle made natural inequality, or the naturally greater ability of some to rule, the foundation of his whole politics and intended thereby the rule of "the wiser sort (such as he thought himself to be for his philosophy)" over those others "that had strong bodies, but were not philosophers as he . . ." (*Lev.* 1.15, 118; *De Cive* 1.3.13; *El.* 1.17.1). Measured against this account of their intention, the rhetoric of the philosophers has achieved a doubtful result; the foolish have seldom sought, or acquiesced in, the rule of the wise nor have the wise always, often, or almost ever mastered by force those "who distrust their own wisdom". In one passage of *De Cive* Hobbes appears even to suggest that the philosophers "who might securely and quietly have lived under the natural jurisdiction of kings" are instead "tormented with perpetual cares, suspicions, and dissensions" in consequence of their own "invention" of the (false) civil science.[13] In any case, Aristotle's founding of political science upon natural inequality has "weakened the whole frame of his politics and given men colour and pretences, whereby to disturb and hinder the peace of

13. This seems to be the meaning of Hobbes's interpretation of the fable of Prometheus (*De Cive* 2.10.3, note) especially when compared with that other fable of the ancients reported in the "Preface" (97).

one another" (*El.* 1.1.1). It would seem that the moral and political philosophy of Socrates and his successors has established, by the success of its rhetoric, the dominance of individual private opinion, or rather passion, over public authority, a pretext for the ambitious, and much support for this claim at the level of common opinion. This result can be connected to the assumption that wisdom should rule, for the ambitious have obtained thereby the basis of a claim to rule, as wiser than him or them now ruling. For the proud at least, this is more than a pretext, for it has become an admission of inferior wisdom not to rule, or have one's opinion prevail with him that does. When, finally, the "ghostly" claim to supernatural wisdom is combined with the belief that ruling is justified by the wisdom of those who rule, the way is prepared for the division of spiritual and temporal authority and the subordination of the latter to the former. What is not established by the old moral philosophy, in any event, is the true rule of wisdom, or even that of those philosophers who considered themselves the wise, over the unwise. Indirectly, the actual result of that moral philosophy could better be described as "the suppression of philosophy by such men, as neither by lawful authority, nor sufficient study are competent judges of the truth" (*Lev.* 4.46, 536; *EW* VI, 283).

In order to determine the character of Hobbes's proposed remedy for this situation for which his predecessors are, at least partly, responsible—a situation defective from the point of view of both philosophy and commonwealth—and to identify the rhetorical dimension of this remedy it will be useful to consider briefly the accuracy of Hobbes's account of the claims of the old civil philosophy.[14] If we may doubt whether Hobbes has done justice to the reasons for the claim of Socrates and his followers that philosophers should rule, we cannot deny that this claim was made. What Hobbes does not acknowledge is that those who claimed that the evils which beset political life would not cease until philosophy and political power coincided were hardly more confident than Hobbes of the prospects for this coincidence. Although the argument for this coincidence could be made within the perspective of political life—perhaps only within that perspective—the political efficacy of this argument was doubtful to those who made it; philosophy must also practice, or call upon, a rhetoric that can soothe the indignation provoked by the very hearing of such a proposal.[15]

If, in the second place, there is a partial truth to the assertion that the old political science was founded upon natural inequality, or the possession by some of greater wisdom by nature whereby these ought to rule over the others, the teachers of that political science did not expect many, if any, actual regimes to reflect this inequality very exactly. Nor did they apparently expect any regime to be "founded upon this inequality" if by this is meant the clear acknowledgement and acceptance of the greater wisdom of those who rule as their title to rule. Where

14. For a general discussion of its accuracy see Joseph Cropsey, "Hobbes and the Transition to Modernity" in Cropsey, ed., *Ancients and Moderns* (New York: Basic Books, 1964), 225–28.

15. Plato, *Republic* 498d.

the claim of wisdom to rule is accepted at all, this is likely to occur only within a wider accommodation of several conflicting claims to rule; for example, the claim of wisdom or virtue may sometimes obtain a limited recognition as a ground on which the more potent claims of wealth and number can be adjusted.[16] The immense task for rhetoric in the creation of a regime that significantly reflects natural inequality and the virtual impossibility of a rhetoric that could fulfill this task are both illustrated by Socrates' suggestion that the city in speech of the *Republic* might be established by persuading all the adult inhabitants of some city to depart leaving their children to be raised by the founders of the new order (541a), or by the "noble lie" he proposes to secure fraternal dedication to the common good and acceptance of the city's hierarchical organization (414b–415d). By the latter especially, Socrates implies that an order which corresponds to natural inequality, even though beneficial to the city and all its members, will be accepted, if at all, only when it is misrepresented, by a powerful rhetoric, as the direct result of divine agency. Just as in securing the rule of the lovers of wisdom, rhetoric must apparently overcome great resentment or indignation.

We may begin to indicate Hobbes's point of departure from the teaching of his predecessors if we recall an image Socrates employs to account for the nonrule, and even contempt, of philosophers which Adeimantus, like Hobbes, had observed (487c–489b). Socrates compares the city to a ship whose owner, the people, is neither very perceptive nor knowledgeable concerning navigation. Members of this ship's crew, the politicians, as represented here, contend with one another in order to obtain control of the rudder. They doubt whether there is any true art of navigation and suppose that this art, if it does exist, could never be combined with what is clearly valuable—the art of obtaining the rudder, whether by persuasion or force. The possessor of the true art of navigation does not rule but is despised because his art is not acknowledged, while the art he does *not* possess is valued. The possibility of his rule would depend upon the combination of those two arts, or the persuasion of the shipowner that there is an art of navigation. Hobbes notes the somewhat similar fact that even the vulgar suppose themselves to possess an equal share of prudence, or civil knowledge, as something attained without any great care or study and therefore deny that there are any others wiser in this than themselves. In *De Cive* this unwillingness of most men to admit that others might have a better claim to the civil science is presented as a consequence of that prostitution of justice accomplished by Socrates and his successors. In *Leviathan* the same conviction of almost all men that they are more prudent than the vulgar, "than all men but themselves and a few others, whom by fame, or for concurring with themselves, they approve," has become an argument for the equality of prudence, albeit facetiously (*Lev.* 1.13, 94–95). Hobbes does not deny the disastrous consequences of the contention for rule, nor

16. Aristotle, *Politics* 1283^{b}10–35. See also H. V. Jaffa, "Aristotle" in Joseph Cropsey and Leo Strauss, eds., *History of Political Philosophy* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1963), 113–14.

perhaps even the existence of some kind of art of navigation, but neither does he seek to persuade those who contend for rule, of the existence of that art.

Hobbes insists, in all presentations of his political teaching, that the claim that there is a natural inequality of wisdom among men justifying the rule by some over others, which was a foundation of Aristotle's doctrine, must be denied (*El.* 1.17.1, *De Cive* 1.3.13, *Lev.* 1.15, 117–18). What we must consider here is how far this denial has itself a rhetorical character. Hobbes says the Aristotelian claim must be denied because it is against both "reason" and "experience." The claim is against "experience", or denied by prudence, in the first place, because, as we have seen, those supposing themselves wiser have seldom if ever successfully imposed their claim. Whatever the conclusion to be drawn from this experience, which we have observed was familiar to Hobbes's predecessors, Hobbes also offers a kind of explanation for this experience: "there are very few so foolish, that had not rather govern themselves, than be governed by others" (*Lev.* 1.15, 118). Once the experienced unwillingness of the supposedly less wise to accept the rule of others as wiser than themselves is understood in this way, it becomes possible to conclude that natural human equality must be universally acknowledged as a necessary condition for the securing of peace and establishing of government. The universal acknowledgement that no man is by nature the superior, or ruler, of any other and the actual enjoyment of an equal liberty consistent with this acknowledgement will perhaps content men who have claimed an equal or even superior share of that wisdom whereby they have supposed the commonwealth is governed. Of course, the Aristotelian claim is also denied "by reason" inasmuch as it has previously been demonstrated that even the strongest can be killed by the weakest in the natural condition. We must observe, however, that although this demonstration is said to show that "the inequality that now is has been introduced by the laws civil," Hobbes's conclusion that equality by nature must be acknowledged is not based on this demonstration from reason but on the argument developed from experience. Thus natural equality is to be admitted "if nature have made men equal" or "if nature have made men unequal."

Although the requirement that natural equality be acknowledged is deduced as necessary for peace in view of the unwillingness of most men to admit that any other is wiser than they are, it may be objected that what is required for peace corresponds with what "reason" teaches, in any case. In fact, all reason teaches in all three accounts of the natural condition is "how brittle the frame of our human body is, which perishing, all its strength, vigour, and wisdom itself perisheth with it; and how easy a matter it is, even for the weakest man to kill the strongest . . ." (*De Cive* 1.1.3). Does this teaching effectively contradict the Aristotelian claim that there is a natural inequality among men in wisdom or virtue which justifies the rule of some by others? When he summarizes reason's teaching in *De Cive* Hobbes specifically names "riches, power, nobility of kindred," but not prudence or wisdom, as forms of inequality shown by reason to "come

from the civil law" (1.3.13). In *Leviathan* Hobbes says simply that "the inequality that now is" is introduced by the civil laws perhaps because in the account of the state of nature in this work he has specifically denied that there is a natural inequality of prudence that is a basis for rule. Men are equal not only by reason of their vulnerability to violent death at the hands of others but also in "the faculties of mind." Men are indeed even more equal in the only relevant mental faculty, prudence, than in bodily strength since prudence is only experience, "which equal time equally bestows on all men, in those things they equally apply themselves unto" (*Lev.* 1.13, 94). The vain conceit of most that they are more prudent than others derives from partiality and proves that prudence is equally distributed since the satisfaction of all with their share of some good is the best sign of an equal distribution.[17] If it be true that prudence is experience and that all men will obtain an equal measure of this over the same period of time in what "they equally apply themselves unto," we must note that Hobbes has already acknowledged in the eighth chapter of *Leviathan* that all do not by any means apply themselves equally, that "the causes of this difference . are in the passions," and that prudence is in fact a natural virtue unequally possessed by various men, even if less subject to inequality than "judgment" or "fancy" (*Lev.* 1.8, 52–57).[18] Hobbes's thematic analysis of prudence does not indicate the equality of prudence but the converse. The analysis does however confirm the wisdom of those who would rather govern themselves than be governed by the wise, for the difference in men's passions which is the cause of the difference in their natural wit is a difference between those who do and those who do not desire power or dominion over others. Hobbes does assert that a "plain husband-man is more prudent in affairs of his own house, than a Privy Counsellor in the affairs of another man" (*Lev.* 1.8.56) though not that the plain husband-man could perform the Privy Counsellor's office well; the equality of prudence is not so great as to justify a share of all or anyone in rule but enough to restrict the intervention of Privy Counsellors into the daily affairs of plain husband-men. We may conclude in any event that what is added in *Leviathan* to the argument from "reason" against the Aristotelian claim of natural inequality refutes that claim, if at all, only by appeal once more to a kind of prudence, or even common opinion. The case for equality of prudence is thus based on prudence, or common opinion, or the passionate refusal of men to admit any others wiser than themselves.

If it is pecular to rhetoric that the principles out of which its arguments are drawn "are the common opinions that men have" (*EW* VI, 426), it becomes possible to speak of Hobbes's insistence that human equality by nature be acknowledged as a rhetorical claim, or even to say that the Hobbesian commonwealth, at least in *Leviathan*, has itself a rhetorical foundation. The fundamental role of the

17. See Descartes, *Discourse*, Part I (at the beginning) for another version of the same "argument."

18. It may also be doubted on the latter account whether prudence is entirely distinct from judgment and fancy.

acknowledgement of natural equality within Hobbes's political science is indicated by the fact that it is a necessary and sufficient condition of that reasoning whereby we see that we are bound to obey the sovereign representative, and the several laws of nature, and a standard for the sovereign in the ordinary performance of his office. If, further, the Hobbesian commonwealth not only affirms natural equality but also permits, or even encourages a great inequality in the things "necessary to commodious living" and obtained through the industry of individuals this latter result too is at least consistent with Hobbes's perception of common opinion: "Want is less a disgrace than stupidity; for the former can be attributed to the inequity of fortune; the latter is attributable to nature alone" (*De Homine* 11.8).

III

"At the centre of Hobbes's political theory lies the concept of the state of nature."[19] Although we cannot hope to examine here the role of rhetoric in the structure and content of *Leviathan* as a whole, we do intend to illustrate in this concluding section of our discussion how far rhetorical considerations enter into Hobbes's treatment of the natural human condition especially as it departs from that furnished in the *Elements of Law* and *De Cive*. We hope to show that the novel features of this account admit of such an explanation and, so understood, constitute a valuable indication of the character and broader aim of Hobbes's rhetoric in *Leviathan*. This analysis may also supply an alternative to that interpretation which finds in this chapter Hobbes's substitution of a formal analysis of rational deliberation for his earlier and dubious reliance upon an unattractive and arbitrary account of human nature.[20] On the latter reading of *Leviathan* Hobbes's concern for, or "obsession" with pride or the passionate desire for glory has vanished, or is vanishing, from his central political argument. If Hobbes remains a "pessimist" concerning human nature, his "pessimism" is now to be seen as a merely private view and no part of his political science.

Can one say that Hobbes "does not miss an opportunity [in *Leviathan*] of diminishing the importance of glory in his psychological and political arguments 6?[21] At least four of the six considerations Hobbes advances concerning mankind to distinguish human society from that of the irrational creatures involve glory, comparison, or reputation (*Lev.* 2.17, 130–31).[22] Summarizing his argument to the end of the twenty-eighth chapter, Hobbes says he has "set forth

19. McNeilly, *Anatomy*, 159.

20. *Ibid.*, 146.

21. *Ibid.*

22. Though there are closely parallel treatments of this question in the *Elements* and *De Cive* there are significant revisions in each version and especially in *Leviathan*—Hobbes did not merely preserve something from the earlier works. See notes 23 and 28.

the nature of man (whose pride and other passions have compelled him to submit himself to government) . ." and explains the title of the present work *Leviathan* by reference to God's words to Job: "he [Leviathan] . . . is king of all the children of pride" (*Lev.* 2.28, 246). Vainglory is treated as the most important of the passions which cause crime and especially criminal sedition (2.27, 228–29), and apparently as the more important of the two passions "whose violence, or continuance maketh madness" (1.8, 57). Since madness is understood by Hobbes to constitute the excess of passion itself we may almost conclude that "vainglory, which is commonly called pride and self-conceit" characterizes human passion as such.[23] If vanity is a less obvious and explicit concern in *Leviathan*, and especially in the discussion of the state of nature, than previously, it has hardly disappeared from Hobbes's teaching. Nevertheless, we must consider whether it has become superfluous to Hobbes's discussion of the state of nature and consequently of minor importance to Hobbes's argument as a whole. Does Hobbes's account of the principal reasons why the state of nature is a state of war no longer depend upon the pursuit of glory?

The improved argument Hobbes's *Leviathan* is said to contain can be summarized thus: while self-glorifying violence can result from the pursuit of glory, competitive violence can result whenever men have incompatible objectives; the possibility of either leads to a general diffidence, to anticipatory violence, and so to a state of war. Hobbes, on this account, supposes nothing as to the specific nature of individuals, or human nature generally, but only works out the calculations of any individual who must act in relation to others "when the specific nature of these others is indeterminate."[24] A man may reasonably initiate anticipatory violence when he fears violence from some other within a condition of general diffidence; he may fear violence from that other not only when he suspects that other of pursuing an incompatible objective or glory but also when he suspects that the other may himself initiate anticipatory violence for any of these same reasons including fear of anticipatory violence. "Diffidence" and "anticipatory violence" within a formal analysis of rational deliberation constitute a "hypothetical" argument which replaces that of the *Elements* and *De Cive*.[25] In those works Hobbes had argued that man is driven into conflict with others "because of the nature of his passions as an individual" so that even if violence were not caused by the incompatibility of objectives it would result from the universal and "relentless drive for glory which is the chief cause of conflict."

The error in this interpretation begins to emerge when we consider Hobbes's preface to *De Cive* which is supposed to constitute evidence of a transition from an earlier political science based upon a specific account of human nature to the

23. Strauss, *Political Philosophy of Hobbes*, 11–12.

24. McNeilly, 165.

25. Whether the argument is hypothetical may be doubted even on McNeilly's understanding of anticipatory violence; it is finally hypothetical only in the sense that it is deemed reasonable "only if there should be an opportunity of making precautionary war" to do so (166).

formalized version of *Leviathan*. In reply to those who object that he has assumed men wicked by nature, Hobbes observes that "though the wicked were fewer than the righteous, yet because we cannot distinguish them" anticipation and self-defense is required of even the most honest (p. 100). To say that what operates here, as in *Leviathan,* is "not the nature of human motives . . . but the bearing of the unknown on rational deliberation" is not exact. Hobbes's "honest" man does not know which of the others is "wicked" or "righteous" but he must have an account of human nature which encompasses the more dangerous possibility. Similarly, though anticipatory violence may be caused by fear of anticipatory violence the condition of diffidence within which this can occur presupposes a certain understanding of human nature, or of the range of its possible forms, on the part of the diffident; the diffident must be able to conceive of a possible cause of violence in human nature other than the fear of anticipatory violence itself. It can also be shown that vanity, or self-glory, as a possible form of human nature remains essential to the existence of diffidence even in the treatment of the state of nature in *Leviathan*.

In his account of the causes of quarrel in *De Cive* Hobbes calls glory "the chief source of violence" yet admits that "the most frequent" source is the incompatibility of objectives. This would indicate incoherence in Hobbes's argument as stated here, only if we understand glory as a specific and isolated human motive. Hobbes's incoherence vanishes when we recognize that the human concern for glory or comparison can enter into the very choice of objectives and cause, or contribute to, their incompatibility. And indeed Hobbes says in *De Cive* that "man scarce esteems anything good, which hath not somewhat of eminence in the enjoyment . . ." (2.5.5).

In *Leviathan* Hobbes introduces "equality of hope" as the result of "equality of ability" and from this derives enmity and war out of competition (1.13, 95). Has Hobbes thus found a sufficient cause of violence in the mere incompatibility of objectives, or in the scarcity of the means whereby desires may be satisfied? We should observe rather that Hobbes new notion of "equality of hope" follows his expanded and revised treatment of "equality of ability." As we have already seen, Hobbes argues in *Leviathan* for the first time that men are equal not only in their physical vulnerability but also in their faculties of mind; in arguing this latter he notes that "such is the nature of men . they will hardly believe there be many so wise as themselves . . ." For Hobbes this becomes a proof of equality of wisdom but it is not, of course, an acknowledgement of equality as it exists in men's beliefs. One can say that Hobbes derives "equality of hope" from "equality of ability" only when he expands his account of the latter to include the vain conceit of most men as to their own wisdom. Not equal hope of obtaining but equal fear derives from equality of ability when this is confined to the recognition of how brittle the frame of our body is.[26] In *Leviathan* then, though diffidence

26. "Dans cet état, chacun se sent inferieur; à peine chacun se sent-il égal." Montesquieu, *De l'esprit des lois* 1.1.2.

may occur whenever "two men desire the same thing which nevertheless they cannot both enjoy," we must recall again that "man, whose joy consists in comparing himself with other men, can relish nothing but what is eminent" (2.17, 130). The probability and possibility of a true "incompatibility of objectives" depends upon the fact that at least some men proceed in this way, or that all men can imagine that some might. That vanity, or the concern for what is eminent, remains an essential element of the argument which shows that the state of nature is a state of war, is finally suggested by the fact that "the desire of such things as are necessary to commodious living" is a passion that inclines men to peace, at least when it is accompanied by the hope of obtaining these things by their own industry (1.13, 98).

If, as we have argued, vanity, or the concern for reputation, remains essential to Hobbes's account of the generation of quarrel in the natural condition, we must nevertheless acknowledge that its explicit role within his argument is reduced. More exactly, glory as a separate and specific cause of violence is mentioned after rather than before competition for "gain." Nor is this the only change of this kind within Hobbes's argument. In the earlier statements and especially in *De Cive* Hobbes had also identified the "combat of wits" as a cause of violence; if glory is the *chief* cause of the "desire to hurt" and "appetite to the same thing" its most *frequent* source, disagreement of opinion concerning religious "doctrines or politic prudence" causes "the fiercest, or the greatest discords which are . . ." (*De Cive* 1.1.5). In *Leviathan* men's vain esteem of their own wisdom is incorporated into the "proof " of equal faculties of mind, while their differences of opinion are included among the "trifles" for which those who seek glory contend (*Lev.* 1.13, 96). We may doubt whether this change indicates that Hobbes no longer supposes differences of opinion concerning "religious doctrine" or "civic prudence" an important cause of contention or civil strife; the greater part of Leviathan is directed to the problem for the commonwealth posed by errors of religious doctrine. It is therefore reasonable to consider whether Hobbes's altered treatment of these differences of opinion as also of the priority of the pursuit of glory could be intended to contribute to the practical solution of the problem these create for the commonwealth. There is, we believe, a general consistency between the changes in Hobbes's account of the natural condition here and other revisions in his teaching concerning the nature of the commonwealth which supports this suggestion.

If the pursuit by two or more of some objective they cannot jointly enjoy obtains a kind of priority over the pursuit of reputation in *Leviathan*, this change may be considered in relation to Hobbes's understanding of the possibility and manner of satisfying those pursuing these ends within civil society. In *De Cive* Hobbes argues that "gain" can be obtained through the society of others, even if it could be sought yet more successfully through dominion, were this obtainable (1.1.2). As we have seen, the desire of things necessary for commodious living coupled with the hope of obtaining these through our own industry is a passion

which inclines men to peace (*Lev.* 1.13, 98). Society does not at all advance "the cause of my glorying in myself," on the other hand, according to *De Cive*, and no great or lasting society can be based on this pursuit (1.1.2). Those forms of commonwealth in which there is opportunity for this pursuit are to this extent inferior to that in which there is none (*De Cive* 2.10.9). Since, further, "ambition and greediness of honour cannot be rooted out of the minds of men" those who think themselves wiser than others and show it by harming the commonwealth if they cannot do so otherwise must be led to "an ambition to obey" by the "constant application of rewards and punishments . " (2.13.12). In *Leviathan* Hobbes still speaks of the application of rewards but understands the aim of these to extend beyond the mere restraint of ambition:

> their use and end . is then done, when they that have well served the commonwealth, are with as little expense of the common treasure, as is possible, so well recompensed, as others thereby may be encouraged both to serve the same as faithfully as they can, and to study the arts by which they may be enabled to do it better (*Lev.* 2.30, 270)[27]

If the proper use of rewards can encourage something other than the mere "ambition to obey", could the concern for comparisons or what is eminent be transformed into the pursuit of those goods associated with commodious living? We have already noted Hobbes's observation that the peculiarly human pursuit is of what is eminent since man's joy consists in his comparison of himself with others. We may now observe that this thought obtains its most radical form in *Leviathan*. In the *Elements of Law* Hobbes had said that while bees pursue a common good, men seek such goods as are distinct and therefore cause contention; in *Leviathan* the bees are naturally inclined to their private good and *thereby* procure the common good while man determines what is good by its eminence—comparison is not a result but a cause of the human pursuit of goods that are distinct and eminent (*El.* 1.19.5; *De Cive* 2.5.5; *Lev.* 2.17, 130).[28]

We have seen that in *Leviathan* men's vain esteem of their own wisdom, which is expressed in their differences of opinion concerning civic prudence and religious doctrine in *De Cive*, becomes part of an argument for the equality of prudence and we have suggested that this argument is dubious both on its face and when compared to what Hobbes has said about prudence previously in *Leviathan*. So far as Hobbes's aim remains that of persuading his readers that they should not "suffer ambitious men through the streams of [those readers'] blood to wade to their own power" (*De Cive*, "Preface," 103) the rhetorical merit of his new argument is considerable and it is augmented by other changes in his teach-

27. Compare also the extent and status of Hobbes's treatment of the prevention of idleness in *De Cive* (2.13.14) and *Leviathan* (2.30, 267).

28. The account in *De Cive* falls between those of *The Elements* and *Leviathan*: the natural appetite of the bees is "conformable and they desire the common good, which among them differs not from their private" while man "scarce esteems" what "has not somewhat of eminence in the enjoyment, more than that which others do possess."

ing.[29] Though men's vain esteem of their own wisdom is not satisfied by participation in the governance of the commonwealth it is not violated by the need to admit the greater wisdom of some other. Equality of hope becomes central to the account of quarrel in the natural condition, and equality of right fundamental to Hobbes's treatment of the laws of nature. Equity as the acknowledgement of natural equality among men has moreover an increased role in guiding the sovereign representative in the performance of his office and a new role of great importance in the judicial interpretation of the laws of the commonwealth.[30]

Differences of opinion concerning religious doctrine are no longer named at all among the causes of quarrel in Hobbes's treatment of the natural condition in *Leviathan* though the basis of religious belief in ignorance of natural causes is accorded considerable importance in Hobbes's examination of the "qualities of mankind that concern their living together in peace and unity" earlier in the same work (*Lev.* 1.11, 78–81). If such differences retain their significance we can only suppose that Hobbes includes them among the "trifles" for which men seeking glory invade one another (1.13, 96). That men's differences of opinion might be understood as a contention over "trifles" is not immediately obvious. In the *Elements of Law* Hobbes had supposed it a duty of sovereigns "to establish the religion they hold for best" since "eternal is better than temporal good" (2.9.2) though in *De Cive* he is less sure of this (2.13.5). Nor is the question of who should govern ignored by the partisans of opposing religious doctrine.[31] Differences of opinion concerning religious doctrine may *become* a contention over "trifles," however if it be agreed that "inward faith" that Jesus is the Christ and obedience of the sovereign is all that is required for salvation and that this faith is consistent with any external actions, even of worship, required of subject by sovereign, and these are the teachings of *Leviathan*.[32]

In the *Elements of Law* Hobbes had deplored the lack of progress in moral and civil philosophy evidenced by the fact that the writers on this subject have not resolved but exacerbated controversy while every man continues to think "that in this subject he knows as much as any other, supposing there needs thereonto no study" but that supplied by "natural wit." He had contrasted this lack of progress with the several benefits to mankind resulting from the efforts of those who compared "magnitudes, numbers, times, and motions and how their proportions are to one another;" this difference Hobbes attributes to the fact that these latter men

29. To eliminate differences of opinion or reduce these to their passionate basis is consistent with the aim Harvey C. Mansfield, Jr., has attributed to Hobbes of avoiding founding politics or rule on political opinion as such. "Hobbes and the Science of Indirect Government," *American Political Science Review*, Vol. 65 (1971), 99–100.

30. In *Leviathan* the requirement to seek peace if obtainable is immediately followed by the rule that a man content himself "with so much liberty against other men, as he would allow other men against himself" (1.14, 100). In *De Cive* the same rule is presented as the ninth law of nature and a sequel to the prohibition of pride (1.3.14).

31. See *English Works* VI, 243, 275.

32. On Hobbes's authorization theology see Orwin, "On Sovereign Authorization," 35–38.

have proceeded "evidently from humble principles" while the civil philosophers have taken "vulgarly received" opinions as their principles (1.13.3). Hobbes names these same benefits of scientific progress in *Leviathan* but now these are enumerated as the things men must lack in that condition of war to which their natural passions carry them (1.13, 96–97).[33] Although, or because, Hobbes continues to deny the common opinion that "there needs no method in the study of the politics (as there does in the study of geometry)" and even to suppose that "the politics is the harder study of the two" (2.30, 271), he makes little effort to persuade men of the need or difficulty of that study or that they should accept the rule of those who profess it. If Hobbes attempts to correct men's "vain conceit" of their own wisdom, his correction tends rather to the acknowledgement of natural equality and the acceptance of a politics and society based on equality of right than to the recognition of that "harder study" of the politics. Within classical political science rhetoric is called upon to assuage the indignant popular reaction to the claim that wisdom, or those devoted to its pursuit, should rule. On Hobbes's understanding of men's "vain conceit" we could say that this reaction is at once the acknowledgement that wisdom is a title to rule and the angry denial of most men that there are others wiser than themselves. For ancient political science so far as the common opinion recognizes, or can be represented as recognizing, the claim of wisdom, that opinion implies a basis on which the claims of the many, the wealthy, and the wise might be harmonized. In principle, the political task becomes in large measure the subordination of the spirited element, which is the basis of anger, to wisdom; political justice is the result of this subordination.[34] For Hobbes, on the other hand, inequality of wisdom as a possible basis of rule must be denied. Hobbes seeks rather to derive from men's passionate denial that others are wiser than themselves their belief in equality of right. As "getting opinion from passion" is a form of rhetoric, Hobbes's response to men's vain esteem of their own prudence must be acknowledged as a new and powerful kind of rhetoric (*El.* 1.13.7, 2.8.14).

33. In the *Elements* Hobbes speaks only of the absence of "ornaments and comforts of life, which by peace and society are usually invented and procured" (1.14.12) and in *De Cive* of the lack of "pleasure and beauty of life" (1.1.13). The famous enumeration occurs only in *Leviathan*.

34. See Plato, *Republic* 441–42. If the pursuit of wisdom is itself a form of the pursuit of glory or power, as it is for Hobbes, this subordination is ruled out. If the spirited element is to be civilized it must rather be subordinated to appetite so far as this is possible.

Rousseau versus the Savoyard Vicar: The Profession of Faith Considered

PETER EMBERLEY
Carleton University

New philosophic truths and new forms of political power can cast doubt on the existence of the gods to whom a people prays and can erode the traditional restraints by which a community regulates men's passions. Rousseau appeared to believe this problem to be particularly acute in his day because of what he perceived to be the social consequences of modern materialism and the modern natural-right teaching. Men confronted one another now as equals, liberated from earlier obligations to do another's bidding. The diffusion of individualism had made each man the center of a self-contained universe thus jeopardizing the social order by dissolving the self-evidentness of traditional restraints and encouraging a ruthless calculation of interest and advantage. Contrary to the teaching of Hobbes and Locke, Rousseau did not believe that calculative reason and juridical power could moderate the newly liberated appetites. In fact, the new teaching and the materialism upon which it is based, had given rise to a predatory competitiveness and a cheerless dependency on the whims of others, that stood in stark opposition to the most potent facts of the human condition: the solidarity of men and human freedom. Rousseau's teaching involves a sustained polemic against what he perceived to be the public irresponsibility of the materialists and various philosophic and pedagogic innovations to reconstitute moral behaviour in the wake of their disturbances.

Rousseau, more sensitive than his contemporaries to the fact that philosophic discourse was a public act and therefore had political effects, often presented his readers with salutary truths. He employed a powerful rhetoric to prevent the corruption he saw to be the inevitable consequence of the modern natural-right teaching. However, he also wrote for educators and legislators whose future task it would be to construct new social bonds upon the ruins of the political order and within the emerging power matrix that pending revolutions would produce. Thus, in interpreting Rousseau's various pronouncements and judgments, it becomes necessary to speculate that some of them may have dramatic or strategic rather than philosophical significance and that this may be particularly the case where religious and ethical matters are at stake.[1]

Interpreters of Rousseau have often been insensitive to the relation of his

References are to *Œuvres complètes de J.-J. Rousseau* (Paris: Gallimard, Bibliothèque de la Pléiade, 1964), 4 vols., although I have followed the translation of Allan Bloom, *Émile or on Education* (New York: Basic Books, 1979).

1. *Cf.* Jean Morel, "Recherches sur les sources," *Annales de la Société J.-J. Rousseau*, V (1909), p. 135.

novel doctrines to the Biblical tradition, a tradition that constitutes a large part of the social and intellectual fabric of Rouseau's time.[2] One of the consequences of this is that readers have difficulty in understanding the philosophic dispute with orthodoxy with the same caution and alarm as did the political authorities—not to say ecclesiastics—in Rousseau's time. Ignoring the possibility that his statements might have been a product of prudent caution, or to have a strategic value, commentators of Rousseau have understood him to be unequivocally challenging the materialist monists and their pernicious doctrines with a restatement of traditional dualistic doctrines; pointing forward however to a new moral autonomy. This restatement is said to occur in "The Profession of Faith of the Savoyard Vicar" in Book IV of the *Émile*. With this Rousseau was said to have attempted to charm corrupted hearts, to have made explicit his self-appointed task of raising contemporary man "to the pitch of the souls of the ancients," and to have responded to the doctrines of Helvétius, La Mettrie, and Diderot (III.961). It is asserted that Rouseau did not merely restore but instead identified the structure of a novel and rigorous moral experience. A prominent interpretation, then, is to see the Profession as Rouseau's "proto-Kantian" statement of moral freedom as self-legislating autonomy grounded, however, on natural sentiment.

Many of Rousseau's interpreters claim that in the "Profession of Faith" he presented the only coherent and unified discussion of his metaphysics, epistemology, and ethics.[3] Much of what is revealed by the vicar is indeed compatible with seminal ideas Rousseau expressed explicitly in such works as the *First Discourse*, and *Letter to d'Alembert*, the *Moral Letters*, the *Letter to Voltaire*, and the epistle dedicatories to other major works. Moreover, immediately after the presentation of the profession of faith, Rousseau wrote that he had transcribed it "as an example of the way one can reason with one's pupil in order not to diverge from the method" he had tried to establish (IV.635). In his *Confessions*, Rousseau claimed that he had resolved his own metaphysical and religious doubts along the lines of what he had written in the *Émile*: "the result of my painful re-

2. Rousseau's broad grasp of both classical and Biblical material is attested to by various authors, *cf.* Marguerite Reichenberg, "La Bibliothèque de J.-J. Rousseau," *Annales*, XXI (1932), pp. 181–250. Rousseau writes in his *Confessions*: "My usual evening reading was the Bible and I read it through five or six times in this way," XI, I, 580.

3. As examples of this interpretation: R. Grimsley, *Rousseau and the Religious Quest* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968), and *The Philosophy of Religion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1973); P. M. Masson, *La Profession de foi du vicaire savoyard* (Fribourg: University of Fribourg Press, 1914); K. F. Roche, *Rousseau, Stoic and Romantic* (London: Methuen, 1974); Ernest Cassirer, *The Question of Jean-Jacques Rousseau* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1954); A. Levine, *The Politics of Autonomy* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1976). The exceptions to the general opinion are A. Bloom, introduction to the *Émile* (N.Y.: Basic Books, 1979), C. Butterworth, interpretive essay to *The Reveries of the Solitary Walker* (N.Y.: New York University Press, 1979), Yvon Belaval, "La Theorie du jugement dans l'Émile," *Jean-Jacques Rousseau et son Œuvre* (Paris: 1964), pp. 149–57, J. Cropsey, "The Human Vision of Rousseau" in *Political Philosophy and the Issues of Politics* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1977), and C. Orwin, "Humanity and Justice: The Problem of Compassion in the Thought of Rousseau," Harvard Ph.D. dissertation, 1976. None of the latter, however, explore the disjunctions in detail.

search was just about what I have since registered in the profession of faith" (1.1018). Apparently what Rousseau conveyed in the vicar's profession was intended as his final word on religious and ethical matters and few commentators have questioned his openness or sincerity.

A major reason for most readers' belief that these are Rousseau's own views is that the profession is unorthodox and was the cause of Rousseau's troubles with the ecclesiastical authorities. The vicar, who is commonly thought to be Rousseau's mouthpiece, is regarded as a literary mask through which Rousseau could air his own unorthodox views in a less direct manner. The vicar claims that there is no basis to revelation, to divine intervention in the form of miracles, or to the truth of holy scriptures and prophecies. He also denies that the Church has infallible authority. The vicar's approach to theology is a type of "natural religion" constituted by man's natural grasp of the world around him rather than the truths of revelation. Since some of the vicar's views are explicitly expressed elsewhere by Rousseau, few have doubted that the profession of faith is Rousseau's own philosophical position.

I shall argue, however, that this conspicuous section of the *Émile* is in fact Rousseau's most orthodox and traditional treatment of philosophical issues and thus does not contain the enduring core of his teaching. I suggest that the profession clashes only with the externalities of the theological teaching of the Church while leaving its foundations intact. The character of the rest of Rousseau's teaching is, by contrast, much more subversive of Christian and classical teachings in disputing the ontological structure of that tradition. The radical character of the profession acts indeed as a mask, but to the much more unorthodox character of Rousseau's fundamental agreement with the materialists. It mediates between his novel general teaching and the traditional or conventional opinions of his contemporaries. The vicar's views I would suggest, are ultimately more respectable than those of Rousseau himself before the judgment of orthodoxy. Despite its heretical character, the profession embraces a metaphysical dualism and all that this commitment entails. Insofar as Rousseau appears to adopt some of the important doctrines of materialistic monism, as will be shown, there is an essential incompatibility in the physical and moral theories of Rousseau and the vicar.

To submit that the profession does not constitute Rousseau's own teaching will require a two-fold demonstration: (*a*) that there are major "dramatic" factors that suggest that the profession is an unacceptable teaching for Emile, and (*b*) that there are substantial philosophical claims made that are incompatible with Rousseau's own views stated elsewhere. However, even this proof is not sufficient. Does it not seem extraordinary that an author would offer a text that is not his own philosophical position but one guaranteed to bring about the severest censure? To explore and to present the view that there is a disjunction between Rousseau's and the vicar's positions does not explain the purpose of the profession. What aim does it serve if it is not Rouseau's own considered opinions about

moral matters? Such an explanation is a needed supplement to the inquiry and follows my demonstration of the disjunction in views.

It is necessary to make some preliminary remarks concerning the justification for engaging in interpretation of Rousseau's intention and the interpretive strategy I shall employ. It is not self-evident which of Rousseau's works are more important and which serve a didactic rather than a philosophic purpose. Rousseau asserted that his books would have to be taken "in a certain order and diligently read" (I.933). He was concerned that he would be misrepresented, that the effects he sought would not be produced, and that he would be read superficially, and so it is incumbent on the reader to trust Rousseau's advice given in the few suggestions he offers.

It is obvious that Rousseau's philosophic principles are not presented in the traditional mode of philosophical discourse. Instead, as exemplified most particularly in the *Émile*, he provides a series of narratives, anecdotes, and conversations. Explaining his demand on readers to decipher the meaning of these fragments,

> I have often given myself a good deal of trouble to try to enclose in a sentence, in a line, in a word cast as if by chance, the result of a long series of reflections. Often the greater part of my readers ought to find my speeches badly connected and almost entirely desultory, for having failed to perceive the trunk whose branches alone I have shown them. But it was enough for those who know how to understand, and I have never wanted to speak to the others (III.105–106).

The terseness of many of Rousseau's images encourages reflection on the broader significance of the example: "Reader, spare me words. If you are made for understanding me, you will be quite able to follow my rules in my detailed examples."[4]

It is nonetheless pertinent to query the suggestion that Rousseau writes with caution and indirectly. Especially with Rousseau who so constantly parades his sincerity and who explicitly claimed that he had dedicated his life to the interest of truth and that the subtlety and subterfuge of many authors was a sign of their bad faith (IV.569), a reader might be suspicious of an interpreter's attempt to decipher his statements. Openness, sincerity, and "simple naïveté" are after all, virtues that Rouseau extolls. "Yes, with some pride of soul, I declare and I feel that in that writing I have carried good faith, veracity, and frankness as far, further even . . . than any other man has ever done" (I.1035).

Nonetheless, in response, two factors should be considered. First, Rousseau claimed in a work sixteen years later, *The Reveries of a Solitary Walker*, that he had dedicated his life to the *interest* of truth. In a public document whose reader's opinions and reactions are diverse, it was necessary for the interest of truth to present the inquiry in such a way as to promote salutary teachings to those readers unwilling or unable to pursue the more subtle meaning. Rousseau re-

4. IV, 802.

vealed that his writing had been motivated by the desire to offer useful teachings to mankind: "Love of the public good is the only passion which causes me to speak to the public."[5] He had recognized that some truths were salutary and that others were socially harmful. The materialists had run roughshod over this distinction, but the diffusion of knowledge which they had effected had not produced human order. What would happen to the saluary effects of traditional restraints on the passions—the fear of eternal damnation, or the corruption of the soul, or the notion of the intrinsic nobility of just acts—if science had determined that men have no souls, that all human striving is purposeless, and that the sole guide to human action is self-calculation? Rousseau had recognized that political dangers were being posed by the new science. Interpreting his life's maxim, *vitam impendere vero*, Rousseau wrote: "My professed truthfulness is based more on feelings of integrity and justice than on factual truth" (I.1038). What he implies is that the obligation to reveal the truth publicly is based on a consideration of the public utility of that truth.

The truth is owed but the manner of its delivery can reveal different things to different men. I suggest that Rousseau's intention is two-fold: he provides a document for his time, the nature of which is to inspire in his fellow citizens, at the very least, the simulacrum of virtue; he also offers to his future readers who may well be educators and legislators, a science with which a novel transformation of ethics and politics may be effected. That transformation is obscured by the way in which he uses his terminology, sometimes in the more radical way. It is worthwhile heeding the admonition Rousseau gave to Mme. d'Épinay: "Learn my vocabulary better, my good friend, if you want us to understand each other. Believe me, my terms rarely have their usual meaning."[6]

To turn now to the interpretive strategy I shall employ, it is well-known that there are significant tensions or disjunctions from one of Rousseau's works to another. Yet he had claimed "I have written on variouss subjects, but always with the same principles; always the same morality, the same belief, the same maxims and, if you like, the same opinions" (IV.928). Is there a set of works that would provide the principles whereby all the differences can be understood? In a letter to M. de Malesherbes Rousseau identified his principal writings in a description of his "suden inspiration": "All I could retain of these crowds of great truths which, in a quarter of an hour, illuminated me under that tree, has been weakly distributed in my three principal writings, namely that first discourse, the one on inequality, and the treatise on education, which three works are inseparable and form a single whole" (I.1135–36). This suggests that the decisive principles of Rousseau's thought are to be found in the *Discourse on the Arts and Sciences*, the *Discourse on the Origin of Inequality Among Men*, and the *Émile*.

Of these, the *Second Discourse* could be said to have the most significance for

5. J.-J. Rousseau, *Letter to M. d'Alembert on the Theatre*, transl. by Allan Bloom (N.Y.: Free Press, 1968), p. 132.

6. J.-J. Rousseau, *Letter to M. d'Alembert*, p. 28.

an interpretation of Rousseau's teaching because in this writing he elaborates the philosophic principles upon which the novelty of his thought is based. There is considerable evidence to support his claim. That essay, he had indicated, was "a piece of writing in which these principles were most boldly, if not audaciously revealed" (III.783). Years later, writing in his *Confessions* about his texts, he indicated that "everything daring in the *Social Contract* was already said in the *Second Discourse*," and in the *Émile* his references to that discourse imply that it was of crucial philosophical significance for interpreting the educational treatise.[7] In the *Letter to Beaumont*, in which Rousseau defended his treatise against the accusations of the Archibishop, he wrote the following about the *Second Discourse* and his earlier works in relation to the *Émile*.

> if the subject of them did not admit of their being so fully explained, they gained in force what they lost in extent and express the author's profession of faith with less reserve than that of the Savoyard vicar.[8]

Finally, in a passage of *Rousseau juge de Jean-Jacques*, Rousseau has his interlocutor suggest that Rousseau's principles could be understood only in an order which "was retrograde to that of their publication," suggesting that the discourses contain the most elaborate expression of his philosophic principles.[9] Thus, it appears that an interpretation of the resilient core of Rousseau's teaching requires an emphasis upon the *Second Discourse* and any such disjunctions as may arise in reading Rousseau's other works need to be interpreted in favor of that discourse. Indeed, the most important theoretical insights offered—the historicization of consciousness and the crucial significance of the human experience of time as duration—supplies the necessary condition for Rousseau's pedagogical innovations. This is an important conclusion because of the contradictions that exist between the *Second Discourse* and the profession of faith.[10]

Although most modern commentators have ignored these contradictions, the discrepancies have not gone completely unnoticed. A suggestion of disjunction appears, perhaps not surprisingly, in an account by the first reviewer of Rousseau's *Émile*, the Archbishop de Beaumont. In his mandate against the *Émile*, of which the significant portion is a discussion of the profession of faith, the Arch-

7. J.-J. Rousseau, *Confessions* (London: Penguin Books, 1975), p. 379; IV. 556, 796.

8. T. Becket and P.-A. de Honot, *The Social Compact and the Mandate of the Archbishop of Paris* (London: 1764), p. 47.

9. I, 932–33; see also, Roger Masters, *The Political Philosophy of Rousseau* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1986), for a similar interpretive strategy.

10. I have not addressed the issue of why in the *Moral Letters* to Mme. d'Houdetot or the *Lettre sur la Providence* Rousseau embraces certain metaphysical assumptions similar to those of the vicar. Although often quoted to support the interpretation of Rousseau as a proto-Kantian and metaphysician, these letters too reveal Rousseau's pedagogical efforts. The particular anxieties of each addressee receive individual attentioin and one cannot assume simply that the contents of each letter have a general significance; cf. Rouseau's portrait of Mme. d'Houdetot in the *Confessions* (I.409) and his qualifications for the initial letter of Providence to Voltaire, June 17, 1760 (IV.1070–71).

bishop also censures Rousseau for presenting Emile as brought up "to look on himself as a being purely material and subject to the laws of mechanism."[11] Now this statement could hardly have been made on the basis of the presentation in the profession of faith, which although heretical is sustained by a metaphysical dualism and not what often appears to be Rousseau's own mechanical monism. The statement therefore attests to, or points to, an apparent disjunction between the profession of faith and the Archbishop's own interpretation of the rest of the *Émile*.

I. DRAMATIC FACTORS

Throughout the *Émile*, Rousseau counsels that great stealth and care must be taken in presenting young minds the teaching from which they are to learn how to judge.

> A single object well chosen and shown in a suitable light will provide him emotion and reflection for a month. It is not so much what he sees as his looking back on what he has seen that determines the judgments he makes about it; and the durable impression he receives from the object comes to him less from the object itself than from the point of view which one induces him to take in recalling it (IV.516).

Given this advice, it appears judicious to consider the "dramatic" factors of the vicar's presentation. We will consider four elements of that context: (*a*) Rousseau's preceding discussion of imagination and the source of ideas of the divine, (*b*) his critique of Locke's educational method, (*c*) the significance of the accompanying frontispiece, and (*d*) the character of the profession's addressee.

The discussion of Book IV, in which the profession is situated, is devoted primarily to the need to prevent the premature development of Émile's sexual desire. The major dilemma confronted in that book is the tendency of Émile's imagination to arouse his desires through alluring and enticing images. Thus, the tutor seeks by various manipulations to mute and to channel the influence of imagination by eliciting and maintaining desire, instrumentalizing it, and extending control over the body of the nascent moral subject. It is necessary to emphasize that this context offers us an indication of what is at stake in the Profession of Faith. For the moment it is sufficient to say that it is particularly with regard to the problematization of desire that the vicar's and Rousseau's views differ. However, that the Profession of Faith is situated in the context of the excitation and instrumentation of desire in Book IV may suggest, beyond a mere

11. T. Becket and P.-A. de Honot, *op, cit. supra*, p. 16. The Archbishop wrote the following about the *Émile* as a whole: " . . . containing abominable doctrines calculated to invalidate the principles of natural justice and to subvert the foundations of the Christian church" (p. 34). He could not have written this on the basis of his reading of the profession alone.

conflict of positions, a strategic tactic on the tutor's part in the constitution of "sexuality", as the locus of a positive investment in life processes, which I shall explore presently.[12]

The section immediately preceding the profession focuses upon the difficulty men have in acquiring ideas of the divine, of substance, and of disembodied spirits. Rousseau reiterates a theme sustained throughout the first three books, that men can only know the world by perception: "we are limited by our faculties to things which can be sensed" (III.551). As he has maintained throughout Book II, corporeal and sensible phenomena are the only ones of which men have concrete and reliable ideas. Rousseau now suggests that men have animated the world with processes and characteristics which are projections of their own being. For want of comprehending natural forces, men created gods that were anthropomorphic versions of their own fears, needs, and hopes. Rousseau relates this "creativity" to a certain primal fear and to the rampant excursions of the imagination. A world that is not understood is animated with intention and will; an omnipotent will is believed to direct the motions of the universe. Men's ideas about substance and spirit are conceived in a similar fashion, generated by ignorance of natural causes. Should one read the vicar's views mindful of this observation?

The second feature of Rousseau's prelude to the profession is his criticism of Locke's suggestion that a child should become acquainted first with spirits and then bodies. Rousseau argues that Locke's method leads to materialism, that his procedure is against the order of nature, and that it proceeds from superstition. Rousseau proposes, as he has throughout Emile's education, to begin with a knowledge of bodies.

An examination of the relevant section in Locke's writings on education is revealing because it shows the great divergence between the two thinkers regarding the foundation of virtue. Locke argues that virtue is the first and most necessary endowment for a gentleman and suggests that it is "absolutely requisite to make him valued and beloved by others, acceptable or tolerable to himself."[13] In Locke's teaching, other's esteem appears more important to men than self-esteem. Virtue, appears here as the means to happiness in this world and the next. Locke continues by arguing that the foundation of this virtue is to be "a true Notion of God," imprinted early onto the mind and that He is to be acknowledged as the author and maker of all things, as well as the benefactor of all that is good in men's lives. The esteem of God makes men esteem themselves; the recognition of God's benefaction encourages humility and the love of fellow men. It is in the imitation of Christ that men become Christ-like; it is in being valued by God, that men acquire value in their own eyes. Locke's gentleman is to acquire

12. For this distinction see M. Foucault's critique of the "repressive hypothesis" concerning Victorian mores, in *The History of Sexuality*, vol. 1 (New York: Vintage Books, 1980).

13. John Locke, *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1902); section 135, p. 99.

the idea of an omnipresent and omniscient Deity, whose greatness is to be praised and acknowledged through prayer.

Locke then turns to a discussion of how to accustom children to the dark so that they avoid the fearful imagining of other spirits which, in their fears, they are liable to produce. He advises that children should know that God made the dark for their purpose and that He is ever vigilant, protecting them against any harm that could come to them. Trusting in God, His goodness, and benefaction forestalls primal fear, teaching men to endure patiently whatever His designs may have in store for them. Locke's precise argument for the study of spirits is that is serves "as an enlargement of our minds to which we are led both by Reason and Revelation."[14] The knowledge children ought to have of God and their own soul is to be taken from revelation. The study of spirits is necessary because matter, upon which the senses are constantly engaged, does not itself encourage reflection on immaterial phenomena. Locke stipulates that "none of the great phenomena of nature can be resolved" by recourse to explanations of mere matter and motion; such forces as gravity can only be explained by appealing to "the positive Will of a Superior Being so ordering it."[15]

Now all of this goes very much against the spirit and particulars of the education proposed by Rousseau and casts some question on the purpose of the revelation about to commence, if Rousseau is implying that there is a connection between Locke's and the vicar's pedagogy. Émile has been confined throughout his education to understanding the natural phenomena solely by grasping the properties of matter; he has required no recourse to spiritual explanations in his experiences of reality. Moreover, the notion of an external Will with some manifest intention towards man runs counter to the perspective to which Émile is committed. In an attempt to maintain the unity within his heart, Rousseau has taught Émile to appraise all phenomena around him from the point of view of his own utility and the scientific knowledge with which he has experimented. This solipsistic self-contraction—which is intended however to guarantee some indubitable core of material facts—justifies Starobinski's claim that Rousseau banishes the divine, for "If the self interiorizes the last judge, it also interiorizes the creator: the self is his own origin, or better, he keeps the memory of his own origin and in his recollection he coincides with it."[16] Rousseau has insisted that

14. *Ibid.*, sec. 190, 156.

15. *Ibid.*, sec. 192, 157–58.

16. Jean Starobinski, *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: La Transperence et l'obstacle suivi de sept essais sur Rouseau* (Paris: Gallimard, 1971), p. 329. The self-delusion of this Cartesian project on behalf of operationalizing doubt in experimentation and the indubitability of material facts, and the danger of the mind's enclosure within its own self-made entities, albeit technologically successful, is explored in H. Arendt's *The Human Condition* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1958), pp. 248–89, and in G. Grant's discussion of the meaning of the modern understanding of the truth as the copenetration of knowing and making in "Knowing and Making" Transactions of the Royal Society of Canada, 4th Series, 12 (1974); its self-divinizing quality is captured by a remark of Merleau-Ponty that Cartesian consciousness assumes the divine task of creating the world anew each morning.

Émile not perceive any intention beyond himself. No restraint is to appear that emanates from a will; Émile's only constraint is the natural necessity of an impersonal, purposeless universe. Indeed, in Book II, in his discussion of the source of the tyrannical will Rousseau had intimated that this turbulent state was precisely a product of the belief that there is an external will in the universe.

Rousseau's comments on Locke's advice regarding revelation and trust in God's beneficient nature might remind the reader of a corresponding section in Book II where Rousseau had shown that the "fantastic imaginings" arising from fear of the dark could be dispelled by empirically examining the phenomena of the world. The discussion in Book II involved an experience in a church and the consequences of imagining the existence of spirits. That example alludes perhaps to the broader question of religion and its psychological origin and so is relevant to our immediate concerns. Rousseau's project in Books II and IV, on behalf of channelling fear, had been to redirect it *from* an alliance with ignorance of the causes of the phenomena and the resultant superstitious imaginging of spirits, *to* a physical study of natural phenomena based on need and the desire for relief from pain. The former obscures natural causes even further; the latter aids in revealing them. As Rousseau will say later, "The idea of a need which is natural and known to the child turns aside that of a mysterious process" (IV.499). Implicitly, Rousseau appears to cast serious doubt upon some of the truths of religious orthodoxy, reducing them to psychological responses, and ignorance, thus planting in his reader's mind some suspicion regarding what is about to transpire.

Rousseau concludes his comments on Locke with the judgment that Locke's method leads to materialism. Reflecting on Émile's education, however, the reader might wonder whether Rousseau's education could lead Émile to have a need of or desire for any notion of spirits. What Locke's method seeks to encourage—the contemplation of spirit—Rousseau's method appears to exclude from the beginning. Émile's inquiries are scientific, useful, for the relief of his estate, and, literally, close at hand. No authoritative doctrine is required to shed light on his doings. Locke's method prepares for administering to future anxieties; Rousseau's method is meant to pre-empt them. Rousseau's young student is educated to question the world around him in light of his needs and to seek natural explanations for the effects he observes.

This makes it all the more strange that when the vicar actually commences, he proceeds not by a reasoned conversation but rather, by claiming: "it is enough for me to reveal it to you" (IV.566). Mindful that Émile's principal question in assessing all knowledge is "what is that good for?", and his utilitarian appropriation of the phenomena that may present themsselves to him, one might wonder what in the vicar's revelation will actually benefit Émile. Can articles of faith supplement Émile's functional observations of the natural world? Is Émile ever in a condition such that "the progress of his enlightenment leads his researches in that direction?" (IV.557)

The third dramatic factor to consider is the complex relation between the vicar

and the addressee of the profession. This question appears never to be raised by commentators for it is simply assumed that the profession is directed to Émile. But the youth to whom the profession is actually addressed is described as corrupted by "tyrants": rage, indignation, and a tempestuous vanity are his responses to fate. Everywhere he sees only the viciousness of men and the ruses men perpetrate under the appearance of virtue. As a consequence of his observations, the young man experiences a hatred and contempt for mankind. Can a therapeutic profession for a youth like this be applicable to Émile?

Émile by contrast has none of this youth's remorse nor division; he is truly a "pre-Fall" innocent:

> His heart, as pure as his body, is no more familiar with disguise than with vice. Neither reproaches nor contempt have made him a coward; never has vile fear taught him to disguise himself. He has all the indiscretion of innocence. He is uncalculatingly naïve (IV.706).

The self-sufficiency and self-dependency of Émile contrasts with the slavishness and dependency of the embittered addressee. It is not obvious then that the profession is meant for Émile as a necessary supplement to his "natural education." Rousseau has repeatedly cautioned that the pedagogical techniques used to advance the teaching of virtue must be appropriate to the character of the soul of the student; here the difference between the two is too glaring to permit the immediate conclusion that the profession can benefit Émile. As we shall examine more carefully shortly, the pedagogies of Rousseau and the vicar differ substantially. The addressee of the profession is such that the vicar's words appear to be specially tailored to his corrupted character.

The vicar, too, is a special case. He, while sworn to celibacy, submits to carnal involvement with married women. The youth is witness to the vicar's weakness, temptations, "of which he was not too well corrected." The vicar's recurring theme of anxiety is the guilt and torment regarding the disunity of his soul, and what he problematizes is the "Flesh," as the site of moral prohibitions on his desire. To alleviate this he embraces moral principles upon which "he founded the uniformity of so singular a life." The moral and metaphysical theories the vicar proposes appear necessitated by the conditions he himself and his addressee are in. The creed thus appears to provide a palliative for their weaknesses and guilt and, it might be said, is a healing response to the dualism they feel within themselves. By contrast, Émile is free from the worries and the rage the vicar's beliefs are designed to ease.

Moreover, the relation of tutor to student is also significantly different. Throughout the *Émile*, Rousseau counsels that the tutor must be the model of propriety and sobriety. Any indication of weakness, division, or dissimilarity to Emile's own condition will serve to undermine and ultimately to collapse the careful foundation he has constructed. Could the vicar ever provide the sort of model of education which Émile requires?

The fourth and final feature to which the reader's attention is drawn is Rousseau's choice of the frontispiece that accompanies the profession of faith. It depicts Orpheus teaching men the worship of the gods, transforming them and the beasts by the wonderful power he was said to have by virtue of his singing and lyre-playing. They, in apparent fright, prostrate themselves before the terror of the divinity above. Looking up they are given the hope of divine benefaction. The frontispiece seems particularly well-suited to the revelation about to occur, both as a hallmark of that profession and as a signal to the disjunction between the vicar's and Emile's concerns. For what is singular about the religion Orpheus inspired, of note for our immediate sense of disjunction, was its attitude towards death. The body was seen as a prison wherein the soul paid for the sin committed by the Titans. Through death the soul escaped and was granted the privilege of beautitude in the afterlife. Death was thus a benefaction for it led to real life, a life where men became like the gods. Beatitude was a reward for the sacramental acts men were obliged to perform so as to atone for the human inheritance of the sins of the Titans. The need for an expiation of original sin and the notion of life as a preparation for the real life beyond, demanded an ascetic life as a means of delivering the soul from the bodily prison. Man's nature was seen as dualistic and sex was problematized by seeing the flesh as the site of various prohibiting techniques of power. Chastity, as an *imitatio Dei* and as the *déjà-là* of death, was a supreme expression of the longing for purity. It is a theology in its celestial and eschatological elements of striking similarity to that underlying the vicar's presentation. It is highly questionable, however, what use Émile could have of such opinions, given his earthly engagement and attachments, his shameless naïveté, the absence of sacramental ritual in his life, and the lack of division in his soul.

But the Orpheus myth also has a *supplement*, the character of which exposes the ambiguity of Rousseau's intention and so takes us beyond our immediate sense of a disjunction.[17] The myth brings forth in addition to its Apollonian elements a host of chthonian and tellurian images of the fecundity of the earth and the mystery of generation expressed in the religious initiate's abandonment of himself to the experience of the full fertilizing power of the Earth Mother. Orpheus as a god-man of androgynous character was understood to attend to the redemptive, rhythmic regeneration of the rites of agriculture. While he was appropriated later by Christianity as the prototype of Christ, and thus an expression of natural man's innocence and yet ultimate hope of union with a transcendent god, the "orobouric" symbol of androgyny within the theme of the generative power of the earth, is in fact the enduring core of the religion of Orpheus. Thus while Orpheus could be depicted as a Christ who mediates heaven and earth, who through divine insight into the meaning of natural events harmoniously orders

17. The term "supplement" is Derrida's and connotes both the linguistic attempt to reappropriate presence and the infringing substitute, that is an intervention or insinuation, adding only to replace, cf. Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1976), pp. 145–63.

them from within and bestows heavenly and eschatological significance upon them, he is more properly the fecundating power of the Earth Mother.[18]

While the Vicar affirms the Apollonian element which in the Pythagorean table of opposites places all meaning, truth, and plenitude on the side of light and the celestial, and all absence on the side of what is dark, heavy, cold, earthy, and female, Rousseau's own teaching admits the re-emergence of the suppressed absence, conferring plentiude of meaning now on the sanctity of life and the mystery of birth and abundance. This contrast of the sacrality of the sky and the fecundity of the earth, I suggest, betrays a subtle suggestion that the Profession of Faith lacks a univocal meaning, permitting instead a disclosure of the last Dionysian trace of Orpheus.

As we shall see, Rouseau's social world is radically distinct from that of the vicar's: it is one in which the Émiles and Sophies are submerged within the rhythmic cycles of birth, growth, fullness, and decay of the life process. Even love's illusions do not break those cycles, making them instead only more endurable. As quanta of "biopower" the Émiles and Sophies participate in a recurrent and endless metabolism with nature, a cyclic becoming and biocosmic unity.[19] Here the sacrality of mortality is replaced by the social ideal of health and fertility, an object of calculation with no sense of transcendence. Philosophy is no longer learning how to die, because death does not continue to be ontologically significant. Instead, philosophy is transposed into technical modes of intervention that invest the life process with significance. In Rousseau's Enlightenment appropriation of the chthonian Orpheus, death is no longer a destiny or fate but a scandal and transgression, to be corrected by technical means. I shall turn to an extended examination of these issues in the following sections.

Having considered these four elements of Rousseau's presentation, the reader may experience some hesitation in simply equating the vicar's and Rousseau's views. The substantial philosophic position to which I have already alluded and to whose fuller treatment I now turn, is, however, even more indicative of a severe disjunction with Rousseau's other avowed principles.

II. PHILOSOPHIC CLAIMS

There are two sections to the vicar's profession, one that elaborates a philosophic system and the other constituted by a polemic on the historical effects of orthodox Christianity. The first section of the vicar's profession outlines his epistemology, his metaphysics, and his account of the soul and its proper moral tun-

18. For a discussion of the significance of these chthonian themes see Mircea Eliade, *Rites and Symbols of Initiation* (New York: Harper and Row, 1958) and *Patterns in Comparative Religion* (London: Sheed and Ward, 1958).

19. For an argument that the submergence into a "metabolism with nature" leads to loss of care for "the world", of meaning, and of reality, see Hannah Arendt, *op cit. supra*, pp. 79–135.

ing and is the one with which we are primarily concerned in order to discern whether it is compatible with Rousseau's philosophic principles.

The vicar commences his epistemological views by proposing to speak with "the clarity of the original understanding in (his) mind" (IV.560). From this he draws the major philosophical principles upon which his views are supported. In the *Second Discourse* Rousseau tells us that man is not by nature rational and that understanding is a derivative capacity. In the *Émile*, too, the young man does not appear endowed with a capacity for understanding or with innate ideas or principles beyond those which he gradually grasps through trial and error, repetition, and habituation. The vicar appears to grant human nature a greater natural endowment and natural direction than does Rousseau. As long as the vicar's position is qualified by the recognition that his is an historically contingent introspection, no serious disparity need exist here, but it must be noted that without a further philosophy of history no ontological claim could be advanced by the vicar which Rousseau would accept. The vicar now appeals to a guide in his deliberations, an "inner light" (IV.569). The reader is not told whether this is part of the "original understanding" or if it is his "conscience", but however that may be, Émile is allowed no such appeal in any of his deliberations. His judgments are based on his "natural researches" of those things that are of utility to him. From Rousseau's account of the manner in which Émile's consciousness is shaped, there appears to be neither a natural understanding apart from the prudence acquired by experience nor any inherent intellectual or moral sense.

The vicar's questions are addressed to what he experiences as a "frame of mind of uncertainty and doubt," a condition that he finds a "disturbing and painful state": "Doubt about the things it is important for us to know is too violent a state for the human mind" (IV.568). He suggests that his inquiry is intended to overcome this state. The vicar's revelation is thus a settling of doubt; his account is a satisfaction of the requirements of the situation of perplexity and doubt that initiated the inquiry. One might be led to feel that his profession is potentially a merely subjective account of truth for it is truth that is personally satisfying in quieting doubt. Such an inquiry limits truth to the effect of the inquiry and the nature of the inquirer himself rather than relating it to those facts by virtue of which the propositions are true or false. The vicar is more skeptical in some ways about knowledge than Rousseau:

> We do not have the measurements of this immense machine, we cannot calculate its relations: we know neither its first laws nor its final cause. We do not know ourselves; we know neither our nature nor our active principle. . . . Impenetrable mysteries surround us on all sides; they are above the region accessible to the senses (IV.568).

Émile's education has been by contrast more narrowly empirical, and ultimately offers a more restricted but "operational" theory of knowledge, for he has attempted to gain certainty of his knowledge by virtue of verifying, testing, and cross-referencing his various sensations. Certain fundamental facts, albeit con-

fined to corporeal utility, are at the source of his certainty about the material world.[20]

Rousseau himself we know shares the vicar's skepticism about man's grasp of the final end, of essences, or of substances. However, throughout the *Émile* he argues much more assertively than the vicar that the first laws of nature can be known, that general laws of science are derivable from empirical observations, that man's nature is governed by knowable psychological laws, and that the "active principle" is controllable and its working ascertainable. Indeed, on this last point, Rousseau clearly has given the impression that the active principle is neither a spiritual nor a mysterious principle but rather, nothing more than the physiopsychological motion of the body. The sentiments it produces appear moreover to be explicable by a thermomechanistic account.[21] The science of the passions used by the tutor with precision throughout the *Émile* is based upon a coherent understanding of human behaviour as subject to predictable modes of modification. In Book III Émile is taught the rudimentary principles of hydrostatics, astronomy, biology, and chemistry, implying that man's proper posture to nature is not one of passivity and resignation, but of control and willful imposition of form upon matter in motion. Whatever doubt Rousseau may have had about the mind's ability to grasp certain ethereal truths, he is far more confident than the vicar about immediate, palpable certainty.

The vicar continues his inquiry by recognizing that he is a sensing creature and from this resolves that he is endowed with an active force—a sense of his existence—that acquiesces to sensations. For the vicar, men have a natural notion of their own existence; sensation implies the presence of an "I" that is sensing (IV.570). Rousseau however does not believe that men naturally have a sense of their own existence (IV.279–80). For Rousseau, as a reading of Books I and II reveals, the "I" is created relatively in the consciousness of, and resistance to, other objects and selves but the self is never immediately sensed. Rousseau's training of Émile suggests that "I" develops from a relation between a sensed phenomenon and a sensing "self." The awareness of modification by an external source and the realization reinforced over time that the modification can be re-experienced provides the human machine with an identity. There is no substantial self prior to this experience that can reflect on its own states and that realizes the continuity of its own existence independent of experience. It was for this reason that Émile had to learn experientially to coordinate the effects he felt from his various senses, unable to rely on an inherent sense coordination or an innate sense of a residing "I" that experiences all the sensations as a unity. The sentiment of existence is acquired rather than sensed, the unity of consciousness achieved through the equilibrium of power and desire (IV.301).

20. See note 16.

21. Following La Mettrie and Diderot, Rousseau appears to identify heat as a stimulus that gives rise to sensibility, the passions, and thought, and to give physiological explanations of the effects hitherto believed to be produced by a spiritual substance. See IV.342, 502, 519, 547, and Bloom, n. 2, 488. Cf. J. Cropsey, *op. cit. supra* for an account of this thermomechanism.

What this suggests is a radical feature of Rousseau's teaching, alien to his contemporaries. Rousseau appears to have dispersed the subject understood as a unified totality, depicting instead a subject constituted as a conjuncture of multiple trajectories traversing the body, thus dissolving, too, the primacy the vicar accords to consciousness and identity. This disemination of the subject makes possible the success of technical reconstitution. Constituted as a body, the individual can be represented as a "machine", possessing capabilitites which must be optimized: flaws must be corrected and forces must be administered at the capillary level, beneath consciousness and identity. That Rousseau is engaged in such a task is suggested by his understanding of experience. For Rousseau the sensations prior to touch do not convey what would be necessary for the self even to distinguish itself from its sensations, let alone realize that it has a distinct and enduring identity. The vicar infers from certain effects that he must have a substantial soul. Rousseau shows that these effects could be more simply understood by explaining the gradual construction of experience much in the spirit of Condillac's demonstration of the understanding of his statue-man. From Rousseau's point of view, the vicar's claims are unscientific for the vicar believes that spiritual and metaphysical principles underlie the workings of his mind.

The vicar then depicts his "active force" as one that is capable of judging. He distinguishes perceptions from judgment and hence suggests that he has a distinctive faculty, one that is a sign of an "active and intelligent human being" (IV.571). He denies that a merely sensitive being is capable of this sort of judgment; comparison involves superadding a mental construction to received sensations. Man's intelligent force is active rather than passive. The vicar's position implies that man has an autonomous reason to which the perceiving and experiencing individual appeals to adjudicate the appearances present in the sensible world.

For Rousseau, this mode of judgment is not so obviously active, nor does he accept the idea that man has an autonomous reasoning capacity. He presents, at one point, the example of the appearance of a broken or bent stick in water. Émile learns the true character of the stick by employing various senses and receiving different types of sensations. His deliberation consists in a succession of sensations rather than appeal to an intelligible principle. His judgment is considerably more passive than that which the vicar describes. Rousseau suggests that Émile would perceive the stick to be bent the first time he saw it, but through the experience of comparing various sensations he would soon learn to rectify his original assumption. This resolution does not require a distinct power or capacity for judgment; the copresence of various sensations informs his reason as to the proper relation.

For example, whereas the vicar is puzzled as to how the mind could coordinate its five senses as if it were in fact passive and denies that without an active and autonomous judgment the mind could be capable of providing communication between the senses, Rousseau suggests an alternative. Reference to the

Molyneux problem and the Cheseldon experiment in the *Moral Letters* suggest that Rousseau was well aware of his contemporaries' scientific denial of an *a priori* coordination. He thus suggests that the copresence of different sensations constitutes comparison; judging is a modified form of sensing, strengthened by exercise and coordinated to the sensations of touch.

In sum, the vicar denies that experience can be the sole cause of all ideas and sentiments, yet Rousseau states quite unambiguously that "everything which enters into human understanding comes there through the senses" and that experience is the only means of acquiring knowledge. For Rousseau there are no innate ideas or principles prior to experience. Faculties and sentiments are acquired by the repetition of sensations, perceptions of pain and pleasure, and through habit. Rousseau denies the autonomy of reason, for it "alone is not active" (IV,645). The fundamental activity of the mind resides not in itself but in psychological forces: "it is only passions which make us act" (IV.453). The senses correct themselves and simple ideas, by which the illusions of perception are dispelled, are only compared sensations. There is no mysterious, nonempirical principle to Rousseau's epistemology. The rationalists, Rousseau claims, among which one must include the vicar, had not realized the extent to which the mind relies on the body rather than on the promptings of a spiritual substance.

The vicar turns subsequently to metaphysical issues. He distinguishes the two types of motion—communicated and spontaneous—and suggests that the natural state of phenomena is to be at rest. On the first point he claims that the motion of animate beings is spontaneous and denies the idea of "unorganized matter moving itself or producing some action" (IV.575). Rousseau, however, claiming that animals are only "ingenious machines" in the *Second Discourse*, suggests that their matter is organized in such a manner that they are capable of motion, sensitivity, and even some thought, thus extending far greater power to matter. The vicar doubts that intelligent life could possibly have emerged from "passive and dead matter" and "blind fatality," or from nonintelligent life and chance.

> "I need only know that matter is extended and divisible in order to be sure that it cannot think. And for all that any philosopher who comes to tell me that trees sense and rocks think, may entangle me in his suble arguments, I can see in him only a sophist speaking in bad faith who prefers to attribute sentiment to rocks than to grant a soul to man . It seems to me that far from saying that rocks think, modern philosophy has discovered, on the contrary, that men do not think. It no longer recognizes anything but sensitive beings in nature" (IV.580).

Yet Rousseau reveals his solidarity with his contemporaries on precisely this point: reason or thought is not natural to man and deliberation is a product of experience, senstion, and habit. Moreover, in addition to Rousseau saying that animals are only machines and yet capable of thought, he also sees nothing inherently peculiar about attributing vitality to matter. He suggests that only the lack of "progressive movement" makes it unnecessary that plants should have sense and thought (IV.584).

On the second point of natural rest, the vicar, in observing the visible universe around him, perceives a motion he says is "regular, uniform, and subjected to constant laws" and draws from this observation his first article of faith: a will moves the universe and animates nature (IV.576). For him, there is an external cause to the regular motions of the universe. From a perception of design and order, the vicar derives the notion of a prime mover: moved matter according to certain laws is evidence of an intelligent will. The vicar illustrates this phenomenon of order and harmony with a Newtonian image: the universe is like a watch and it is God's design that keeps all the parts working for a "common end" (IV.578). The sensible order "proclaims a supreme intelligence" (IV.579). The "goodness of God is the love of order . . . for it is by order that He maintains what exists and links each part of the whole" (IV.593).

Rousseau, by contrast, posits a notion of the universe that is more ambiguous. Although the perceived nature of reality—as flux and indeterminate motion—is often a product of man's turbulent social life, there is also a caprice to nature that issues in disorder, chaos, and sudden upheaval: "everything on earth is only transitory" (IV.816). Rousseau intimates his acceptance of a Lucretian account of the universe, a reality as a result of the accidental collisions of random particles of matter, denying thereby that there is any overall design, final end, or divine and personified force that sustains and directs the world beyond the appearance of disorder. He makes repeated reference to the "body in continuous motion," to the affections of the bodies in "continual flux," and suggests that it is precisely because the world *is* in constant motion that men come to acquire knowledge (IV.284, 303, 363). A perception of destructiveness and susceptibility to painful and violent alteration characterizes man's proper relation to nature, and like Lucretius, Rousseau appears concerned to liberate the mind from the terrors of religion by demystifying death. Rousseau depicts the lot of man to be one of hardship and pain, but one which does not issue in an excessive desire for transcendence if his pedagogy is followed. There is no reason for habituation to a particular posture of the intellect, nor for security in love of glory, because all is flux and transition, "As a mortal and perishable being, should I go and form eternal ties on this earth where everything changes, where everything passes away, and from which I shall disappear tomorrow?" (IV.820) Although men may come to understand the first laws of observable motion sufficient for their earthly purposes, these do not suggest an ultimate unified order beyond.

The vicar continues the theme of order and regularity by turning to the doctrine of evolution as proposed by the modern materialists. He suggests that it is impossible to conceive that "nature finally prescribed laws to itself to which it was not subjected at the outset" (IV.579). He flatly refuses to accept the notion of chance combination as responsible for the present configuration of the universe and that complex configurations could emerge from the conjunction of simple elements. He denies too the notion that all life could have emerged from a common prototype:

> The insurmountable barrier that nature sets between the various species, so that they would not be confounded, shows its intentions with the utmost clarity. It was not satisified with establishing order. It took certain measures so that nothing could disturb that order (IV.580).

Rousseau's *Second Discourse* explicitly denies both of the vicar's claims. Appealing to natural science rather than to *a priori* reasoning or "the writings of Moses," and deferring more precisely to Buffon, the naturalist, Rousseau argues that the history of natural phenomena has been a product of "fortuitous causes," "countless accidents" and the "chance combination of events which might never have arisen" (III.162). Describing the passage of time from earliest man and his original ignorance, Rousseau writes: ". . . the generations multiplied uselessly and everyone always starting from the same point, centuries passed in all the crudeness of the first ages" (III.160). There was no benevolent guide to man's present state of organization, and thus Rousseau disavows the teleological and metaphysical assumptions required to sustain the vicar's position. There is nothing contradictory to Rousseau in the view that the development of the organs and the corporeal organization generally was haphazard and often by error. Like the atomists, Rousseau disavows any language concerning formal or final causation, stating for example that it is an error to believe that the senses and organs are naturally functional for the utility of life. There are no gods who prescribe design or end to the universe. His discussions in Note "J" strongly suggest that he believes all natural life to have emerged from a common prototype, but that such emergence was in no way designed. Indeed, one may go further and suggest that what makes the *Second Discourse* particularly interesting is that in his analysis of each historical stage, he situates the emergence of a new practical consciousness, language, and script, within a synchronic rather than diachronic structuration, thus disrupting the notion of continuity, identity, and development in the history of the human species. Thus, in the *Second Discourse*, Rousseau appears to sustain an argument for the materiality of discourse ordering human consciousness.

The third and final section of the vicar's philosophical position is his account of the soul. He senses a "violent condition" within himself and as a consequence invokes a notion of metaphysical dualism. He admits that he cannot understand the interaction of his two substances but accepts that the idea of dualism "contains nothing repugant to reason or to observation" (IV.576–7). He suggests that he has two distinct principles:

> one of which raised him to the study of eternal truths, to the love of justice and moral beauty, and to the regions of the intellectual world whose contemplation is the wise man's delight; while the other took him basely into himself, subjected him to the empire of the senses and to the passions which are their ministers and by means of these hindered all that the sentiment of the former inspired in him (IV.583).

The vicar experiences the conflict of these two principles and is torn by remorse and guilt for his coarser inclinations. He depicts his shame as a "tyrannical senti-

ment" that brings him torment. Like Adam after the fall, the vicar is ashamed and his fears of eternal torment lead to his attempt to hide from himself. He does so with the self-righteous moralism of hating the wicked (IV.596). The vicar's shame and feelings of torment and his intense and bitter hatred for the wicked reside together with an intense and passionate "love for the beautiful," which is the source of "these transports of admiration for heroic actions, these raptures of love for great souls . . . this enthusiasm for virtue." Divided between his desires and the moral principles evoked by his active reason, the vicar seeks the original unity of natural man.

By contrast, Émile who has never been given cause to choose between desire and duty because his desires have never been rampant, is described, as we have seen, as undeceiving and naïve (IV.642). While subject to the alienation caused by human temporality underlying also the vicar's self-division, he nonetheless has retained much of the self-identity and immediacy to nature of natural man. Much artifice has been deployed to achieve this, but an artifice wholly unlike that of the vicar's current animadversions. The vicar's violent vacillations of love and hatred are far from the moderate sentiments that Émile experiences. By confining his existence within himself, he has not been led to judge others nor to be transported by raptures that would injure the stability of his mind.

What permits the vicar to sustain his project of restoration to self-unity is a "divine essence" within himself that issues in an "innate principle of justice and virtue":

> Conscience, conscience! Divine instinct, immortal and celestial voice, certain guide of a being that is ignorant and limited but intelligent and free; infallible guide of good and bad which makes man like unto God (IV.600–1).

He also speaks of man's capacity for contemplation and links to it a natural perception of "order, beauty, and virtue."[22] We discover that the vicar's project for overcoming hiss self-division is to be achieved by a moral freedom which grounds social man's active reason and will in the natural sentiment of conscience, thereby reconciling what he sees as his freely-determined actions to nature, and so restoring the original unity of his being. Rousseau never appeals in the *Émile* or in the *Second Discourse* to these faculties or this resolution nor does he mention any inherent sense of order, beauty, or virtue. Instead, Émile's sense of order is restricted to the predictable consequences of his experimental science, his sense of beauty is fabricated and nurtured by the judicious manipulation of his imagination, and his virtue develops in the regulation of his heart by ideals that the tutor instills. The vicar ascribes to the natural character of the soul, a metaphysical structure that Rousseau both reveals to be a false hypostatization of structurally and historically emplaced behaviours, and ignores in his own pedagogical techniques.

22. IV.582.

The vicar claims that these sentiments of love of the good and hatred of the bad are as natural as the love of self and suggests that it is these relative sentiments that make men sociable by nature. By dint of moral sentiment, men are able to reflect upon and make actual a just regime. The vicar expresses the view that the "inner voice" acts as a natural law governing men's affairs:

> All the duties of the natural law which were almost erased from my heart by the injustice of men are recalled to it in the name of the eternal justice which imposes them on me and sees me to fulfill them (IV.603).

Where the vicar expresses his admiration for man's natural sociability, Rousseau on the other hand writes "from the little care taken by nature to bring men together through mutual need and to facilitate their use of speech, one at least sees how little it prepared their sociability and how little it contributed to everything men have done to establish social bonds" (III.151).

Rousseau's argument that man's nature is a product of history, and that man is not by nature a being endowed with certain predetermined capabilities and experiences, in fact undermines the possibility of the vicar's natural law in the strict sense. If we take the doctrine of natural law to mean (*a*) that man is by nature a rational being who is inclined toward acting according to reason and hence acting virtuously and (*b*) that the principles of natural law are universally valid and eternal because they accord with an unchanging human nature, then Rousseau's position in the *Second Discourse* renders him incapable of consistently maintaining a natural law doctrine. By claiming that man is by nature asocial and nonrational, and by finding man's distinctiveness in his malleability, Rousseau denies that human nature points to or informs man as to certain moral principles whereby he is completed or perfected. Man makes himself because there is no natural order to which he must adapt. For Rousseau, as Book V appears to suggest, morality is an artifice of imagination, ideals and human will.

The consequence of the vicar's belief that his is a privileged position in nature is crucial for understanding the difference between Rousseau and the vicar. For Rousseau, nature has assigned no ranks; man does not represent the apex of the natural world. The vicar, by contrast, claims, "I find myself by my species incontestably in the first rank" (IV.552–3). Rousseau's analysis of the passion *amour propre* appears to shed light on the vicar's condition, his self-interpretation, and his need for the palliative of his faith. The vicar himself makes mention of the distraught state of this passion. He claims that raising questions of metaphysics has "agitated (his) *amour propre*." Many of his sentiments, indeed, appear to be both products and also causes of the increasing turbulence of his *amour propre*. The vicar is imperious in his self-congratulatory pride. "Can I see myself thus distinguished without congratulating myself on filling this honourable post and without blessing the hand which placed me in it", he asks himself (IV.583). On the other side of this imperiousness can be found an obsequious servitude:

> Being of beings, I am because You are; it is to lift myself up to my source, to meditate on you ceaselessly. The worthiest use of my reason is for it to annihilate itself before you . . . it is the charm of my weakness to feel myself overwhelmed by your Greatness (IV.594).

This diverges remarkably from the status Emile is to envisage for himself. Pride, vanity, and servility are seen by Rousseau as distortions of the soul for they are based on corrupt comparisons. Comparisons with others lead to envy and resentment especially when others are perceived as being superior. *Amour propre*, which is enflamed by comparisons of those superior, produces in turn all the "hateful and irascible passions." It is *amour propre* that "always wants to carry man above his sphere," and this "looking up" produces a slavishness that is the source of misery and dependency upon others. For Rouseau, the constraints of a transcendent morality make men more turbulent, more prone to deception, and ultimately more unjust. It is the lack of ability or desire to cull from *within* those resources to comprehend and use nature, that leads a frustrated *amour propre* to animate the universe with will and intention. It is precisely *amour propre*'s link with imagination that produces the very idea of a sphere that transcends human life.

It is for this reason that a significant portion of Émile's education has been an attempt to arrest the emergence of *amour propre*, the source of these attempts to aspire to supreme heights and beyond the human condition. The tutor has carefully contrived situations so that the seeds of imperious passions may never be sown. Efforts to surpass the human condition by acts of supreme and Godlike virtue, lead to unhappiness, unrequitable hope, and unruly vanity. The passions that cause men to emulate others, to become dependent on other's recognition, and to become resentful if that recognition is not forthcoming are not however natural to man; careful nurture can prevent their emergence. A proper education must ensure that the child not perceive a domineering will insisting that its precepts be followed nor believe that an external will can be beseeched to respond to its demands. Émile's tutor has been concerned to manipulate the environment in such a way that the young man may not develop the character which would require the myths of eternal salvation and hope of divine intervention. Rousseau's analysis of the source of the tyrannical will reveals that the cause of such a temperament is a faulty perception of reality. The passions that the profession succors are thus a symptom of defective education.

Émile is one who lives for himself; the corrupted soul lives in the eyes of others or another. The vicar finds his source of happiness in "contemplation of the Supreme Being and the eternal truths of which He is the source . . . the beauty of the order will strike all the powers of our soul" (IV.591). The transcendence to contemplation of the eternal order is, for the vicar, the height of perfection for human beings. For Rousseau, this transcendence simply betrays a demand for recognition of others. The vicar does indeed seek recognition from others, betraying his slavishness to their opinions: "I wanted supernatural understanding in

order that I myself would be privileged among my fellows" (IV.608). His virtue, moreover, is calculating and hypocritical: "If I do a good deed without a witness, I know that it is seen and I make a record for the other life of my conduct in this one" (IV.308).

Rousseau transforms the virtue of humility to that of humanity, and the supreme virtue of glory and honor to that of domestic fidelity, in seeking to redirect man's attention to the earthly things. Belief in a transcendent realm and a Deity who is the author of commands regarding human virtue, or attempts to surpass the human condition in heroic feats, produces misery and "vain-glory." In the Letter to Beaumont, Rousseau revealed precisely that

> continual meditations on the Deity or the enthusiasm for virtue may have disturbed, in the sublime imaginations, the mean and regular order of . common ideas. A too great elevation of mind sometimes turns the brain and things are no longer seen in their ordinary light[23]

The teaching Rousseau wishes to convey is that by focusing upon the divine, men have lost the capacity to achieve justice and happiness in this world. As well, this heroic striving has corrupted the regularity of their souls. Men must therefore restrict their allegiance and energies to the human estate; an imaginary elevation of man's existence makes him imprudent and neglectful of his weakness and true duties.

> I have only one precept to give you and it comprehends all the others. Be a man. Restrain your heart within the limits of your condition. Study and know the limits. However narrow they may be, a man is not unhappy as long as he closes himself up within them. He is unhappy only when he wants to go out beyond them. He is unhappy when he forgets his human estate in order to forge for himself imaginary estates from which he always falls back into his own. The only goods it is costly to be deprived of are those one believes one has a right to . . . A man wants to be God when he believes he is no longer a man . The illusions of pride are the source of our greatest ills. But the contemplation of human misery makes the wise man always moderate . As a mortal and perishable being should I go and form eternal ties on this earth where everything changes, where everything passes away, and from which I shall disappear tomorrow? (IV.820)

This disparity between the vicar's and Rousseau's views underscores too the divergent pedagogies they employ. The vicar attempts to instill a love of virtue by depicting the beauty of virtue in such a way as to make it alluring. He does so by portraying others: "he reanimated a generous ardour in his heart by the account of others' noble deeds . . in making the boy admire those who had performed them, the priest gave him the desire to perform like deeds" (IV.653).

For reasons we have already examined, this would not be appropriate for Émile because it would exacerbate his *amour propre*. He has been taught to question the motives and intentions of those who attempt to surpass ordinary hu-

23. T. Becket and P.-A. de Honot, *op. cit. supra*, p. 37.

man bounds and to strive for immortality. Imitation, and especially imitation of the heroic or the divine, is the source of the corruption of an honest love of virtue. In Rousseau's understanding the discourse of the classical pedagogy that made appeal to "imaginary estates", supreme virtue, duties in opposition to nature, and the need for patient endurance in hope of future salvation necessary, had taken men outside of the "natural" order and caused disruption in their souls. Rousseau's choice of preceptors indicates the worldly concerns he intends to impart. Rather than choosing a teacher of virtue who was said to partake of the divine—Socrates, Christ, or the heroes—he offers Chiron as the most popular model.[24] Émile's concerns are completely this-worldly: "I shall not seek a distant happiness for him at the expense of the present" (IV.654).

In sum, one may discern from the god to whom a man prays how a man is constituted. The vicar's regard is for a god who exercises divine judgment; the vicar is corrupt, rebellious, and torn between desire and guilt. The vicar sees the body as a prison and sees life as a period of atonement: " . . . I aspire to the moment when, after being delivered from the shackles of my body, I shall be me without contradiction or division and shall need only myself in order to be happy" (IV.604). He bases his hopes on the immortality of the soul and the belief that the afterlife justifies the pains endured for justice and virtue: "I believe that the soul survives the body long enough for the maintenance of order" (IV.590). Torn between inclination and duty, the vicar is tormented by the "violent condition" of the union of his body and soul. The vicar's hopes and sufferings thus require a belief in eternal salvation.

Do all of these opinions and beliefs sound like the sort of teaching Émile requires? Émile is completely free from the worries, calculations, and recriminations the vicar's beliefs are intended to ease. The vicar's "virtue", like Locke's which we examined earlier, depends on a transcendent, punitive God ("without faith no true virtue exists"); virtue depends on suppressing nature and transcending mortal life (IV.632). Émile's virtue, by contrast, is constituted by a self-regulatory prudence. It is based on knowing how to judge and circumscribe his ambitions. Hopes for eternal salvation are folly in Rousseau's eyes for they cause men to forget "the art of living":

> In the uncertainty of human life, let us avoid above all the false prudence of sacrificing the present for the future; this is often to sacrifice what is for what will not be (IV.781).

Despite the vicar's expectations man occupies an insignificant, if guaranteed, place in the whole. Compared to the heavenly bodies or divine intelligence, man is at an outer periphery:

> The good man orders himself in relation to the whole, the wicked one orders the whole in relation to himself. The latter makes himself the center of all things; the former mea-

24. While Chiron was the teacher of heroes, he partook of the dual nature of beast and man and it is this that Rousseau emphasizes, reasons for which I explored in "Rousseau and the Domestication of Virtue," *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, XVII:4 (December 1984), pp. 731–53.

> sures his radius and keeps to the circumference. Then he is ordered in relation to the common center, and in relation to all the concentric circles, which are the creatures (IV.292).

For the vicar, man is the measure of the cosmos; he reflects its order and harmony and remains within a pre-established relation. By looking at the order within himself, man can understand the order in nature because he is a microcosm of the universe. The vicar simply remains committed to a classical cosmology and ethic as a response to the materialists' claims.

For Rousseau, however, man is the master and measure of the chaotic universe; he creates the order and his understanding is based on his own constructions. All intelligibility or meaning has its root in human needs and artifice. The difference of accounts is most poignantly revealed in Rousseau's description of man's relation to the world around him:

> Let us measure the radius of our sphere and stay in the center like the insect in the middle of his web; we shall always be sufficient unto ourselves and we shall not have to complain of our weakness, for we shall never feel it (IV.305).

Rousseau's choice of the spider as the dominant metaphor is insightful, for the metaphor has a pedigree, the best known being the use made of it in Swift's bitingly satiric contrast of the ancients and moderns. He had in his "The Battle between the Ancient and Modern Books" described ancient philosophy as a bee whose wings produce music and flight and who thus "visits all the blossoms of the field and garden . . . and in collecting from them enriches himself without the least injury to their beauty, their smell, or their taste."[25] The ancient bee is contrasted to the modern house-building spider which feels that it can produce its own world from within itself and perceives itself as self-sufficient.

Whatever the ambiguity of Rousseau's agreement with Swift's critique of the moderns, he nonetheless adopts this modern perspective. Rousseau rejects the vicar's teleological conception of the universe, and its transcendent morality, and the account of power that sustains that classical project. Rousseau's criticism of previous philosophers, who have mistaken a particular historical configuration of nature and of the soul as nature herself, applies as much to the vicar's position. Rousseau's acceptance of mechanism and modern psychology and his historicization of consciousness requires leaving ancient ideas behind. The profession of faith is, therefore, the most conservative part of Rouseau's work and should be taken as distinct from the radical teaching he propounds as the enduring basis of his philosophy. However, we must now account for the reason Rousseau might have had in writing the text and situating it within Book IV of the Émile, an explanation to which I promised to return.[26]

25. Jonathan Swift, "The Battle Between the Ancient and Modern Books," in *A Tale of a Tub and other Satires* (London: Dent, 1975), p. 151.

26. An objection could be made to this reading by pointing out that in his own name Rousseau embraces some of the vicar's doctrines, particularly of conscience and of dual substances. However,

III. DRAMATIC AND STRATEGIC SIGNIFICANCE

If the profession of faith is not compatible with the theoretical core of Rousseau's teaching, what purpose does it serve? I offer the following possibilities.

First, the education which is offered to Émile is not only an impractical political proposal because of the rare and privileged attention the tutor gives to his pupil, but also because Rousseau himself was not persuaded of its efficacy. To engineer a human soul is a wager, not because Rousseau appears to believe that the student will suffer intimations of deprival of natural, experiential truths from which he has been excluded, but because of the essential fragility of human artifice and because of the multiple trajectories traversing the body in a given social reality, threatening the univocal script with which it has been outfitted. Like the Styx-dipped Achilles, Émile's pedagogy is not invulnerable. After all, the sequel to the *Émile* is a tragic aftermath, where Rousseau reveals that the couple's daughter dies in infancy, that they move to Paris, where following Sophie's seduction and impregnation by another man, Émile abandons her for a misanthropic existence as a solitary. One might hypothesize that the juristic constitution of sovereign association in the *Social Contract* is as vulnerable, and in both cases the civil profession of faith serves as a palliative to the degeneration ensuing from the rupture of the unity of the moral experience. The Profession, while injurious to those whose self-unity is uncontaminated, might be the only solution where the technical penetration has failed or been overwhelmed by other forces.

This leads me to the second suggestion. In a corrupt, bourgeois society the vicar's profession of faith can inspire virtue by portraying a simulacrum of virtue, dazzling in its charm and beauty and capable of alluring men away from vice. For his contemporaries, Rouseau provides a "natural religion," less demanding and less inclined to promote hypocrisy than revealed religion, that assures some moral response to the commercial society and its misery. In this way, the vicar's profession conveys a salutary teaching, one that is intended as a tract for the times. Indeed, Rousseau intimates that the profession has primarily a political task. At the beginning of the profession he announces that he is about to speak to his "dear fellow citizen." The reader should recall that in the general preface to the *Émile* Rousseau addresses his work to those educators who seek an education "suitable for man and well adapted to the human heart." This universal

---

since this occurs conspicuously around the profession, these declarations seem to have the role of softening what would otherwise be too severe a disjunction in views. Although one could muster sufficient evidence for this thesis—for example, by contrasting earlier editions with the published work—I will adduce only one argument. After the profession where one might expect that love of order, of God, or of the inherent virtue and justice might regulate Émile's heart, Rousseau resumes his biotechnology: "One has a hold on the possessions only by means of the passions. It is by their empire that their tyranny must be combatted; and it is always from nature itself that the proper instruments to regulate nature must be drawn" (IV.654).

address to mankind is in contrast to the particular addresses of other more rhetorical works, where he speaks as a citizen of Geneva to other citizens. In those works where he speaks as a citizen, Rousseau is less open and more didactic, seeking to impart salutary truths and concerning himself with civic virtue and justice. In the *Émile*, generally, no such political fervor is expressed. Only in the introduction to the profession of faith does Rousseau express any similar patriotic or partisan sentiment, and so one might assume that it serves the same end as Rousseau's other rhetorical works. In the *Letter to Beaumont*, Rousseau had indicated that his sole concern had been to devise a religion "useful to mankind": "Let us take this utility therefore as our guide; and proceed to establish those doctrines which are most conducive to it."[27] The truth of revelation is subordinated wholly to the utility of presenting certain views to his contemporaries.

As well, in Book XI of the *Confessions*, Rousseau in fact indicates that his aim in writing had been to display the beauty of virtue so that he might move the hearts of the Parisians. Although he believed that they were corrupt and had ceased to know virtue and morality, they had a "delicate sensitivity" that Rousseau felt he could entrance with his accounts. Rousseau never systematically reveals the objections he might have made to the profession of faith and its proposed model of virtue. An explicit statement to the effect that the vicar's position only provided the simulacrum of virtue would have undermined its intended effect. Hence, his rhetoric is beautiful and noble and he presents his views unambiguously and his solutions as unproblematic. Only implicitly does Rousseau speak with less reserve. There is a reason for Rousseau's reticence connected with the difficulty of presenting his teaching. He did not believe it possible in his age simply to praise temperance and exhort men to moderation. To the man who has abandoned all traditional restraints, whose action is governed by the principle of pleasure and calculative reasoning alone, Rousseau's teaching would appear anachronistic and tyrannical. His teaching in the *Émile* reveals the need to accept some degree of suffering as the prerequisite to a moral outlook; the evils to be endured are emphasized more than the goods to be happily enjoyed. There is a complexity to the relationship between happiness and virtue not immediately apparent to the man who calculates the most efficient means of administering to his desires, who has been exposed to modern materialism and the natural-right teaching and whose prejudices would render Rousseau's concerns comical. For this reason, Rousseau often presents the simulacrum of virtue, that can serve as an alluring image for men already corrupted by the modern teachings. They are charmed by his text and are sent away with a surface view better than their old prejudices. In "corrupted hearts" which by dint of persuasion might again become disposed to a love of virtue, the simulacrum of virtue must be compounded with what is not precisely virtuous: "the sacrifices made to duty and virtue always have a secret charm even for corrupted hearts." Although this may not be sufficient for the more comprehensive theory of virtue, the image of "ex-

27. T. Becket and P.A. de Honot, *op. cit. supra*, p. 37.

alted virtue" plays a crucial pedagogical role. Beautiful images charm even as they help win agreement to the more substantial arguments.

However, neither of these suggestions does justice to the question of why the Profession of Faith is where it is in the *Émile*. For this another interpretive strategy must be advanced and I suggest that in looking at the connection between Rousseau's pedagogical techniques and a distinctive element of his political teaching a provocative possibility comes to light. It is unorthodox but I believe crucial to make the case that the *Discourse on Political Economy* establishes an agenda for Rousseau's thoughts on the political technology of desire and explains the mode of power deployed in constituting the Émiles as moral subjects.[28]

As the *Discourse* and the *Émile* make evident, men are not simply guided by reason and morality; they are constituted as particular moral subjects, by the way power traverses their bodies within a political culture, or a political economy. What makes Rousseau interesting is his problem: how to constitute an economy of desire, power, and truth. That desire, power, and knowledge are posed as sites of problematization already early in his writings emerges, for example, in his article for Diderot's *Encyclopédie* which offers us his agenda:

> If it is good to know how to use men as they are, it is better still to make them what one needs them to be. The most absolute authority is that which penetrates to the inner man and is exerted no less on his will than on his actions. It is certain that people are in the long run what the government makes them   Train men, therefore, if you want to command men.

Rousseau is alluding here to a very specific historical and political reality and organization of an economy of bodies, which Foucault has suggested was constituted within a specific art of political rule, namely "governmentality." This art has as its datum the "population" as a unique field of intervention. What this means is that new tactics and techniques as well as formations of knowledge proper to governing men in their multiple relations—in the conjuncture of population, territory, and wealth—emerge as the concern of state, and make possible the "penetration of inner man," the desiring man who wills and acts, enabling him to be governed efficiently. Thus, in the *Discourse on Political Economy*, Rousseau relates that to govern a state is to set up an economy involving the entire state that is to exercise toward its citizens—that is, toward the wealth and behaviour of each—a form of surveillance, or dressage involving questions of sexuality, mortality, health and hygiene, wealth, fertility, birthrates, and the safety of urban and domestic spaces. Such a project conveys the dream of a perfectly transparent and efficient society. Foucault writes, "The eighteenth century invented, so to speak, a synoptic regime of power, a regime of its exercise within

28. I am here pursuing and enlarging upon an argument made by Michel Foucault in "Governmentality," *Ideology and Consciousness*, VI (Autumn 1979), pp. 5–21, and his histories on sexuality, *op. cit. supra*.

the social body, rather than from above it." Unlike Hobbes's sovereign who exercises juridicial power—a distillation of power into a single will—the art of government deploys a power that circulates in a dispersed network of apparatuses without a single, organizing system, center, or focus. Individuals simultaneously exercise and undergo power, they are vehicles of power and not its point of application. Moreover, the individual with his desires, knowledges, and expectations is the prime effect of power. Rousseau is precisely novel in this regard because he examines how the relations of power constitute bodies as effects of power, that is, how they are constituted in the deployment of power, especially at the level of desire. Here power is polyvalent; power has a productive character since it produces the effects of truth within the many governmental discourses of population management. Commentators have hinted at this political technology and its accompanying exercise of power by referring to the refashioning conducted by the soulcraft of the legislator and by suggesting that the reproduction of the structure of the natural equilibrium of power and desire is a technical question. But the constitution of the new subject goes beyond this. The government of men and their constitution as quanta of labour power or biopower in a population, suggests that this is not "Man" as an ontological given who is being made to be free. Commentators acknowledge that it is the external conditions of freedom that allow this "making" or "denaturing" to be possible, but here they appeal to a juridicial conception of power, exercised by a superior wisdom. I have suggested that Rousseau's position is more refined: this is a power dispersed and diffuse; there are no central nodal points of power, only the trajectories of a multiplicity of social forces. Indeed, a substantial portion of the *Social Contract*, the *Discourse on Political Economy* and most of the *Émile*, are given over to a discussion of this moral discipline. One is right to identify the genre of the moral freedom constituted to be "self-mastery" but in Rousseau this code is at one, and indeed dependent upon, the politics of surveillance, of the confessional, and of the ritual of examination, and thus must be differentiated from the divergent political technologies of self-mastery of the citizen in the Greek polis, of the Stoic in the cosmopolis, of the courtesan in feudal Europe, or of the *condottieri* in the Italian city-republic because the measure is drawn from a new scientific object, "the population."

Let me elaborate this further: one might see that Rousseau's politics of truth is inextricable from the dynamics of a confessional discursive regime. That is, the subject is incited to produce a discourse of truth about his desires, his sexuality, to examine his thoughts, memories, images, and dreams, so as to decipher them for the first stirrings of desire which animate the flesh. Desire is construed as that which is hidden. It must be extracted, and the subject, until he has done so, does not know his own truth. Pedagogical discipline incites a confessing subject who renders his truth in the verbalization of his desires. The hermeneutic relation in which the moral subject is engaged to achieve self-mastery, in which power/knowledge elicits and maintains desire, instrumentalizing it and extending con-

trol over the body of the subject, is actualized in a society devoted to a new political optics—an omniscient gaze—and an economy of orderly, contented bodies. It is not a morality of repression and self-abnegation but rather one of desire as a pervasive visibility in an economy of excitation, proliferation, and instrumentation.

Sex, for example, we find out in the *Émile* now becomes a political, economic, and technical problem; it is no longer "the flesh" as the site of various prohibitive techniques of power (the Church teaching or the sovereign's power of death), but instead it assumes a new form as "sexuality": sex has become a locus constituted on the basis of new techniques of power; not on the negative exercise of the sovereign's vengeance, or the denial of access to the world hereafter, but upon a positive investment in practices which direct life processes. Constituted as a body, the individual can be represented as a "machine", as a quantum of "biopower" possessing capabilities which must be optimized; flaws must be corrected, and forces must be administered at the capillary level in this "metabolism with nature." Émile's education is not a pedagogy of precept, of knowledge as juridical authority. Instead, the tutor engages the technique of constant surveillance, a gaze coupled with the incitement of desire. The innovation is that what occurs is not the repression of free desire but its incorporation, its government, through disciplinary power. Throughout the *Émile*, Rousseau deploys tactics of force, ruse, habit, suppression and incitement. The teaching of moral, juridical rights, and duties are continually deprecated by Rousseau as ineffective and inappropriate for producing the new "natural man" who is to be integrated into society's grid of surveillance. The same mechanic in the constitution of this unique subject is found too in *La Nouvelle Héloïse* where Julie claims,

> If a mother is in the least watchful, she has the passions of her children under her complete control. She has means of arousing and sustaining the desire to learn or any other desire; and, so far as they are compatible with the complete freedom of the child and do not sow the seeds of vice, I readily employ them.

This scrutiny is however only a prelude to the interiorization of surveillance and the administration of desire it makes possible. In the *Émile*, the next tactic in this administration is illustrated by the Profession of Faith whereby the tutor ensures that "the inner sentiment" obliges Émile "to keep an attentive watch over himself before listening to his nascent desires." At this point where the tutor has contrived the situation so that Émile cannot immediately consummate his desire for Sophie, his temporary self-division is monitored by the policing of an internalized gaze. The procedure finally culminates in again shifting the surveillance, in fixing desire to a particular object: the imaginary woman, who will eventually become the tangible Sophie. Rousseau has here resorted to the disciplinary solution of intensified surveillance from without, a woman who governs, judges, observes, and exercises the powers of desire over him. What this implicitly shows is distrust for the effective "inner sentiment" as the final, conclusive moral regu-

lator and the dependence on a new tutelary relation, guaranteed by a prudent management of desire.

The Profession then has served as a momentary bridge in Rousseau's overall program of a perfectly transparent society which guarantees itself the complete control of the drawstrings of moral behavior. The transparent society will require no gods and no sovereign. Power dispersed and diffused to the capillaries of this society will ensure an efficient circulation of moral effects. The Profession is but a tool drawn from Rousseau's kit to this end, tactically contrived within a moral project of constituting disciplined subjects. Submerged within the recurrent and endless metabolism with nature and identifiable not by their singularity but by the quanta of "biopower" they contribute to Mankind, as a biological species, the Émiles and Sophies have been constituted within an object of technical intervention, the healthy and productive "population."

To conclude, I have argued that the profession of faith cannot be read as containing Rousseau's philosophic principles. The vicar's system is open to insurmountable objections on the basis of the new philosophic truths and political matrix and thus is rendered ineffective in regulating the social effects of the new individualism fostered by materialism. The traditional restraints of a transcendent morality can only be seen as arbitrary or quaint from the point of view of the man who embraces the materialist teaching on human nature and realizes that his selfish designs now have philosophic sanction. Rousseau had realized that the consequences of this new teaching on social life were calamitous.

However, he could not simply revert to a classical cosmology and impose a refutable system of morality upon men. Although such depictions of virtue as presented by the vicar may charm corrupted men's hearts and dispose them to virtue, the ancient ideas could not be sustained in the new commercial governments. Nor did Rousseau believe it possible to simply ignore the materialist findings and postulate that man nonetheless has a distinct realm of freedom that exempts him from mechanical necessity. Man is one of the mechanically-regulated phenomena of nature. It is from his nature that the means of regulating his nature must be taken. Rousseau's moralizing of the human machine is found elsewhere in the multiple modes of power and knowledge his account sustains.

It was Nietzsche, of course, and not Rousseau who taught us that with the death of God, "Man" was gone too. But Rousseau also seemed to recognize that "Man" had become problematic and to have ventured on the path implying that "Man" is technically constituted through various modes of power, and that morality is but an armature of that power. It is the public responsibility and caution Rousseau adapts in constituting the moral and political subject, however, that distinguishes him from many of his inspired and willful followers.

PUBLIUS:

THE JOURNAL OF FEDERALISM

Published by the
Center for the Study of Federalism

Temple University and
North Texas State University

Editors: Daniel J. Elazar and John Kincaid

PUBLIUS is a quarterly journal now in its sixteenth year of publication. It is dedicated to the study of federal principles, institutions, and processes. PUBLIUS publishes articles, research notes, and book reviews on the theoretical and practical dimensions of the American federal system and intergovernmental relations and other federal systems throughout the world.

Forthcoming issues will feature articles on state constitutional law, diffusions of information and innovation, Reagan's New Federalism, consociationalism and federalism, the Voting Rights Act, federalism in Germany, rural communities in the federal system, federalism and military rule in Nigeria, and much more as well as the PUBLIUS Annual Review of American Federalism.

EDITORIAL ADVISORY BOARD: Thomas J. Anton, Samuel H. Beer, Lewis A. Dexter, Ivo D. Duchacek, Max Frenkel, Robert B. Hawkins, Jr., A.E. Dick Howard, L. Adele Jinadu, Irving Kristol, E. Lester Levine, William S. Livingston, Catherine H. Lovell, Alexandre Marc, Elinor Ostrom, Vincent Ostrom, Neal R. Peirce, William H. Riker, Harry N. Scheiber, Ira Sharkansky, Donald V. Smiley, David B. Walker, Murray L. Weidenbaum, Frederick Wirt, Deil S. Wright.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES: Individual $20; Institutional $30; Student and Retired, $15.

Subscriptions and manuscript submissions should be sent to:

PUBLIUS: THE JOURNAL OF FEDERALISM
c/o Department of Political Science, North Texas State University
Denton, Texas 76203-5338 (817) 565-2313

Alexander Hamilton on Natural Rights and Prudence

MACKUBIN THOMAS OWENS, JR.
Office of Congressional Affairs, Department of Energy

In Number 1 of *The Federalist,* Alexander Hamilton, writing as "Publius," observed that America would decide the great question "whether societies of men are really capable or not of establishing good government from reflection and choice, or whether they are forever destined to depend for their political constitutions on accident or force."[1] The unique claim of America, according to Hamilton in this passage, was that this nation, rather than having its political system imposed upon it by tradition or necessity, would establish a regime by human choice in accordance with reason, a reason that is ordered toward a truth that lies in an objective order of reality.

The American nation would therefore be the first regime based upon *principle* rather than accident. The English word "principle" comes from the Latin *principium,* which is the translation of the Greek *ἀρχή*. An *ἀρχή* is a *rule,* which governs the meaning or action of a thing; it is also a beginning or origin. Insofar as the rule which governs the development of a thing is present in its origin, the thing will become what it is intended to become. The beginning rules the end, by determining what a thing, when it has fulfilled its nature, will become. An acorn does not become a human being, and a human embryo does not become an oak. This applies as well to politics. The principles informing the American founding would shape the nation's destiny as well.[2]

There are various statements of the principles upon which the American regime is supposed to be founded, but the best known expression of those principles understood as both the beginning and end of government, is to be found in the Declaration of Independence. According to this document the purpose or end of government is to protect the unalienable natural rights of individuals to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Thomas Jefferson of course was the author of the Declaration, and it is his name that is invoked as the advocate of what most Americans take to be the principles of the American regime.

While most people profess to know Jefferson's principles and their importance to the foundation of the United States, the same cannot be said of Alexander Hamilton. As John Marshall remarked, "[w]ith respect to [Hamilton's] political principles and designs, the most contradictory opinions were entertained."[3]

1. Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, and John Jay, *The Federalist,* ed. Jacob E. Cooke (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), p. 3.

2. Jeffery Wallin, "Locke and the American Founding," paper delivered at the APSA Annual Meeting, 1980, p. 3. Cf. Leo Strauss, *National Right and History* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1950), pp. 122–27.

3. John Marshall, *The Life of George Washington* (New York, 1925), Vol. V, p. 202.

The reputation of Alexander Hamilton has been subject to wide vicissitudes of opinion. Talleyrand is supposed to have said, "I consider Napoleon, Pitt, and Hamilton as the three greatest men of our age, and if I had to choose among the three, I would without hesitation give the first place to Hamilton."[4] According to Guizot, "Hamilton must be classed among the men who have best known the vital principles and fundamental conditions of a government worthy of its name . there is not an element of order, strength and duration in the Constitution which [Hamilton] did not powerfully contribute to place there."[5] Nor was this high regard for Hamilton restricted to foreigners. Washington wrote of him: "That he is *ambitious* I shall readily grant, but it is of that laudable kind, which prompts a man to excel in whatever he takes in hand."[6] And Fisher Ames: "The name of Hamilton would not have dishonored Greece in the Age of Aristides."[7]

Of course, contemporary approbation of Hamilton was by no means universal. His erstwhile Federalist ally, John Adams, called him "the bastard brat of a Scots peddler." The ambition for which Washington had praised Hamilton was the source of Adams's disdain: "[Hamilton] was in a delirium of ambition: he had been blown up with vanity by the Tories, had fixed his eye on the highest station in America, and he hated every man young or old who stood in his way."[8] Your "ambition, pride and overbearing temper" wrote Noah Webster, "have destined you to be the evil genius of this country."[9]

But it was Hamilton's perceived principles rather than his ambition that most troubled his greatest political enemy, who branded him as the conservative or, indeed, reactionary opponent of the principles of the American revolution: Thomas Jefferson most firmly fixed Hamilton's reputation by branding him "not only a monarchist, but for a monarchy bottomed on corruption."[10] Jefferson and his allies characterized Hamilton as a proto-Caesar, and attacked his financial plan as an attempt to establish monarchy, aristocracy, plutocracy, and corruption in America.[11] To the charge of being opposed to the principles of the revolution, modern historians have added the charge that Hamilton was at odds with himself, that the late "conservative" Hamilton contradicted the early "radical."

In fact, Hamilton's principles were the principles of the American revolution and, to a remarkable extent, the principles of Thomas Jefferson. The later "conservative" Hamilton was, moreover, perfectly consistent with the early "radical" Hamilton in the principles by which he took his bearings. The great debate be-

4. *Life, Letters, and Journals of George Ticknor* (Boston, 1876), Vol. I, p. 261.

5. Quoted in Melvin G. Dodge, *Alexander Hamilton* (New York: Putnam, 1896), pp. 7–8, 48.

6. To John Adams, September 25, 1798. *The Writings of George Washington*, John C. Fitzpatrick, ed. (Washington, D.C., 1931–44), Vol. XXXVI, pp. 460–61.

7. Quoted in William Coleman, ed., *A Collection of the Facts and Documents Relative to the Death of Major General Alexander Hamilton* (New York: Houghton Mifflin, 1904), p. 249.

8. Quoted in Page Smith, *John Adams* (New York, 1962), Vol. II, p. 1085.

9. Smith, *John Adams*, Vol. II, p. 1045.

10. Jefferson, *The Anas*, in Adrienne Koch and William Peden, eds., *The Life and Selected Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (New York: Modern Library, 1944), p. 126.

11. Cf. e.g., *National Gazette*: "Brutus No. 1," March 15 and subsequent numbers. Cited in Forrest McDonald, *Alexander Hamilton* (New York: Norton, 1979), p. 241.

tween Hamilton and Jefferson, and the apparent conflict between the early and late Hamilton, had largely to do with *means* rather than ends.

This is not to say that these differences were not considerable, even fundamental from a political point of view. To "establish good government" it is not sufficient merely to espouse true principles. These principles must be applied in practice, and the mode of application can make all the difference in the world. Hamilton's vision of America in his *Report on Manufactures* is perfectly consistent with the natural rights doctrine found in his *Full Vindication of the Measures of Congress* (1774) and *The Farmer Refuted* (1775). His understanding of the end of government was the same in 1800 as in 1776. But what he perceived as the proper *means* to those ends had changed, as circumstances had changed. Specifically, Americans were no longer fighting a revolutionary war. They were instead establishing institutions of government and learning to live together under them. The public measures (and the public disposition) required for founding were different from those required for revolution, though revolution and founding served the same ends.

As a statesman instrumental in the founding of the American regime, Hamilton faced a major obstacle. The American people were a revolutionary people, passionately attached to liberty. This passionate attachment to liberty led them to the belief that their will should rule in all things. Even established law was an unacceptable constraint. Hamilton saw that such a character in the people would lead to anarchy and hence to tyranny, both destructive of true liberty. A major aspect of Hamilton's statesmanship consisted of attaching the American people to the law and Constitution of the new nation, and in making them virtuous by making them law-abiding. Hamilton believed that liberty meant the citizens ought to be free to follow their natural inclinations, but that it was necessary for there to be some relationship between what the people are inclined to do and what is right for them to do. Hamilton sought to teach moderation and justice to a revolutionary people through attachment to good laws, particularly in urging them to respect the property of minorities, pay their debts, and abide by the strictures of international law.

In short, Hamilton's great challenge was to transform a revolutionary people into a self-governing people, to moderate their passion for liberty in order to secure to them the *blessings* of liberty, to infuse the spirit of independence with the spirit of the law. Even at the height of revolutionary fervor, Hamilton showed his awareness of this challenge in a letter to John Jay.

> The same state of passions which fits the multitude . . for opposition to tyranny and oppression, very naturally leads them to contempt and disregard of all authority . When the minds of those are loosened from their *attachment to ancient establishments and courses*, they seem to grow giddy and are apt more-or-less to turn into anarchy.[12] [Emphasis added]

12. To John Jay (November 26, 1775), *The Papers of Alexander Hamilton*, ed. Harold C. Syrette and Jacob E. Cooke, 26 Volumes (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961–79), 1.176–77; *Papers* hereafter.

He returned to this central theme at the New York Ratifying Convention in 1788.

> In the commencement of a revolution . nothing was more natural than that the public mind should be influenced by an extreme spirit of jealousy . and to nourish this spirit, was the great object of all our public and private institutions. Zeal for liberty became predominant and excessive. In forming our confederation, this passion alone seemed to actuate us, and we appear to have had no other view than to secure ourselves from despotism. The object certainly was a valuable one. But, Sir, there is another object, equally important, and which our enthusiasm rendered us little capable of regarding. I mean a principle of strength and stability in the organizing of our government, and of vigor in its operation.[13]

It was in attempting to moderate America's revolutionary passion, the better to fulfill America's revolutionary purpose, that Hamilton incurred the wrath of Thomas Jefferson and won from posterity the reputation as a reactionary opponent of the revolution and of his earlier (radical, and therefore better) self. In this great test of his statesmanship Hamilton displayed that quintessential virtue of the statesman—prudence, the choice of *means* to unchanging ends, given by nature and not subject to deliberation.

Hamilton seems to attach great importance to principles and to consistency in holding them. Thus in *Federalist* 31 he writes:

> In disquisitions of every kind, there are certain primary truths, or first principles, upon which all subsequent reasonings must depend . Though it can not be pretended that the principles of moral and political knowledge have, in general, the same degree of certainty with those of the mathematics; yet they have much better claims in this respect, than to judge from the conduct of men.[14]

And in commenting on Jefferson's first annual message to Congress he says that although "a wise and good man" may, under certain circumstances, change his opinions, such changes, especially in matters of great importance to the public, must be rare.

> The contrary is always a mark either of a weak and versatile mind, or of an artificial and designing character, which, accommodating its creed, to circumstances, takes up or lays down an article of faith, just as may suit a present convenience.[15]

The statesmen, of course, is not necessarily a philosopher. But to dismiss him as simply a man of action, as merely an advocate of a particular political plan is to miss the important point that political decision and advocacy, while certainly not identical with political theory, nonetheless may be grounded in thoughtfully articulated principles.

Our first problem is to discover what Hamilton's political principles were. Al-

13. Remarks at the New York Ratifying Convention (24 June, 1788), *Papers*, v.68.

14. Alexander Hamilton, James Madison, John Jay, *The Federalist*, ed. Jacob Cooke (Middletown, Conn.: Wesleyan University Press, 1961), pp. 193–95.

15. *The Examination*, Number XVI. *Papers*, xxv.564. Cf. *Second Letter from Phocion*, *Papers*, III.542–43.

though there is evidence he intended to do so, Hamilton never wrote a political treatise.[16] His principles must be gleaned from his pamphlets, reports, and letters which, now collected, run to 26 thick volumes. There are however two pamphlets in particular which Hamilton devotes to the articulation of political principles, and common sense dictates that we begin here. In fact, our beginning is Hamilton's as well, since these are his earliest political writings. In them is a full discussion of human nature, natural ends, and therefore an articulation of what is good for man as man.

A Full Vindication of the Measures of Congress, written in December 1774, and *The Farmer Refuted*, which followed in March 1775, provide the clearest statement of Hamilton's political principles.[17] In view of Hamilton's alleged "conservatism," these early pamphlets are truly shocking. He voices here a thoroughgoing radicalism. He defends the right of the American colonies to legislate for themselves, basing his argument on natural rights and natural law. From natural rights, he derives a radical justification for the right to revolution.

Hamilton's first pamphlet, *A Full Vindication,* was a response to an attack on the Continental Congress by Samuel Seabury, the Anglican rector of Westchester, New York. Seabury, under the name of "A. W. Farmer" had ridiculed the measures enacted by the Congress in response to the so-called "Intolerable" or "Coercive" Acts passed by Parliament in 1774. Hamilton, invoking the law of nature, the genius of the British constitution, and the Colonial charters as justification for the security of the individual in his life and property, set out to show that "the inhabitants of Great Britain [had no] right to dispose of the lives and properties of the inhabitants of America . . "[18]

Seabury, in his reply, requested that Hamilton "explicitly [declare] to the public [his] idea of the natural rights of mankind." Hamilton obliged him in *The Farmer Refuted,* to which he added a justification of the colonists' cause in terms of the British constitution and the colonial charters. Hamilton's two pamphlets provide one of the most comprehensive defenses of American liberty to be found, one that is at least as radical as the document written by his future political enemy, the author of the Declaration of Independence.

Seabury's position was that Parliament had every right to legislate for the colonies because, by definition, a colony is subordinate to the motherland. Thus,

16. "Mr. Hopkins relates: when Hamilton hesitated his consent to republication [of *The Federalist*], that he related to him, '*Heretofore* I have given the people *milk; hereafter* I will give them meat;' words indicating his formed purpose—to write a treatise on government." John C. Hamilton, ed., *The Federalist* (New York, 1864), Vol. I., pp. xcii, ciii. "[Hamilton intended to write] a full investigation of the history and science of civil government and the various modifications of it upon the freedom and happiness of mankind . [He desired] to have the subject treated in reference to past experience and upon the principles of Lord Bacon's inductive philosophy, and to engage the assistance of others in the enterprise." William Kent, *Memoirs and Letters of James Kent* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1898), pp. 327–28.

17. *A Full Vindication of the Measures of the Congress, &c., Papers*, 1.45–78. *The Farmer Refuted, &c., Papers*, 1.81–165.

18. *Papers*, 1.46.

there could be no lawful resistance to the taxes imposed on the colonies by the Parliament. For Hamilton, the issue was not whether there should be a "petty duty of 5 pence per pound on East India tea." The dispute was rather "whether the Parliament of Great Britain shall make what laws, and impose what taxes they please upon us, or not . . "

> It is true, we are denying to pay the duty upon tea, but it is not for the value of the thing itself. It is because we cannot submit to that, without acknowledging the principle upon which it is founded, and that principle is *a right to tax us in all cases whatsoever.*[19]

But Hamilton denies this principle. There is no unlimited power to tax, because to admit such a power is a contradiction of the law of nature, the British constitution, and the colonial charters.[20]

Seabury's problem, says Hamilton, is one of ignorance. He does not know the natural rights of mankind. His total ignorance of these rights is the fundamental source of all his errors and sophisms, and his ignorance requires that Hamilton spell out a doctrine of political obligation, beginning with the law of nature.

> Good and wise men, in all ages . . have supposed, that the deity, from the relations, we stand in, to himself and to each other, has constituted an eternal and immutable law, which is, indispensibly, obligatory on all mankind, prior to any human institution whatever.[21]

Quoting Blackstone, he continues:

> This is what is called the law of nature, 'which being coeval with mankind, and dictated by God himself, is, of course, superior in obligation to any other. It is binding over all the globe, in all countries, and at all times. No human laws are of any validity, if contrary to this; and such of them as are valid, derive all their authority, mediately, or immediately, from this original.'[22]

The content of the natural law as it applies to man is "twofold." Hamilton's formulation suggests that there are two commands of the law of nature: a strong one and a weak one.

> It is . . a dictate of humanity to contribute to the support and happiness of our fellow creatures and more especially those who are allied to us by the lines of blood, interest, and mutual protection; but humanity does not require us to sacrifice our own security and welfare to the convenience, or advantage of others. Self-preservation is the first principle of our nature. When our lives and properties are at stake, it would be foolish and unnatural to refrain from such measures as might preserve them, because they would be detrimental to others.[23]

19. *Papers*, 1.67.
20. *Papers*, 1.43.
21. *Papers*, 1.87.
22. *Papers*, 1.87; Blackstone, *Commentaries on the Laws of England*, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1979 [First published, London, 1765–69], Vol. I, p. 41.
23. *Papers*, 1.51.

The strong command of the law of nature is: "preserve yourself." The weak command is "help, or at least, do not harm, others." The end of the strong command is to preserve one's life. The means to that end are within the choice of the individual, but are constrained by the weak command.

The "natural rights of mankind" depend upon the natural law, and include the inviolable right to "personal liberty" and "personal safety," as well as the natural right to freedom, or "which is the same thing security for life and property."[24] These natural rights to life, liberty, and property are all in accordance with the dictates of the law of nature. The relationship between natural law, natural rights, and self-preservation can be understood because the supreme being "endowed [man] with rational faculties, by the help of which, to discern and pursue such things, as were consistent with his duty and interest . ." and which enable him to understand and employ "the means of preserving and beatifying [his] existence."[25]

It is reason that indicates these "luminous principles." "They speak the plainest language to every man of common sense; and must carry conviction where the mental eye is not bedimmed, by the mist of prejudice, partiality, ambition, or avarice."[26]

Reason and the law of nature operate even when there is no civil society, but the sanctions against those who violate the law of nature are very weak in the absence of civil society. The best Hamilton can say is that "in a state of nature, no man had any *moral* power to deprive another of his life, limbs, property or liberty; nor the least authority to command, or exact obedience from him." Hamilton's emphasis on moral power indicates that there is a problem here. If the law of nature commands "preserve yourself," if, that is, every man has the right to self-preservation, he must also have the right to the means of self-preservation. In the state of nature, the right of self-preservation of one man necessarily comes into conflict with that of another, and since every man is the judge of his own cause, this means that the state of nature is either actually or potentially a state of war.[27]

The natural, inviolable rights which Hamilton proclaims are thus not complete in the state of nature, "since a right implies a remedy." The weaker dictate of the law of nature will always be overwhelmed by the stronger, and that "moral" power one has in the state of nature turns out to be no power at all.

Because the equal right of self-preservation for all will lead to universal conflict, the state of nature is unendurable and thwarts the intention of natural law. This must be corrected by placing *actual* force behind the ineffectual moral force

24. *Papers*, 1.66.

25. *Papers*, 1.87–88.

26. *Papers*, 1.97.

27. *Papers*, 1.88. Hobbes, *Leviathan*, ed. Nelle Fuller (Chicago: Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1952). Vol. 23 of *The Great Books*. Chapter XIII, pp. 84–86. Locke, *Two Treatises of Government*, ed. Peter Laslett (New York: New American Library, 1960), Second Treatise, Chapter III; Sections 45, 48–51.

of that part of natural law which says do not harm others. In other words, for the law of nature to effect even its minimal purpose, i.e., to secure self-preservation, men must be prevented from harming each other. A real sanction must be provided where nature does not provide one. Civil society is the necessary correction of the state of nature.

The purpose of civil society is to protect those absolute rights which, though ordained by the law of nature, are not secure in the state of nature. *"Civil liberty is only natural liberty, modified and secured by the sanctions of civil society."*

Again quoting Blackstone, Hamilton says:

> The principle aim of society is to protect individuals in the enjoyment of those absolute rights, which were vested in them by the immutable laws of nature; but which could not be preserved, in peace, without that mutual assistance and intercourse, which is gained by the institution of friendly and social communities. Hence, it follows, that the first and primary end of human laws is to maintain and regulate the *absolute rights* of individuals.[28]

For civil society to be just, it must be a voluntary compact, based on the consent of the governed.

> No reason can be assigned why one man should exercise any power, or pre-eminence over his fellow creatures more than another; unless they have voluntarily vested him with it.[29]
>
> . the origin of all civil government, justly established must be a voluntary compact, between the rulers and the ruled; and must be liable to such limitations, as are necessary for the security of the absolute rights of the latter; for what original title can any man or set of men have, to govern others, except their own consent?[30]

Thus does Hamilton derive the purpose and foundation of civil government from first principles or the law of nature.

Governments that violate these principles are illegitimate. As Hamilton quotes Blackstone: "[N]o human laws are of any validity if contrary to [the law of nature]; and such of them as are valid, derive all their authority . . . from this original."

> To usurp dominion over a people, in their own despite, or to grasp at a more extensive power than they are willing to entrust, is to violate that law of nature, which gives every man a right to his personal liberty; and can therefore, *confer no obligation to obedience*. (Emphasis added)[31]

Hamilton does not hesitate to proclaim the right to revolt against such illegitimate governments.

28. *Papers*, 1.104, 88; Blackstone, 1.120. The editors of the *Papers* mistakenly give the page reference of this passage as 124.

29. *Papers*, 1.47.

30. *Papers*, 1.88.

31. *Papers*, 1.88.

> The nations of Turkey, Russia, France, Spain and all other despotic kingdoms in the world, have an inherent right, whenever they please to shake off the yoke of servitude (though sanctified by the immemorial usage of their ancestors;) and to model their government, upon the principle of civil liberty.
>
> *When the first principles of civil society are violated, and the rights of a whole people are invaded, the common forms of municipal law are not to be regarded.* Men may then betake themselves to the law of nature; and if they but conform their actions, to that standard, all cavils against them, betray either ignorance or dishonesty. There are some events in society, to which human laws cannot extend; but when applied to them lose all their force and efficacy. In short, when human laws contradict or discountenance the means, which are necessary to preserve the essential rights of any society, they defeat the proper end of all laws, and so become null and void.[32]

Hamilton clearly advocates a natural rights position expressed in language similar to that of Jefferson in the Declaration of Independence. Hamilton's principles understood as beginnings are rooted in human nature which requires a free government, a government of political equality based on consent. His principles understood as ends are the perfection of virtue, or human excellence through the expansion of liberty.

Guided by what he took to be the natural ends of men, Hamilton varied his practice to meet the exigencies of the time and place. What was best simply, might not be best under the circumstances. This is the essence of prudence. Thus while in private Hamilton criticized the various state constitutions, in public he attempted to attach the people to law-abidingness by praising those same constitutions; while he privately characterized the Federal Constitution as a "frail and worthless document," he mounted a major effort to see it ratified; and while he asserted that Jay's Treaty had been negotiated by "an old woman," he publicly defended it as the best means of preserving the regime under the prevailing conditions of international affairs.

Hamilton's fullest account of prudence is found in *The Defence of the Funding System* written after his resignation as Secretary of the Treasury. But even in his first pamphlets there is a brief discussion of the relationship among good policy, principles, and prudence. A good policy must meet these practical criteria:

> First, the necessity of the times [must] require it, secondly . . . it [must] not be the probable source of greater evils than those it pretends to remedy: and lastly, . . . it [must] have a probability of success.[33]

In the *Defence,* Hamilton wrote that his duty as Secretary of the Treasury, and by implication the duty of any statesman, had been "to unite [in his policy] two ingredients . . . intrinsic goodness [and] a reasonable probability of success." He could not in good conscience, he wrote, "have submitted the best financial plan simply because it was too remote from the prevailing opinions . . ."

32. *Papers,* I.125, 136 (Emphasis added).
33. *Papers,* I.52.

> In pursuing too far the idea of absolute perfection in the plan unaccomodated to circumstances. The chance of an absolutely bad issue was infinitely enhanced, and the evils connected with it.

Such evils included the collapse of credit, the subversion of union (and hence effective government), and "a severe blow to the security of property."[34]

Hamilton's prudence did not, however, mean the subordination of principle to simple expediency. Although we should act according to the dictates of prudence, we must keep our eye upon an objective standard of human behavior.

> accommodation was not to be carried so far as to sacrifice to it any essential principle. This is never justifiable. But with the restriction of not sacrificing principle was it not right and adviseable to shape the course as to secure the best prospect of effecting the greatest possible good? To me this appeared the path of policy and duty and I acted under the influence of that impression.[35]

But it was also a dictate of Hamilton's prudence to recognize that the constant appeal to first principles is destructive of the stability necessary to the very preservation of those principles. *This,* it seems is the source of the real debate between Hamilton and Jefferson. While Jefferson advocated a constant appeal to first principles, Hamilton believed that positive law must of necessity replace that appeal. Revolutionary fervor is inappropriate to living in a stable political society, even one that protects individual rights. Prudence teaches that ultimately individual rights can only be preserved when there exists in the regime a strong sense of law-abidingness.

Thus, as suggested before, much of Hamilton's enterprise was the prudential attempt to make a revolutionary people law-abiding. Before he could hope to see a regime of liberty fully established in America, and its benefits enjoyed, it was necessary to make a revolutionary people, who desired only to acquire whatever their wills directed, see the necessity of paying their debts. In an infant nation whose survival depended on the restraint and good will of great powers, a revolutionary people had to be shown the necessity of subordinating gratitude to other countries and attachment to revolutionary principles, to the dictates of international law. Perhaps the foremost requirement of prudence was to make an *ancient establishment* of a new government, to attach the people to the laws of the new government in order that their rights might be protected, and that stable government might be preserved.

In order to understand the importance of prudence to the implementation of a regime of principles, it is helpful to examine Hamilton's justification for revolution and the source of that justification. As Gerald Stourzh has brilliantly demonstrated, the source of both Hamilton's "radicalism" and his "conservatism" was the "eminently respectable" Blackstone.[36] Much has been made of Blackstone's

34. "Defense of the Funding System," *Papers,* XIX.3–6.
35. *Papers,* XIX.7.
36. Gerald Stourzh, *Alexander Hamilton and the Idea of Republican Government* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1970), pp. 9–37.

conservative influence on the Revolution. But he also provided a justification for "the resort to first principles" that characterized the radical aspect of the Revolution. The jurist whom Jefferson accused (along with Hume) of having "made Tories of all England," and of doing the same to "those young Americans whose native feelings of independence do not place them above . . . wily sophistries . . ."[37] could nonetheless write about:

> those extraordinary recourses to first principles, which are necessary when the contracts of society are in danger of dissolution, and the law proves too weak a defense against the violence of fraud or oppression.[38]

The historian Claude Van Tyne writes that:

> a South Carolinian spoke of those latent, though inherent rights of society, which no climate, no time, no constitution, no contract, can ever destroy or diminish . . . To a mind that venerated the Constitution such ideas were poisonous, and pointed plainly to anarchy.[39]

But the source of those sentiments was precisely one who venerated the British constitution.

> Indeed, it is found by experience, that whenever the unconstitutional oppressions, even of the sovereign power, advance with gigantic strides and threaten desolation to a state, mankind will not be reasoned out of their feelings of humanity; nor sacrifice their liberty by a scrupulous adherence to those political maxims, which were originally established to preserve it. And therefore, though the positive laws are silent, experience will furnish us with a very remarkable case, wherein *nature* and *reason* prevailed . . . [Abdication of James II]. In these, therefore, or other circumstances, which a fertile imagination may furnish, since both law and history are silent, it becomes us to be silent too; leaving to future generations, whenever necessity and the safety of the whole shall require it, the exertion of those inherent (though latent) powers of society, which no climate, no time, no constitution, no contract, can ever destroy or diminish.[40]

37. To Horatio G. Spafford (March 17, 1814) in *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson*, ed. A. A. Lipscomb and A. E. Bergh (Washington, 1903), Vol. 6, p. 335.

38. Blackstone, 1.243.

39. Claude Van Tyne, *The Causes of the War of Independence* (Boston, 1922), pp. 236–37. Cited in Stourzh, p. 13.

40. Blackstone, 1.238. Stourzh maintains that Blackstone had a major impact on Hamilton, especially in terms of his understanding of natural law. Stourzh, pp. 9–36. McDonald minimizes the influence of Blackstone on Hamilton, suggesting that "he may have merely skimmed through [the *Commentaries*] during the six or eight weeks between his writing of the two tracts," since he did not refer to them in his earlier pamphlet. McDonald, p. 51. McDonald also claims that Hamilton did not "derive his understanding of natural law from Blackstone: that came principally from Vattel." McDonald, p. 57. Concerning Stourzh's opinion, McDonald writes "I believe that Stourzh, in his not unflawed but generally excellent study . misinterprets and overstates Blackstone's influence upon Hamilton." McDonald, p. 378, note 17. I follow Stourzh in this debate. Indeed, anyone familiar with Stourzh's work will recognize how much my discussion here depends upon his view. I believe that Blackstone demonstrates the unique way in which the "natural law" was transmitted in the British tradition. For instance, it is interesting to note at this point that Hamilton's use of Blackstone may point the way to reconciling two apparently irreconcilable views of the Revolution: the "conservative" or "legalistic" view of, e.g., Daniel Boorstin, and the "ideological" view of Bernard Bailyn. Boorstin neglects the role of resort to first principles. Taking issue with Carl Becker's explanation of the role

For Blackstone (and Hamilton writing in 1775) the English law and the British constitution were coeval with the natural law. Thus the first Resolve of the Massachusetts House of Representatives proclaimed "that there are certain essential rights of the British Constitution of Government, which are founded in the Law of God and Nature, and are the common Rights of Mankind," and the Massachusetts Circular Letter of 1768 expressed the view that the "essential, unalterable right, in nature . . . What a man has honestly acquired is absolutely his own [was] engrafted into the British Constitution, as a *fundamental law*."[41]

---

of natural law in the Revolution, Boorstin writes: "According to this view, the colonists began their arguments on a low legalistic level, finding it convenient to debate first within the framework of the imperial constitution and the common law; but they gradually and inevitably climbed the ladder of abstraction until, by mid-1776, they were thinking and talking in the arid heights of natural law [Becker's account] supposes a kind of intellectual mobility—near disingenuousness—which enable the Americans to shift their grounds to suit their needs. It takes for granted . that the colonists could as readily abandon the legal for the philosophical level of argument as a hired counsel could alter his plea from guilty to not guilty." Daniel J. Boorstin, *The Genius of American Politics* (Chicago, 1953), pp. 77–78, 79.

Bailyn's interpretation on the other hand stresses the ubiquity of natural rights thinking, and goes far toward suggesting that there was no conservative element to the Revolution. Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1967). Both of those views, it seems, can be reconciled by recognizing the special status of the natural law in English thought, represented most of all by Blackstone, and the prudence of the colonists in adapting their arguments to their needs.

First of all, the absolute distinction between positive law as the pure command of the sovereign and other species of law such as natural law, which we inherit from Hobbes via John Austin, did not exist for the Founders. Writers, particularly Christian writers such as Fortescue and Hooker, interpreted the common law and the British Constitution in terms of medieval Natural Law. Thus there was a merging of common law rights, such as the right to trial by a jury of one's peers, "natural" and sacred by virtue of the very antiquity of their tradition, and the rules of moral conduct ordained by God and revealed by scripture and reason: the *"Lex Aeterna,"* in the words of Sir Edward Coke, "the moral law, called also the law of nature written with the finger of God in the heart of man." Quoted by Hamilton in *Papers*, 1.91. Onto this tradition of English natural law was engrafted the fundamental law of self-preservation. Perhaps, as later thinkers have argued, modern natural rights as articulated by Hobbes and Locke are incompatible with the older tradition, but for the statesmen of the Revolutionary period, who embraced a lawyer's understanding of law and the constitution, such an incompatibility was not important.

Boorstin is correct in recognizing the importance of Blackstone to the founders, but he misses the fact that the conservative Blackstone provided the means of constitutional reasoning used by the colonists in their radical enterprise. The colonists' concern with the "true nature of the British Constitution" must not obscure the fact that, as transmitted by Blackstone's *Commentaries*, that concern was inseparable from natural law and natural rights. And further it is not disingenuousness but prudence, that led the Americans to change their arguments from a defense of the colonies in terms of the "rights of Englishmen" to the "rights of mankind." At the beginning, they were in fact the same, but as Parliamentary supremacy gained ground, the colonists suited their arguments to their changing needs. Thus John Adams recollected that during the drafting of the Declaration of Rights in 1774, it was discussed "whether we should recur to the Law of Nature, as well as to the British Constitution and our American Charters and Grants. Mr. Galloway and Mr. Duane were for excluding the Law of Nature. I was very strenuous for retaining and insisting on it, as a Resource to which we might be driven, by Parliament much sooner than we were aware." John Adams, *The Diary and Autobiography of John Adams*, ed. L. H. Butterfield (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1962), Vol. III, p. 309.

41. Edmund S. Morgan, ed., *Prologue to Revolution: Sources and Documents on the Stamp Act Crisis* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1959), p. 56. The Massachusetts Circular

Hamilton, in his early pamphlets argued with equal fervor on three levels that the "security to our lives and property [is afforded by] the law of nature, the genius of the British constitution, and our [colonial] charters . . ." Hamilton could with equal facility argue his position from natural law or from a pre-Lockean understanding of such a concept as "legiance." Thus, "[t]he law of nature and the British constitution both confine allegiance to the person of the King; and found it upon the principle of protection."[42]

Blackstone's role in unifying, in the minds of Englishmen and colonists alike, the law of nature and the British constitution is most forcefully demonstrated in this little noticed passage.

> The absolute rights of every Englishman (which, taken in a political and extensive sense, are usually called their liberties) as they are founded on *nature and reason,* so they are *coeval with our form of government*

Immediately above this passage, Blackstone had written:

> The idea and practice of this political or civil liberty flourish in their highest vigour in these kingdoms, where it falls little short of perfection, and can only be lost or destroyed by the folly or demerits of its owner: the legislature, and of course the laws of England, being peculiarly adapted to the preservation of this inestimable blessing even in the meanest subject. Very different from the modern constitutions of other states, on the continent of Europe, and from the genius of the imperial law; which in general are calculated to vest an arbitrary and despotic power of controlling the actions of the subject in the prince, or in a few grandees.[43]

Blackstone argues that all men have certain natural rights "such as would belong to their persons merely in a state of nature, and which every man is entitled to enjoy whether out of society or in it." The "natural liberty" of man which "consists properly in a power of acting as one thinks fit" must be modified in order to receive the advantage of civil society. "Every man when he enters into society gives up a part of his natural liberty, as the price of so valuable a purchase." Civil rights, the absolute rights of individuals, are a number of "private immunities" defined by "several statutes" and consist in "that *residuum* of natural liberty, which is not required by the laws of society to be sacrificed to public convenience."[44] The natural rights, now the civil rights of the people of England, consist in three articles: "the right of personal security, the right of personal liberty; and the right of private property."

> The preservation of these, inviolate, may justly be said to include the preservation of our civil immunities in their largest and most extensive sense.[45]

Letter is cited in Edward S. Corwin, *The "Higher Law" Background of American Constitutional Law* (Ithaca, 1955), p. 79.

42. *Papers,* 1.91.

43. Blackstone, 1.123, 122–123 (Emphasis added).

44. Blackstone, 1.125.

45. Blackstone, 1.125.

The sum of Blackstone's argument seems to be that the British constitution is coeval with the natural rights of mankind. *All* men are entitled to these rights, but only the British constitution among all the legal systems in the world has in fact secured them.

The fact that Hamilton relied on natural rights to a greater extent in his early pamphlets, and advocated them more strongly than Jefferson did in his *Summary View of the Rights of British America,* can be explained by a circumstance to which prudence must adapt itself. As Hamilton himself tells us, New York, where he was writing, had no royal charter, and his careful argument for the charter rights of other colonies did not apply to New York.

> It is true, that New York has no Charter, But, if it could support its claim to liberty in no other way, it might, with justice, plead the common principles of colonization: for it would be unreasonable to seclude one colony, from the enjoyment of the most important privileges of the rest. There is no need, however, of this plea: The sacred rights of mankind are not to be rummaged for, among old parchments, or musty records. They are written, as with a sun beam, in the whole *Volume* of human nature, by the hand of the divinity itself; and can never be erased or obscured by mortal power.[46]

Hamilton's principles, as given in his early pamphlets, reflect a Blackstonian understanding of the British constitution. Hamilton's radicalism is thus traceable to a view of the constitution advanced by the eminently respectable jurist. But with Blackstone, and unlike Jefferson, Hamilton believed that the "resort to first principles" should be a rare occurrence, undertaken only under the direst circumstances, only when absolutely required by the "prudence of the times." "Legitimate" revolution, which may involve illegal acts, is to be undertaken only when the absolute safety of the people is at stake or, as quoted above, "when the first principles of civil society are violated, and the rights of a whole people are invaded . ." Resistance to Parliament is justified by that body's usurpation of the rights of the people. Since the end and intention of government, is to preserve the life, property and liberty of the subjects, only the encroachments of oppression and tyranny justify a resort to first principles. When power is used illegitimately by their rules, the people may resort to legitimate, though illegal measures, and may do so with a clear conscience. Such extralegal but legitimate measures serve to restore the conditions of rule originally designed to guarantee the purpose of government.

Hamilton's sober radicalism stands in contrast to that of Jefferson. Jefferson favored a frequent resort to first principles, which explains his complacent and bookish reaction to Shays's Rebellion and the bloodshed of the French Revolution. In a letter to Edward Carrington, Jefferson spoke favorably of the "tumults in America," i.e., Shays's Rebellion, "as a means to the firmness of our [state] government," which, even when in error, "keep [their governors] to the true principles of their institutions. To Madison he wrote "I hold it that a little rebel-

46. *Papers,* 1.121–22.

lion now and then is a good thing, and as necessary in the political world as storms in the physical."[47]

Gerald Stourzh has shown that the source of Jefferson's ideas can be found in Article IV of the Virginia Declaration of Rights, which states that "no free government, or the blessing of liberty can be preserved to any people but by a firm adherence to justice, moderation, temperance, frugality, and virtue, and by frequent recurrence to fundamental principles." According to Stourzh, this emphasis on a resort to first principles can be traced back through George Mason, to James Burgh, Thomas Gordon and John Trenchard, the authors of the influential *Cato's Letters,* thence to Algernon Sydney and finally to Machiavelli.[48] Burgh writes in his *Political Disquisitions* that "*Machiavelli* says, that to render a commonwealth long lived, it is necessary to correct it often, and reduce it towards its first principles, which is likely to be done by punishments and examples."[49] And Sydney:

> [*Machiavelli* proposed] reducing every state, once in an age or two, to the integrity of its first principle. All human constitutions are subject to corruption, and must perish, unless they are timely renewed, and reduced to their first principles.[50]

Indeed, the title of *The Discourses* III, I is "To insure a long existence to religious sects or republics, it is necessary frequently to bring them back to their original principles." The purification of the corrupt body politic could be accomplished by "extrinsic accidents" such as the sacking of Rome by the "Franks" which led to the rebirth of Rome, or internal devices such as "a law that obliges the citizens of the association often to render an account of their conduct."[51] Many saw this as the source of the ideas of rotation in office, frequent elections, and other republican institutions. Sydney, for one, saw it also as a call for popular tumults, and Jefferson followed him in this regard.

While Hamilton and Blackstone agreed with Jefferson that an extralegal resort to first principles was sometimes necessary they maintained that such recurrences should be rare. Hamilton's great fear was that the end of government would be overturned and that mobs, driven by their short-sighted passions would undermine the whole basis of civil government. His *Phocion Letters* were directed against mob rule. And indeed these bookish admirers of "little rebellions," had

47. To Edward Carrington (January 16, 1787), Koch and Peden, p. 411; To James Madison (January 30, 1787), Koch and Peden, p. 413; cf. to Col. Smith (November 13, 1787). "And what country can preserve its liberties, if its rulers are not warned from time to time, that this people preserve the spirit of resistance? Let them take arms. The remedy is to set them right as to facts, pardon and pacify them. What signify a few lives lost in a century or two? The tree of liberty must be refreshed from time to time, with the blood of patriots and tyrants. It is its natural manure. " Koch and Peden, p. 436.

48. Stourzh, pp. 34–37.

49. James Burgh, *Political Disquisitions* (London, 1774–75), Vol. III, p. 298.

50. Algernon Sydney, *Discourses Concerning Government,* in *The Works of Algernon Sydney* (London, 1772), pp. 405, 124.

51. Machiavelli, *Discourses,* ed. Bernard Crick (Baltimore: Pensuin Books, 1970), III. I, p. 386.

they read the whole of Machiavelli's chapter on resort to first principles would have seen the essential correctness of Hamilton's fear. For Machiavelli's return to the beginning of republics involved terrible and striking deaths, i.e., a return to the terrible beginning out of which civil society necessarily arose. A return to beginnings is the renewal of the fear that characterizes the state of nature. As Machiavelli writes in this section:

> [Some men] used to say that it was necessary to reconstitute the government every five years, otherwise it was difficult to maintain it; where by "reconstituting the government" they meant instilling men with that terror and fear with which they had instilled them when instituting it . . . Provision has of necessity to be made against [misbehavior and corruption] by restoring that government to what it was at its origins.[52]

For Blackstone or Hamilton, frequent rebellions or rules for overthrowing tyrants undermine the stability of government which is necessary for the very preservation of liberty. While Blackstone admitted that extrajudicial, extralegal acts against authority might be legitimate under certain circumstance, he took issue with Locke's position, expressed in Sect. 149 of *The Second Treatise,* that the people have the inherent power to remove or alter the legislature, when they find the legislative act contrary to the trust reposed in them.

> But however just this conclusion may be in theory, we cannot adopt it, nor argue from it, under any dispensation of government at present actually existing. For this devolution of power to the people at large, includes in it a dissolution of the whole form of government established by that people; reduces all the members to their original state of equality; and, by annihilating the sovereign power, repeals all positive law whatsoever before enacted. No human laws will therefore suppose a case, which at once must destroy all law and compel men to build afresh upon a new foundation; nor will they make provision for so desperate an event, as must render all legal provisions ineffectual.
>
> The supposition of *law* therefore is, that neither the king nor either house of parliament (collectively taken) is capable of doing any wrong; since in such cases the law feels itself incapable of furnishing any adequate remedy. For which reason all oppressions, which may happen to spring from any branch of the sovereign power, must necessarily be out of the reach of any *stated rule,* or *express legal* provision: but if ever they unfortunately happen, the prudence of the times must provide new remedies upon new emergencies.[53]

It was the "prudence of the times" which required "new remedies upon new emergencies during the period of the Revolution." According to Hamilton

> When the first principles of civil society are violated, and the rights of a whole people are invaded, the common forms of municipal law are not to be regarded. Men may then betake themselves to the law of nature; and, if they but conform their actions to that standard, all cavils against them, betray either ignorance or dishonesty. There are

52. *Discourses* III.1, p. 388.
53. Blackstone I.157, 237–38.

> some events in society, to which human laws cannot extend; but when applied to them lose all their force and efficacy.[54]

But the prudence of the times also recognizes that extralegal but legitimate revolution is not to be confused with mere violence, no matter under what pretence that violence may erupt. Revolution is not anarchy.

The young "radical" Hamilton was as much concerned about rash violence as the mature "conservative" Hamilton, as his reaction to the attack on the press of Tory James Rivington in the previously cited letter to John Jay indicates:

> Though I am fully sensible how dangerous and pernicious Rivington's press has been, and how destestable the character of the man is in every respect, yet I cannot help disapproving and condemning this step.
>
> In times of such commotion as the present, while the passions of men are worked up to an uncommon pitch there is great danger of fatal extremes. The same state of passions which fits the multitude, who have not a sufficient stock of reason and knowledge to quiet them, for opposition to tyranny and oppression, very naturally leads them to contempt and disregard of all authority . . . In such tempestuous times, it requires the greatest skill in the political pilots to keep men steady and within proper bounds, on which account I am always more or less alarmed at every thing which is done of mere will and pleasure, without any proper authority.[55]

It is the prudence of the time that teaches that authority and government are necessary to the protection of those rights for which the revolution was fought. And here, Hamilton faces a particular problem, a problem that, as his letter to Jay demonstrates, concerned him even in his "radical" youth, and which will concern him to the very end of his life.

Reason teaches men the rights of mankind. But everyone has not the same "stock of reason and knowledge." Short-sighted, self-interested men have a passionate attachment to "liberty." Such passion can be made use of in opposition to tyranny and oppression, but if not curbed through the actions of true statesmen, can undermine the very principles of the Revolution, the principles of true liberty. The passionate devotion to freedom, understood as merely the emancipation of desires is opposed to the reason and knowledge necessary to establish true liberty. Reason and knowledge teach that it is necessary to establish a proper authority and rules of law and government in order to protect the absolute rights of individuals. But men, driven by passion and without a "sufficient stock of reason and knowledge to guide them" will recognize no principle to limit their desires, will recognize no authority because the passions are in principle unlimited.[56]

54. *Papers*, I.136.

55. *Papers*, I.176–77.

56. To James A. Bayard (April [16–21], 1802): "Nothing is more fallacious than to expect to produce any valuable or permanent results, in political projects, by relying merely on the reason of men. Men are rather reasoning than reasonable animals for the most part governed by the impulse of passion . . . For at the very moment [the Republicans] are eulogizing the reason of men and professing the appeal only to that faculty, they are courting the strongest and most active passion of the human heart—VANITY!" *Papers*, XXV.605.

What prudence dictates is the moderation of the passionate love of liberty, without which the love of liberty will turn into anarchy, which in turn may call forth tyranny as a necessary corrective. Prudence dictates that revolutionary passion be replaced by new "establishments and courses," since the minds of men have been loosened from their ancient ones. What this means is that the "pilots of the people," those who do have reason and knowledge, must guide the people toward the establishment of proper authority and government, in order that those rights for which the revolution was fought are protected and maintained.

> Peace made . a new scene opens. The object then will be to make our independence a blessing. To do this we must secure our *union* on solid foundations; a herculean task and to effect which mountains of prejudice must be levelled.[57]
>
> We have now happily concluded the great work of independence, but much remains to be done to reach the fruits of it. Our prospects are not flattering. Every day proves the inefficacy of the present confederation, yet the common danger being removed, we are receding instead of advancing in a disposition to amend its defects . It is to be hoped that when prejudice and folly have run themselves out of breath we may return to reason and correct our errors.[58]

Hamilton was concerned that in the aftermath of the Revolution, hostility to authority in general had emerged, arising from a passionate and not a reasoned attachment to liberty; and that there was a tendency for the new government to succumb to the passions of the people, causing those governments to oppress the citizens just as surely as the British government oppressed the Americans. The problem for the "pilots of the people" was to attach citizens to a government of law, based on and informed by a concern for rights and principle, but taking into account human nature in such a way as to moderate the passions of the people.

"It is an axiom that governments form manners, as well as manners form governments."[59] According to Hamilton the American governments were formed by the democratic temper of the people passionately attached to liberty. Hamilton wished to have government form manners by providing an antidote to the chaotic rule of passions, prejudices, and interests. This was to be done both by proper force and by example. This example would be the government's adherence to the very principles upon which the Revolution was based. A government which allows its actions to be swayed by passion provides no example to the people. Good government forms a model of good conduct for its citizens.

Good government requires attachment to authority, which in turn attains the object of independence. That authority must be worthy of respect. It must act honorably and not arbitrarily or tyranically. "It will be shocking and indeed an

57. To John Laurens (August 15, 1782), *Papers*, III.145.
58. To John Jay (July 25, 1783), *Papers*, III.416–17.
59. *Second Letter from Phocion, Papers*, III.553. Cf. Montesquieu, *Sur les causes de la grandeur des romains et de leur décadence*. "Dans la naissance des sociétés, ce sont les chefs des républiques qui font l'institution; et c'est ensuite l'institution qui forme les chefs des républiques." *Œuvres Complètes* (Paris: Editions du Seuil, 1964), p. 436.

eternal reproach to this country, if we begin the peaceable enjoyment of our independence by a violation of all the principles of honesty and true policy." By adhering to the rule of principle, a government is rendered moderate and just, respectable and exemplary. The failure of good government in America signals the doom of the cause of freedom everywhere.

> The world has its eye upon America. The noble struggle we have made in the cause of liberty, has occasioned a kind of revolution in human sentiment. The influence of our example has penetrated the gloomy regions of despotism, and has pointed the way to inquiries, which may shake it to its deepest foundation . . .[60]

But in order to provide an example to the rest of the world, "it remains for us to justify the revolution by its fruits." If the outcome of the experiment in self-government proves that "we really have asserted the cause of human happiness," such an illustrious example will be something that "the world will bless and imitate."

> But if experience, in this instance, verified the lesson long taught by the enemies of liberty; that the bulk of mankind are not fit to govern themselves, that they must have a master, and were only made for the rein and spur: we shall then see the final triumph of despotism over liberty. The advocates of the latter must acknowledge it to be an *ignis fatuus*, and abandon the pursuit. With the greatest advantages for promoting it, that ever a people had, we shall have betrayed the cause of human nature.[61]

That the cause of human nature not be betrayed, human nature must be habituated to certain behavior and away from certain tendencies. Otherwise self-government or popular government is not possible. Self-government requires moderation. The statesman needs to do more than merely establish institutions. He must teach moderation. By teaching moderation and adherence to principle to "those who have the direction of public affairs," the statesman establishes the manners necessary for self-government.

> 'Tis with governments as with individuals, first impressions and early habits give a lasting bias to the temper and character. Our governments hitherto have no habits. How important to the happiness not of America alone, but of mankind, that they should acquire good ones.
>
> If we set out with justice, moderation, liberality, and a scrupulous regard to the constitution, the government will acquire a spirit and tone, productive and permanent blessings to the community. If on the contrary, the public councils are guided by humour, passion and prejudice; if from resentment to individuals, or a dread of partial inconveniences, the constitution is slighted or explained away upon every frivolous pretext, the future spirit of government will be feeble, distracted and arbitrary.
> The rights of the subject will be the sport of every party vicissitude. There will be no settled rule of conduct, but every thing will fluctuate with the alternate prevelancy of contending factions.[62]

60. To George Clinton (May 14, 1783), *Papers*, III.355.
61. *Second Letter from Phocion*, *Papers*, III.557.
62. *Papers*, III.556–57.

There is, of course, a certain "paternalism" in Hamilton's attempt to educate the Americans to their responsibilities in self-government. But this merely takes cognizance of the fact that everyone does not have the same "stock of reason and knowledge" in order to seek "the real welfare of the community." The welfare of the community depends upon the establishment of good law and the attachment of the citizens to the law, and those motivated by passion, humour, and interest alone cannot be properly attached to the law.

Men passionately attached to liberty must be made to see that their true interest lies in developing habits of law-abidingness. They must be shown that if they act on the basis of "political expedience," which in practice amounts to acting on the basis of passion, humour, and interest, rather than on the basis of principle as manifested in good law, they put *themselves* "out of protection of law." They in effect "transfer the scepter from the hands of government to those of individuals . [T]hey arm one part of the community against another . [and thereby] *enact* a civil war." They "undermine all those rules, by which individuals can know their duties and their rights, and convent the government into a government of *will* not of *laws*."[63]

The gratification of momentary passions through whimsical and arbitrary actions which ignores principles, while it may be in the immediate interests of the people, may well return to haunt them.

> Nothing is more common than for a free people, in times of heat and violence, to gratify momentary passions, by letting into the government, principles and precedents which afterwards prove fatal to themselves.[64]

By teaching people that their true self-interest lay in developing a character which made them law-abiding and which engendered an affection for good laws, Hamilton tried to make self-government possible. The passionate attachment to liberty which characterized the Revolution was appropriate to the struggle *for* liberty but was not appropriate to the establishment and maintenance of true liberty. The role of the statesman and the policy dictated by the "prudence of the times" was to moderate the passionate love of liberty so that the *blessings* of liberty may be obtained. If such moderation should not take place, if violent government as the arbitrary means to fulfilling the passions of unreasoning men should become the norm, the danger would be great that such "a disorderly or violent government may disgust the best citizens, and make the body of the people tired of their independence."[65]

> Were the people of America, with one voice, to ask, what shall we do to perpetuate our liberties and secure our happiness? The answer would be "govern well" and you have nothing to fear either from internal disaffection or external hostility. Abuse not the power you possess, and you need never apprehend its diminution or loss. But if

63. *Papers*, III.556, 551.
64. *Papers*, III.485–86.
65. *Papers*, III.494.

> you make a wanton use of it, if you furnish another example, that despotism may debase the government of the many as well as the few, you like all others that have acted the same part, will experience that licentiousness is the fore-runner to slavery.[66]

It should now be clear that Hamilton in no way abandoned his principles. But the mere assertion of those principles does not secure them. They must be fought for when threatened by tyranny and oppression, and they must be protected by civil authority. The passions released in the fight for one's rights can in the end destroy those rights, because of passionate hostility to authority on the one hand, and the use of authority by mobs to destroy rights on the other.

Passionate men must be attached to good laws. They must be taught that their true interest lies in law-abidingness, that the constitution is the implementation of those principles for which men fought the Revolution, that the recourse to violent political expedience, introduces precedents that will eventually render all men unsafe in their liberty.

Hamilton's political career was, for the most part, a model of prudential behavior. His aim was to establish a government that implemented the principles of the Revolution, but he had to make use of the character of the people to do it. That character was not always suited to the times, because not everyone had the same stock of reason and knowledge. Hamilton realized that only a central government could ensure the enjoyment of the fruits of the Revolution, but the character of the American people was hostile to authority, particularly centralized authority. Hamilton had to do what he could to make *all* authority as decent and effective as he could, while at the same time working to establish the necessary central government. Thus, as shown above, during the period of the Revolution and its aftermath, Hamilton publicly praised extant political authority, either the state governments or the Congress and Articles of Confederation, in order to encourage a certain character in the people, i.e., affection for a rule of conduct, and law-abidingness; while in private he expressed concern over the inadequacy of the Articles and the attachment of the people to state rather than the national government. This is not hypocrisy, but prudence. His praise of extant authority was done for the purpose of establishing the conditions necessary for the ultimate adoption of the improved constitution.

But even the establishment of the national government and the adoption of the Federal constitution did not end the requirement for Hamilton's statesmanship. The character of the new government was still unformed. Those who could make use of the institutions available, and who remembered that governments, once formed by men then form the character of their citizens, would now be able to ensure the implementation and perpetuation of those principles for which the Revolution was fought.

66. *Papers*, III.495.

CANADIAN JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

SUPPLEMENTARY VOLUME 12, 1986

NUCLEAR WEAPONS, DETERRENCE, AND DISARMAMENT

Edited by David Copp

David Copp	Introduction: Deterrence and Disarmament
Noam Chomsky	The Rationality of Collective Suicide
Onora O'Neill	Who Can Endeavour Peace?
James P. Sterba	Moral Approaches to Nuclear Strategy: A Critical Evaluation
Michael Dummett	The Morality of Deterrence
Alan Gewirth	Reason and Nuclear Deterrence
Russell Hardin	Deterrence and Moral Theory
Jan Narveson	On Defense by Nuclear Deterrence
Steven C. Patten	Individual Responsibility, Nuclear Deterrence, And Excusing Political Inaction
Ian Hacking	Weapons Research and the Form of Scientific Knowledge

PRICE:
CDN $12.00 (in Canada)
US $10.00 (outside Canada)

This Supplementary Volume is **free** to individual and Student **SUBSCRIBERS** to **CJP** Volume 16, 1986.

ORDER FROM:
THE UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY **PRESS,** LT 1013,
2500 UNIVERSITY DRIVE N.W., CALGARY, ALBERTA
T2N 1N4 CANADA
ISSN-0229-7051

ISBN-0-919491-12-X

CANADIAN JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY

The **CANADIAN JOURNAL OF PHILOSOPHY** is a quarterly non-specialist journal of philosophy. Individual and student subscribers to the journal receive free in addition a supplementary volume of original papers on a theme of current importance. 1986 subscribers will receive *Nuclear Weapons, Deterrence and Disarmament* edited by David Copp.

SOME RECENT AND FORTHCOMING ARTICLES

DANTE'S HELL, AQUINAS'S MORAL THEORY, AND THE LOVE OF GOD	Eleonore Stump
INTRINSICALITY AND THE CONDITIONAL	Ray Jennings
ARGUMENTS FOR SCEPTICISM	A. Meidan
SYMPOSIUM ON ARISTOTLE'S PRINCIPLE OF NON-CONTRADICTION	Alan Code, S Marc Cohen, Montgomery Furth
HUME'S ACADEMIC SCEPTICISM	John Wright
THE NATURE OF POSSIBILITY	David Armstrong
ARMSTRONG ON POSSIBLE WORLDS	Jaegwon Kim
RIGHTS AND RISK	Dennis McKerlie
ETHICS, IDEOLOGY, AND FEMININE VIRTUE	J. Exdell
ON THE USE OF STRICT LIABILITY IN CRIMINAL LAW	C. Sistare

SUBSCRIPTION RATES FOR VOL. 17, 1987:
INSTITUTIONS - $35.00 in Canada $36.00 US outside Canada
INDIVIDUALS - $20.00 in Canada $20.00 US outside Canada
STUDENTS - $13.00 in Canada $13.00 US outside Canada
Payment by money order, Visa or Mastercharge.

ORDER FROM The University of Calgary Press, Library Tower,
2500 University Drive NW, Calgary Alberta T2N 1N4 CANADA

Autonomous Morality and the Idea of the Noble

PETER SIMPSON
Catholic University

INTRODUCTION

I refer to autonomous morality in my title, and what I principally mean by the term is that tradition of moral theorizing that wants to separate off moral values and moral thinking from other forms of thinking, such as thinking about natural objects, and to set it in a realm of its own where it operates according to its own internal logic without having any foundation in anything outside itself. In this sense morality is autonomous because it has its own independent sphere. This autonomy is often expressed by reference to the is/ought distinction. Morality is the realm of the 'ought', not the 'is', and this 'ought' is *sui generis* and is not, for instance, like the prudential or hypothetical 'ought'. For the prudential 'ought' rests for its force on the facts about the contingent desires and interests people have, and just tells one what one ought to do if one is to satisfy them; but the moral 'ought' has a force peculiar to itself, and is somehow uncontaminated by calculations of selfish advantage. Unless one recognizes this peculiar 'categorical' character of morality, it is said, one has failed to grasp the idea of moral thinking at all.[1]

Another way of stating the same idea is to say that morality is nonnaturalist, or that thinking about what one ought to do and what counts as morally good is quite different from thinking about how things are or about the true and false. In this sense it is said that moral thinking is volitional rather than cognitive, for it is not constituted by knowing certain facts, but rather by the performance of certain acts of will, or acts of choice that are spontaneous and not elicited by any prior acts of thought. The existence of morality as an independent sphere is thus understood as arising from the fact that it is constituted by independent, spontaneous acts of will. As both senses of independence used here are to be counted as senses of autonomy, the autonomous morality of my title must be taken to embrace both.

An earlier version of this article was read to the Irish Philosophical Society at its conference in Cork, March 1984. I am grateful to the other participants for the stimulating and helpful discussion that followed.

1. E.g. Phillips and Mounce, "On Morality's Having a Point", in Hudson, *The Is/Ought Question* (Macmillan, London, 1969), p. 233; Hudson, *Modern Moral Philosophy* (Macmillan, London, 1970), pp. 274–75 (though see also pp. 276–81); the very interesting article of Duff, "Desire, Duty and Moral Absolutes," in *Philosophy*, 55, 1980, pp. 223–38; Foot, *Virtues and Vices* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1878), essays 11 and 12; Paton, *The Moral Law* (Hutchinson University Library, London, 1948), p. 22; Crombie, *An Examination of Plato's Doctrines* (RKP, London, 1962), vol. 1, p. 275; MacIntyre, *After Virtue* (Duckworth, London 1981), p. 131.

The claim that morality is autonomous is often looked upon as the guarantee of its peculiar and distinctive character, without which it would get reduced or collapsed into something quite different. But one may also and equally look upon it as the claim that there is a divorce, or a severing, between the realm of knowledge and nature on the one hand and the realm of will and moral values on the other. At least the finest exponent of the autonomy of morality, Kant, looked on it like this, as he made starkly evident in the introduction to his *Third Critique*.

It is, in fact, this theme of the autonomy of morality as constituting a divorce or split in human existence that I want to examine in this article. Considering the influence of the ideas of autonomous morality today, and even more so the influence of Kant in contemporary moral philosophy, it is a theme that perhaps deserves more attention than it is usually given.[2] If I choose to approach it from the vantage of history, it is not because I think a philosophical position can be explained or refuted in terms of its origins, but because in many cases, and especially in this case, the internal logic of a philosophical position can become clearer if seen in its process of growth. The precise bearing and significance of different elements in a united whole, and which they still have in that whole, may be better seen if observed outside it in their beginnings. In this way, when one returns to the whole, one may be able to discern in it what before had escaped one's notice.

My principal object of concern in what follows will be Kant (though I will deal with several others as well). I regard him not just as the finest but also the first exponent of the idea of autonomous morality, and as the one who is responsible, if anyone is, for the persistence of that idea in our own day.[3] My remarks will of course not be exhaustive, either with respect to history or with respect to the philosophy of Kant. I hope, nevertheless, that they will be pertinent and provocative.

THE 'REALISM' OF MACHIAVELLI

In tracing any historical development one is always faced with the problem of how far back to go. Wherever one stops it will always be possible to continue further, for no historical beginning is absolutely a beginning (except possibly the Big Bang). Obviously one needs to go back as far as is required for one's purpose. My purpose can suitably begin with Machiavelli. I cannot really justify this choice in advance because the justification is precisely the ensuing argument where the importance of Machiavelli for my theme will become clear. I can,

2. E.g. Hare, *Freedom and Reason* (OUP, Oxford, 1963), pp. 34, 219; *Moral Thinking* (Clarendon, Oxford, 1981), pp. 4, 9–11; Rawls, *A Theory of Justice* (OUP, Oxford 1972), pp. viii, 256; Foot, *op. cit*, pp. 157ff.

3. Cf. Von Wright, *Varieties of Goodness* (RKP, London, 1963), p. 1.

nevertheless, appeal to the fact that Machiavelli is widely regarded as initiating something original; as being one of the chief founders of modern forms of thought.[4] Since autonomous morality as I have described it is a typically modern doctrine (nothing like it exists in ancient moral thought which is far more holistic and naturalist in character), it would not be surprising if it has roots in Machiavelli.[5]

There has, of course, been much debate about the novelty of Machiavelli, and I have no intention here of entering this debate.[6] I will note one particular element of his thinking which is especially relevant for my purposes. This is his rejection of the ancient idea that there is by nature a supreme or highest good for man (namely human perfection), which is discoverable by reason and which determines the character and structure of the good life. This, one may say, was the very substance of ancient moral and political thought, and in chapter 15 of *The Prince* Machiavelli gives what is effectively his dismissal of it. Declaring his intention to write something "useful", and separating himself from the "orders" of others, he was going to go to the "effectual truth of the matter," not the "imagination of it." He accordingly mounted an attack on the thinkers of the previous tradition, those who "imagined republics and princedoms that have never been seen, or known to be in truth." It is in this that is found what I shall call Machiavelli's 'realism', or his refusal to indulge in speculations about, and constructions of, the best regime, such as were usual in the classical writers, and his insistence instead on speaking about the world of actual realities, and to men whose concern was with getting on in that world. The effort, by the imaginative construction of the best regime, to see as far as possible what political order will best realize man's highest good, and the attempt to live by the virtues relative to that good, is rejected by Machiavelli as both useless and ruinous.

Machiavelli's work may have a confessedly practical rather than theoretical orientation—for he wants not to speculate but to get results—yet his practical teaching is given a theoretical basis. "Nature," he writes, "has created men in a way that they can desire everything but cannot obtain everything";[7] and again: "human appetites are insatiable, because having from nature the power and wish to desire everything, and from fortune the power to obtain few of them, there re-

4. E.g. Berlin, *Against the Current* (Hogarth Press, London 1979), essay on "The Originality of Machiavelli"; Skinner, *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought* (CUP, Cambridge, 1978), vol. 1, pp. 180–86; Procacci, *Machiavelli: Il Principe e Discorsi* (Feltrinelli, Milan, 1979), Intro., p. xcii.

5. The novelty of the modern autonomous 'ought' was argued in a famous article by Anscombe, "Modern Moral Philosophy", in Hudson, *The Is/Ought Question*, pp. 175–95 (it originally appeared in *Philosophy*, 33, 1958). The thesis has been recently and more elaborately re-argued by MacIntyre, *op. cit.* While I agree with some of the things especially that MacIntyre says, my own views are somewhat different and owe more to the writings of Leo Strauss (e.g. *Natural Right and History*, Chicago, 1953).

6. For a summary of the varying views, see the essay by Berlin, note 4.

7. *Discourses*: Bk. 1, ch. 37; all translations, whether of Machiavelli or others, are my own.

sults continually an ill content in human minds, and a disgust with the things that are possessed".[8] For Machiavelli men's desires turn out to be both insatiable and self-interested. Men's good is their private good, their private pleasure and advantage. As he sees it, men are directed by nature only to the objects of their contingent and self-regarding passions, and to all of them equally, not to one more than another. There can be no sense in speaking of a highest among these, or of one that will complete and satisfy the possessor.

Moreover because these passions are infinite but man's lot is such that he can never satisfy them, the natural human condition is understood as one of misery and frustration. The world is hostile to man and opposed to his natural urges. Machiavelli, in fact, speaks almost as if nature had been deliberately cruel and vicious to man. At any rate his 'realist' vision is of man as a creature of selfish passions set in a hostile world where he is forever condemned to frustration in greater or lesser degree.

The contrast between this vision of man and the ancient vision could hardly be greater. It is, therefore, of some importance to fix the precise sense and character of the difference. The traditional idea of a supreme end for man may be said to have two aspects to it: (i) it is the fully satisfying object of desire that excludes nothing desirable;[9] (ii) it is an ordered hierarchy responding to the objective hierarchy of human nature. Man is a being made up of parts and these parts are rightly ordered when subject to the discipline of reason, and when they preserve and assist the activity of reason (in art, science, philosophy, etc.). It is not the case, therefore, that whatever one may subjectively and contingently happen to desire will be satisfied by the supreme good, for it may be that some of these desires lack the necessary subordination to reason. Attaining the supreme good involves not just the satisfaction of desire, but also the disciplining and control of desire, so that it does not exceed the rational measure; but this in fact proves to be the most desirable and fully satisfying state because it is the state that accords with the objective condition of nature.[10]

The good life may thus be the most objectively satisfying life; but it is also the most noble or excellent life. The noble is understood as the highest and most elevated, and in the context of human life, high and elevated mean the most complete and advanced development of soul, where life is lived to its fullest and most intense. As this development of soul, or perfection, is precisely the realizing in oneself of the hierarchy of one's being, it follows that the good and satisfied life must also, at least in the ultimate case, be the noble and beautiful life. Such a life is the intention of nature itself: this is what man is naturally directed towards. In

8. *Ibid.*: Bk. 2, Preface.

9. E.g. Boethius, *De Consolatione Philosophiae*, III, prose 2; Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, 1215^{b}18; Aquinas, *Summa Theologica*, Ia IIae, q. 1, a. 5.

10. This is certainly the thrust of Plato's and Aristotle's ethical thought, and of Aquinas in his articles on happiness, *Summa Theologica*, Ia IIae, qq. 1–5.

becoming good and noble, in achieving virtue and rational self-control, one does not oppose or thwart one's natural inclinations but rather follows them.

For Machiavelli, however, the reverse is the case. Man has no natural inclination to virtue or nobility; he is just by nature a creature of multitudinous passions, ruled by whatever desires he happens to have and moved by nothing but the restless urge to satisfy them. There might still be here a notion (implicit rather than explicit) of a supreme good in the sense of complete satisfaction of desire (though this satisfaction remains out of reach), but not in the sense of an ordered hierarchy. There is no longer any attempt in Machiavelli to distinguish among natural and unnatural desires, or to impose, in the name of nature, discipline and restraint on the latter; instead all desires whatever are regarded as equally natural. By thus retaining the idea of complete satisfaction and rejecting the idea of order and hierarchy, the idea of complete satisfaction of one's being and one's yearning for it become, instead of something ennobling and elevating, a curse and a burden; and man's world, instead of friendly and beneficent, hostile and cruel.[11]

Man's desires thus cease to be a guide to follow and become rather a problem to overcome. These desires are the cause both of happiness and misery; happiness if they are satisfied, misery if they are not. Complete happiness is impossible but one can at least contrive to get what one can. In Machiavelli's case this takes the form of the devious and unscrupulous techniques of his political science whereby the artful prince is able to conquer and subdue other men and win for himself the pleasures of lasting rule and glory. There were, however, other answers, notably that of Hobbes.

Hobbes presents the Machiavellian picture of man in some ways more effectively even than Machiavelli himself. To quote one of his more striking passages:

> There is no such *finis ultimus* (utmost aim) nor *summum bonum* (greatest good) as is spoken of in the books of the old moral philosophers. Nor can a man any more live whose desires are at an end than he whose senses and imaginations are at a stand. Felicity is a continual progress of the desire from one object to another, the attaining of the former being still but the way to the later. The cause whereof is that the object of man's desire is not to enjoy once only and for one instant of time, but to assure forever the way of his future desire.[12]

This insatiable quest for satisfactions has the inevitable result, in Hobbes' view, that in all men there is a "perpetual and restless desire of power after power that ceaseth only in death;" for what men want is not just satisfaction now but an ability to secure satisfaction for the future.[13] This necessarily brings men into con-

11. Aristotle was as aware as Machiavelli of the infinite character of the passions; but because of his notion of hierarchy, he holds, unlike Machiavelli, that reason's imposition of a measure on the passions is natural and ultimately most satisfying, cf. *Politics*, 1257^b24-8^a14.

12. *Leviathan*, ch. 11; I have changed spelling and punctuation to bring them more into line with current conventions.

13. *Ibid.*

flict, since they are competing for limited goods and so striving to get the better of each other. From this results the "war of everyman against everyman" where, far from being satisfied or secure, each is in continual fear of violent death.

This picture is quite parallel to Machiavelli's, but Hobbes has not acquired the same reputation for 'wickedness' and 'evil arts'. The reason, I think, is not far to seek. While Machiavelli leaves the unredeemed condition of man unredeemed and merely counsels how to exploit it to one's own advantage, Hobbes in a quite ingenious way endeavours to refound morality on its basis. He does this in effect by finding a substitute for the traditional idea of a highest end; only Hobbes' substitute is rather a necessary condition than a supreme end. In the state of war of everyman against everyman, since no one can be sure of getting any satisfaction at all, let alone of assuring satisfactions for the future, the one absolutely indispensable thing for everyone is to replace it with a state of peace. Peace is the universal and necessary condition for the attainment of any satisfaction whatever, and hence for the attainment and safe enjoyment of anything that the individual can call good. Whatever, therefore, is necessary for peace is necessary for any sort of decent and satisfied life. Hobbes accordingly constructs a set of rules or "natural laws", whose sole purpose is to secure peace; they are, as he calls them, "convenient articles of peace".[14] They are also at the same time the normative rules of Hobbes' moral theory. That is why I call this universal condition of peace a substitute for the ancient vision of a supreme end. For as the ancients understood the moral by reference to the highest good of human perfection, so Hobbes understands the moral by reference to the necessary condition of peace.[15]

Hobbes' theory may be ingenious but the morality that results has a certain feature that, for my present theme, deserves particular notice. It creates a twofold split or divorce. First of all there is a divorce that it creates between the moral life and the satisfied life. Morality consists in the rules of peace, and these rules consist in giving up, for the sake of satisfying some of one's passions, the pursuit of the satisfaction of all of them. For to try to satisfy all is to achieve nothing but the war of everyman against everyman, and that in turn is to achieve nothing but the frustration of all one's passions. One has, therefore, a choice between satisfying some passions or none; one certainly cannot satisfy all.

But just as there is this divorce between the moral life and the fully satisfied life, so there is a divorce beween the moral life and the natural life. By nature man pursues the satisfaction of all passions whatever, without distinction, and morality comes along as a check, a restraint, on nature, to hold it back—in short to frustrate it; for even if the frustration is partial and is justified in the name of satisfaction, it is still frustration and a frustration that one cannot entirely avoid. This is implicitly admitted by Hobbes, but it has taken a modern Hobbesian, G. J. Warnock, who consciously constructs his morality on the Hobbesian model, to

14. *Ibid.*, ch. 13.
15. *Ibid.*, ch. 15, *ad finem*.

point out that such a morality—since it involves the frustration indeed the repression, not the fulfillment, of nature—involves also the likelihood of causing continuous psychological damage, or a general psychic malaise.[16] It is at any rate quite clear that Hobbesian morality generates a split or divorce in the structure of human life: the requirements of morality and those of satisfaction and nature are in insoluble conflict.

If in elaborating one of the strands of Machiavellian 'realism' Hobbes uncovers one divorce it creates within human existence, Bacon and Descartes, by elaborating a further strand of it, uncover another. Along with Machiavelli's picture of man as a collection of unordered passions went also, as has already been briefly mentioned, a picture of knowledge as a technique of mastery for personal advantage. To control the insatiable beast that is man one needs skill and force, and Machiavelli prided himself on his knowledge, on his understanding of the passions of men, and much more on his understanding of how to control them.[17] The Machiavellian prince is a man who knows how to manipulate men, and to exploit their passions to his own advantage; he is a man endowed with a superior technique. The man of knowledge in this sense is a man who knows how to conquer human nature and human affairs; knowledge, in other words, is power and for the conquest of what is known.

Machiavelli confined his knowledge to control of man, but Bacon, who picked up Machiavelli's idea of knowledge as conquest, thought it could and should be applied to the conquest of nonhuman things as well, so that they could be exploited for human advantage. It seemed to Bacon, who at least for this life accepted Machiavelli's picture of man,[18] that even if one could not secure entire satisfaction, one could achieve a lot more of it than Machiavelli thought, for one could overcome the hostility of external nature by the conquest of technological science, and so exploit the nonhuman things for human advantage and satisfaction. Bacon, in fact, implicitly accused Machiavelli of being one-sided, of not seeing the advantage of having knowledge in both areas, and of thus failing to see that one could control man not just by the direct use of force and trickery,[19] but also by the invention of "new arts, endowments, and commodities towards man's life" [20] If Hobbesian morality was one alternative answer to the Machiavellian problem of how to deal with man's insatiable passions, Baconian science was another. What Machiavelli thought to secure by ruthless politics, Bacon hoped to secure by technological science. His vision of the *New Atlantis* is a fictional representation of just that hope.

Bacon's new method of science, which was invented precisely for this pur-

16. *The Object of Morality* (Methuen, London, 1971), pp. 161–62; cf. also Mackie, *Inventing Right and Wrong* (Penguin, 1977), pp. 107–19.

17. See the dedicatory epistles of *The Prince* and *Discourses*.

18. *Advancement*, in *Works*, ed. Spedding, Ellis and Heath (Longman, London, 1857–74), vol. III, pp. 301–302, 419ff.; *Great Instauration*, Preface, *Works*, vol. I, pp. 125–33.

19. *Advancement*, bk. I; in *Works*: vol. III, pp. 244–45.

20. *Advancement*, bk. I, in *Works*: vol. III, pp. 301–302.

pose[21] (a purpose which still predominately animates the pursuit of technological science to this day), has however precisely the same consequence for human knowing as Hobbes' new morality had for human acting—namely a split or divorce of man from nature. Previous or traditional science had, in Bacon's view, failed to find the proper method. It had set too much store by the "immediate and natural perceptions of the senses," and had tried to use these to get to the realities of things. But this is a hopeless procedure because the senses are too gross to judge nature directly; they can only judge it by means of artificial aids; that is, they can report the truth about experiments but it is the experiments that must report the truth about nature. For Bacon's science is a mechanical and materialist science; the world is just bodies and efficient causes, operating without reference to ends, that is without any inherent teleology. The world is just a collection of goalless facts.[22] It is, indeed, only on the basis of such a vision of things that a technological science seems best able to operate, for such a science first requires that the natural be reduced to calculable rules, so that artificial devices can be built with the necessary mathematical and mechanical precision to embody and exploit them; and second it requires that things be understood as no more directed to one thing than another, so that man is free to use them exactly as he wills.

Now Bacon took this picture of nature postulated by science as objectively real, and hence he thought that by the knowledge revealed by artificial experiments alone, and not by the knowledge of the unaided senses, could a legitimate familiarity be restored between the mind and things.[23] But it is at once evident that this restoration by means of an artificial method is only required because by nature the mind and things are divorced. Man has, as such, no direct access to the nature of things, and though mechanical aids enable him in part to overcome this, he only ever gets indirect access; the original divorce is never abolished. It remains the case that the mind and the senses are not by nature fitted to know nature.

This divorce is even more evident in the case of Descartes, another of the great founders of modern science, who also, like Bacon, saw in it a means of the conquest of nature for human advantage.[24] His famous 'doubt', his use of skepticism to reject the natural and ordinary operations of the mind and the senses, has, as its result, and indeed intended result, the setting of the world of things beyond human access behind a screen of 'ideas', or inner mental entities, which are always the direct and proper object of knowledge. In his view, one only ever knows the contents of one's own consciousness, and external things only to the

21. *Advancement*, bk. I, in *Works*, vol. III, pp. 294–95; *Great Instauration*, Preface and Distribution of the Work, in *Works*, vol. I, pp. 125–45.

22. *Novum Organum*, II, sect. 2, *Advancement*, bk. 2, in *Works*, vol. III, pp. 357–59; *Great Instauration*, Preface and Distribution of the Work, in *Works*, vol. I, pp. 121, 138.

23. *Works*: vol. I, pp. 121, 138; *Novum Organum*: Preface, and I sect. 50.

24. *Discourse*: Part VI.

extent that God guarantees one's ideas are like them. The picture of the real world Descartes ends up with is one of pure mathematical extensions, devoid of all sensible properties; something, in other words, both typically scientific and at the same time quite foreign to what we are familiar with through the unaided senses.

This new vision of science and of the world and man's place in it is marked already in Bacon and Descartes by two opposing characteristics—confidence and despair. The confidence is more noticeable, for it is what they both stress, namely their belief in the almost unlimited power of man to conquer nature for his own advantage, that is for the increasing satisfaction of his passions. But the despair goes hand in hand with this, for it is nothing other than the divorce between mind and things on which the new method of science was founded. Man may be able to conquer the world for his own use, but the real nature or essence of that world is forever cut off from the direct grasp of the human mind behind a screen of more or less delusive sensible images.

We have long grown accustomed to call this despair by another name, the name of epistemology. For the epistemological task, as this exists in its typically modern form, was from the outset that of confining the human mind within narrower bounds than had traditionally been allowed by laying down for it its legitimate sphere of competence. It seemed very clear at the time, indeed, that if this was not done the mind would fly off in all directions into areas where it had and could have no knowledge, and consequently where it could produce nothing but ignorance and useless disputing. The condition of the schools of the day was eagerly seized upon as furnishing just the evidence for this fact. Not surprisingly it soon came to be believed that the first task of any philosophy that pretended to systematic rigor, was precisely to determine the scope and competence of the human mind, and so to impose on it the necessary ascetic discipline and restraint that the previous scholastic tradition of philosophy had signally ignored. This becomes quite explicit in Locke,[25] and from him it passes over into Hume, Kant, and latterly, A. J. Ayer.[26]

Taking this divorce from nature in the sphere of knowledge together with the divorce from nature in the sphere of morals traced earlier, one evidently has in the tradition of realism descended from Machiavelli what may be called in general the philosophy of divorce. In fact, such a title is exactly applicable to the Kantian critique, for it is, as was suggested in the introduction and as I shall now try to show more at length, in Kant's critical philosophy that one gets perhaps the most ingenious and systematic elaboration of just this theme. One also gets in this philosophy another, and for my purposes, quite significant answer to the Machiavellian problem that had exercised Bacon and Hobbes.

25. *Essay on Human Understanding*, bk. 1, ch. 1, sect. 7.

26. One is tempted to suggest, in the light of this, that whereas the ancient tradition was severe as regards the passions but indulgent as regards speculative thought, the modern Machiavellian tradition is the reverse—severe as regards speculative thought and indulgent as regards the passions.

KANTIAN AUTONOMOUS MORALITY

Following Bacon and Descartes, Kant holds that the direct and immediate object of our knowledge and experience is not real externally existing things but entities in our own minds. He goes further, however, than Descartes in asserting, with the British empiricists, that the content of our experience is always purely sensible and that we never know anything except what is in some way a matter of sensible properties. He denies, however, that the patterns of unity or combination that give this sensible content coherence and meaning derive from experience; on the contrary they are imposed on sensible experience by the mind itself in the act of knowing. For the mind, according to Kant, is endowed with these patterns of unity, or categories as he calls them, *a priori*, that is, it possesses them already as part of its structure. Consequently, whenever the mind thinks experience it must of necessity think it according to these categories. Knowledge is thus, for Kant, a matter of subsuming sensible or empirical data under laws or patterns given prior to that data. He expressly models himself here on the procedures of modern science as practiced by people like Copernicus, Galileo and Newton,[27] for, like many in his own day and since, he was deeply impressed by the success of modern science and became convinced that it had the key to knowledge in general.[28] But if the actual procedures of contemporary science were part of his inspiration here, the major influence was undoubtedly the empiricism of Hume. Following and elaborating on Locke, Hume had confined knowledge to ideas and impressions (immediate sense experiences and their copies in imagination) grasped at the level of sensation; and he showed, with fair success, that in such a gutted experience there is nothing universal or necessary. Kant accepted that Hume was right about what experience in itself is like but because he recognized that there was no science without the universal and the necessary, and because he accepted the reality of science, he was driven to look for another source of these properties, and found it in the mind.

One of the immediate consequences of Kant's epistemology is the claim that we can never have knowledge of anything but what can be given in sensible form, either purely quantitative, in mathematics, or sensuous as well, in the natural sciences. There is no such thing as genuine metaphysical knowledge, that is knowledge of the being as being of things. In complete consistency with the tradition of epistemological despair that he was consciously following, Kant wholly rejected the speculative metaphysics that is so marked in the older thinkers. In his view we can only know appearances; the real being that things have in themselves is forever hidden from us. This leads him to distinguish two worlds: the phenomenal world, the world of appearances that we know, and the noumenal world, the world of realities that we do not know.

27. *First Critique*, B, pp. xiv–xxii.
28. *First Critique*, B, p. xvi; and also the conclusion to the *Second Critique*.

The phenomenal world is the natural world as described by contemporary science, and it has the features attributed to it by Bacon, for it is materialist, governed by mechanical necessity and lacks any objective teleology. But, and this is more important for present purposes, the description Kant gives of man insofar as he too is part of the natural or phenomenal world, proves to be no other than the description given previously by Machiavelli and Hobbes; man is just a creature of passions, and these passions are purely selfish and lack any natural ordering among themselves.[29]

If Kant had been forced by reflection on the character of science, namely its universality and necessity, to add something from the mind to the empirical world of Hume, so he was forced by reflection on the character of morality to add something from the mind to the selfish world of Machiavelli and Hobbes. In the first case this addition took the form of the a priori categories or patterns of unity; in the second case it took the form of autonomy and the categorical imperative.

When Kant looked at morality, three things in particular seem to have struck him as characteristic of it. First, moral judgements have a special claim or authority that applies independently of one's actual and contingent wants (the only wants that, following Machiavelli and Hobbes, Kant felt one had as something natural). If morality is made to depend on such wants, one ought only to behave as the moral judgement requires if one will satisfy some want in the process; and if one has no such want, or one's wants change, then one no longer ought to do it. But the sense of 'ought' used in morality is not hypothetical like this. It does not vary with the state of one's inclinations, but rather stands independently of them, even in opposition to them; it is, as he says, in some sense 'categorical'. Second, morality is something elevated and sublime, but if one subordinates it to particular inclinations, which are all selfish, one will make of it something low and base, and destroy all its peculiar worth. Third, morality is bound up with freedom. Men, in judging and acting morally, do so without external constraint or compulsion from natural causes; they are exercising free choice or their rational will.[30]

All three of these elements were lacking in the morality devised by Hobbes on the basis of Machiavelli's view of man. Kant could not, therefore, accept the correctness of that account. Now in doing this, Kant was, in effect, reverting to a

29. *Second Critique*, in *Gesammelte Schriften* (Königliche Preussiche Akademie der Wissenschaften, Berlin, 1910ff.; hereafter referred to as AA [Akademieausgabe]), vol. v, pp. 21–25, 35. (Also in Abbott, *Kant's Theory of Ethics*, Longmans, London, 1898, pp. 107–12, 125.) One ought to say here that the ancient conception of a supreme and hierarchical end for human life was tied up with their far more confident conception of the scope of human knowledge. Knowledge is not, for them, confined to empiricist, sensible data, nor to such data plus Kantian categories, rather it embraces the whole, substantial 'being' of things, and it is by discernment of the 'being' of man (or his nature) that one discerns the supreme end. The rejection of ancient epistemology is thus of a piece, logically and conceptually, with the rejection of the ancient idea of a supreme end; cf. also note 26 above.

30. *Groundwork*, AA, vol. IV, pp. 428, 442–44.

more ancient and pre-Machiavellian vision of morality, the vision that did see moral goodness as something fine and splendid, as something objectively valid for all men independently of their particular passions, and as involving the free assent of human choice. For these were present in the ancient vision of the supreme good and the noble, or the natural perfection of soul. But if Kant was sympathetic to the ancient claim that the truly good life must be something noble, he was not sympathetic to their understanding of what the noble was. This was because he rejected their claim that the noble was part of nature and was an object of knowledge.

The reason for this is of course not difficult to grasp; it lies in his theory of knowledge, or his acceptance of the tradition of epistemological despair that was, as has been argued, just another (though distinguishable) element of the 'realism' of Machiavelli. Kant firmly believed that in the world of knowledge, the phenomenal world, none of the aspects of morality he had noted could be found. The phenomenal world is in fact the world of Machiavellian realism and Baconian science, of man as a beast of insatiable passions and of nature as a collection of valueless facts. Kant was, therefore, forced to find the origin of what was properly moral in the noumenal world. This had some important results.

To take first the questions of the moral good, or of the noble, and of freedom. The moral good can manifestly no longer be regarded as an object of knowledge as it had been by the ancients (for the only knowable goods are the object of particular selfish desires), and consequently, when one wills and acts in a moral way, it ceases to be the case that one is determined or moved to do so by some prior cognitive recognition of good. On the contrary nothing knowable can determine the will to moral choice; if the will is determined it cannot be by anything accessible to understanding, but only directly by the will itself. The will, says Kant accordingly, has its own spontaneity, its own free causality, quite distinct from the determinist causality of scientific nature. This causality or self-determination with which the will is endowed must evidently belong to the noumenal and hence nonknowable sphere. If the impossibility of the will's being determined by any prior grasp of good, by any prior acts of thinking, means that it has to determine itself directly, the setting of this self-determination in the noumenal sphere makes freedom something entirely unknowable. Kant thus only secures the nobility and freedom associated with morality at the cost of shifting both into a sphere that lies completely beyond human grasp. The free acts of the will that constitute moral goodness and moral choice are beyond human explanation and comprehension.[31]

This does not mean, however, that one cannot say anything about the form that these choices take; on the contrary one can say quite specifically that they take the form of categorical imperatives or categorical 'oughts'. Morality is about action, or about how to behave. Judgments about how to behave are typi-

31. *Groundwork*, ch. 3.

cally expressed in terms of 'should' or 'ought'. In the ancient scheme of things these 'oughts' are relative to the good of the supreme end of human perfection; one ought to do so and so because it is part of, or leads to, the good. But Kant has ruled out this way of understanding 'ought' by denying that any good accessible to knowledge is other than contingent, low, and selfish. Consequently in the case of moral judgements about how to behave he is left with an 'ought' that is not relative to any good, or that is, in his own words, 'categorical'. This categorical 'ought' is just the pure idea of prescription or command, for that is all that is left to it when the reference to a good is removed. Kant's morality therefore becomes a matter of pure categorical 'oughts', and the will's free self-determination of itself takes the form of the imposition of a moral command. Freedom is self-legislation, that is autonomy or the commanding of an 'ought' that has no ground or source other than one's own mysterious will—it certainly has nothing to do with nature or anything that can be known; and it is essentially volitional, not cognitive. It is thus in Kantian categorical morality that the 'is/ought' distinction receives its first and certainly its classic expression.[32]

This is one, and perhaps the most important, aspect of Kant's moral thought, but there is a further one that deserves mention, and that follows from it; for the separation of 'ought' from good means that the moral 'ought' has to be understood in a purely formal way. If one takes an 'ought' judgment and removes from it, in the manner described, any reference to a good to which the 'ought' is relative or which is to be attained by following what the 'ought' judgment prescribes, one is left, as has been said, merely with the formal character of the 'ought' as a prescription or a command. Now this purely formal character of 'ought' was understood by Kant as not just prescription, but universal prescription (the reason given is that what is formal is also necessarily universal). The 'ought' in which the will expresses itself, the so-called categorical imperative, requires that any proposed course of action must be examined to see if it can be made a universal law for everyone and still stand, and only if it can is it compatible with right and duty. This separates the action from dependence on merely subjective and selfish interests that are private and contingent to each individual, and so allows it the categorical character that is necessary for morality. This also enables Kant, at the same time, to give a moral dignity to the purely selfish character of man's desires as these were pictured in Machiavellian realism. For while it remains true that the only desires or interests that one can know to exist in men are their particular felt and self-interested preferences, it is nevertheless possible to put these desires on a higher moral plane provided they can be subsumed under the categorical imperative, the principle of morality, and be made into uni-

32. Some people, e.g. Anscombe (see note 5 above), have argued that this 'ought' begins with Hume. But Hume has no sense of disinterested duty, or unfounded autonomous 'oughts', since he makes it plain that duty or obligation is tied to, and follows, some interest one has and cannot be wished nor can it arise on its own (*Treatise*, ed. Selby Bigge, Oxford, 1888, pp. 484, 498, 517–19, 523).

versalized prescriptions or laws. Morality, in other words, becomes a kind of universalizing of what begins as self-interest.[33]

The categorical autonomous 'ought' of universalizing carries the whole weight of Kant's moral system and it is, therefore, of some importance to understand its significance. If one looks at how Kant expressly regards the principle in his ethical writings (and not just *The Groundwork*), one will find that universalizing is little more than an elaboration of Hobbesian peace. The formal principle of universalizing establishes right, and right is that one should refrain from pursuing those of one's self-interested desires which are incompatible with others' pursuing their self-interested desires, or which bring one into conflict with others. Or, to put it differently, one is free, and has a right to pursue happiness, or one's self-interested desires, in whatever way one wishes, so long as in doing so one does not infringe upon the right and freedom of another to pursue his happiness, or his self-interested desires, in whatever way he wishes.[34] Right is the restraining and checking of one's desires sufficiently to avoid conflict; and the way to ensure this is precisely the device of universalizing one's desire. One asks what would be the result if everyone were to do the same, and if the result would be conflict or something like the war of all with all, then it is not right.[35]

Kant's moral principle, then, which establishes the idea of right is no more than Hobbes' idea of peace—it is its logical as well as historical heir.[36] In this sense Kant never gets beyond Hobbesian morality. He does, however, manage to bestow on this morality something of that ancient sense of the noble that Hobbes (along with Machiavelli) had lost. But he does not do this by changing the formal

33. Cf. Hare, *Freedom and Reason*, 104–105.

34. *Theory and Practice*, AA, vol. VIII, pp. 290–91 (also in Riess, *Kant's Political Writings*, Cambridge, 1971, pp. 74ff.); compare with *Metaphysic of Morals*, AA, vol. VI, pp. 380–81, 396 (Abbott, pp. 291, 307); also AA, vol. VI, pp. 230–33 (Riess, pp. 133–35).

35. The contradiction that shows a given maxim cannot be universalized is rather one of will than of thought (e.g. *Groundwork*, AA, vol. IV, p. 423), and this will perhaps help to meet Mill's objection to Kant (in *Utilitarianism*, Everyman, 1910, ch. I, pp. 3–4). The contradiction that rules out certain maxims or courses of action is just conflict of desire with desire. That is why Kant is prepared to appeal to the undesirability of consequences, for it is precisely the repugnance to one's desire of the consequences of an action when this action is universalized or conceived as done by everyone that shows one cannot desire it *as* universalized, even though one could desire it when conceived as done only by oneself. This does not mean that utilitarianism lies at the bottom of Kant's principle of universalizing (at least not utilitarianism in Mill's sense, though there are similarities with Hare's version, especially when one considers his remarks on 'fanaticism'), for an action done by many that increased the happiness of the many at the expense of happiness for a few would not be a case of universalizing, though it would or could be a case of utilitarianism. What it means is that one has to consider whether the consequences of a given maxim amount to conflict of desire or not in order to know whether the maxim is universalizable in the relevant sense. It is worth noting that Hobbes' argument against war and in favor of peace has exactly the same structure as this. Everyone finds he has to desire peace because what he instinctively and ordinarily desires—the unfettered pursuit of private pleasure—leads to consequences he cannot desire (namely the misery of war) if everyone does the same.

36. This becomes especially clear in such of Kant's political pamphlets as *Theory and Practice*, sect. II, and *Idea for a Universal History*, especially 4th and 5th propositions; AA, vol. VIII, pp. 289–306, 20–22.

character of Hobbesian morality; rather he changes its motive and its justification. For by making his expression of this formal character, namely the principle of universalizing, into the categorical imperative (in which is contained the pure idea of oughtness or command that the will imposes on itself without reference to good or desire), he aims to make this principle into an object of respect and awe in and for itself, quite regardless of the selfish interests it serves, and for the sake of which men would more or less necessarily be moved towards it in Hobbes' system. In this way the principle is separated from selfish and contingent motives (which it never was for Hobbes), and so has been endowed with precisely those three qualities which Kant, with his sense of the noble, felt it lacked. For it is now categorical, that is independent of actual, contingent desires; sublime, that is independent of what is low and selfish; and free, that is imposed on the will spontaneously by itself and not by the more or less mechanical workings of the passions.

It is thus in the idea of autonomy, of categorical 'oughts' and respect for universalizing as such, all divorced from anything natural and knowable, that the sense of the noble comes to rest in Kant's thought. As one can see from the movement of that thought traced above, this happens because the sense of the noble has had to be forced into a Machiavellian context of selfish inclinations and epistemological despair. The truth of this conclusion is no better illustrated than by Kant himself:

> Duty! thou sublime, mighty name . . . what is your origin, and where is found the root of your noble descent, which proudly strikes out all kinship with inclinations? . . . It can be nothing less than what exalts man (as part of the sensible world) above himself. It can be nothing other than personality, that is freedom and independence of the mechanism of the whole of nature, yet viewed at the same time as a power of a being which is subject to special laws, pure practical laws given by its own reason.[37]

Kant may thus have succeeded in restoring something of the noble to morality from within a Machiavellian context (which Hobbes failed to do), but because of the way that context forces him to alter that idea into the idea of categorical 'oughts', the noble is reduced to a sort of universalizing that differs from Hobbesian peace only because it is conceived as an unfounded and awesome command. For this reason Kant's noble has an altogether peculiar character. By Kant's own admission Hobbesian morality is too low for morality, yet his own 'higher' morality appears to be no more than Hobbes backed up by the unfounded 'ought' of noumenal, that is to say incomprehensible, freedom. As all that can be noble here is the sheer unfounded and incomprehensible 'oughtness' and nothing else, it would seem that Kant's noble is just Hobbes' ignoble made mysteriously imperious.

Perhaps, however, this is a little extreme. What Kant regards as ignoble about Hobbes is not the peace he commends but the grounds on which he commends it,

37. *Second Critique*, AA, vol. v, pp. 86–87; Abbott, p. 180.

namely selfish interest. So in removing this but keeping the idea of peace, Kant is not so much making Hobbes' ignoble imperious as removing something noble from an ignoble context. But this is to forget the logical origin of the idea of peace. This is only devised in the first place on the basis of a Machiavellian view of the natural man. For it is because men are conceived as creatures whose desires are just particular passions that the problem becomes one of coping with these passions. The Hobbesian way of making this problem a moral one is to ask how the satisfying of passion by one can be harmonized with the satisfying of passion by all. The answer is, in the end, to universalize. All that Kant adds is to say that man has a mysterious capacity to respect this universalizing as such and not just in view of what he gets out of it.

By contrast the ancient vision of the noble is tied to a view of the natural man which denies any independent validity to particular passions, and a fortiori any right to the pursuit of them, whether universalized or not. What needs to be discerned instead is how to subordinate the passions so as to make them accord with and promote the natural perfection and elevation of soul (which means, in the end, a certain perfection of reason in thought and action). Kant, however, is bitterly opposed to ancient moral thought. When he speaks of their vision of the perfection of man, he calls it "fanaticism," by which he means "the delusion of seeing beyond the boundaries of sensibility (sense perception)";[38] or, specifically in the case of "moral fanaticism," the attempt to base morality on something other than the stern categorical 'ought' of duty, and in particular the attempt to base it on some presumed knowledge and love of the noble.[39]

Kant condemns all such ideas fiercely. To exhort men to action by appeal to the noble, sublime and magnanimous, is necessarily, whatever may be protested to the contrary, both to appeal to a motive that is "pathological", to some self-love or sentimental romanticism, and to induce an "airy, superficial, fantastical kind of thinking" that flatters men they have a "voluntary goodness of spirit" when, in fact, they are only moral when subject to the "yoke" of duty.[40] It is not necessary to repeat that Kant's reasons for such remarks are of course his beliefs about the limitations of human knowledge and about the selfishness of the natural man.[41]

This opposition to the ancient idea that the noble is perfection of soul and replacement of it by the pure 'ought' of duty has meant that in Kant's thought one has, besides the separations already mentioned of the moral from the natural and the real from the knowable, also the separation (deriving directly from Hobbes) of the moral from the beneficial and expedient, or from the idea of the most de-

38. *Third Critique*: sect. 29, AA, vol. v, p. 275. Kant was aware that the ancient vision of perfection presupposed a capacity of the mind to penetrate beyond sensible properties to the intelligible being of things; that is the main reason why he rejected it.

39. *Second Critique*, AA, vol. v, pp. 84–86; Abbott, pp. 178–79.

40. *Ibid.*

41. *Groundwork*, AA, vol. iv, pp. 441–44; *Second Critique*, AA, vol. v, pp. 35–41; Abbott, pp. 124–30.

sirable and fully satisfying life. Since, for Kant, to speak of how something benefits one or makes one better off or fully satisfied is, if it is to have any graspable content and not be merely empty ideas, to speak of something empirical and selfishly pleasant,[42] he necessarily associates the beneficial and satisfying with the low and selfish and so dissociates them from duty and the moral.[43] It has now become fairly standard, at least in some quarters, to repeat the same separation and to equate the selfish with the prudent and to deny any essential connection between the moral and what benefits the individual.[44] This separation is sometimes put in terms of the distinction between what it is to be a good x and what it is to be good for x. Such a distinction would not, for instance, have been tolerated by Plato's Socrates, who thought it absurd to suppose that what makes something good might not also be good or beneficial for it, and who went so far as to curse the man who first separated the useful and the just. There are others who have made the same protest since.[45]

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

In this article I have tried to show how the idea of autonomous morality as developed by Kant has its roots in the morality of Hobbes, the science of conquest of Bacon and Descartes, and ultimately the 'realism' of Machiavelli. Having inherited and made his own a bestial, selfish view of natural human inclinations, despair of the human capacity to grasp the real being of things, and a mechanis-

42. See the references in the previous note.

43. It is worth noting that Kant asserts as much as, if not more than, Machiavelli and Hobbes that the natural condition of man is wretched and miserable. He goes further, however, in actually praising nature for being cruel and vicious for it is misery that is nature's engine to compel men to develop towards morality by forcing them to universalize their particular passions; *Third Critique*, sect. 83, AA, vol. v, pp. 429–34, *Universal History*, 4th proposition, AA, vol. VIII, p. 21.

44. See the references in note 1, and also Saunders' remarks in the translation of *Aristotle's Politics* (Penguin, 1981), p. 390, which one should compare with Aristotle's own remarks in bk. 7, ch. 1, to which Saunders is referring.

45. Plato, *Gorgias*, 474c–479e, and of course there is the general teaching of the *Republic* that justice is a kind of health of soul and a benefit to the just man precisely as such without addition (e.g. 443c–445b). Foot and Warnock and others also wish to reunite the prudential and the moral by relating the moral to human benefit and harm, but they do, or were inclined to do this, by giving up the idea of the noble and returning to the selfishness of Hobbes (e.g. Foot, *op. cit.*, p. xiii). For a more Socratic position, one may compare Whately: "If anyone really holds that it can ever be expedient to violate the injunctions of duty—that he who does so is not sacrificing a greater good to a less (which all would admit to be inexpedient),—that it can be really advantageous to do what is morally wrong, and will come forward and acknowledge that to be his belief, I have only to protest, for my own part, with the deepest abhorrence, against what I conceive to be so profligate a principle." *Rhetoric*, Longmans, London, 1877, p. 316. Also Veatch, 'Telos and Teleology in Aristotelian Ethics,' in D. J. O'Meara, *Studies in Aristotle* (Catholic University of American Press, Washington, 1981). One should also not forget Nietzsche. Like the ancient authors, he wanted to see nobility in terms of perfection and elevation of soul, and so in terms of what enhances and benefits the noble individual (so *Beyond Good and Evil*, especially part 9).

tic, nonteleological science of nature, Kant devises an autonomous morality of self-willed categorical 'oughts' to cope with the sense of the noble. This has the consequence of reaffirming and making more absolute fundamental splits in human existence. The moral is divorced from the natural and knowable and also from the prudential and the fully satisfying, and mind is divorced from the real. One cannot say that these splits have been overcome or the root causes abandoned in the course of the historical development of autonomous morality since Kant, for they have not. The cardinal thesis of autonomous morality, the is/ought distinction, remains today as much dependent on empiricist notions of the 'is', or of 'facts', and a selfish understanding of human desires as it was for Kant; and there is still the same insistence that the moral has not been understood properly if it is at all equated with the prudential and satisfying.

These suggestions about the structure of autonomous morality, as derived from an examination of historical origins, do not in themselves amount to a refutation, either of the origins or of what rests on them. For one thing there is a lot of very good evidence to back up the Machiavellian account of the natural man (the appeal to facts of history is one of the strong points of Machiavelli's work). Yet one must not forget that there are other ways of coping with this evidence without going the way of Machiavelli, and so without going the way of Kant either.[46] I have, in fact, throughout this paper, contrasted the Kantian account of how things are with the more ancient one. This has doubtless revealed my own preferences. Certainly for one who is drawn towards a holistic and unified vision of man and his world, that does not posit nor require radical splits and yet gives a place to the noble, the ancient vision is far more promising. Still it has not been my aim to settle this issue here; merely to help make clearer what the issue is.

46. Aristotle, *Politics*, 1253a29–39.

Review Essays

Faith and Reason in Contemporary Perspective Apropos of a Recent Book

ERNEST L. FORTIN
Boston College

After centuries of heated and often futile debate, any attempt to reopen the question of faith and reason is bound to strike the modern reader as a quaint anachronism or at best a daring challenge. For these ancient terms, once used as convenient labels to designate the two types of knowledge whose problematic relationship, it has been said, constitutes the highest theme of western thought, our contemporaries have substituted "religion" and "experience," both of which are supposedly less controversial and more readily accessible to us. No one is likely to quarrel with the word "experience," which has a certain *prima facie* evidence that "reason" can no longer claim, and we have all learned from William James and others that there are "varieties" of religious experience, with which it is possible to become acquainted even if we have no firsthand knowledge of them ourselves. Indeed, a remarkable degree of openness has come to prevail regarding these matters. Experiences can be described but require no justification. It suffices that they be "authentic." Everyone is entitled to his own without having to account for them or answer any questions about them. Since their objects are presumed to lie beyond the pale of rational discourse, all such questions are to be judged irrelevant or at the very least unanswerable.

The trouble is that it is not always easy to tell an authentic experience from one that is not. There is no mistaking the pain that I feel when I have a toothache, and, having had a number of them in the past, I know roughly what others go through when they are similarly afflicted. If, however, the content of the experience is not an object of sense perception, if it has to do with issues as subtle and elusive as those associated with religious belief, a greater measure of caution may be in order. Seemingly profound experiences often prove to be nothing more than fits of enthusiasm, passing fancies, delusions, or momentary infatuations. Others obviously have deeper roots, but even they are not wholly unambiguous in so far as they are apt to be mediated if not actually induced by the larger context of opinion to which they belong. For all practical purposes the world is what we see in it, and what we see in it is, with rare exceptions, what we have been taught to see in it. Our thoughts and feelings are rarely ours alone. They tend to be those of our time or of our society and are generally shared by other members of that society. They thus assume a public character to which they

owe both their plausibility and their authority. The Hindu who is persuaded that cows are sacred is not indulging in a private fantasy or expressing a purely personal view. His "knowledge" is noticeably different from that of the party-goer who has had too much to drink and swears that the cow in his backyard has wings. Still, it is not the kind of knowledge that someone brought up in different tradition would take for granted. This simple observation is enough to remind us that we are confronted with a multiplicity of such traditions, religious or otherwise, and that they often differ widely from one another. Hence the modern habit of speaking of "religions" in the plural rather than of "religion" in the singular, as was the custom prior to the sixteenth century. It follows that, once the normative character of these religions has been called into question, any effort to evaluate them will have to include some reference to criteria that are not indigenous to any one of them.

The great theologians of the past were not wholly unaware of the problem and that is why they preferred a more objective approach to it than the one to which we have lately become accustomed. They knew that what went under the name of "faith" was ultimately grounded in an experience of some sort, whether it be that of the prophet to whom God had spoken or of the recipient of his message, but they denied that it was a simple matter of subjective experience and insisted that the formulation of its content be submitted to the external control of reason. The assumption was that, although the divinely revealed truth exceeded the mind's natural capacity, it did not run counter to it and was not totally impervious to it. Since the God who reveals himself in the Scriptures was also the author of nature, and since he cannot contradict himself, no real antagonism between the dogmas of the faith and the independent findings of reason could be anticipated.[1] Christianity was in principle and could become in fact a universal religion.[2] It was not the preserve of any particular nation or group of people and its teachings contained nothing incongruent or demonstrably false. The assent that they commanded was a reasonable one—*rationabile obsequium* (cf. Romans, 12:1). It was an assent of which all human beings were theoretically capable. There was nothing to fear from a philosophic investigation of its roots and no danger of its being damaged by it as long as the investigator was competent. If anything, the opposite was true. Philosophy could be employed, not indeed as a principle allowing one to pass judgment on the truth or falsity of Revelation, but as a tool with which to probe its meaning and counter any attack that might be leveled against it in the name of reason.

It is quite possible, however, that in its eagerness to emphasize the reasonableness of the Christian faith, medieval theology downplayed its experiential or existential component, just as, in its eagerness to react against this tendency, modern theology is prone to overlook its rational component. The singular merit of Robert Sokolowski's book, *The God of Faith and Reason: The Foundations of*

1. See, for example, Thomas Aquinas, *Summa contra Gentiles*, I, ch. 7.
2. Cf. Augustine, *City of God*, X.32.

Christian Theology,[3] is that it looks for a happy balance between these two approaches and that it does so, not merely by restating the problem as it posed itself in the Middle Ages, but by using the contributions of modern phenomenology to arrive at a more adequate articulation of it. As its subtitle suggests, Sokolowski's essay is an exercise in what is now called "fundamental theology." Its immediate aim is not so much to defend the compatibility of the life of faith with that of reason as to lay bare the theoretical presuppositions that enable one to make sense of the dogmas and practices of Christianity. Such a theology is said to proceed by way of clarification rather than by way of inference from premises to conclusions. It seeks above all to elaborate the horizon or "open up the logical space" within which the "meaning" of these teachings can be unfolded for the benefit of believers and interested nonbelievers alike (cf. pp. xiv and 37). Accordingly, it is most aptly described as a "theology of disclosure" or a "theology of manifestation," as distinguished from, though not necessarily in opposition to, a "theology of things," Sokolowski's term for the theology of the Middle Ages. Its thesis is that there is imbedded in the structures of the Christian faith a coherent pattern of thought that becomes fully manifest only when we reflect thematically on the peculiar understanding of God that underlies it and contrast it with the one that pervades the whole of pagan philosophic and religious thought.

According to Sokolowski, this novel understanding is best formulated in terms of the fundamental distinction between God and the world, a distinction that has no exact equivalent outside of Christian theology. Neither in Greek philosophic thought nor in any religious tradition other than Christianity is God conceived as a being that is not in any way affected by the existence or nonexistence of the world. God is not himself a part of the world, and, even though he is responsible both for its coming into being and its continued existence, he gains nothing from its presence, just as he would lose nothing from its absence. Take God away and nothing is left of the world, but the converse does not obtain, for even if there were no world, God would still be "all that he is in undiminished goodness and greatness" (p. 107). In him and in him alone, essence and existence coincide. When he creates, "there may be 'more' but there is no 'greater' or 'better' " (p. 19). This insight, as we learn from the first chapter of the book, is already implicit in Anselm's celebrated formula according to which God is the being than whom none greater can be conceived. The distinction that it presumes is unlike any of the ones with which we are familiar from common experience. In all of these the two terms of the distinction imply each other and have no meaning one without the other (cf. pp. 32–33). Without a son or a daughter, there is no father or mother and vice versa. The present case is different in that the relationship of dependence between God and the world works in one direction only.[4]

3. Notre Dame and London: University of Notre Dame Press, 1982. Pp. xiv + 172.

4. For a similar argument, cf. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theol.*, I, q.45, a.3, ad lum, where Aquinas explains that the relation of the creature to God is a real "relation" (*relatio realis*), whereas the relation of God to the creature is no more than a "relation of reason" (*relatio secundum rationem*).

God is no more perfect for having created the world and would not be any less perfect for not having created it. Such a view constitutes a radical departure from all of pagan or pre-Christian thought, for which God is merely the most perfect being in the universe. "In Greek and Roman religion, and in Greek and Roman philosophies, god or the gods are appreciated as the most powerful, most independent and self-sufficient, most unchanging beings in the world, but they are accepted within the context of being." Hence "the possibility that they could be even though everything that is not divine were not, is not a possibility that occurs to anyone" (p. 12). This is true of the Olympian gods, but it is also true of the god of Aristotelian metaphysics, for "no matter how Aristotle's god is to be described, as the prime mover or the self-thinking thought, he is part of the world, and it is obviously necessary that there be other beings besides him, whether he is aware of them or not" (pp. 15–16). Within this framework, the whole of nature is looked upon as a rational necessity and is treated as such. The thought that the world might never have existed simply does not arise. The same view is equally characteristic of the later Platonic tradition, despite its emphasis on the transcendence of the divine principle of all things, for even here the transsubstantial One or the Good is still "taken as 'part' of what is: it is the One by being one over, for, and in many, never by being One only alone by itself" (p. 18).

As the rest of the book so well shows, the basic distinction to which attention has just been drawn undergirds the entire structure of Christian life and thought. It is indispensable to a proper understanding of the Trinity, the Incarnation, divine grace, and the role of the sacraments in human life, and it governs the manner in which Christians read the Scriptures, experience the world around them, and relate to one another and to the divinity. This is not to say that once the importance of that distinction is fully appreciated, the Christian "mysteries" cease to be mysteries but only that one then begins to see more clearly wherein their mysterious character lies (cf. pp. 37–39). Such an approach has the great advantage of preserving the integrity of the faith as well as that of the natural order (pp. 21–23). Contrary to what one so often finds among contemporary religious thinkers, there is no question of reducing Christian theology to a complex system of symbols designed to convey a purely human meaning. On this score, Sokolowski can also claim to be on more solid ground than either Rahner or Lonergan, whose "transcendental Thomism" arrives at God through an analysis of human thought and its alleged demand for complete or unrestricted knowledge. Unlike Sokolowski, Rahner and Lonergan take the createdness of the world for granted, for only on that assumption can it be regarded as transparent to God and hence "completely intelligible." As a consequence, neither of them sees the need to contrast the Christian and pagan senses of the whole. Their transcendental method thus fails to give "due recognition" to the pagan state of mind. It refuses to accept it as a real possibility and works entirely within a perspective that is biblical or Christian from the outset (cf. pp. 108–109). Without explicitly saying so, Sokolowski seems to detect in their approach a latent tendency to blur

or deemphasize the distinction between the natural and the supernatural orders.[5] His own method of dealing with this issue likewise differs markedly from that of Karl Barth, who goes to the opposite extreme and repudiates metaphysics altogether but makes us pay for the "religious clarity" that this repudiation generates by leaving us in "philosophical darkness" (p. 112).

One further point to be stressed is that the distinction between God and the world occupies a unique position within Christian theology itself. Since that distinction is not entirely beyond the scope of reason, it does not strictly speaking belong to the realm of faith, but since it has not in fact been discovered without the aid of divine revelation, one hesitates to describe it as purely philosophical. Therein lies its advantage. Because it stands at the intersection of the two domains, it can serve as a bridge between them (cf. p. 39). Nonbelievers will have fewer difficulties with it than they do with the dogmas of the faith, and, having accepted it or at least been made to see that it is not manifestly contrary to reason, they will be less reluctant to concede that the Christian mysteries, though not accessible to human reason alone, do not require that one turn one's back on it (cf. pp. xii, 39, and 113).

Sokolowski's essay has few parallels in the theologically lean and impoverished literature of our time. As was mentioned earlier, its topic and the level on which it is taken up are more typical of former ages than of ours and the thesis that it lays before us is argued with a cogency that one admires all the more as it is so rarely found elsewhere today. One can only hope that, by raising once again the thorny issue of the rapport between faith and reason, and by raising it in a manner that is both respectful of the past and sympathetic to recent developments, the book will set a new trend in religious philosophy as well as in philosophical theology. There does not appear to be much doubt that it accomplishes what it sets out to do, namely, to show that the Christian faith can command the respect of thoughtful persons regardless of what their religious convictions may be and even if they profess no religious convictions at all. As such, it stands in the best tradition of Catholic theology, which has always prized reason and looked upon it as an ally rather than an enemy of the Faith. Anyone who starts from the same premises, and they are the ones that the medieval tradition took as its point of departure, is bound to arrive at similar conclusions and will agree that the Christian faith cannot be dismissed as meaningless, that its main tenets are neither patent absurdities nor logical inconsistencies, and hence that one can subscribe to them without lapsing into obvious contradictions.

This said, one wonders whether, apart from its more modern (and sometimes more obscure) terminology, Sokolowski's "theology of disclosure" is really as new as it claims to be. In view of the extreme care that the medieval theologians brought to the distinction between the sciences and their various formalities, they

5. See esp. pp. 89–90 and 100–101, where the problem is taken up in much the same terms but without any mention of either Rahner or Lonergan.

can scarcely be thought to have been less concerned than we are with the manner in which things come to light, are "presenced," or manifest themselves to us. To be sure, Sokolowski has no intention of separating the two theologies, which, he says, must be kept "in tandem" (p. 93); but he nevertheless sees them as different. Whereas the "theology of things" takes the Christian distinction between God and the world for granted and concentrates on its two terms, the "theology of disclosure" zeroes in on the distinction itself (cf. pp. 90–92). To speak of such a distinction, however, is to imply that one has already analyzed its terms and determined as accurately as possible wherein they differ. The medievals may possibly have taken the distinction between God and the world for granted, but there is reason to think that Sokolowski, who highlights that distinction, tends to take its terms for granted.

A case in point is his insistence on the intramundane character of the Aristotelian God, which may or may not do full justice to the complexity of Aristotle's thought on this matter. Unfortunately, the texts in which the problem is taken up in the *Metaphysics* and elsewhere are relatively few in number and, as the long history of Aristotelian scholarship demonstrates, notoriously difficult to interpret. Ascertaining what exactly Aristotle may have meant by "God" is no small task, especially since the word is applied not only to the "first unmoved mover" and the other separate substances but, in accordance with earlier Greek tradition, to the outermost heaven, all of the heavenly bodies, and on occasion reason itself. The ambiguity is noted by Cicero, who observes apropos of Aristotle's lost dialogue *On Philosophy*: "At one moment he assigns divinity exclusively to the mind; at another he calls the world itself a god; elsewhere he puts some other god over the world, assigning to this god the task of regulating and sustaining the movement of the world by means of a revolution of some sort; then he calls the celestial heat (or ether) a god, not realizing that the heaven is a part of that world which he himself had previously designated by the name of god" (*De Nat. Deor.*, I.xiii.33). Clearly, some of Aristotle's "divine" beings belong to the whole with which the metaphysician is concerned, but it is not at all clear that the prime mover is himself a "part" of that whole. The *Metaphysics* describes him variously as "self-subsisting actuality" (*ἐνέργεια ἡ καθ' αὑτήν*, $1072^{b}27$; cf. $1071^{b}20$), an "eternal and immovable being" (*ἀίδιον οὐσίαν ἀκίνητον*, $1071^{b}5$), the good at which everything in the universe aims ($1072^{b}3$), or the principle on which the heaven and all of nature depend" ($1272^{b}14$), even though he himself does not depend on them or receive anything from them. God is the subject of sacred theology, which appropriately begins with him and studies everything else in relation to him.[6] He is not as such the subject of metaphysics or first philosophy, which takes as its theme being qua being,[7] knows nothing of God as he is in himself, and would not speak of him at all were it not for the fact that the world as we know it becomes unintelligible without him. Significantly,

6. Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theol.*, I, q.1, a.7.
7. Cf. *Metaphysics*, $1003^{a}21$, $1004^{b}15$, $1025^{b}2$, etc.

God is discussed only toward the end of the *Physics* and the *Metaphysics*, where he is introduced as the extrinsic final cause of the world, as distinct for its intrinsic final cause or the order of its parts.

As for the contention that Aristotle could not conceive of a divine being whose existence was not so linked to the world as to be unthinkable without it (cf. pp. 16–18), it too may have to be re-examined in the light of other statements that bear on this subject. The problem comes up at least once in the *Metaphysics*, in connection with the discussion of the number of the separate substances. True enough, Aristotle thought it "reasonable" (*εὔλογον*) to suppose that this number is identical to that of the spheres, which is tentatively set at either fifty-five or forty-seven. Yet he was not prepared to rule out the possibility that there might be other separate substances whose existence is not in any way related to the realm of celestial or sublunar phenomena (cf. *Met.*, 1074^a14–31).

Even if these remarks should prove accurate, however, they are by no means fatal to Sokolowski's general thesis; for regardless of whether one regards Aristotle's prime mover as part of the world or not, a vast difference still separates him from the God of Christian theology. That difference comes most clearly to sight in Sokolowski's discussion of the radical contingency of all beings other than God. The pages devoted to this topic bring us back to the more familiar view according to which the opposition between the religious and the philosophic traditions turns in the final analysis on the issue of creation or divine omnipotence.[8] Between a God who is defined exclusively as the thought that thinks itself, is ignorant of what goes on in this world, and has nothing to do with its coming into being or its governance on the one hand, and the all-powerful creator of the biblical tradition on the other, there is obviously no middle term. From this point of view at least it is certainly possible to argue for the greater transcendence of the Christian God, who not only surpasses all other beings in perfection but, as the *ipsum esse subsistens* or uniquely self-subsistent being, already contains within himself the totality of being.

Sokolowski would appear to have reason on his side when he insists that, once the case for creation has been presented, the philosopher owes it to himself to take it seriously (cf. p. 115). That it was taken with the utmost seriousness by the great thinkers of the past is amply attested to by the numerous disquisitions to which it gave rise in all three of the great religious communities of the West, Islam, Judaism, and Christianity. It does not follow necessarily that, having examined that case thoroughly, the philosopher will be more inclined to accept it. For one thing, it is hard to see how God could produce beings other than himself and still be said to be infinite or to exhaust the totality of being. As far as human reason knows, nothing can be added to infinity. To say that that creation gives us something "more" but nothing "greater" or "better" provides us with a good shorthand statement of the problem but does little to elucidate it. It is equally

8. See *inter multa alia* Averroes, *Decisive Treatise*, in Lerner and Mahdi, *Medieval Political Philosophy: A Sourcebook* (N.Y., 1963), 173–75; Maimonides, *Guide*, II.13.

hard to see how a God who is defined as pure and changeless actuality could create without passing from potency to act and hence without undergoing some kind of change. Finally, if God can create, he also has the power to intervene in the processes of nature and alter them as he sees fit. Anything that is not inherently contradictory becomes possible. In that case, science loses something of its necessary character and must live with the realization that its results could be overturned at any time by divine decree. Divine omnipotence may not render the world order vain, but it does inject an unknown factor or an element of unpredictability into the philosopher's quest for unchanging causes.

Much as one can admire the zeal with which the medieval theologians wrestled with these issues, it is fair to say that the problems themselves have always been clearer than the proposed solutions to them. Sokolowski seems to grant as much when he goes on to explain that the Christian distinction between God and the world is not on a par with other philosophical doctrines in so far as it "engages our affections" and demands the collaboration of both the intellect and the will. To that extent, it is inseparable from action and must be "lived" before it can even be stated (pp. 123, 142). While not itself a properly supernatural truth, it at least has that much in common with the truths that belong exclusively to the order of grace. It should be noted that Aristotle, for his part, did not claim to be able to prove apodictically that the world was eternal. In *Topics* 104^b6–17, he admits that the magnitude of the problem is such as to defy any completely satisfactory solution, and he also makes it clear in the *Metaphysics* that he preferred his own alternative to the others only because it was the one that offered the "fewest difficulties" (cf. *Met.*, 1075^a27) and shed the greatest amount of light on the famous issue of the one and the many or of being and becoming that had dominated the whole of pre-Socratic philosophy.[9] Since so little in the way of rational certitude awaits us on either side of this vexed question, it may be to our advantage to leave the study of nature aside for the time being and, taking our cue from Socrates,[10] turn to Sokolowski's account of human or moral things.

The discussion in this particular instance begins with an analysis of natural virtue (pp. 53–68) that takes its bearings from the *Nicomachean Ethics* and focuses on the nature of moral agency as well as on Aristotle's division of human types into four basic categories or formal possibilities: the virtuous, the continent, the incontinent, and the vicious. The stage for much of the argument is set by Kant, who is used as a foil to illustrate the importance attributed to moral character in classical thought. For Kant, the ethical life is conceived solely in terms of the struggle between inclination and duty or between passion and rational obligation. The virtues and habits have practically no role to play in it and the notion of human wholeness all but disappears. Kant had the right idea when he

9. See Aristotle's summary discussion of this frequently debated topic in *Metaphysics*, 1075^a25–1076^a5.

10. Cf. Xenophon, *Memorabilia*, 1.1.10–15.

"related moral responsibility to the issue of the divine" (p. 56), but that is about as much as Sokolowski is willing to say in his behalf. For an adequate assessment of natural moral phenomena "we must get out from under Kant," and this is where Aristotle can be most helpful to us (p. 55).

The Aristotelian view of morality is subsequently contrasted with the Christian view, which modifies it to some extent and, by adding to it the infused moral virtues and the theological virtues, provides a new setting for human existence. None of these properly Christian virtues destroys the natural virtues, which continue to serve as a kind of "ballast" for Christian action (p. 83). This must not be taken to mean that, when the two contexts, i.e. the natural and the theological, are introduced, the individual moral agent is "split into two performers"; it means rather that "in the concrete situation, . . . what the Christian is primarily supposed to do is what the good man would be expected to do" (p. 82). To be more specific,

> The Christian perspective does not bring in obligations that are at odds with what we ought to do according to the nature of things; the Christian illumination of what is to be done consists first of all in confirming what is good by nature, and in appreciating that what is good according to nature is not simply good in itself but also good because created and therefore willed by God. What is good by nature is not set over what is good by grace but is integrated into it. And what is good by grace is not simply a matter of convention and arbitrary decision; rather it builds on nature and shares in the reasonableness associated with nature (p. 83).

While there is much to applaud in all of this, one cannot help thinking that Sokolowski's determination to absolve Christian ethics from even the faintest suspicion of irrationality has again caused him to weight the evidence in his favor. Among other things, his interpretation of the *Ethics* stresses only such elements as may be thought to be neutral in regard to the distinction that was later made between pagan and Christian virtue. Little if anything is said about the spirit that informs Aristotle's treatment of these matters, his method of procedure, the kind of reader to whom his book is typically addressed, his resolve to present moral phenomena on their own level or as they appear not so much to the philosopher as to morally good or decent human beings, and, most important, the cognitive status that attaches to moral virtue in the Aristotelian scheme. The way is thus paved for the assertion that Christian morality does not contradict pagan morality but merely redirects or refines it by privileging "certain aspects of natural moral goods" (p. 83).[11] Generally speaking, it exhibits a livelier concern

11. Sokolowski's remarks concerning the difference between natural and Christian morality are set within the context of a comparison between the Augustinian and Thomistic views of natural virtue (cf. pp. 78–79 and 88). In simple terms, for Augustine natural virtue without faith is "false" virtue; for Aquinas, it is "true" virtue, albeit only relative virtue. This apparent discrepancy is rightly said to find its explanation in the fact that Aquinas distinguishes more sharply between the order of nature and the order of grace. It is not unimportant to note, however, that Augustine, who generally works within a Platonic framework, tends to study all things in the light of their highest principles. Just as Plato denies that virtue without true knowledge is genuine virtue, so Augustine denies that virtue without faith is true virtue.

with what human beings have in common "as created and loved and redeemed by God"; it pays greater attention to the needs and dignity of the weak, the unborn, and the poor; and it is more emphatic in its proclamation of "the natural equality of all men," later to be reasserted by Hobbes, Locke, and Rousseau (pp. 83, 96). None of this, not even the addition of humility to Aristotle's list of virtues, constitutes an obstacle to the pursuit of natural goodness. Humility may affect one's appraisal of one's own worth, but it does not enter into competition with noble pride or make the believer any less secure in his actions as a human being. The example of those who manage to combine in their own persons "natural pride and supernatural humility" is proof enough that the two virtues can live comfortably together (p. 85).

All well and good, save for the fact that we are still confronted with two vastly different types of human beings between which one is sooner or later compelled to choose. Luther may have exaggerated but he was not entirely wide of the mark when he pronounced Aristotle's *Ethics* "the worst of all books," one that "flatly opposes divine grace and all Christian virtues."[12] Even if the Christian and the pagan should happen to agree on many of the same things, the spirit that animates them and dictates their actions is not the same, and that is surely something to be considered in any analysis of moral character. Sokolowski's argument proves only that Christian belief promotes one type of morality and, depending on one's perspective, perhaps not the highest one at that. The passing remark to the effect that in Aquinas "the noble seems almost to be changed into the obligatory" (p. 81) says a good deal about Christianity's inherent propensity to elevate justice above nobility, thereby stripping the moral life of some of its splendor.[13] Magnanimity, once it is required of everyone, inevitably ceases to be the rare achievement described in Book IV of the *Ethics*. It becomes, as Aquinas would have it, a part of courage, arguably the lowest albeit the most necessary of the moral virtues (*Summa Theol.*, II–II, qu.129, a.5). This alone does not make Christian morality any less "reasonable," but to anyone who is not inclined to measure human perfection by what is said about it in the New Testament, it could make it look somewhat less lofty. For better or for worse, there are not many "ladies" and "gentlemen" anywhere in the Bible, and the few people who tried to behave as if they were—Saul and Michal immediately come to

12. Luther, *An Open Letter to the German Nobility*, in *Three Treatises* (Philadelphia, 1960), pp. 93–94.

13. On p. 77, Sokolowski notes by way of comparison that, whereas "natural temperance, for example, moderates our use of food and drink in view of health and the exercise of reason, . . . infused virtue will urge us toward asceticism." No one denies, of course, that Christian virtue is more ascetical than purely natural virtue, but the interesting point in Sokolowski's statement is that it reflects a purely instrumental conception of natural virtue, which is regarded as a means to a further end, whether it be bodily health or the healthy condition of the mind. No mention is made of the Aristotelian notion of moderation and moral virtue generally as something "noble" (καλόν) or desirable for its own sake; cf. *Nic. Ethics*, 1115^{b}13 and 24; 1116^{a}12 and ^{b}20; 1117^{a}17; 1119^{a}18 and ^{b}17; 1120^{a}23, *et passim*.

mind—soon learned to rue their mistake.[14] Along similar lines, it is significant that the Christian tradition has often seen a parallel of sorts between Christ and Socrates (who was not a gentleman) but never, as far as I know, between Christ and Achilles, "the best of the Achaeans." Simply put, by valuing some moral "goods" so much more highly than others, Christianity risks inhibiting the development of certain parts of the soul the cultivation of which may not be any less essential to the attainment of human excellence.

The problem has larger ramifications, however, for it is far from evident that from a purely philosophical standpoint moral virtue is fully supported by nature and that its normal requirements are always consonant with the good of society as a whole. To cite only one of the examples adduced by Sokolowski, Christianity's traditional stand against abortion and infanticide can be defended on rational as well as on Christian grounds, but the reasons that purport to justify it may have to be pondered in the light of other reasons that militate against it in certain circumstances. Aristotle, Sokolowski's spokesman for natural morality, did after all propose that the number of children be limited and that deformed offspring not be allowed to live (cf. *Pol.*, 1135^b20–26). One can likewise think of numerous other cases where in strict observance of the rules of justice as ordinarily understood would be detrimental to the preservation and welfare of the city. A society that has no regard for the observance of these rules could easily jeopardize its chances of survival, but neither Aristotle nor any of his classical followers ever went so far as to maintain that an unswerving commitment to them is always and everywhere possible.

Confronted with that problem, some Christian Aristotelians of the Middle Ages questioned the universal applicability of all universally recognized principles of justice and right. As one of them expressed it in equivalent terms, what is universally admitted is not rational and what is rational is not universally admitted.[15] The question with which we ultimately come face to face is whether, in the absence of a legislating God, the moral order is internally consistent at every point and enjoys the cosmic support that most decent human beings demand for it. Sokolowski puts us on the right track when he observes that "the divine is inseparable from a sense of the good and the obligatory" (p. 55). The moral man as such, one is tempted to say, is the natural candidate for belief in divine revelation.

This brings us straightaway to the comparatively brief but incisive appendix that is devoted an examination of the relationship between Christian belief and the political life (pp. 157–64). Sokolowski notes perceptively that the privatization of religion necessitated or brought about by the triumph of modern liberalism has led to the neglect of religion on the part of political thinkers and of poli-

14. Cf. I Samuel, 15:1–9; II Samuel, 6:16–23.

15. Cf. Marsilius of Padua, *The Defender of the Peace*, II.12.7–8.

tics on the part of theologians, to the detriment of both political theory and theology. Such was not the situation in premodern times, when most philosophers and theologians were wont to take a lively interest in all questions pertaining to the place of religion in society. One notable exception to the present-day rule is to be found in the works of Leo Strauss and his disciples, to whom Sokolowski gives full credit for having refocused our attention on this problem but with whom he nevertheless feels compelled to take issue on a number of crucial points. Specifically, he sees no warrant for the allegation that revealed religion renders "the political life, or at least the preservation of natural right impossible" in so far as it singles out some members of the body politic "as superior to others, not because of wealth or strength or virtue or intelligence or natural ability," but because they are the repositories of certain higher truths to which no one else is privy. His answer to that charge is that Christianity leaves the realm of nature intact and hence does not advance any political teachings that are not equally available to non-Christian or nonbelievers or establish "a group of people who are supposed to govern others by virtue of the unusual opinions they possess." None of its central doctrines, least of all the belief in creation, interferes with the normal operations of human reason or contravenes the "natural necessities" of the political order (p. 158).

Although Sokolowski readily acknowledges that Strauss' position on these and related matters remains somewhat elusive, he questions what appears to be his understanding of revealed religion as the "communication of commandments whose necessity is not obvious to reason" and that, as the story of Abraham and Isaac suggests, "may even appear to be irrational." Such an understanding is foreign to Christianity, which, we are again told, accentuates certain parts of natural morality more than others and expresses some of its requirements with greater clarity, but whose teachings never "work against the natural law" (p. 159).

Equally objectionable in Sokolowski's eyes is the Straussian tendency to interpret the distinction between the natural and the supernatural as a simple variant of the distinction between nature and convention, the pivot of Strauss' political theory. On this telling, the mysteries of the faith, along with the Christian virtues and the obligations they entail, become another form of conventionalism, at the risk of losing much of their credibility. Yet Strauss himself acknowledges the threat that the weakening of the sense of the sacred poses to civil society. For the same reason, Sokolowski cannot accept the view that Athens is permanently at odds with Jerusalem or that philosophic reason and religious belief can coexist only in an uneasy and finally unresolvable tension with each other. According to Strauss, this tension is what prompted many of the philosophers of the past to conceal their innermost thoughts lest by disclosing them openly they should undermine the salutary opinions by which most people live and on which society depends for its well being. This peculiar mode of writing may have been prevalent among philosophers in the past, but Sokolowski denies its relevance to Christianity on the ground that the Christian faith "does not enter into competi-

tion with reason" and that "its scope is other than the whole within which reason finds its home." The Christian writer can dispense with this form of concealment or deliberate dissimulation, not because he is more honest or forthright than others, but because the things he believes in "do not necessitate a conflict between what is believed and what is known" (p. 162). Christianity is not a convention, formulating for the uneducated in a way that is persuasive to them certain thoughts about the ultimate, the sacred, the necessary, the obligatory, or the whole that philosophy then scrutinizes and reveals as mere opinion. Unlike the God of whom Strauss speaks, the Christian God is not "unfathomable will," and unlike the God of the philosophers, he is not intellect alone. As the *ipsum esse subsistens,* he is both Will and Intellect and neither more one than the other. Moreover, the fact that he creates and redeems does not deprive nature of its intelligibility or prevent human beings from discerning that intelligibility by the exercise of their unimpeded reason. Hence the Christian need not prescind from the notion of creation when he speculates about the world. What he does as a philosopher is no different from what he would do if he were convinced that the world is eternal and uncreated.

Sokolowski's acute comments are all the more welcome as they reveal with unusual clarity the uneasiness that Christian theologians frequently experience when confronted with Strauss' analysis of the so-called theologicopolitical problem. Though critical of Strauss on the points that have just been mentioned, Sokolowski is not entirely unsympathetic to him and he fully appreciates the difficulty posed by the fact that one cannot always tell whether Strauss is speaking in his own name or merely paraphrasing the authors about whom he writes. Strauss certainly said or implied that many of these authors looked upon revealed religion as a politically useful myth, however cautious they may have been in stating that view. What is more, he never expressly disagrees with them. But neither does he profess to agree with them; for only a completed philosophy, as distinct from a philosophy that understands itself as an unfinished and unfinishable quest for wisdom, could demonstrate the falsity of revealed religion, let alone rule out its possibility. Strauss denied that he was in possession of such a philosophy. He knew that, within certain limits, the "teachings" of the classical philosophers could be harmonized with those of revealed religion, and he pointed to the achievements of Averroes, Maimonides, and Thomas Aquinas as examples of the various ways in which this harmonization could be effected. But this leaves untouched the question of whether the *βίος θεωρητικός* or philosophy as a way of life rather than as a set of teachings or a body of doctrines is compatible with the believer's wholehearted assent to certain truths that either exceed the capacity of human reason or cannot be nailed down by it. One may wish to quarrel with that definition of philosophy, but to be convincing to everyone, the argument against it would have to be based on premises that bear no trace of the influence of divine revelation. Sokolowski has a good point when he reproaches Rahner and Lonergan with not accepting the pagan state of mind as a real possi-

bility, but he himself appears to be reluctant to go all the way in recognizing that possibility.

Using Strauss against himself, so to speak, Sokolowski quotes a statement to the effect that "By becoming aware of the dignity of the mind, we realize the true ground of the dignity of man and therewith of the goodness of the world, whether we understand it as created or uncreated, which is the home of man because it is the home of the human mind."[16] From that statement he infers that by Strauss' own admission Christian belief need not be interpreted as just another convention and that the Christian thinker is not required to choose between nature on the one hand and creation and grace on the other (p. 161). The argument may be beside the point, however, inasmuch as Sokolowski has not proved but merely asserted that Strauss relegated religion in general and Christianity in particular to the realm of convention; but even if it is not, we should miss the full import of Strauss' statement if we were to see in it a simple acknowledgment of the fact that there is a large area of agreement between the domains of philosophy and revealed religion. The total picture comes into view only when we look at a parallel passage in the essay entitled "How to Begin to Study the *Guide of the Perplexed,*" where Strauss explains that the same conclusion—in the instance under consideration, the existence, oneness, and immateriality of God—may occasionally be drawn from two different and opposed premises, to wit, the eternity of the world or its creation in time. But he is careful to add that the results in each case are not simply identical:

> For instance, someone might have said prior to the Second World War that Germany would be prosperous regardless of whether she won or lost the war; if she won, her prosperity would follow immediately; if she lost, her prosperity would be assured by the United States of America who would need her as an ally against Soviet Russia; but the predictor would have abstracted from the difference between Germany as the greatest power which ruled tyrannically and was ruled tryannically, and Germany as a second-rank power ruled democratically. The God whose being is proved on the assumption of creation is the biblical God who is characterized by Will and whose knowledge has only the name in common with our knowledge.[17]

Granted, in the vast majority of cases the human being who takes reason alone as his ultimate guide and the one who seeks to please God above all else are likely to come to the same conclusion regarding what is to be done in a particular set of circumstances. But there is also something of importance to be learned from the few remaining cases in which their actions could conceivably differ.

As a Christian theologian, Sokolowski can hardly be blamed for taking exception to the Maimonidean and Straussian view according to which God is essentially Will rather than Intellect and for countering it with the Thomistic view, for

16. L. Strauss, "What Is Liberal Education?" in *Liberalism, Ancient and Modern* (New York, 1968), p. 8.

17. L. Strauss, *ibid.*, p. 180.

which God is as much Intellect as he is Will. The fact is, however, that Thomas' position is a theological interpretation of the biblical datum that draws heavily on Aristotelian philosophy. If one sticks to what is said about God in the Hebrew Scriptures, which is what Strauss has in mind, a different vision emerges. As is obvious not only from the paradigmatic story of Abraham and Isaac but from innumerable other biblical passages as well, the biblical God does not give any reasons for what he does or what he demands of his followers. That outlook is only slightly modified in the New Testament, which replaces what is now called the Old Law with the new and in some fashion perhaps even more paradoxical "command" of love. It is no accident that within the Christian tradition itself the voluntaristic emphasis on the divine will again comes massively to the fore in the works of such well-known late-medieval theologians as Scotus and Ockham.

Closely related to this problem is the whole issue of esoteric writing, which figures prominently in Straussian hermeneutics but which is supposedly out of place in the Christian world. In his treatment of this matter, Sokolowski laments the fact that more is not known about the way Strauss interpreted Aquinas' works and alludes to a "Straussian oral tradition" according to which Strauss would have considered Aquinas to be "more truly a philosopher than a believer" (p. 161). Strauss did say more than once that there is no way of knowing in advance what a truly great mind is capable of, but to my knowledge he never questioned the sincerity of Aquinas' religious beliefs. It did not surprise him that, whenever possible, Aquinas consciously and deliberately interpreted Aristotle's text in the manner that best accords with the Christian faith. Strauss was also intrigued by Aquinas' habit of muting his disagreements with some of his Christian predecessors by exposing their thought "reverently" (*reverenter*), a practice reminiscent of the reserve that marks the works of the ancient philosophers and some of their Islamic and Jewish followers. This is not to suggest, however, that he regarded Aquinas as an esoteric writer. The truth of the matter is that genuine esotericism was less frowned upon than ignored in the Christian West, where for a long time it survived mainly in the form of a pedagogical device to which the learned could resort when called upon to address the simple faithful. Aquinas, who was vaguely acquainted with it through the works of the Pseudo-Dionysius, leaves it at saying that, while it may have had its legitimate uses at other moments in history, it was now largely abandoned—*apud modernos est inconsuetus*.[18]

Be that as it may, Sokolowski traces Christianity's greater openness to philosophy to its "special understanding of God," which calls for a world in which "the mind and reason are at home" and does away with "many of the paradoxes and contradictions that Strauss so well describes between religion and philosophy" (p. 163). The same point could be made more simply by stating that, as a charismatic religion or a religion of love rather than of the Law, Christianity is not linked to any particular political community and does not lay down any particular

18. Thomas Aquinas, *In Librum B. Dionysii De Divinis Nominibus*, C. Pera, ed. (Turin, 1950), Prooemium, II, p. 1.

code of laws by which such a community might be governed.[19] On that level at any rate, it was immune to the kind of philosophic criticism that could be directed against the Jewish or the Islamic Law. This is still a far cry from saying that its moral imperatives are always in full accord with the needs of the political life. As we have had occasion to observe, there are times when, in the name of reason itself, wise and decent rulers may feel compelled to embark upon courses of action that Christian morality reproves. One does not solve that problem by arguing that none of the teachings of the Faith violates the "natural law"; for, the natural law properly so-called is itself a product of the Christian world and a reflection of its own understanding of natural morality.[20] What Christian theology calls "reason" is sometimes, though not always, what it has already chosen to define as reason.

It is easy, too easy perhaps, to say that "Christian Revelation leaves the natural necessities and natural truths intact, including all those that are at work in political life," and that a commitment to its beliefs does not of itself qualify one for positions of leadership in civil society (p. 158). Everyone knows that throughout much of its history the Chruch did arrogate to itself the right to exercise political authority and to impose its ethical demands on society as a whole. Sokolowski, who does not dwell on the subject, would probably reply that this is a simple historical accident based on a misunderstanding of Christian principles on the part of Church leaders. Even so, the frequency with which that misunderstanding has been perpetrated across the centuries does little to allay the fears that it continues to inspire in the minds of others. Strauss' criticisms are not proper to him and to

19. On that basis, Sokolowski argues for the greater transcendence of the New Testament conception of God over against that of the Old Testament (cf. pp. 124–29). The God of the Old Testament, we are told, is an "interventionist" God who does not allow things to be according to their own natures. His creative power and dominion over the world no doubt set him apart from everything else, but for all that, when the Jewish writers speak of him, "they speak of 'the same thing' that the gentiles speak of with their god and gods, except that the Jews consider themselves to be speaking truly while the others are in error" (p. 125). As Sokolowski himself eventually recognizes, however, this super-eminently transcendent character of the Christian God is often obscured in ordinary Christian piety. The whole argument, which is as subtle as it is profound, would require a much more detailed examination than any that can be accorded to it here. One regrets only that more is not said about the Old Testament's highly original notion of the "holiness" (in modern parlance, the "transcendence") of God, which could cast the problem in a slightly different light.

20. As recent studies have shown, the origin of the natural law theory presents a riddle that no one has yet been able to crack. Cicero, the author of the oldest known works in which the expression is used in a clearly moral sense, identifies the natural law with right reason, thereby depriving it of its strictly legal status (cf. *Republ.*, III.22). The Church Fathers refer to it only sparingly and more as a commonplace than as a fully developed doctrine. The first theological treatises devoted expressly to it date only from the thirteenth century and are proper to the Christian West, where the natural law proved especially helpful as a means of bridging the gulf between the ecclesiastical and the temporal powers. Since the end of the nineteenth century, the claim has frequently been made that the Church itself is the authentic interpreter of the natural law, a fact that may seem somewhat strange if, as is likewise asserted, the natural law is accessible to the unassisted human reason. On this point, see the puzzling remarks by T. E. Wassmer, "Natural Law: Contemporary Theology and Philosophy," *New Catholic Encyclopedia*, vol. 10, p. 262.

his "school." They were first voiced by thoughtful and dedicated Christians as far back as the Middle Ages. One occasionally regrets that Sokolowski, who blames Christian theologians for their neglect of political theory, has not taken it more seriously himself. What he regards as the *primum quoad nos* or "first for us" is not the political life but the *Lebenswelt* of modern phenomenology, which is not particularly noted for its interest in politics and shows relatively little awareness of the extent to which our perception of the world around us is shaped by the realities of our political situation. This, more than anything else, is what lends to his analysis a slightly abstract quality and, despite its claim to be "closer to life" (p. 97), an air of remoteness from the vital concerns of everyday Christian living.

It is not necessary to add that the foregoing remarks barely touch the surface of Sokolowski's essay and are in no way meant to detract from its outstanding merits. They will have achieved their purpose if they encourage others to read the book for themselves and to read it with all the attention it deserves. Sad to say, there are few recent books of its kind that can be recommended with the same degree of confidence and enthusiasm. We live in a peculiar age, one whose leading thinkers are frequently embarrassed by the continued presence of faith and reason in our midst and, not knowing what to do with them, would just as soon ignore them altogether. *Et le combat cessa, faute de combattants* . Sokolowski wants them both, but he knows that their harmonious relationship is no longer as evident to us as it was to our medieval forebears. His is a courageous book, which ignores the fads and fashions of the day and refuses to be intimidated by the pomp and ceremony of the contemporary theological establishment. It is also a serene and dispassionate book, as remarkable for its defense of the faith against the latent or vestigial rationalism of our time as for its defense of reason against the irrationalism of so much of present-day religious thought. Theologians will find in it a challenging alternative to the approaches favored by Rahner and Lonergan, the two currently most influential names in Catholic theology, and it will also teach political theorists to be more moderate in their criticisms of a tradition that for the most part they have never taken the pains to investigate. A sure sign of its success is that one need not agree with everything that is said in it in order to be enlightened and perhaps even profoundly edified by it.

Thought

A Review of Culture and Idea

SIXTY YEARS IN THE FOREFRONT

A Representative Listing of Articles Published Over the Years

Notes on the Comic	*W. H. Auden*
A Consistent Ethic of Life: An American-Catholic Dialogue	*Joseph Cardinal Bernardin*
Anniversary Poems: Report from the Empty Grave	*Daniel Berrigan*
Nuclear Addiction: A Response	*Edmund G. Brown Jr.*
Imaging the Church for the 1980's	*Avery Dulles*
American Catholicism, 1953-1979: A Notable Change	*John Tracy Ellis*
The Conservative Onslaught	*John Kenneth Galbraith*
Toward a Theology of Death	*Robert W. Gleason*
Memory, Creation and Writing	*Toni Morrison*
On the Subject of the First Amendment	*Daniel Patrick Moynihan*
The Problem of Pluralism in America	*John Courtney Murray*
Liberation Theology and Practice	*Michael Novak*
Theology and the Arts	*Karl Rahner*
The Moral Aspects of Deterrence	*Caspar W. Weinberger*
Feature Review Literary Criticism: The State of the Art	*Walter Kendrick*

FORDHAM UNIVERSITY QUARTERLY

"...EMINENTLY READABLE."

—*Magazines for Libraries*

SUBSCRIPTION ORDER FORM

To: **Thought**, Fordham University Press, Box L, Bronx, NY 10458 CPD

Please enter my subscription* to **Thought**:

☐ *Individual Rate* (must be prepaid with check or money order to **Thought**):

☐ 1 Year: $17 50, $15 00 Introductory

☐ 2 Years: $28.00

☐ *Institutional Rate* (please attach purchase order)

☐ 1 Year: $25 00

Name ____

Institution ____

Address ____

City ____ State ____ Zip ____

* Subscriptions ar

On Eco's *The Name of the Rose*

JOSEPH J. CARPINO
St. Francis College, Brooklyn

The Name of the Rose. By Umberto Eco. (New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1983. 502 pp.: cloth, $15.95.)

This is no mere medieval detective story. It is a paean to the particular, a lustration of laughter, a celebration of cerebration, a laudation of Levellerism, and an epistemological epiphany . . . all ending in a holocaust of *books*! It is, in sum, a religious tract in the guise of a literary feast.

The story by now is well known, so little can be lost by briefly summarizing it. Adso of Melk, the Ishmael-Watson of this adventure, is a young Benedictine novice assigned as amanuensis to William of Baskerville, a Franciscan friar sent, in 1327, by Emperor Louis the Bavarian to arrange a meeting between the Franciscans and the representatives of Pope John XXII of Avignon ("Heaven grant that no pontiff take again a name now só distasteful to the righteous" [p. 12]) at an abbey in northern Italy. They arrive on a Sunday in November and remain for a week, during which time about a half dozen monks die violent deaths, Adso has a brief fling with a peasant girl on the floor of the refectory kitchen (Wednesday night), the convocation of clerics ("a fraternal debate regarding the poverty of Jesus" [p. 335]) erupts in a hilarious brawl (Thursday morning), and a mad monk commits suicide by stuffing the pages of a forbidden book into his mouth with glee (Friday night). The week ends (Saturday, the seventh day) with a total "ecpyrosis" of the abbey, starting in and taking with it the Library around which everything revolved.[1] And all throughout, the Rule of Silence is shattered, smashed, pounded, and pulverized by endless conversations, rememberings, debates, discussions, gossip, and whisperings—not to speak of meaningful glances. This is, we must remember, an Italian monastery.

The Name of the Rose presents itself as a detective story: a tall thin Englishman with a name we cannot disengage from the Hound or the typeface, traveling with a sidekick whose name (Adso) lacks only the "W" (which is not, after all, an Italian letter) and who is as stuffy as a young man could be . . . this lanky, languid, and apparently drug-taking Franciscan (p. 213) *deduces*, in the first few pages, in theatrically Holmesean fashion, the name, the appearance, and the probable whereabouts of a runaway horse he has never seen; then in a conversa-

1. Echoing, in the process, the last paragraph of Hume's *Inquiry*: "When we run over libraries, persuaded of these principles, what havoc we must make? If we take in our hand any volume—of divinity or school metaphysics, for instance—let us ask, *Does it contain any abstract reasoning concerning quantity or number?* No. *Does it contain any experimental reasoning concerning matter of fact and existence?* No. Commit it then to the flames, for it can contain nothing but sophistry and illusion."

tion with the abbot he is presented with an unsolved murder (it turns out to be a suicide of sorts) which soon becomes the first of an apparent series of homicides. And therein lies the reality and the mystery: there *is* no series!

The "seriality" of the deaths, the "order" in which they are located, is essentially fictive, residing initially in the investigative intentionality of the "detective" (and of the reader, the first time around) and, at the end, in the retrospective rationalizations of the main villain of the piece (Jorge of Burgos), who permits himself to become convinced "that a divine plan was directing these deaths" (p. 470), and who makes use of the "Seven Trumpets" of the *Apocalypse*, a pattern first suggested by a somewhat dotty old monk, Alinardo,[2] (p. 159), the toothless Tiresias of this tragicomedy. The deaths do *fit* the "Seven Trumpets,"[3] but they are not the pattern; "There was no plot," says William at the end (p. 491), and the whole mystery is a triumph of Nominalism![4]

The fabric of this often gorgeous tapestry is woven of a woof of detective story crisscrossing a warp of philosophy (epistemological and political), the interstices crammed with a nap of details about things medieval. There is something here for everyone, nuts and raisins and bits of citron scattered all through this literary panettone to provide nuggets of recognition for any reader ever subjected to a course in "Western Civ.": the bull of Phalaris (p. 486), "the castrate Abelard," with his *Sic et Non* (p. 132), "the idea of a golden mountain" (p. 188), the syllogistic figure Darii (p. 261), Occam's razor (p. 91), Buridan's ass (or horse, p. 24), and finally Wittgenstein's ladder (p. 492), making it a sort of intellectual coffee table book. There is even comic relief, especially the convocation of friars and prelates which ends in a melée of boasting and namecalling,[5] a scene whose theatrical or even cinematic potential cannot be ignored.

The list of such "accidental" delights could go on, but not everyone will agree with Adso that "there is nothing more wonderful than a list" (p. 73). We must

2. His gumming of the chick-peas (p. 159) is pure Italian, a kind of peninsular family-joke.

3. Consider, for example, the Seventh Trumpet—which is *not* mentioned in connection with Jorge's cramming of the "forbidden book" into his mouth:

> And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and ate it up; and it was in my mouth sweet as honey; and as soon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter. *Rev.* 10; 10.

Jorge enjoys eating the Second Book of Aristotle's *Poetics*—it's the only time he laughs in the entire book (p. 481)—but of course it kills him.

4. The final clue, p. 457, entails taking words as *things* and not even as signs.

5. A personal note. At one point in the "martyr-dropping" interchange, "The Dominican Bishop of Alborea, red in the face, . stood up. 'I can prove that before any Minorites [i.e., Franciscans] were in Tartary, Pope Innocent sent three Dominicans there.'" (p. 343) The reference here can only be to Piano Carpini (no relation), a *Franciscan* friar sent with two others of that order by Innocent IV on a mission to the Mongols in 1245. The comedic intention here may well be to point up the ignorance of the bishop's Franciscan opponent, who does not challenge his facts. But insofar as Adam Smith makes his own mistake about poor Piano (conflating him with another Franciscan, sent by Louis IX in 1253 [as per the Modern Library *Wealth of Nations*, pp. 389–99]), we can only suspect that there is some plot afoot to obscure the efforts of old Carpini.

turn rather to essentials, to the particular *form*[6] of the novel, its philosophical content, and must forego completely any indulgence in the detective-story "matter." Echoing, therefore, the wonderful list of fundamental philosophical questions offered by Kant, we shall approach *The Name of the Rose* in terms of the following concerns:

1. Deciphering of puzzles
2. The political program
3. The vision of the simple
4. Laughter[7]

1. DECIPHERING OF PUZZLES

The very first thing that William of Baskerville does, his "act of address" to the abbey, is to discover the location of a horse he has never seen (p. 23). William's *Seinsverhaltung*, in other words, is that of an investigator, a solver of mysteries (p. 304), a decipherer of codes (p. 166), indeed, an inquisitor:

> as inquisitor I am . . [even] better than Bernard Gui,[8] God forgive me. Because Bernard is interested, not in discovering the guilty, but in burning the accused. [But] I, on the contrary, find the most joyful delight in unravelling a nice complicated knot.[9] And it must also be because, at a time when as a philosopher I doubt the world has an order, I am consoled to discover, if not an order, at least a series of connections in small areas of the world's affairs (p. 394).

And from that consolation a whole epistemology is made to flow, a notion of truth modeled on the solving of puzzles. The procedure is packed into a peculiarity of translation (there are several such) in a passage occurring just after William has explained to Adso the principles of solving a mystery (pp. 304–305):

> I had the impression [muses Adso] that William was not at all interested in the truth, which is nothing but the *adjustment* [l'*adequazione*] between the thing and the

6. That forms can be particular, that individuation can be formal, is a characteristic theme among the Franciscan Scholastics, and it is no accident that the protagonist and his favorites (Roger Bacon and William of Occam) are all Franciscans—although Duns Scotus, whose "specialty" is *haecceitas*, never appears in person. Scotus, however, had little or nothing to say politically.

7. Laughter, of course, is the classical "property" of man and the central concern of the book. For surely it cannot be an accident that the Eskimo expression for the conjugal act is "to laugh together" and that such laughing together, between Adso and his peasant girl, occurs at the "geographical" midpoint of the novel—pp. 245–50 of a 500-page book!

8. One of the many historical figures appearing in the book, and a really *grand* inquisitor, if ever there was one!

9. William had in fact been an inquisitor, but "abandoned that noble activity" (p. 31) because he was interested only in the "simple chains of causes" connecting a victim with his prisoner and not with diabolical intervention (p. 30). ("I don't want to know who is good or who is wicked. " [p. 207]) Reasoning about such ultimate causalities, he says, "is a very difficult thing, and I believe the only judge of that can be God" (p. 30).

intellect. On the contrary, he amused himself by imagining how many possibilities were possible (p. 306; p. 309. Emphasis added.)[10]

"Adjustment" of course is precisely what William was doing, and it is what the investigator into puzzles must do, but the formula being echoed by Adso is usually rendered as the *adequation* of (even—you should bite your tongue—the "correspondence" between) thing and intellect. Needless to say, when puzzle-solving is made the model of learning (i.e., of coming to know), "adjustment" *is* the appropriate term, and truth becomes *success*. But only men make puzzles.

There are two elements, one might say, in the solving of puzzles, and they are inevitably problematic for a science built on the paradigm of puzzle-solving: particulars, clusters, "sets," even *manifolds* of particulars; and the patterns, "orders," or *concepts* according to which they are to be arranged or "understood." The relationship is suggested in a couple of lines omitted from the translation. William is speaking of "the science [Roger] Bacon spoke of" (p. 207):

> Observe, I speak of propositions about things, not of things. Science has to do with propositions and their terms, and the terms indicate singular things.[11]

First the particulars, then their ordering.

Early in the tale, when he was expatiating to Adso on the epistemology of his discovery of the missing horse (pp. 27–28), William describes the process by which a vague and general idea is gradually replaced by more specific ones as we come closer to the object of inquiry.

> . . When you come closer, you will then define it as an animal. And finally, when it is still closer, you will be able to say it is a horse. . And only when you are at the proper distance will you see that it is Brunellus. . And that will be full knowledge, the learning [l'intuizione] of the singular [*pace* Aristotle!]. So an hour ago I could expect all horses, not because of the vastness of my intellect, but because of the paucity of my deduction [intuizione]. And my intellect's hunger was sated only when I saw the single horse. . . Only then did I know that my previous reasoning had brought me close to the truth. And so the ideas, which I was using earlier to imagine a horse I had not yet seen, were pure signs, as the hoofprints in the snow were signs of the idea of 'horse'; and signs and the signs of signs are used only when we are lacking things (p. 28; p. 36).

Brunellus appears again, in a disquisition on hypothesis testing:

> . solving a mystery is not the same as deducing from first principles. . . I line up so many disjointed elements [tanti elementi sconnessi] and I venture some hypotheses. I didn't know which hypothesis was right until I saw the cellarer [looking for a horse] . . . Then I understood that the Brunellus hypothesis was the only right one. . I won, but I might also have lost . . (p. 305; p. 308).

10. That is, p. 306 of the English translation and p. 309 of the Italian (*Il nome della rosa*, Bompiani, Milano, 1980). Subsequent dual references will be arranged in this manner.

11. " Bada, parlo di proposizione sulle cose, non di cose. La scienza ha a che fare con le proposizione e i suoi termini, e i termini indicano cose singolari." *Il nome della rosa*, p. 210.

At this point Adso contrasts William's procedure with the "usual" one: "I understood at that moment my master's method of reasoning, and it seemed to me quite alien to that of the philosopher, who reasons by first principles, so that his intellect almost assumes the ways of the divine intellect" (pp. 305; p. 308).[12]

William's rejection of this "method of the philosopher," who "reasons by first principles" and "almost assumes the ways of the divine intellect" is grounded in his tender concern for the prerogatives of the divine will:

> You understand, Adso, I must believe that my proposition works, because I learned it by experience; but to believe it I must assume there are universal laws. Yet I cannot speak of them, because the very concept that universal laws and an established order [un ordine dato delle cose] exist would imply that God is their prisoner, whereas God is something absolutely free, so that if He wanted, with a single act of His will He could make the world different (p. 207; p. 210)[13]

Adso sympathizes:

> "Yours is a difficult life," I said.
> "But I found Brunellus," William cried, recalling the horse episode of two days before.
> "Then there is an order in the world [un ordine del mondo]!" I cried, triumphant.
> "Then there is a bit of order in this poor head of mine," William answered (p. 208; p. 211).

Order, in short, is a function of the individual mind; and the way of discovering it, the type and paradigm, the very "form" of inquiry, is the process of deciphering. The page or two devoted specifically to cryptography and code solving (pp. 165–67) are particularly revealing. William offers some examples of code systems (p. 166) and then turns to the ways of breaking them:

> . But the first rule in deciphering a message is to guess what it means.
> But then it's unnecessary to decipher it! I laughed.[14]

12. Earlier Adso had remarked on the ways of "divine reason, which has built [costruito] the world as a perfect syllogism (p. 279; p. 282)," and on the contrasting temperament of his master: "On other occasions I had heard him speak with great skepticism about universal ideas and with great respect about individual things; and afterward, too, I thought this tendency came to him from his being both a Briton and a Franciscan" (p. 28; p. 36).

13. "Universal laws," of course, is quite equivocal. As Occam says, "[The divine intellect] understands all necessary principles naturally, as if before the act of the divine will (since their truth does not depend upon that act and they would be understood even if, *per impossibile*, [the divine will] were not willing)." William Ockham. *Predestination, God's Foreknowledge, and Future Contingents.* Trans. Marilyn McCord Adams and Norman Kretzmann. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Meredith Corporation, 1969, p. 84 (brackets in the original). But the creative intentions of the divine will are no more bound by their effects than ours are. Again, Occam: "For our will, as naturally prior to its act, elicits that act in such a way that it could at one and the same instant elicit its opposite. In the same way the divine will, insofar as volition itself alone is naturally prior to such an intention (*tendentia*), intends the object contingently in such a way that at the same instant it could intend the opposite object." (*Ibid.*, p. 83) In other words, God's freedom to make another world is not compromised by the laws of this one. The problem, we must assume, is not science but miracles.

14. The echo, here, of Meno's conundrum, *Meno* 80d, can hardly be accidental, because nothing less is involved, here, than the possibility and nature of learning, of *coming to know*.

Not exactly. Some hypotheses can be formed on the possible first words of the message, and then you can see whether the rule you infer from them can apply to the rest of the text. . [He gives some examples, concerning the cipher before them.] . . Perhaps this is the right tack. But it could also be just a series of coincidences. A rule of correspondence [una regola di corrispondenza] has to be found.

Found where? [asks Adso.]

In our heads. Invent it. And then see whether it is the right one. . . . remember this—there is no secret writing that cannot be deciphered with a bit of patience (p. 166; p. 171. Emphasis added).

Lest we be lulled by the Holmesean flavor of this apostrophe—the detective showing off his expertise in the techniques of his trade—into thinking that the topic here is the deciphering of codes, William's very next sentence is: "But we risk losing time, and want to visit the library" (p. 167). It is the *library* which must be deciphered, the library which is "a great labyrinth, sign of the labyrinth of the world,"[15] as old Alinardo says (p. 158); and the library is the heart of the abbey (p. 36), which is itself a "mirror of the world"[16] (p. 120), all in a sequence of infoliated symbols of symbols. Upon their emergence (by accident!) from their first frightful night-visit to the library (it may not be entered by day) Adso remarks to William, "How beautiful the world is, and how ugly labyrinths are," to which William replies:

How beautiful the world would be if there were a procedure [una regola] for moving through labyrinths (p. 178; p. 182).

Again we must not dally with the obvious: the world, for Adso the cloistered young monk, is a place to get out of; for William, the worldly old friar, it is a puzzle to enjoy. Rather, by what will be a somewhat tortuous winding and turning among the pages, let us now try to discover the "regola" by which order is to be found in the world.

While they are wandering around the library in the darkness of that first night, William recites, "from an ancient text I once read," a complicated scheme for finding one's way out of a labyrinth, involving making a mark with charcoal at every juncture unless it already has three marks . . . or something like that.

And by observing this rule [questa regola] you get out? [Adso asks.]

Almost never, as far as I know, [William replies] (p. 176; p. 180).

15. Its wings and branches are arranged and stacked in terms of the areas of the world from which the books or authors supposedly came, so it is quite literally a "sign of the world"—not unlike ancient and medieval maps, with the Mediterranean Sea in the center and all places located in a circle around it. Thus the anthropomorphism of all cosmic representations!

16. With a condition:

If this abbey were a speculum mundi, you would already have the answer. [says William.]

But is it? [Adso asks.]

In order for there to be a mirror of the world, it is necessary that the world have a form, concluded William, who was too much of a philosopher for my adolescent mind (p. 120).

So much for the rules of "ancient texts." But how *do* our heroes solve the puzzle of the Library, and from what standpoint? From outside, and by means of mathematics. "We must," says William the next day, "find, from the outside, a way of describing the Aedificium as it is inside. . . ." "But how?" asks Adso.

> Let me think, it shouldn't be so difficult. .
> And the method of which you spoke yesterday? You don't want to walk through the labyrinth making signs with charcoal?
> No, he [William] said, the more I think about it, the less I am convinced. Perhaps I didn't succeed in recollecting the rule well, or perhaps to get around in a labyrinth one needs to have a good Ariadne who awaits you at the door holding the end of a thread. But threads so long don't exist. And also if they were to exist, that would signify (often fables speak the truth) that one can get out of a labyrinth only with outside assistance. The laws of the outside must be equal to the laws of the inside.[17]

How then will we figure it out? "We will use the mathematical sciences. Only in the mathematical sciences, as Averroës says, are things known to us identified with those known absolutely [in modo assoluto] (p. 215; p. 219)." Adso jumps to the obvious conclusion: "Then you do admit universal notions. ." (cf. p. 208). Not quite.

> Mathematical notions are propositions constructed by our intellect in such a way that they function always as truths, either because they are innate or because mathematics was invented before the other sciences. And the library was built by a human mind that thought in a mathematical fashion, because without mathematics you cannot build labyrinths. And therefore we must compare [confrontare] our mathematical propositions with the propositions of the builder, and from this comparison science can be produced [e di questo confronto si può dare scienza], because it is a science of terms upon terms [di termini su termini]. And, in any case, stop dragging me into discussions of metaphysics (p. 215; p. 219).

There is one more piece to the puzzle. A few days later, after William has reconstructed the floor plan and layout of the library, Adso asks him admiringly,

> But how does it happen that you were able to solve the mystery of the library looking at it from the outside, and you were unable to solve it when you were inside?
> Thus God knows the world, because He conceived it in His mind, as if from the outside, before it was created [*pace* Hegel!], and we do not know its rule [la regola], because we live inside it, having found it already made.
> So one can know things by looking at them from the outside! [exclaims Adso.]

17. Lasciami pensare, non deve essere così difficile. "
E il metodo di cui dicevate ieri? Non volevate percorrere il labirinto facendo segni col carbone?
No, disse, più ci penso, meno mi convince. Forse non riesco a ricordare bene la regola, o forse per girare in un labirinto bisogna avere una bona Arianna che ti attende alla porta tenendo il capo di un filo. Ma non esistono fili così lunghi. E anche se esistessero, ciò significherebbe (spesso le favole dicono la verità) che si esce da un labirinto solo con un aiuto esterno. Dove le leggi dell'esterno siano uguali alle legge dell'interno (pp. 218–19 of the Italian). For some reason this passage is omitted from where it belongs on p. 215 of the English translation.

> The creations of art [Le cose dell'arte], because we retrace in our minds the operations of the artificer. Not the creations of nature [le cose della natura], because they are not the work [non sono opera] of our minds (p. 218; p. 222).[18]

And there we have it, the Charter of Modern Science.

"Ancient texts" are of no use in solving the puzzles of this world. Only some "outside assistance," whose laws are "equal" to the internal laws, only some point of view like God's, Who conceives the world "as if from the outside," only such a rule will permit us to make our way in the labyrinth of this world. And that "regola," that Ariadne's thread, that *equivalent to God*, is "the mathematical sciences."

We must be forgiven this serpentine sorites, this shuttling through the fabric of the text, pulling at a thread from here and there to weave a swatch of simple doctrine, but this, as must be said again, is no mere detective story.

Nominalism was the inevitable consequence of a creational cosmology, where the Measure and the things It made were all particular. The ancient problem was the problem of individuation: how can particular beings be intelligible, when the proper mode of intelligibility as such is timeless and unchanging, permitting the wise man (who sees) and even the philosopher (who seeks) a kind of divinity? The ancient solutions, generally speaking, made some accommodations with chaos, regarding the particular as at least partly meaningless. The modern problem—and it emerges early in the middle ages (the Franciscans did not discover the particular, they merely popularized it)—is the problem of universals: In a world where "Divinity" is a proper noun and everything else an intelligible particular (God being unable to make anything meaningless), what "mode" is left to intelligibility as such? Where and what, one asks, are the universals?[19] To what, in short, do common nouns refer? There *is* no separate "world" of Forms, and God's absolute simplicity *excludes* their multiplicity and mutual exclusivity

18. Adso then asks, "But for the library this suffices, doesn't it?" (p. 218), and William replies "Yes, . But only for the library" (p. 219). The implication for the story-line is that mathematics will not solve the homicides, but the larger application would be to exclude free acts from the analytic power of "mathematical science."

19. See, for example, the ending of Chapter III of Aquinas' *On Being and Essence*: "Human nature, then, can have the character of a species only as it exists in the intellect. . . . And although the nature existing in the intellect has the character of a universal from its relation to things outside the intellect, since it is one likeness of them all, nevertheless as it exists in this or that intellect, it is a certain particular species apprehended by the intellect. The Commentator was thus clearly in error in his exposition on the third book of the *De Anima*, for he wanted to conclude that the intellect is one in all men from the universality of the form in the intellect. For the universality of that form does not come from the existence which it has in the intellect, but from its relation to things whose likeness it is. In the same way, if a material statue represented a great number of men, it is agreed that the statue's image or likeness would have an individual and proper act of existing as it existed in this particular matter, but it would have community inasmuch as it would be the common representative of many men." (*On Being and Essence*. Trans. A. A. Maurer. Toronto: Pontifical Institute of Medieval Studies, 1949, pp. 41–42.) St. Thomas tends to be circumspect about these things, but insofar as he bases this rejection of Averroës' Agent Intellect on the particularity of the universal, he must have meant it to be taken seriously.

—as though, as was first suggested, his "concepts" could be the "Ideas" which Plato sought—so what can words be but an intention to *use* them in a general way? In fine, Nominalism, with all its pomps and virtualities.

But Nominalism must have floundered aimlessly for years until a flexible number-system appeared, to provide an armature for scientific inquiry. (Imagine Galileo trying to work with Roman numerals!) And the verities of "mathematical science" are so self-assured that their provenance ("either because they are innate or because mathematics was invented before the other sciences"—p. 215) can be bracketed off (". . . stop dragging me into discussions of metaphysics"—p. 215) with no detriment to the success of experimental inquiry ("I won . . " p. 305).

There is perhaps one more metaphor that can be squeezed for meaning, in this involuted attempt to show the medieval roots of modern thought. Can it be completely accidental that the protagonist had been by trade an inquisitor? Ancient science did not *inquire* of being or put it to the torture (as in scientific experiments); it accused, imputed "categories," and then followed their histories, awaiting results that were "largely and for the most part" true. But to inquire of being is to expect an *answer* from it and, unable to check its veracity, to be satisfied with anything that "works." Thus, technological science. The categorizing mode, on the other hand, confronted with the sullen silence of the accused (being doesn't speak; we speak, and maybe God speaks), too often retired to its chambers and the somber consolations of skepticism. Modern nihilism is a different thing; it is a "misology" resulting *not* from a disappointment with argument (as Socrates would have it in the *Phaedo*) but from a bitterness over the loneliness of a reason which finds itself so often unrewarded by the now-Godless Nature it inquires of (as Kant suggests in the *Fundamental Principles*).

But that is all metaphor, words about words, and not even books speaking of other books (pp. 286, 396). Suffice it to say that when inquisition is taken as the model of the judiciary mode, when heretical conspiracies and labyrinths and ciphers (as in "the book of nature") and puzzles and even languages[20] are taken as the paradigm for being itself, then inevitably the methodologies of investigative reporting and of decipherment become the rules for the achievement of knowledge, and success, even "winning," is all.

The labyrinth is not, could not be, a model of the universe for pagan philosophy. Labyrinths (and puzzles and conspiracies and languages) are made by people, but for a non-Creational consciousness the Measure does not *make* anything; it simply *is* as *what* it is; indeed, it *is* a "what." A Jew or a Christian might *well* regard the world as a cosmic puzzle—it certainly presents itself that way—but the puzzlement occurs within the context of belief in an ultimately benevolent if

20. Socrates' example, in the *Theaetetus* (202–206), of the syllable and its elements, has nothing to do with languages in their variety and complexity. But the hilarity of his etymologies in the *Cratylus* indicate precisely the impossibility, in ancient thought, of using language as the model for being. *The Name of the Rose* also has some very amusing derivations (e.g., pp. 282, 283, 288), but their intention is only historical—a little fun-poking—and not epistemological.

not immediately benign Puzzler. Our author reportedly no longer shares that faith;[21] we must wonder what the context of his puzzlement could be? A memory? A wish? A cruel hoax? A cosmic joke, perhaps. For, as Adso writes, at the very end, "stat rosa pristina nomine, nomina nuda tenemus."[22]

2. THE POLITICAL PROGRAM

The political thrust of this "medieval detective story" is deep and passionate, and the "moments" of its dialectic are present from the start. Adso of Melk is of the nobility (p. 13) and was even born in a castle (p. 335). William of Baskerville, if not clearly of peasant stock is basically British (apparently Scottish, p. 15) — which is almost as good. And we soon realize that the "bad guys" (this is, after all, a detective story) all come from aristocratic backgrounds (Abo the abbot,[23] and Jorge of Burgos, the blind old keeper of the secrets, to name the main ones), while the victims — not the suicidal monks, but the cellarer and the girl caught in the inquisitorial web of Bernard Gui — are all peasants and from "i semplici," the simple folk. And it finally dawns on us, after reflection, that the absence of Duns Scotus in all the laudatory references to Franciscan doctors can only be due to his virtual silence on political matters, whereas all the others — Roger Bacon, Occam, Grosseteste (a semi-Franciscan) — were outspoken, and sometimes quite active, politically.

The ostensive topic of the convocation which provides the *raison d'être* of the action is a "debate" on the poverty of Christ. If Christ can be shown to have been poor, or to have advocated poverty, then the Pope at Avignon is wrong in his condemnation and prosecution, *as heretical*, of all the groups of Fraticelli and Poverelli that had preached and pillaged throughout Italy in the recent past. Of course,

> . the question is not whether Christ was poor: it is whether the church must be poor. And "poor" does not so much mean owning a palace or not; it means, rather, keeping or renouncing the right to legislate on earthly matters (p. 345; p. 349).

Heresy and poverty, in other words, are not a matter of theory and fact, but of practice and principle, and the "heresy" at issue — the illegitimacy of wealth — as particularly dangerous to the social order. The abbot, speaking as it were for the Establishment, makes the connection:

> . The Fraticelli derive from that doctrine [of the poverty of Christ] a practical syllogism: they infer a right to revolution, to looting, to the perversion of behavior (p. 150; p. 155).

21. Cf. *Current Biography*, April 1985, Vol. 46, No. 4, p. 14b.

22. Which has been translated "approximately" as: "the rose of an earlier time stands only as a name, we hold names alone." *Ibid.*, p. 15b.

23. *Abbone*, in the original, which *might* be rendered as "Big Daddy," if we mix languages a little.

. . [all heretics] jeopardize the very order of the civilized world . . . (p. 151; p. 155).

. I know that heretics are those who endanger the order that sustains the people of God (p. 153; p. 158).

This is a very political book, and it presents in no uncertain terms the "ideological" function of theology in the Middle Ages (a thing unknown, thank heaven, in our own time), when the poor and downtrodden made use of the faith to justify their rebellion and the powerful used theology to support their dominion. As William says:

Every battle against heresy wants only this: to keep the leper [i.e., the outcasts, the lower classes] as he is. As for the lepers, what can you ask of them? That they distinguish in the Trinitarian dogma or in the definition of the Eucharist how much is correct and how much is wrong? Come, Adso, *these games are for us men of learning* [questi sono giochi per noi uomini di dottrina]. The simple have other problems" (p. 203; p. 206. Emphasis added).

William of Baskerville is very concerned for what he calls "i semplici,"[24] the simple folk.

"So the cellarer was right [says Adso]: the simple folk always pay for all, even for those who speak in their favor, even for those like Ubertino and Michael, who with their words of penance have driven the simple to rebel!" I was in such despair that I did not consider that the girl [Adso's brief encounter, soon to be burned as a witch] was not even a Fraticello, seduced by Ubertino's mystical vision, but a peasant, paying for something that did not concern her.

"So it is," William answered me sadly. (p. 406; p. 409)

What is to be done?

The solution is *not* to be a matter of Christian charity, benevolence on the part of the ruling class. After he has been imperiously dismissed from the case by the abbot, William, in his frustration, blows up at Adso:

" . . . Proud, proud, all of you Cluniacs, worse than princes, more baronial than barons!"

"Master . " I ventured, hurt. . [Adso is the son of a baron].

"You be quiet, you are made of the same stuff [della stessa pasta]. Your band [Voi] are not simple men, or sons of the simple. If a peasant comes along you may receive him [as the abbot received the cellarer], but as I saw yesterday, you do not hesitate to hand him over to the secular arm. But not one of your own, no; he must be shielded. . Have a Franciscan, a plebeian Minorite [i.e., William], discover the rat's nest of

24. His interest in and knowledge of medicinal herbs (pp. 66–67, et passim), also called *semplici* (simples) in Italian, must be just one of those accidents of language, with no apparent ideological significance—other than the fact that the villain is killed by the poison he himself spread on the pages he finally eats.

this holy house? Ah no, this is something Abo [the abbot] cannot allow at any price. . . But now the challenge is not just a matter between me and Abo, it is between me and the whole business [tutta la vicenda]. " (p. 450; pp. 453–54).

"The whole business," of course, is not just the homicides or even the conflict between "Cluniacs" (wealthy monastics) and mendicant friars; rather it is a matter of social systems, of "orders." Earlier, in speaking of Roger Bacon, scientist, theologian, politician, William enlarges:

Bacon believed in the strength, the needs, the spiritual inventions of the simple. He wouldn't have been a good Franciscan if he hadn't thought that the poor, the outcast, idiots and illiterate, often speak with the mouth of our Lord.[25] . . What must be done? Give learning to the simple? Too easy, or too difficult. (p. 205; p. 208) [Bacon] thought that the new natural science should be the great new enterprise of the learned [dei dotti]: to coordinate, through a different knowledge of natural processes, the elementary needs that represented also the heap of expectations . . . of the simple.

So I think that, since I and my friends today believe that for the management of human affairs it is not the church that should legislate but the assembly of the people, then in the future the community of the learned [comunità dei dotti] will have to propose this new and humane theology which is natural philosophy and positive magic p. 206; 209).[26]

Not yet a political program, but at least a preamble, and one which makes manifest the role of *i cognoscenti*:[27] "Those learned in divine things are in their way the voice of the Christian people" (p. 297; p. 300). The program, to the extent that there is one, is presented mainly in William's speech to the friars and prelates on Thursday (pp. 352–56). Pope and Emperor stand on opposite sides in the matter of Christ's "poverty," with the Emperor backing the Franciscans— for his purposes (p. 13). "But . . . we [Marsilius of Padua and William of Baskerville] would like the empire to support our view and serve our idea of human rule" (p. 346).

The plan was that as advisors to the Emperor, the two Williams (the one of Occam, the other fictional) and Marsilius would exchange theological ammunition (for the Emperor in his struggle with the Pope) for improvements in the conditions of *i semplici*. Unfortunately it didn't quite work out that way. For

25. "The voice of the people is as the Voice of God." Midrash Samuel on *Pirke Abot*, quoted in Leo Rosten's *Treasury of Jewish Quotations*. Bantam, 1980; p. 346. William must have been a voracious reader, truly catholic in his interests.

26. This is the "holy magic" spoken of earlier in connection with the spectacles, "where God's knowledge is made manifest through the knowledge of man, and it serves to transform nature, and one of its ends is to prolong man's very life" (p. 87; p. 95).

27. Professor Eco may share some of William's views on the role of the learned. Cf. the reference, in *Current Biography*, April 1985 (p. 14a), to his association with a "Gruppo 63," "a group of writers concerned with social change" in the 1950s and 1960s. In that same brief biography our author's analysis of popular diversionary culture is spoken of: "He objected not to occasional escapist amusement but to an exclusive diet of the kind of entertainment that neither provokes social criticism nor points to the possibilities for needed reform." (*ibid.*)

waiting in the wings, ready to destroy the whole medieval order of things, was the emerging mercantile, manufacturing, and civic tidal wave which later became, in Italy, the Renaissance. (Cf. Aymaro's complaint, pp. 124–27.) The new force is *money*.

> Money, in Italy [says William], has a different function from what it has in your country, or in mine. . much of life elsewhere is still dominated and regulated by the bartering of goods. . In the Italian city, on the contrary; you must have noticed that goods serve to procure money. And even priests, bishops, even religious orders have to take money into account. That is why, naturally, rebellion against power takes the form of a call to poverty. . . and the whole city, from bishop to magistrate, considers a personal enemy the one who preaches poverty too much (pp. 126–27).

Money will be the nexus of the future, sweeping away in its path all prior distinctions, and the specter of it on the horizon makes William's mildly Marsilian parliamentarianism seem more naïve, even passé, than a revolutionary adumbration of things to come. Adso provides only a paraphrase of William's proposals at the meeting.

> He cleared his throat, . . and suggested that the way in which the people could express its will might be an elective general assembly. He said that to him it seemed sensible for such an assembly to be empowered to interpret, change, or suspend the law, because if the law is made by one man alone, he could do harm through ignorance or malice . . (p. 352; p. 357).

Even Aristotle could live with that; but there is also the church, a problem Aristotle could not have foreseen. William proposes a separation of church and state, with all coercive power, in this world, in the hands of the prince.

> [Christ] did not want the apostles to have command and dominion, and therefore it seemed a wise thing that the successors of the apostles should be relieved of any worldly or coercive power. . But what should the prince do with a heretic? . . . The prince can and must condemn the heretic if his action harms the community. . But at that point the power of the prince ends . . (p. 354; pp. 358–59).

In other words, some of the elemental principles of Enlightenment political philosophy can already be found in medieval thinkers who, if not precisely "mainstream," were no less real. (William mentions Marsilius of Padua and John of Jandun at this point [p. 355], but there were others.[28]) This may startle readers totally unacquainted with the period, but as there is nothing new in William's acedia for anyone who has read the words of *Carmina Burana*, so also one does not have to be a medievalist to realize that, for good or ill, not *all* of the roots of the eighteenth century go back to classical antiquity. A lot of work was put into the unearthing of what later became self-evident principles.

28. See, for example, the off-handed remark of Aquinas, that "Hence the making of a law belongs either to the whole people or to a public personage who has care of the whole people. " *S.T.*, Ia IIae, Q. 90, art. 3, corpus.

What we ought to do, then, is to strive for the elimination of injustice in this world and the institution, again in this world, of more equitable—i.e., "democratic"—political systems. What *is* somewhat new, in William's presentation, is the metaphysical and epistemological grounding for this by now rather standard secular ethic.

3. THE VISION OF THE SIMPLE

William's abiding concern is for "the simple folk," *i semplici*, and this in two respects: their status as outcasts, as the despised of the earth (e.g., pp. 201–203); and their role as epistemological "lens,"[29] providing insight into the really real (pp. 205, 206, et passim). The first concern is doubtless grounded in his Christianity, there being no classical philosophical counterpart to compassion for the downtrodden.[30] It may therefore be set aside as religious sentimentality—or as *mere* sentimentality—and of no import for a purely rational and natural political program.[31] More important, and fairly unique, is the "gnoseological" function of *i semplici*.

Following the lens experiment (p. 205) and his brief presentation of Roger Bacon's sociological proposals, William expands upon the role of "the simple":

> The simple have something more than do the learned doctors, who often become lost in their search for broad general laws. The simple have a sense of the individual [l'intuizione dell'individuale], but this sense [intuizione], by itself, is not enough. The

29. Right after showing Adso how a lens can magnify without changing what is seen through it (p. 205), William says "I'm saying more than I seem to be," and immediately launches into his discussion of Roger Bacon's political program (pp. 205–206) and Occam's epistemology (pp. 206–207).

30. Aristotle, for example, will concede the possibility of a kind of collective wisdom in an assembly of the freeborn: " . . for where there are many, each individual, it may be argued, has some portion of virtue and wisdom. . . . " (*Politics* III, vi, 4; Loeb translation, p. 233.) Taken individually, of course, they are not to be trusted with the highest offices (vi, 6; p. 225), but "for them not to participate [at all] is an alarming situation, for when there are a number of persons without political honours and in poverty, the city then is bound to be full of enemies" (*ibid.*). The many, in other words, must be handled, even manipulated, but surely not loved.

31. No sentimentalist himself, however, William offers an intriguing explanation of that most charming of medieval images, St. Francis preaching to the birds. After speaking of lepers as the ultimate outcasts, he says:

> " The lepers are a sign of exclusion in general. St. Francis understood that. . . Have you been told about his preaching to the birds?"
>
> "Oh, yes," [says Adso,] "I've heard that beautiful story, and I admired the saint who enjoyed the company of those tender creatures of God. "
>
> "Well, what they told you was mistaken, or, rather, it's a story the order has revised today. When Francis spoke to the people of the city and its magistrates and saw they didn't understand him, he went out to the cemetery and began preaching to ravens and magpies, to hawks, to raptors feeding on corpses."
>
> "What a horrible thing!" I said. (p. 202)

simple grasp a truth of their own, perhaps truer than that of the doctors of the church . . (p. 205; p. 208).

The lens, we remember, made things more visible,[32] and now the simple folk are "bearers of a truth different from that of the wise" (p. 285), their natural insight into "the individual." William continues:

> . . How are we to remain close to the experience of the simple, maintaining, so to speak, their operative virtue [la virtù operativa], the capacity of working toward the transformation and betterment of their world? This was the problem for Bacon (pp. 205–206; p. 208).

And Bacon's solution — legislation by the people under the direction of those learned in the "new Magic" — is a "splendid enterprise" (Adso's expression, p. 206) which Bacon and William both think is possible.

> But to believe in it we must be sure that the simple are right in possessing the sense of the individual [l'intuizione dell'individuale], which is the only good kind [l'unica buona]. However, if the sense of the individual [l'intuizione dell'individuale] is the only good [l'unica buona], how will science succeed in recomposing [ricomporre] the universal laws through which and, interpreting which, the good magic will become functional [operativa]? (p. 206; p. 209)

Adso asks how it can be done. William says he "no longer know[s]," and refers to "my friend William of Occam."

> He has sown doubts in my mind. Because if only the sense of the individual is just [giusta, = correct], the proposition that identical causes have identical effects is difficult to prove. How can I discover the universal bond that orders all things if I cannot lift a finger without creating an infinity of new entities? For with such a movement all the relations of position between my finger and all other objects change. The relations [relazioni] are the ways [modi] in which my mind perceives the connections [il rapporto] between the single entities, but what is the guarantee that this [questo modo] is universal and stable? (pp. 206–207; pp. 209–10)

"Intuition of the singular," he had said, when talking about his discovery of the horse (p. 28), is "full knowledge." But now the individual breeds *other* individuals, like frost upon a windowpane, and the mind, in its effort to discover the laws of their interconnections, is overwhelmed by the multiplicity of its own perceptions. This is not Nominalism at its simplest (where it cannot be distinguished from what Engels will call "metaphysics"[33]), but it is surely an outgrowth of it. Practice is not at issue:

32. The dramatic *and* epistemological function of William's spectacles is only one of the many leitmotive — like mirrors, and even light itself — which shimmer through the text. For example, p. 208: "And when this fork [the spectacles] is on my poor nose," William says, "perhaps my poor head will be even more orderly." (Order a function of vision, and vision a function of technology?) But how the abbey's glazier can grind and polish a new set of lenses for William in a matter of days, even hours, is itself something of a mystery!

33. Or, for that matter, from what Kant calls "dogmatism," but coming at it from another angle.

In fact, I have worked out this proposition: equal thickness [of lens] corresponds necessarily [deve corrispondere] to equal power of vision. I have posited it because on other occasions I have had individual insights [intuizione individuali] of the same type. To be sure, anyone who tests the curative property of herbs knows that individual herbs of the same species have equal effects of the same nature on the patient, and therefore[34] the investigator [lo sperimentatore] formulates the proposition that every herb of a given type helps the feverish, or that every lens of such a type magnifies the eye's vision to the same degree (p. 207; p. 210).

But what has this to do with the insights of the simple and their political vision? In a way, everything. For what remains untouched by all this perplexity is the status of names; interconnecting "laws" are up for grabs (as the simple might put it), but all agree, both simple and learned, that individuals may be named. We return to William's political statement at the meeting of friars and prelates. He mentions Adam, "encouraged" by God "to give things names."

In fact, though some in our times say that nomina sunt consequentia rerum, the book of Genesis is actually quite explicit on this point: God brought all the animals unto Adam to see what he would call them: the whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof. And though surely the first man had been clever enough to call, in his Adamic language, every thing and animal according to its nature, nevertheless he was exercising a kind of soverign right in imagining the name that in his opinion best corresponded to that nature. Because, in fact, it is now known that men impose different names to designate concepts, though only the concepts, signs of things, are the same for all. [How would we know *that*?] So that surely the word "nomen" comes from "nomos," that is to say "law," since nomina are given by men ad placitum, in other words by free and collective accord (p. 353; p. 357).

The derivation (nomen from nomos) is much too wild to have been offered without historical justification; but it's backwards! For surely naming comes first, generalized imposition "by free and collective accord" (like money, in Locke) and then, by legislative decree, impositions on behavior, or positive law. And only the simple have no illusions about this. With their native insight into the singular, their unconcern for word games or for dalliance with universals, the simple folk know that laws too are imposed, and when all the bets are in they want their cut of the pot.

The faith [i.e., the theology which] a movement proclaims doesn't count: what counts is the hope it offers (p. 203).

The *hope* that is offered by this "new science, the new natural magic" (p. 206) is nothing less than unlimited creature comforts for the many, "the elementary needs that . . . [are] also the heap of expectations . . . of the simple" (*ibid.*), or, as

34. The "therefore" which connects antecedent and consequent, here, is *not* the same as the "therefore" by which the experimenter generalizes his experiences. There are *rewards* for "correct" inductions; but the step from the manifold of experience to the unity of "law" is of a different order completely, a kind of compulsion specifying the human being. But that is a side issue.

Jorge puts it, in another context, "the idea that man can wish to have on earth . . . the abundance of the land of Cockaigne" (p. 475). For if all words are imputed names, all laws imposed connections, then—as Protagoras implied—the majority rules (or should rule, because given the right kind of "leadership," it *can*); and Nominalism (l'intuizione dell'individuale) emerges as the epistemological foundation for Populism!

Hope by nature overrides the given, but it cannot be grounded in itself. The genius of Hobbes was to ground his hopes in human selfishness, in the expectation that though "words are wise men's counters," their *fears* will provide a bedrock of certitude beneath the swamp of vanities. William's hopes are grounded in compassion for "the simple folk," and his universe is a kind of polenta with an anticlerical (i.e., Italian) seasoning. The distinctions in it are all spoon-made, ultimately quantitative and subjective; there is nothing for the fork of reason, the either/or of moral condemnation, to dig out for chewing on.[35] That's the *problem* of a cosmologically disengaged Nominalism, its inherent relativism, reducing moral judgment to sentimental indignation.

For all its weaknesses, Christianity provided the many with ontological grounds for hope for a millenium or so, along with and perhaps at the cost of its latent support for Nominalism. Now only the hope remains, politically, and with it the residue of merely naming as the mode of science. William reflects, towards the end:

> I have never doubted the truth of signs, Adso; they are the only things man has with which to orient himself in the world. What I did not understand was the relation among signs. . . . there was no plan [connecting the deaths, but only] a sequence of causes and concauses, and of causes contradicting one another, which proceeded on their own, creating relations that did not stem from any plan. Where is all my wisdom, then? I behaved stubbornly [da ostinato], pursuing a semblance of order [parvenza di ordine], when I should have known well that there is no order in the universe (p. 492; p. 495).

And then he quotes "a mystic" from Adso's homeland, who had said that "the order our mind imagines" is like "a ladder, built to attain something. But afterwards you must throw the ladder away, because you discover that, even if it was useful, it was meaningless (p. 492)." Use *is* of course the "meaning" of ladders, but there's a larger issue. William goes on:

> It's hard to accept the idea that there cannot be an order in the universe because it would offend the free will of God and His omnipotence [cf. p. 207]. So the freedom of God is our condemnation, or at least the condemnation of our pride (pp. 492–93; p. 495).

We must not be put off by this lightning shift from Wittgenstein to Sartre; William's tender regard for God's prerogatives has communicated itself to Adso, who finally begins to think:

35. This reviewer must be forgiven these lapses into gastronomical metaphor, but that too is Italian. (Cf. all the delightful digressions on food, e.g., pp. 94, 220, 288, 307).

I dared, for the first and last time in my life, to express a theological conclusion: "But how can a necessary being exist totally polluted [intessuto] with the possible? What difference is there, then, between God and primigenial chaos? Isn't affirming God's absolute omnipotence and His absolute freedom [disponibilità] with regard to His own choices [miracles?] tantamount to demonstating that God does not exist?" (p. 493; p. 496)

William's response, and Adso's "unpacking" of it remind us of all the references to secrecy that bestrew the text:[36]

William looked at me without betraying any feeling in his features, and he said, "How could a learned man [un sapiente] go on communicating his learning [il suo sapere] if he answered yes to your question?" I did not understand the meaning of his words. "Do you mean," I asked, "that there would be no possible and communicable learning [sapere] any more if the very criterion of truth were lacking, or do you mean you could no longer communicate what you know because others would not allow you to?" (p. 493; p. 496)

And of course at that point the roof caves in (literally!) and William cannot answer: "There is too much confusion here," he says, and the mystery ends with a final double-entendre, a little grammatical joke: "Non in commotione, non in commotione Dominus." (*ibid.*) It looks like the echo of a prayer, but it's an assertion!

4. LAUGHTER

This is a very funny book, in places, and laughter ripples through *The Name of the Rose* as a recurrent theme. It must therefore finally be dealt with, and seri-

36. For example: "But often the treasures of learning must be defended, not against the simple but, rather, against other learned men [sapienti]. " (p. 88; p. 96). And then, a little below that: "You see?" William said. "Sometimes it is better for certain secrets to remain veiled by arcane words. . . . Aristotle says in the book of secrets that communicating too many arcana of nature and art breaks a celestial seal and many evils can ensue. Which does not mean that secrets must not be revealed, but that the learned [sapienti] must decide when and how" (p. 88; p. 96). He explains further: "I meant that, since these are arcana from which both good and evil can derive, the learned man [il sapiente] has the right and the duty to use an obscure language, comprehensible only to his fellows" (p. 89; p. 97).

There is later a brief recapitulation of much the same thing, but it is omitted from the translation. After saying (p. 97) that learning (scienza) consists "also of knowing what we could do and perhaps should not do," William explains: "Look, that is why I said to the master glazier today that the learned man must in some manner conceal the secrets that he discovers, in order that others not make wicked use of them, but [he] needs to reveal them, and this library [like the world?] appears to me rather a place where secrets remain hidden." [Ecco perché oggi dicevo al maestro vetraio che il sapiente deve in qualche modo celare i segreti che scopre, perché altri non ne facciano cattivo uso, ma bisogna scoprirli, e questa biblioteca mi pare piuttosto un luogo dove i segreti rimangono coperti (p. 105, Bompiani edition).]

On p. 132, Jorge reminds his listeners that "the fathers . . had considered that such things should have been subdued rather than raised [piuttosto sopite che sciolte]" (p. 132; p. 139).

And finally, putting God above all this exoteric-esoteric interplay, William tells us: "The hand of God creates; it does not conceal [nasconde]" (478; p. 482).

ously, because as the blind old Jorge says, in an early interchange with William, "With his laughter [Così ridendo] the fool says in his heart [implicitamente], 'Deus non est'" (p. 132; p. 139).

This is a book about a book,[37] "a story of theft and vengeance" all because of a book, "A forbidden book!" (p. 394) The book in question, as must be well-known by now, is the supposed long-lost second book of Aristotle's *Poetics*, on Comedy, the only extant copy of which is somewhere in the monastery's library.

Jorge of Burgos, one-time Librarian and the gray eminence of the whole piece, will not allow anyone access to it. Jorge is against laughter, not just because he's a puritanical sourpuss, but for apologetical and political reasons, as we shall see.

The theoretical climax of the book (as opposed to the final monastic holocaust and the central orgasm on the kitchen floor) is the last debate, in the hidden room of the Library, between Jorge and William of Baskerville (pp. 467–48; pp. 471–82). The topic is Comedy and the role of laughter. First William reads from the "text" of Aristotle:

> In the first book we dealt with tragedy and saw how, by arousing pity and fear, it produces catharsis, the purification of those feelings. As we promised, we will now deal with comedy (as well as with satire and mime) and see how, in inspiring the pleasure of the ridiculous, it arrives at the purification of that passion. [And so forth, to include a listing of what the ridiculous includes.] (p. 468; pp. 471–72)

And then, a few pages later, William spells out what he thinks will be important about the book:

> . . . Comedy is born from the Komai — that is, from the peasant villages — as a joyous celebration after a meal or a feast. Comedy does not tell of famous and powerful men, but of base and ridiculous creatures, though not wicked; and it does not end with the death of the protagonists. It achieves the effect of the ridiculous by showing the defects and vices of ordinary men. Here Aristotle sees the tendency to laughter as a force for good, which can also have an instructive value [un valore cognoscitivo]; through witty riddles and unexpected metaphors, though it tells us things differently from the way they are, as if it were lying, it actually obliges us to examine them more closely, and it makes us say: Ah, this is just how things are, and I didn't know it. Truth reached by depicting men and the world as worse than they are or than we believe them to be, worse in any case than the epics, the tragedies, [and the] lives of the saints have shown them to us. Is that it? [he asks Jorge.]
>
> Fairly close, [replies Jorge] (p. 472; p. 475).

But what can be so terrible about that? "Because it was by the Philosopher," says Jorge:

37. Needless to say, "the book" is also a cosmic metaphor here, like mirrors and the rose itself. Adso muses at one point: " . . . the whole universe is surely like a book written by the finger of God . . . in which every creature is description and mirror of life and death, in which *the humblest rose* becomes a gloss of our terrestrial progress [cammino terreno] " (p. 297; p. 282. Emphasis added). Of course these are all meaningless images in a pagan context, where there is no one to write and nothing to mirror; and the rose, even the compass rose, for all the egalitarianism among its petals, *goes* nowhere; it only looks up.

> Every book by that man has destroyed a part of the learning that Christianity had accumulated over the centuries. . . Before, we used to look to heaven ; now we look at the earth. .
>
> But what frightened you in all this discussion of laughter? [William asks.]
>
> laughter is weakness, corruption, the foolishness of our flesh. It is the peasant's entertainment, the drunkard's license; . Still, laughter remains base, a defense for the simple [i.e., relaxation for the mob] . But here, [in the Second Book of Aristotle's *Poetics*], here . . the function of laughter is reversed, it is elevated to art, the doors of the world of the learned [dotti] are opened to it, it becomes the object of philosophy, and of perfidious theology . (p. 474; p. 477).

Jorge is a preacher (see his sermon on the last days, pp. 398–405), and this, his argument against laughter, is the book's final sermon, albeit, of course, *in modo negativo*. It cannot be escaped.

> . Laughter frees the villein [villano] from fear of the Devil . . . But this book [ostensibly Aristotle's] could teach that freeing oneself of the fear of the Devil is wisdom. When he laughs, as the wine gurgles in his throat, the villein feels he is master, because he has overturned his position with respect to his lord [i rapporti di signoria]; but this book could teach learned men [dotti] the clever and, from that moment, illustrious artifices that could legitimatize the reversal. Then what in the villein is still, fortunately, an operation of the belly would be transformed into an operation of the brain [intelletta] To the villein who laughs, at that moment, dying does not matter: but then, when the license is past, the liturgy again imposes on him [i.e., after Mardi Gras], according to the divine plan, the fear of death. And from this book there could be born the new destructive aim to destroy death through redemption from fear. This book could prompt the idea that man can wish to have on earth . . the abundance of the land of Cockaigne. But this is what we cannot and must not have. . . . if one day somebody, brandishing the words of the Philosopher and therefore speaking as a philosopher, were to raise the weapon of laughter to the condition of subtle weapon, if the rhetoric of conviction were replaced by the rhetoric of mockery, if the topics of the patient construction of the images of redemption were to be replaced by the topics of the impatient dismantling and upsetting of every holy and venerable image — oh, that day even you, William, and all of your knowledge, would be swept away! (pp. 474–76; pp. 478–79)

William feels he would manage. Jorge goes on to say that "we are not afraid" of the blasphemy, violence, and destruction of heretics; "their impiety makes our piety shine" (p. 476).

> But if one day — and no longer as a plebeian exception but as ascesis of the learned [ascesi del dotto], devoted to the indestructible testimony of Scripture — the art of mockery were to be made acceptable, and to seem noble and liberal and no longer mechanical [meccanica]; if one day someone could say (and be heard), 'I laugh at the Incarnation,' then we would have no weapons to combat that blasphemy. (pp. 476–77; p. 480)

And there we have it. Jorge is of course quite mad, and in his madness he forgets that the art of mockery, the use of ridicule in debate, had already been spo-

ken of, variously and at some length, by ancient works on rhetoric. The difference, to be sure, is that the ancients used ridicule to defeat an opponent, a *particular individual*, where Jorge fears the use of ridicule to destroy an idea —unless, by some stretch of the imagination, "the Incarnation" is to be taken to signify some Particular.

Two things are involved here: Comedy, a dramatic form; and Laughter, the property of man (pp. 131, 197, 78, 95)—which flows, traditionally, from the rational *differentia* and *not* from "the dark powers of corporal matter" (Jorge, p. 477); animals don't laugh. First, Comedy.

Aristotle may well have dealt with Comedy (and, as he says, with hexameter verse) "later," in a second book (as per *Poetics* v. 1), and it is indeed a pity that no copy of his treatment remains. Comedy is for him one of two kinds of poetry, distinguished "according to the poet's nature," the "more serious" representing "fine doings and the doings of fine men, while those of a less exalted nature represented the actions of inferior men" (*Poetics* IV. 7, 8). And in the only real paragraph we have, he summarizes:

> Comedy, as we have said, is a representation of inferior people, not indeed in the full sense of the word bad, but the laughable [i.e., the ludicrous] is a species of the base or ugly. It consists in some blunder or ugliness that does not cause pain or disaster, an obvious example being the comic mask which is ugly and distorted but not painful (*Poetics* v.1–2).

And that's about it, for Comedy in Aristotle. It "was not at first treated seriously" (v.3), perhaps because it was not to be taken seriously; but even if Aristotle did treat seriously of Comedy in some subsequent book of the *Poetics*, we can hardly expect, from what we do have, that his treatment would have given much comfort to Levellers of any time or type.

Laughter is another matter.

For Socrates, laughter is a "mixed pleasure," our reaction to the ridiculous posturing of our friends (*Philebus* 49e–50a). The paradigm is a mild derision, tinged perhaps with pity, a looking down on the foolishness of mortals. There are some very amusing passages in Plato, and they must have been hilarious to his contemporaries; but at no point does laughter provide insight into anything deeper than human ignorance (cf., perhaps, *Gorgias* 509b). For Aristotle, laughter is a polemical technique:

> As for jests, since they may sometimes be useful in debates, the advice of Gorgias was good—to confound the opponents' earnest with jest and their jest with earnest. We have stated in the *Poetics*[38] how many kinds of jests there are, some of them becom-

38. Not in what we have. He also speaks, at *Rhetoric* I, xi, 29, of having discussed the ridiculous in the *Poetics*, but that too is lost. On the offchance, however, that his discussion was still available to Cicero, the presentation through the mouth of Julius Caesar of the role of wit in oratory might be of some interest (*On the Orator*, Bk. II, chs. LVIII–LXXIII). Caesar begins with: "for neither great vice, such as is united with crime, nor great misery is a subject for ridicule and laughter" (ch. LVIII); a little later he cautions: "so in this, all scurrilous buffoonery is to be studiously avoided by the orator" (ch. LX). And he refers repeatedly to kinds of jesting which are "not suited to us," and are "far from be-

> ing a gentleman, others not. Irony is more gentlemanly than buffoonery; for the first is employed on one's own account, the second on that of another (*Rhetoric* III, xviii, 7; Loeb p. 467).

Laughter is a rhetorical device, for ancient thought, and never "revealing of being" (to employ a barbarism) or even a sign of the human condition. There is no laughing at oneself (that's buffoonery) and the jesting that *is* permitted "a gentleman" has always a hard edge to it.

In his reaction to Jorge of Burgos — who hates laughter and insists that Christ never laughed (pp. 95, 132, 133) — William of Baskerville suggests that

> Perhaps the mission of those who love mankind is to make people laugh at the truth, *to make truth laugh*, because the only truth lies in learning to free ourselves from [the; dalla] insane passion for truth (p. 491; p. 492).

That is perhaps going too far, contrasting as it does, a presumably rational "love [of] mankind" with the "insane passion" for truth. And we would not want to go along with "an African alchemist" quoted by Jorge, who attributes "the creation of the world to divine laughter" (p. 467). But it remains true that laughter, the "property" of man, has been treated in step-sisterly fashion by philosophy, which has always preferred to deal with the species-differentiating "rationality." Laughter should be taken more seriously.

Science presumes to report on being in a systematic manner. Philosophy, a second-level theoretical endeavor, attempts to analyze "reports on being," also in a disciplined way. But humor is a third and perhaps more primal "theoretical modality," and laughter a visceral response to some "report on being."[39] Laughter flows from the sudden and fortunate cancellation of the set of expectations that have permeated the neurons (i.e., theoria). Animals may giggle (they seem to) but not at the antics of clowns; for that *thought* is required, foreseeing, expecting, and then a sudden *seeing*, with relief.

But unlike philosophy (and science) the object of laughter is very particular.[40] *This* pompous twit does not achieve the essence of great-souledness to which he aspires . . . and his actions prove it. Reason notices the discrepancy between the particular and its concept *and* that the discrepancy does not compromise the universal . and it rejoices. (Wickedness *does* compromise the universal; that's what is "evil" about it!)

That is what is different about the theoretical posture of humor: it is not systematic. Like poetry, humor reveals and then moves on; there is no analysis, no demonstration, and indeed unlike poetry, there is seldom even a rereading of it.

coming to a man of education" (ch. LXII). *Cicero on Oratory and Orators*, trans. J. S. Watson. New York: Harper & Brothers, 1860. Pp. 151, 153, 156. Throughout, jesting is what the superior do *at* and *about* the inferior.

39. Kant alludes to the *reflective* character of laughter, that its object cannot be *directly* a cause of gratification; the enjoyment must result therefore from the "play of representations." *Critique of Judgment*, Book II, 54.

40. We may laugh at particular groups of people, but never at logical classes.

The gentle lightning flashes, something is seen, and the moment is gone. Laughter is theoretical, but it is not contemplative.

Consider, for example, the near-fist-fight between the Franciscans and their opponents at the meeting (pp. 346–47), a bit of comic relief "made for the movies"—although, to be sure, an Italian movie. What does it say except that piety is *not* an objective structure of being about which one might boast, and that those who would boast of it are fools, in error about something important—but not in error as the wicked are in error (we note that Bernard Gui remains aloof throughout)? Piety as such is untouched by the squabble.

Of course there may be a larger intention in the incident. The friars may be in error not merely because piety cannot be an objective possession but because there is nothing to be pious *about*. The battling brothers are fools either because they have forgotten they are human . . . or because there is no God. In either case, however, the humor has a metaphysical purport.

But that is what humor *is*! Humor is a metaphysical "comportement," and laughter the visceral response to its revelations. The problem is that it is not "systematic," and that by nature it eludes the nets of analysis. (Can it be accidental that the great anti-Systemists of modern thought, Kierkegaard and Nietzsche, are also its only humorists?) Laughter is a living thing and dies under the knife.

There is another reason for the virtual absence of laughter in the history of philosophy (aside from the natural *gravitas* of philosophical "types"). Philosophy is the examination of the utterances of a putative wisdom. This means *not* proverbs, whose context is life—that's why they often contradict each other—but *formulas*, like "Man is the measure . . . ," whose context is theory, an already reflective mode, systematic if not a complete system. But the context of laughter, like that of proverbs, is life itself, the whole fabric of lived experience with all its sounds and smells and hopes and fears and trying once again, a context which *resists* the abstractive and generalizing instrumentalities of philosophy. In other words, philosophy can deal with "Virtue is knowledge" because the utterance is already in the same reflective ball park; but what can it *do* with *In vino veritas*, or with "You wanna buy a duck?"

"The fabric of life" was not a system, for classical philosophy, not even a proper theoretical context, and it could not have been; there was too much chaos in it, too much of the particular. And besides, there was too much raw hope in it, and there can be no hope (or despair, it must be added) in a philosophical universe.

The thin and bitter laughter of the gods and their human counterparts, the derisive laughter *at* the foibles of mortals (that's us, folks!) is not real laughter—mainly because it's no *fun*! That kind of humor—the biting wit, the ironic aside—is quite possible in the most hope-less theoretical empyrean,[41] but from

41. As in Lucretius, *De rerum natura*, Bk. II, the beginning: "pleasant it is, when over a great sea the winds trouble the waters, to gaze from shore upon another's great tribulation. . . ." He goes on to say how easy it would be, by right thinking, to remove pain and anxiety. In a fundamentally hopeless universe, knowledge is *technique*, the oil upon the sea of dread.

Aristippus to Oscar Wilde, the great wit is feared, not loved, even by his friends, who laugh with their teeth, not with their bellies.

Real laughter requires hope. In a hope-less universe humor reveals *only* particulars, *this* foolishness, *this* ignorance, *this* discrepancy with the universal. For laughter to have a metaphysical function the individual must have a cosmic significance — because that's what hope *is*, in the long run, the conviction that we particulars are *not* mere instances, more or less defective, of some universal. Such a thing is not accessible to classical science or philosophy, for which the universal is the object, and the particular is barely thinkable.

Of course for those with "no tincture of natural philosophy," for the simple folk of whom William of Baskerville speaks, there has always been laughter (and tears as well, it must be said). Of these it may be asked: If humor is theoretical, what is their "theory"? And if laughter needs hope, what have they to look forward to but suffering and death?

A distinction can be made between "rational life" and "the life of reason." Rationality as such is theoretical; it puts particulars into a context. And life as such overrides the given, does not accept what is but pitches it into the future. Between the two there is theory enough and the "raw hope" of vitality itself to provide between them a basis for laughter when the work is done.

But a "life of reason" is another thing. As the real luxury of wealth is pessimism (the Sadducees, we remember, were not poor folk and could *afford* their materialism), so too the special privilege of the learned — that is, of academics generally — is their transcendence of the hopes and fears of the many, their "impartiality." Living as they do in the timeless generalities of their disciplines, they need not fear death and can *afford* a universe in which the particular has no cosmic significance.

But for Jews and Christians, whether by circumcision or in the spirit (*or* from forgetfulness, living on borrowed cosmology, as it were), and for *both* learned and simple among them, the particular is of absolute significance; they are measured by a Particular and their particularities will be attended to by the Measure. The question is not whether or not Christ ever laughed — William *also* believes he did not[42] — but whether or not the sparrow's fall will be broken.

Only when the universe itself is a system — a labyrinth, to be sure ("The maximum of confusion achieved with the maximum of order" [p. 217]), but a system nonetheless — the production of a cosmogenic Will giving significance to parts and whole, only then can the individual have universal significance and laughter an epistemological function.

Such a thing, of course, was unknown to pagan consciousness — especially the more philosophical — and Professor Eco is well aware of it (although perhaps

42. ". . . because, omniscient as the son of God had to be, he knew how we Christians would behave" (p. 161). Again, aside from the implicit Monophysitism, the sweet pessimism of the learned, who have no need of God's *omnipotence* to make it all turn out all right, observing as they do, already from an upper tier.

not William, in his dour enthusiasms). We must assume, therefore, that *The Name of the Rose* is itself an enormous hoax, theological deadpan, in which an evangelical enterprise masquerades under the appearance of apocalyptic excoriation.

One of the few Latin passages translated in the English edition (it is *not* translated in the Italian) appears in the course of Adso's reflections upon the coincidence of opposites (a characteristically medieval theme) in metaphors:

> Is it possible that things so equivocal can be said in such a univocal way? And this, it seems, is the teaching left us by Saint Thomas, the greatest of all doctors: the more openly it remains a figure of speech, the more it is a dissimilar similitude and not literal, the more a metaphor reveals its truth (p. 248).[43]

The passage occurs in the midst of Adso's ecstatic union with the peasant girl — the center piece of the book, one might say — and its most obvious function is to call into question the possibility of any other kind of "igneous ardor" (as in the raptures of Saint Hildegard, p. 239; cf. also Ubertino, on p. 231), but it *must* have some larger significance.

Irony is one form of saying what is not the case; but so too is humor: "through witty riddles and unexpected metaphors . . . it tells us things differently from the way they are, as if it were lying" (p. 472). Could there be *any* more implausible metaphor by which to convey the essential dependence of modern political and scientific thought on Medieval theology than this vast and rollicking panorama "of theft and vengeance among monks of scant virtue!" (p. 394)? For as William says near the end:

> "There was no plot . . . and I discovered it by mistake [per sbaglio]."[!] (p. 491; p. 492)

43. The Italian: Possibile che cose tanto equivoche possan dirsi in modo così univoco? Epurre è questo, pare, l'insegnamento che hanno lasciato i massimi tra i dottori [N.B.: plural, and no mention of Saint Thomas]: omnis ergo figura tanto evidentius veritatem demonstrat quanto apertius per dissimilem similitudinem figuram se esse et non veritatem probat. *Il nome della rosa*, p. 251.

Annals of Scholarship

Metastudies of the Humanities and Social Sciences

announces a special issue:

Science and the Imagination,

Edited by G. S. ROUSSEAU.

A collection of essays from the 1985 Berkeley Conference, sponsored by the Society for Literature and Science. Themes include: the history of the concept of energy, the "two cultures" debate, French science fiction today, William Blake's relation to science and to technology, Kandinsky's conception of space, the image of science in Margaret Atwood's fiction, and the prospects for Literature and Science.

Volume 4, number 1: available October 1986.
Issue price: $7.00.
Annual subscriptions:
institutions, $35.00;
individuals, $20.00;
foreign air mail, $1.00 per issue.

Annals of Scholarship,
1841 Broadway, NY
10023-7699 USA.

Contributors: Stuart Peterfreund, Lance Schachterle, George Slusser, Nelson Hilton, Mark L. Greenberg, Donald R. Benson, John Woodcock, G.S. Rousseau.

Affirmative Action, Liberalism, and Teleology
On Nicholas Capaldi's *Out of Order*

NINO LANGIULLI
Saint Francis College, Brooklyn, New York

Out of Order: Affirmative Action and the Crisis of Doctrinaire Liberalism. By Nicholas Capaldi. (Buffalo, N.Y.: Prometheus Books, 1985. 201 pp.: $17.95.)

I

This is a philosophical book about a contemporary political affair, namely, the policy of affirmative action, the federally-dictated preferential treatment of certain groups in American society. The title of the book, *Out of Order*, adumbrates its themes which are, bluntly speaking, that the policy of affirmative action is legally out of order, morally pernicious, and logically incoherent and that the ideological environment of the policy, i.e., doctrinaire liberalism, is a swamp.

The book is philosophical rather than political, and this in many respects. It is first, theoretical, addressing itself primarily to the understanding of the reader and only incidentally to any action to be taken. With its many distinctions and carefully wrought arguments, it conveys the importance of offering and maintaining reasons for any belief. Indeed, it displays the arguments *for* affirmative action in clear ordinary English as well as in the now unfashionable symbolic notation (pp. 188–91). But it is philosophical, most of all, because it is an inquiry into the principles and suppositions of the doctrine which houses the policy.

> [B]eneath the maelstrom of statistics and court decisions [concerning the policy of affirmative action], we shall discover a fundamental debate about the structure of the social world, the nature of man, and a conflict of values (p. 1).

> The task, as I see it, is to unearth our present dominant social philosophy [doctrinaire liberalism], to recognize it as such, to recognize the extent to which it colors our judgments and evaluations, to understand its history, to note its peculiar development in our society, and gradually to unfold the distortions to which it is subject (p. 4).

Because the book is concerned with so controversial a topic, a comment about the reader to whom it is addressed is in order. Such a reader must, of course, be someone who is still open to discussion on the issue, but among these the book has in mind, more specifically, those liberals who would not dismiss its author out of hand as a racist and a sexist simply for raising doubts and offering objections concerning a policy which has taken on the cast, among its advocates, of a sacred action (p. 101). Indeed, it is one of the themes of the book that through

the theory and practice of affirmative action, liberalism betrays its very own principle—that of liberty itself by employing a concept of "group entitlement," by believing in power as the sole and central fact of political life, and by engaging in manipulative activism with a patently elitist posture. In all these ways the advocates of affirmative action think and act in ways which are fundamentally in conflict with representative democracy but which are unmistakably evocative of fascism. Professor Capaldi consciously and unhesitatingly draws the comparison between liberalism and fascism (Chapter 7), yet interprets the crisis of liberalism not in terms of its affinity to fascism but rather as a debate among meritocratic, elitist, and egalitarian liberals (pp. 21–25).

There is a terminological demon which haunts the book and that is the use of the term "teleology" to name the theoretical position of liberalism for which we have the following "working definition."

> Liberalism consists of a basic psychological theory and derivative theories of social structure, politics, and history. The theory of liberalism in general and its basic psychological component can be defined as *teleological*. A theory is teleological if it seeks to explain any act, event or process as the outcome of goal-directed behavior (p. 19).

Capaldi seems to comply with a fairly recent convention in the use of the terms "teleology" and "teleological," but it is *not* the correct name and description for the theory of liberal doctrine. Failure to locate the demon and to call it by its proper name can only make its exorcism more difficult. This will become clearer in the course of the review. For now we will continue with the author's criticism of affirmative action in terms of his own usage.

When Professor Capaldi attacks the proponents of affirmative action for having a "teleological" view, it is because he finds that view fundamental to their objections to discrimination (itself the universal excuse for affirmative action). Discrimination, they say, does not permit the oppressed groups to achieve their "full potential" (p. 120), to "fulfill [their] true natures" (p. 90), or to accomplish their "innate built-in ends" (p. 90). Affirmative action, they insist, is the remedy for such blockages, especially when the discrimination has been covert. It is the remedy that will *permit* (if not ensure) the oppressed to "achieve their potential."

The proponents use the same sort of language in response to those who will inevitably be disadvantaged by a policy which gives hyperadvantages to the previously oppressed. But the terminology is curiously inverted in the arguments which are offered to mollify the victims of affirmative action. The following are examples:

1. Nobody deserves anything anyway, even by virtue of their abilities or qualifications. Professor Capaldi quotes two affirmative action "theorists," John Rawls and Richard Wasserstrom.

> [Rawls] No one deserves his greater natural capacity nor merits a more favorable starting place in society (p. 191).

> [Wasserstrom] Since individuals do not deserve having had any of these things [home environment, class, schooling] vis-à-vis other individuals, they do not, for the most part, deserve their qualifications, and since they do not deserve their abilities, they do not in any strong sense deserve to be admitted because of their abilities (p. 191).

(Reflection upon the foregoing quotations can only make the reader dizzy with the high level of abstraction with which these theorists discuss questions of ethics and politics. They might remind him of Tom Wolfe's description of Le Courbusier in *From Bauhaus to Our House*, p. 27, whereby they too might be likened to

> the logician who flies higher and higher in ever-decreasing concentric circles until, with one last, utterly inevitable induction he disappears up his own fundamental aperture and emerges in the fourth dimension as a needle-thin umber bird).

2. Affirmative action is truly for the benefit of the whole of society, inasmuch as it *really* redresses past injustices and only *appears* to treat unjustly those who are temporarily inconvenienced by it (pp. 134–35).

3. In the long run the τέλος (reviewer's word, not Capaldi's) of history will guarantee the equilibrium of an organic society in which it is realized that "no individual can be fulfilled and secure in that fulfillment as long as others are not" (pp. 21, 135).

Thus, briefly, we have what Capaldi calls the "teleological" character of the apologetics of affirmative action, a notion of "τέλος" built into "fulfillment" and "social benefit." He seems not to question this usage as when he asserts unambiguously that the apologists of affirmative action are saddled with an untenable combination of teleology and determinism (pp. 2, 127) and speaks of drives, needs, and desires having to be fulfilled (pp. 20, 125). In fact he uses "teleology" as an umbrella term to cover certain features of the thought of Hobbes (p. 182, n. 10), Bentham (p. 170), Mill (indirectly; pp. 179, 190), and even Hegel (pp. 170–71). Even when he explains, without taking exception to it, that what liberals mean by "rational" (as in "rational animal") is the calculating and maximizing of self-interest (p. 83), he is clearly echoing Hobbes, Bentham, and Mill whose views of humanity and society could hardly be called teleological. But more of this later; for now an exposition, not a criticism.

II

The book is composed of three parts, though this is not evident either visually or typographically. The author tells us so on page four. The eight-chapter structure, however, *is* evident both from the table of contents and the format. There is an introduction and a section of endnotes, both of which are important for an appreciation of the book as a whole. The index is useful and the dedication to Sidney Hook is significant, inasmuch as Hook is an opponent of affirmative ac-

tion, yet a devotee of liberty. Epigrams mark the beginning of each chapter bearing its message mythically and cryptically.

The first chapter, which is entitled "From Jim Crow to Reverse Discrimination," contains a historical and sociological treatment of the events which preceded the institution of the policy of affirmative action. The discussion centers upon Blacks and the schools. Professor Capaldi chose Blacks as the paradigm case of oppressed groups, rather than women or Hispanics, for example, because liberals declare that the most evident case of oppression is that of Blacks. Also, to the ordinary person or average reader, the case of Blacks is the most apparent. Finally, liberal intellectuals regard Blacks as having a superior moral stature (p. 3). Thus Capaldi wishes to examine the arguments for affirmative action as they apply to the strongest and most evident case.

Schools are discussed because in the minds of the advocates of affirmative action, "the school" is the most important institution to control in order to combat racism and to promote and achieve an integrated society.

Capaldi alludes, of course, to the fact of slavery, *and* to Supreme Court decisions, to acts of Congress—familiar episodes in the story of discrimination. He does so in order to illustrate the shifts that took place between 1964 and 1968 in the rhetoric about the oppression of Blacks. The words were changing and so too were the actions of liberals. But the hidden agenda, according to Capaldi, was to increase the power of government and carry out projects of social engineering so as to alter permanently in America the power structure to the advantage of self-appointed elitists (p. 23).

An example of such shifting (shuckin' and jivin' in Black street vernacular) would be that of eliminating *segregated* schools to implementing integrated, nay *fully* integrated schools, nay, nay, *ideally* integrated schools. A new hypothesis was formulated—that of *covert* oppression. The hypothesis was then tested by studying student performance. The hypothesis was reformulated to say that such performance is a result of conditions beyond student control. An appeal to statistics concerning results was considered enough to establish the hypothesis. The same set of statistics establishes, of course, the existence of hidden variables which are then taken to be the causes of the differences in results.

Further appeal is made to the metaphor of "the shackled runner," an image employed by President Lyndon Johnson in a 1964 speech. The metaphor is intended to persuade the hearer that, in the race for life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness Blacks, having shed the chains of overt oppression, need—in order to overcome the *effects* of bondage and in order to participate fairly in the race—certain advantages. Such advantages and realignments which are intended to close the unfair gap are *duties* of the government. The Supreme Court is the special agency to carry out the realignments needed to correct past government alignments which were unfair (p. 19).

In this context Capaldi examines the case of Jackie Robinson's entry into organized baseball (where discrimination was official policy) through the *action* of

Branch Rickey, the owner of the Brooklyn Dodgers. He does so in order to prove the *essential* differences between this case and that of the government's policy of affirmative action.

The aim of the second chapter called "Twisting the Law," is to show how a whole set of governmental happenings—laws, executive orders, the words and actions of the federal bureaucracy (especially, the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare and the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission), and the decisions and opinions of the federal judiciary—all contributed to the drama of affirmative action. Capaldi concludes that the entire drama is produced by an historical hallucination wherein affirmative action is imagined as the remedy for the results of slavery. He places before the reader a compelling assemblage of facts and arguments which leave little doubt that the law has been "twisted."

For example, the Civil Rights Act of 1968 forbids *actual* discrimination. It does not order the termination of the *effects* of past discrimination. The law is meant to foster *equal opportunity*, not preference or racial balance. The expression "affirmative action" is not found in the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Rather it occurs in the usage of the executive branch of government, i.e., in Executive Order #11246 of 1965 and it is extended to women in Executive Order #11375 of 1967. But it was not the President who defined the expression. This was done by the bureaucrats in the Department of Labor who issued Order #4 in 1968, and guidelines in 1970 and 1971. The expression is defined in terms of minority "needs," of "goals and timetables" and of "underutilization." The term "quotas" is *not* used by these bureaucrats, but its concept and intention becomes parasitic on the term "underutilization" which, in turn, is defined and determined by statistical survey. Quotas, declares Capaldi, are "the ultimate logic of affirmative action" (p. 30).

The proponents of the policy regarded it as the proper evolution of equal employment law. *Genuine* equality of opportunity requires those tasks that are necessary to close the economic and the professional gaps between Blacks and Whites in order to achieve an *ideally* integrated society. The sense of the terms "genuine" and "ideally" is established and confirmed in statistics and percentages.

Capaldi assures the reader that he is not resistant to the change the notion of evolution implies. He denies, however, that the change must be in that direction which is defined by liberal ideology. He does not challenge the contention that in Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence, law evolves. The evolution, he says, should be understood from a conservative point of view whereby law is based on "a vast reservoir of precedents" not on a "logical or metaphysical system of first principles about universal human nature" from which applications are deduced (p. 32). He believes that liberals view judicial discretion *not* as applying the inherited wisdom of the past *to* the present but as adjusting the past and present toward a utopian future. When they acknowledge the importance of "legislative intent," they choose to interpret it as a tool for the future. A corollary of their view is that the

law is truly and properly formed in the courts and in the bureaucracy, not in the legislature. The relevant cases that Capaldi adduces both for the theoretical issue of the formation of law itself and for the practical policy of affirmative action are Swann (1971), Griggs (1971), De Funis (1974), Bakke (1978), and Weber (1979).

When the reader reflects on Capaldi's account of both the larger problem of the formation of law and the more specific problem of affirmative action, he is reminded of the even deeper problem of meaning itself. If the meaning of the law is whatever the courts and the bureaucracy say it is, then it is not unreasonable to infer that the meaning of any word is what whoever is in charge says it is. The reflection ends with a vision of Wonderland in the presence of the King of Hearts and "the oldest rule in the book."

In chapters three, four, and five—the second part of the book—Professor Capaldi considers the paradox of the contemporary university as perpetrator and victim of its demise by virtue of the policy of affirmative action, a paradox which is not so curious as it may seem. Free-floating ideas have a way of landing where they will. Taking responsibility for the consequences of ideas is not a thing some academic folk believe to be part of the game or the job. "Philosophers" among them will even justify not doing so with the sophistic argument about actions not following *necessarily* from ideas, slipping into the discussion a question of logical necessity where it is not at issue.

At any event Capaldi offers the reader a valuable analysis of four competing conceptions of the university. Each conception has its advocates who then create factions. Without listing all of the conceptions, it is not difficult to understand how two of them—(1) the university as social instrument and (2) the university as the agency of disinterested research—could generate the factions and the paradox. Capaldi appears to favor the research model, as he calls it, but conceives of it in a contrast which relies on his debatable version of teleology. He says that "[t]he disinterested pursuit of knowledge is unintelligible to doctrinaire liberals . . . It is anti-teleological . . . It is anti-deterministic" (p. 54). The problem here is that the disinterested pursuit of knowledge is contraposed to teleology and teleology is apposed to determinism.

But the thrust of these chapters on the university is that the contemporary American university has abjectly submitted itself to the federal government (p. 65) and that social scientists, in their conversion from being pursuers of knowledge to being solvers of social problems, have had a key role in that submission. The university has chosen to yield its freedom for funding, while the social sciences, in their bid for the prestige and fundability of the natural sciences, move in the direction of manipulative rhetoric, of social engineering, and of an academic priesthood.

> The modern American university, in short, has been subverted by empire builders in the administration who confuse their national ambition with the existence of a national purpose, by enthusiasts of liberal-culture, and by teleological social science (p. 69).

We hasten to add that natural scientists have not been innocent in the subjection and subversion.

The history of the federal funding of the university shows, Capaldi reminds us, that even when it *seems* right, as in the G.I. Bill, it invites federal control. That history describes the courtship and marriage of professional educators and the federal bureaucracy, a union, which gave birth to what Capaldi calls, "the academic-bureaucratic complex"—a complex which without much fuss or objection became "comparable in scope and importance to the military-industrial complex" (p. 60). The path to federal intrusion and tinkering was made ever so smooth by this dubious marriage of convenience.

The reader is invited to view the tragedy of liberal Frankensteins creating the monster (affirmative action) that savages the laboratory wherein it is created. The pathos of this spectacle, which Capaldi prefers to call a tragedy—part of which is the unspoken tragedy of affirmative action—is that too many Blacks by virtue of liberal paternalism fail to develop the necessary skills for the politics of parliamentary democracy (p. 153). The liberal Frankensteins, however, such as Clark Kerr and Derek Bok, seem to escape the destruction they either create or enhance (pp. 79, 82). In their speech and in their deeds they can be collated with those abstract intellectuals who resemble Tom Wolfe's umber bird.

The advocates of affirmative action deny, of course, that the doctrine and the policy entail the radical *equalization* of persons and the *transformation* of the structure and content of the university. When faced with the incoherence of the doctrine and the impractability of the policy, they simply redefine the terms of the doctrine and the rules of action (p. 106). They regard the objections and concerns of their opponents as belonging to the fallacy of the slippery slope, confusing, in their turn, the logic of the speculative order with the way things happen in the practical order. The objections and concerns are not fallacious because the practical order is *not* one of ideas following *necessarily* from each other but one of events following *probably* from each other. The slope is slippery in the practical order and almost everybody knows it, especially the advocates of affirmative action (cf. p. 102).

The fifth chapter ends with a *libertarian* recommendation. The reader is invited to imagine the possibility of quality control of the medical profession through a truly free market system rather than through the profession itself or, heaven forbid, the government. Anyone who wishes to practice medicine should be permitted to do so. The mode of preparation would be by means of a sort of medieval guild apprenticeship. For the patient or consumer, it would be a matter of *caveat emptor*. Capaldi expects his recommendation to be greeted with scorn by liberal power-brokers. Their interest, he insists, is not medical skill or innovation, nor in increasing medical service by and for Blacks. It lies with achieving an *ideally* integrated society so that no statistical or invidious comparisons can be made. They want, in short, to rearrange and manipulate people according to an abstract model, which they regard as a sacrament.

The sixth chapter which opens the third part of the book and is entitled "The Illogic of Affirmative Action" is regarded by Professor Capaldi himself as "the philosophic heart of the book" (p. 5). His intention is to deflect the rhetoric of affirmative action so as to expose the structure and purpose of the argument which contains four "key" concepts: (1) discrimination, (2) potential, (3) the distribution of talent, and (4) compensation. The isolation and analysis of these concepts constitute the structure of his counter-arguments.

Discrimination is distinguished from prejudice in that the former is a social policy of exclusion against individuals who belong to certain groups whereas the latter is a psychological tendency of some people to regard other people according to a preconceived model. Prejudice, in turn, is distinguished from prudential judgments, hasty generalization, and from the fallacies of composition or division. The existence of prejudice, Capaldi assures us, is not evidence of discrimination. It is neither a necessary nor a sufficient condition for discrimination. He adds, however, that those who oppose the policy of affirmative action do not deny the existence of prejudice.

Discrimination, as far as United States history is concerned, issues from laws which prevented Blacks from voting and which segregated them from Whites in schools, restaurants, hotels, lavatories, theaters and modes of transportation. The proponents of affirmative action begin with the *fact* of actual discrimination and then construct a concept of discrimination so abstract that it takes on the look of a myth which is then used as a rhetorical device for promoting the realignment of society as a whole. Redressing injustices is merely the occasion for the more mystical delights of human reconstruction. The transition from actual discrimination to mythic discrimination is accomplished by conceptual shifts from "discrimination" to "discrimination and its effects" to the more expansive "perception of a negative impact." Once the last concept is let loose and accepted, the proponents of affirmative action have the *rhetorical* high ground.

But the policy of affirmative action requires discrimination to be the sole or major cause of impairment of the capacity to compete and that "discrimination" means all practices—private or public, past, present or future, actual or perceived to be actual—that hinder "full participation." This requirement, according to Capaldi, is not demonstrable, since many other causes can be cited for such impairment.

The second "key" concept shows that the affirmative action argument assumes that someone is a victim of discrimination if and *merely* if he has not been allowed to develop his full potential. Capaldi urges the reader that such a correlation between "discrimination" and "potential" is so all-embracing that it is applicable not only to Blacks but to nearly every individual or group. The point of the correlation is that its "logic" entails the total reordering of society (p. 124). Capaldi doubts the coherence of the notion of "potential" as it is used in the argument. He can imagine an indefinite number of "potentials" for an individual and at the same time eliminate a host of others. There might be "potentials" which conflict with one another such that the development of some preclude the devel-

opment of others. The concept of "potential" is forced into such an untenable relationship with the doctrine of "causal determinism" that whatever residual notions of "individual liberty" and "responsibility" remain in the argument tend to evaporate (pp. 125–28).

The third "key" concept in the argument for affirmative action is that of "distribution of talent." Two assumptions reside in the use of this concept, (1) the "potential" of Blacks is equivalent to that of Whites and (2) the distribution of talent is proportionately equal to the percentage of Blacks and Whites in the whole population. The reader is warned, however, about a shift in the use of the notion of talent.

The argument begins with an acknowledgment that the talents in question are those which are relevant in competitive technological society and ends with the promotion of talents that are relevant to another kind of society which is noncompetitive and nontechnological. The shift is performed through a sermon to change the fundamental views and modes of conduct that are characteristic of Western society. Although Capaldi does not give examples of the fundamental views and action he is thinking about, he does seem to have in mind the sort of things that the sermonizers have called snidely "the work ethic" or "Western manners." The shift, he stresses, entails a different conception of affirmative action. It is not a policy intended to allow Blacks into the game but one intended to change the game (p. 129).

If, however, "talent" means what is generally understood and agreed upon, then there can be no empirical evidence, Capaldi asserts, for the presumed distribution of talent. He rejects the notions of racial intelligence and of group superiority, arguing that intelligence and other talents are properties of individuals, not of groups. The demand for evidence of a correlation between discrimination and distribution of talent is met with a response which is transparently circular, i.e., unequal distribution of talent is due to discrimination but the evidence of discrimination is unequal distribution of talent. The fact is, he says, that no one knows, short of actual achievement, how talent is distributed. The advocates of affirmative action do not offer independent measurement of talent prior to discrimination. They do not even clarify the notion of "talent" so that it may be grasped independently of the notion of discrimination. But they do fall back on the rhetorical tactic of charging their critics with racism. They insist either on the belief that objective criteria are not prognosticators of professional success or upon the belief that there are no objective criteria. They remain supremely convinced that, had there been no discrimination, distribution of talent and achievement would be racially balanced—a conviction which is a matter of blind faith. Other explanations, if they occur to these advocates at all, are dismissed peremptorily.

The concept of "compensation" as employed by them is shown by Capaldi to be as hazy and inapplicable as that of "discrimination." What they must do, in order that compensation be made to victims of discrimination, is (1) name the person or persons at fault, and (2) demonstrate that it was discrimination that

caused or led to the inability to compete. (Although Capaldi does not mention it at this point, he would surely add a third condition, viz., (3) they must identify the persons to be compensated.) Because these advocates use the notion of "discrimination" as a theoretical term rather than as the description of an actual state of affairs, i.e., because they use it to denominate an infinite series of unintentional social forces, they disqualify themselves from a coherent use of the term "compensation" (p. 134).

Since the *coherent* and *proper* use of these four concepts is essential for the validity and soundness of the argument for the policy of affirmative action, and since the advocates of this policy do not use these concepts coherently and properly, then the argument is devoid of the essential components for validity and soundness (pp. 188–91).

The penultimate chapter which is concerned with the politics of affirmative action contains several controversial claims. They are not so because they are arbitrary or merely polemical. Every claim is the result of a tightly reasoned and reasonable argument. The controversy stems from the fact that the claims are contrary to the predominant opinions in the predominantly liberal intellectual establishments. Among these claims are (1) liberal state activism which created the policy of affirmative action erodes the democratic process, (2) liberal state activism in the name of eliminating oppression—a frequently prefabricated oppression (pp. 144–48), which is then used as a pretext for further bureaucratic proliferation and more state activism—is fascist in theory and practice, and (3) fascism is essentially and historically a movement of the left not the right (pp. 156–57). A not so incidental feature of Capaldi's discussion of state activism is the conception of the nature and role of law used to justify the activism. He names the two schools of thought which dominate the law schools and prevail in the interpretation of law, i.e., positivism and the so-called American realism. Capaldi says that despite their minor differences, both schools proceed from the same principles, namely, the *denial* that law is based on moral grounds and the *affirmation* of a more restricted notion of law whereby it is conceived of "scientifically" and from a presumably value-free perspective. Although he chose not to, Capaldi might have added an ironic touch to his argument by quoting a *locus classicus* for such a view of law, Hans Kelsen's *General Theory of Law and State*, for example, which states it glibly and confidently:

> As used in these investigations, the concept of law has no moral connotation whatsoever. It designates a specific technique of social organization. The problem of law, as a scientific problem, is a problem of social technique, not a problem of morals . To free the concept of law from the idea of justice is difficult because both are constantly confused in nonscientific political thought as well as in general speech (Kelsen, p. 5).

Not only can such a conception of law not say anything important about law, but it is hardly scientific. For it would be committed to such a view of facts that

the proponent of this view would have to hold that such statements as "He stole the book" is not a fact or a description. He would say that it is a value judgment, expressed in the word "stole," plus a fact, i.e., "He took the book." The word "stole" signifies someone's (or "society's") disapproval superimposed upon the "fact" of taking the book.

Not to use the proposition "He stole the book" for such an event or state of affairs is not to describe that event. Not to understand the proposition as a statement of fact is not to understand the proposition. To claim that the proposition "He stole the book" cannot be used to assert a fact is so perversely ideological that anyone who says so cannot be trusted to recognize facts nor to be scientific about anything, let alone law.

It is this positivistic view of law which stresses will and sanction (Law is whatsover the sovereign wills or commands) coupled with the so-called legal realist's view (that law is not what the legislators frame but what the judges decide) that causes Capaldi to declare that it comes as no surprise that the lawyers in the department of Health, Education and Welfare and in the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission did what they did with affirmative action (i.e., push people around) (p. 150). The corridors of the law are not insulated against the echoes of barbarism. The overall strategy did depend, of course, on there being enough federal judges who subscribed to liberal social doctrine. Since the view that law is an extension of social science has become prevalent, Capaldi asks for the principles on which the judges decide. He answers that they do in fact anticipate the consequences of their decisions in the form required by social scientists. Law becomes, he sadly concludes, "an instrument of social engineering for achieving communal ends insofar as they are elicited by the social scientists" (p. 150). It is court activism and the pretext of performing scientific social activity which are the tell-tale signs of doctrinaire liberalism's affair with fascism.

In his final chapter Capaldi distinguishes the kinds of liberalism differently from the way he does in his first chapter. The later distinction is historical as one between classical liberalism and modern liberalism. He means by "classical liberalism" no reference to *ancient* views of freedom but rather the views found in the Whig party in England after 1832 and as expressed in the thought of Jeremy Bentham. In order to achieve the greatest amount of pleasure for the greatest number of people, certain conditions must be met. For the classical liberal, these conditions are called *rights*. The modern liberal calls them *needs*. The shift in concept has rhetorical advantages, according to Capaldi, inasmuch as the modern liberal appears to assert a scientific or empirical claim rather than a value judgment. The concept of "need," moreover, designates something basic and has, therefore, polemical power. Anyone who questions or denies a need can be called insensitive or malicious. If the satisfaction of a need does not lead to anticipated results, the proponent of the need cannot be blamed, since a need is but a necessary condition not a sufficient condition of anticipated results. Need, however, need not be recognized by those who have them. Thus the occasion for

"consciousness-raising" is contrived in order that the populace be educated as to its "true" needs. The activist state is ready with relish to assume the task of education and thereby increases its bureaucratic growth in a geometric progression (p. 172).

Capaldi locates the conceptual shift from classical liberalism to modern liberalism through a concomitant geographical shift from England to the United States where it took root in the thought and policies of Woodrow Wilson and flowered in the "New Deal" of Franklin Roosevelt. Capaldi might have added that it bore fruit in the "Great Society" of Lyndon Johnson and was brought to harvest during the "regimes" of Richard Nixon and Jimmy Carter. It was in those last two "regimes" that the millennialist character of modern liberalism betrayed itself, since the policy of affirmative action confirmed the transformation of the concept of freedom through equality of opportunity into a collectivist notion of security through equality of result. Inspired by their purity of heart and their pity, the modern liberals wish to "realign society," as Capaldi puts it, i.e., to transform human beings into something they have never been, by means of the creative power of the state. Since the church could not bring about the kingdom of heaven on time and in time, its missionary spirit will achieve greater success in the realistic temple of the state with the university as its sanctuary.

Classical liberalism, Capaldi reminds the reader, cannot resist or oppose the preferential policies of the modern liberals, especially within the universities, because it shares their basic premises and their basic philosophical orientation. And so Capaldi eases his book toward a conclusion with a variation on one of his themes—the crisis of liberalism. His final words, although brief, proffer the alternative to the "impossible dream" of liberalism.

> Our tradition is epitomized in Anglo-Saxon jurisprudence, a tradition of multiple precedents—not a deductive set of first principles. It is a tradition that evolves out of the past, not one that progresses to a mythical future. It is a tradition of individualism, not collectivism. We must not confuse this individualism with the classical *liberal-utilitarian interpretation* [reviewer's emphasis] of it. Individualism means that *human beings are autonomous moral agents* [reviewer's emphasis] responsible for their choices and living according to self-imposed rules. This individualism is the result of older and stronger currents of thought. It existed as an ideal in the Renaissance as well as in the Reformation. It even has medieval roots in the dispute about whether the active intellect was found in an individual soul or a group. But most relevant for our purposes, it has deep roots in the Anglo-Saxon tradition of common law. The great danger to this tradition is some utopian metaphysical vision that fosters paternalism by making the state the judge of what the individual is (p. 179).

III

If it be so that doctrinaire liberalism is the *dominant* ideology both in the universities and in the communications industry, and there is no counter-evidence for this not being so, then Professor Capaldi has written not only a soundly ar-

gued book but a courageous one. For the domains in which he lives and moves and has his being are the domains of the university and of publishing—domains which have their own holy ikons and naturally their own priesthood. For in attacking a holy ikon, he has acted heretically and sacrilegiously. The "priests," not the gods, are sure to be angry. May his own guardians protect him! In the meantime some friendly criticism will neither wrong him nor harm him.

To regard the utilitarian doctrine of human nature and of morality as a species of teleological doctrine is, at least, misleading and, at most, false. Throughout the book, Capaldi calls the theory which is used to justify affirmative action policy—teleology. Yet on the last page of the text and in an endnote, he calls the theory "liberal-utilitarianism," the more precise and accurate name for his demon. Why, then does he insist on the name, teleology? The answer might lie in his Humean predilections. But the better answer lies in the recent convention among analytic philosophers in their discussions of ethics. It is the convention which is found in textbooks of ethics which distinguish and classify moral doctrines as either teleological or deontological. Such anachronistic or "Whiggish" labels are not much more instructive than to call Plato a rationalist and idealist or Aristotle an empiricist and realist. Our complaint is not with the use of labels as such but with the use of unnecessary, inappropriate, or imprecise labels. An example of a textbook which classifies utilitarian ethics as teleological is William Frankena's *Ethics* (1963), pp. 13, 29. Another is Jacques Thiroux's *Ethics* (1977), p. 28, where the distinction is used alternatively with that between consequentialist and nonconsequentialist theories of ethics. A consequentialist theory is equivalent to a teleological theory, while a nonconsequentialist theory is equivalent to a deontological theory. Still another textbook to accept the convention is Tom Beauchamp's *Philosophical Ethics* (1982), p. 73. The use of these classifications has the result of regarding not only the modern positions of Hobbes, Hume, Bentham and Mill but also the ancient position of Epicurus as teleological—hedonism as well as egoism are taken as kinds of teleologism. Thus Hobbes, Hume, Bentham, Mill and Epicurus share the same bed, as far as ethics is concerned, with Plato, Aristotle, and Aquinas.

One of the problems with this convention is the confusion between a consequence and an end. A consequence is an effect of an action, an end is a cause. Furthermore, an end is not a purpose, despite the fact that the words "end" and "purpose" are frequently used synonymously. All sorts of things have ends—knives, trees, computers. Purposes, however belong to intelligent agents by which they perform actions. Purposes are motives which direct and move agents. The end of a tree is to grow, take nourishment and reproduce. The tree executes no purpose in reproducing whereas human agents may use a tree for many purposes—for landscaping, to make furniture, to hide behind, etc. Ends exist independently of human beings willing them; purposes stem from their being willed. The term "purpose," however, *is* synonymous with the term "intention." Many authors, Capaldi included, use the term "end" to mean "purpose" or "intention."

Another problem with the convention comes from the intention to classify ac-

counts of ethics on the *presumption* that the fact-value distinction is *gründlich*, i.e., *radically* true. As a result ethical theories at the presumably "deepest" level are supposed to be distinguished on the basis of whether or not the moral order is connected to the natural order (or whether or not the "ought" is divorced from the "is"). Those moral accounts which are related to the rest of nature or some part of nature are deemed teleological; those which are not are deemed deontological. The convention is either somewhat careless about the distinction or makes it too exclusively or dualistically.

By way of contrast, another recent textbook, *Great Traditions in Ethics* (1980) by Ethel Albert, Theodore Denise, and Sheldon Peterfreund, restricts the description "teleological" to Plato and Aristotle alone (pp. 10, 30). Very shrewdly these authors do not even apply it to Aquinas. And they certainly avoid using it for the positions of Hobbes, Hume, Bentham, and Mill. Such avoidance saves them from having to explain how a teleological ethics can be accommodated to the *mechanistic* beliefs of those thinkers as regards nature in general and human nature in particular.

The point of this exercise in textbook canvassing is to suggest that (1) Capaldi is not alone in regarding utilitarianism as a teleological doctrine, (2) to do so is a mistake, (3) his demon is utilitarianism not teleology, and (4) utilitarianism—through its teaching that morality consists in the moral agent's maximizing pleasure for the maximum number of people and especially Mill's version of that teaching whereby it is the agent's *duty* to do so—is the proper philosophical base of doctrinaire liberalism and its policy of affirmative action.

Edmund Burke's caution about such a doctrine did not occur to Bentham or Mill nor has it dawned on contemporary utilitarians. It is a caution worth noting as regards the matter of affirmative action.

> The great inlet by which a colour for oppression has entered the world, is by one man's pretending to determine concerning the happiness of another, and by claiming a right to use what means he thinks proper in order to bring him a sense of it. It is the ordinary and trite sophism of oppression.

It may very well be Mill's effort to transform individual psychological hedonism into a universal ethical hedonism by means of the "deontological" concept of *duty* ("the pure idea of duty") that is the fulcrum which sits upon the utilitarian base. In America that fulcrum has also been supplied by the Puritan tradition on ethics and worldly success. Louis Auchincloss' wry comment on the Puritan ethic in our time—the subject of his latest novel—is appropriate.

> In American culture, the Puritan tradition is to desire not only to do right by a certain moral standard, but to see to it that everyone *else* does (*Daily News*, 1/5/86).

In this respect, it is interesting and instructive to compare Capaldi's account of affirmative action and liberalism with Michael Sandel's in *Liberalism and the Limits of Justice* (1982). What is instructive in the comparison is that while both are in agreement about liberalism and its product—the policy of affirmative

action—Sandel's treatment is devoted to a criticism of liberalism, especially as found in the sophisticated arguments of John Rawls whereas Capaldi gives his attention to the arguments for but mostly against affirmative action. What is of interest in the comparison is that they disagree profoundly about the philosophical ground of liberalism—Sandel finding it to be more deeply rooted in deontology, while Capaldi locates it in teleology.

Sandel distinguishes two senses of deontology: (1) a moral sense wherein it is opposed to consequentialism and (2) a foundational sense wherein it is opposed to teleology (Sandel, p. 3). For Sandel, utilitarians are liberals but *not* liberals in the foundational sense. The "truest" liberal is a deontologist—a kind of Kantian. For Capaldi, utilitarians are liberals *and* they are liberals in what Sandel calls the foundational sense; i.e., for Capaldi utilitarians are teleologists.

Their disagreement would extend, at this deeper level, to Sandel's prescription for what he takes to be liberalism's unruly voluntarism (a view of the human will which holds it to be so free as not to be subject to reason)—a rediscovery of the limiting ground of the teleological order (Sandel, pp. 175–177). Such a prescription and corrective would involve, naturally, a rediscovery of a concept of reason which acts as a limit to and a guide for the will, not to speak of a concept of nature as having an order distinct from and prior to—but not independent of—human reason, human passions, and human will.

In this vein we must attend to an assertion made twice at the *center* of Professor Capaldi's powerfully reasoned text—an assertion which can only be disconcerting to the sympathetic reader. In the first place it may offer to the advocates of affirmative action a weapon against him. In the second place it puts him in the same boat at engine room level with the liberals whom he otherwise opposes. And in the third place it may count against another of his deeply held convictions.

That assertion is that "human beings do not have natures; rather each and every one of us has a multiplicity of conflicting desires" (p. 91). Yet on the last page of the text, he asserts with equal conviction ". . . human beings are autonomous moral agents, responsible for their choices and living according to self-imposed rules" (p. 179).

If it be true that human beings have no natures, but only a multiplicity of conflicting desires with nothing to sort out the multiplicity or the conflict, then the advocates of affirmative action will claim that Professor Capaldi can have no firm objection to having people manipulated either by the courts or by the social engineers. Human beings, by not having natures, are as infinitely malleable as they are unlimitedly autonomous. Here we should remember that when John Dewey (whose notion of human nature is strikingly like Capaldi's) said that man is primordially "a formless void of impulses" (*Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 125), he also said that "any impulse may become organized into almost any disposition according to the way it interacts with surroundings" (*Human Nature and Conduct*, p. 95). For Capaldi, Dewey, *and* liberals, human beings can be done to as much as they can do. And if this is so, then the human world has to take the

form of one autonomous will against another, one bundle of conflicting desires against another, and one batch of self-imposed rules against another. The advocates of affirmative action will call Professor Capaldi's appeal to reason a sham or even an instrument of his will, impulse, or desire to hold on to his position of privilege and to keep others from achieving the objects of their desires, their impulses or their autonomous wills, and living according to their own self-imposed rules.

If human beings have no nature, and if Sandel is right about the deepest level of liberalism and Capaldi wrong about it, then the sympathetic reader will worry that Capaldi has placed himself in the same deontological boat with the liberals, especially the doctrinaire liberals he so deeply opposes in the political matters. To say that human beings have no nature, no natural ends, only a multiplicity of conflicting desires, is to remain silent about what the principle of construction or selection might be either of ends or desires and whether or not that principle is distinct from choice itself. The deontological boat has an engine, but it does not seem to have a rudder or a port. Deontological liberal-utilitarianism may not collapse automatically into nihilism, but it is surely congenial, as are the advocates of affirmative action, to creating and shifting meanings, to twisting the law, to affirming relativism, to scorning the disinterested pursuit of knowledge, to rejecting the notion and fact of merit (and thereby accepting radical egalitarianism), to recognizing no limits on the power of the individual or the state to construct, reconstruct, or deconstruct the world, and to remaining silent or not worrying about acts of destruction committed by a tyrannical pursuit of duty in behalf of the duty and pleasure of others.

Finally the sympathetic reader will wonder and worry about whether or not Professor Capaldi's strong conviction that "human beings *are* [reviewer's emphasis] autonomous moral agents, responsible for their choices and living according to self-imposed rules" is too heavily taxed by his equally strong conviction that human beings have no natures but do have a multiplicity of conflicting desires. It is difficult to understand what that autonomy might be.

Even if he should escape the charge that he seems to make *autonomy* (or freedom) into the *nature* of human beings, an autonomy which they do not choose but which is theirs by virtue of being human, he might be persuaded to accept the suggestion that the way to confront affirmative action policy and its liberalistic roots is *not* "to challenge the idea that human beings have a nature to be fulfilled" (p. 90). He might then challenge even more forcefully than he does the idea that human beings have desires, all of which must be fulfilled. He might be persuaded, moreover, to accept the suggestion that if human beings have a multiplicity of conflicting desires, then it must be reason which enables them to judge and determine the multiplicity and the conflict and that it is freedom which enables them to make a selection. Such a combination of reason and freedom may just be what the nature or end of human beings *is*.

The Most Recent Thinking of Jürgen Habermas

ROBERT R. SULLIVAN
John Jay College of Criminal Justice

Der philosophische Diskurs der Moderne. By Jürgen Habermas. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1985.)

Die neue Unübersichtlichkeit. By Jürgen Habermas. (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1985.)

I

The New Left's distinguishing claim is that cultural formations can determine the forms that industrialization takes and hence are themselves worth taking seriously as determinants. In other words, where the Old Left held that economics determines culture, the New Left holds that culture, including politics, can determine economics. This being the case, the New Left addresses itself to intellectuals rather than flesh and blood workers, and in keeping with this shift in addressee, it also perceives its opponent to be an intellectual class of neoconservatives rather than the flesh and blood old conservatives of the business (or capitalist) class. This is all a matter of standing Marx on his head, but it gives us the key we need to understand the most recent thinking of the prolific spokesman of the Frankfurt School, Jürgen Habermas.

That thinking is contained in two volumes published in German in 1985. At first glance neither of them seems to fit the model sketched above, but upon reflection—that is to say, with interpretation—both prove to be understandable in terms of the dominant cultural thread of Habermas's thinking. The first book, *Der philosophische Diskurs der Moderne,* is bound to be taken as one of Habermas's major works. It consists of a well-integrated set of lectures, for the most part given in the United States, now being translated and prepared for publication by the MIT Press in late 1986. The title is best rendered as *The Philosophical Discourse on the Modern,* and the body of the book is best understood as a philosophical defense of the modern and a criticism of thinkers who might be called postmodern because they try to break out of what Max Weber ambivalently called the "iron cage" of modernism's rationality.

The second book's title is ungainly in German—*Die neue Unübersichtlichkeit*—and it is best to put it into equally ungainly English as *The New Shortsightedness.* It is made up of newspaper features, introductions to other books, and otherwise unpublished papers from Habermas's files. In other words, it is a collage in which Habermas's purer thinking is applied. It will most likely not be translated in accessible book form, which is too bad, for it very nicely complements the first book.

The two books, taken together, strongly suggest that there is a coherent cutting edge to Habermas's latest thinking. On the one hand, he is going back to the drawing board to construct a powerful philosophical defense of enlightenment as being essential to the modern. On the other hand, he is testing his philosophical vision against counterenlightenment reality, and although he may be pleased by the test results, the fact that he feels a need to defend the modern and criticize the postmodern (read: counterenlightenment) suggests that Habermas feels that the intellectual opposition may be gaining the upper hand.

II

In the *Philosophical Discourse on the Modern,* Habermas defends the modern period as an Age of Reason, and this is meant in a literal sense not to be depreciated. All previous ages are taken by Habermas to be ages of unreason or ages of emerging reason. They are dominated by one or another form of *mythos,* but the modern age is dominated by *logos,* by reason itself, and this makes it absolutely different and absolutely superior to every other age of European history.

In other words, Habermas is a Hegelian who holds the modern to be the embodiment of Absolute Mind. What this means can be put in the following way: whereas every past mythological age can be refuted by reason, the modern age, as the Age of Reason, cannot be refuted by another reason. It is *Catch 22,* Hegelian style: reason cannot be refuted by another reason without simultaneously confirming the absolute primacy of reason. Hence the modern age is absolute. Any attempt to step out of it, any attempt to initiate a postmodern age, is a deception, an effort at counterenlightenment, a regression to myth.

In the *Philosophical Discourse on the Modern,* Hegel is considered first by Habermas and taken to be the ultimate *modern* thinker because he understood the absolute quality of reason in the modern age. Absolute here means, if I read Habermas correctly, that dialectic is not simply a matter of talking-things-through (the literal, classical meaning of the term), but is also a term that adequately describes the underlying structure of historical reality. In other words, dialectical thinking is a reflex of real historical relationships. The recognition of this absolute quality of reason is what distinguishes the *modern* as an age of history.

Over against this Hegelianism, Habermas considers a variety of more recent thinkers who might be called *postmodern* because they do not accept the argument about absolute reason. In one way or another, Habermas then takes all these thinkers to be less than rational or, even, irrational. Nietzsche, Heidegger, Bataille, Derrida, and Foucault are all taken to be thinkers who understood that they could not break out of the Age of Reason by means of yet another act of reason. They therefore resorted to acts of *un*reason to escape Weber's iron cage of modernism.

Nietzsche, so this argument goes, sought to clear the way for the coming of

Dionysius, a god of wine and passion rather than reason. Heidegger sought the *Destruktion* of the European metaphysical tradition that had led to the Age of Reason, and Heidegger's irrationality inspired the book burning of 1933. Derrida today seeks the *deconstruction* of the written text and a return to the spoken word as a way out of the iron cage of rationality, and Foucault did his research in insane asylums because only there could he find Europeans who were *out-of-their-minds,* so to speak, and thereby catch a glimpse of a world beyond reason. In short, Habermas's book is an extended argument documenting the "end of philosophy," the absolute triumph of the modern, and the hopelessness of anything called postmodern, which here means post-Hegelian.

Habermas's *Diskurs* is in my opinion a brilliant but deeply biased book. In the currently fashionable debate over the meaning of the *postmodern,* Habermas narrowly concentrates the Modern in the absolute rationalism of Hegel. The result is that many of the most interesting thinkers since Hegel are necessarily made to appear irrational simply because they disagree. I repeat: if rationality is defined as an absolute and closely assigned to Hegel, then irrationality is no more than a matter of disagreeing with the absolute rationality of the modern. Therefore the postmodern, which by definition disagrees, can be characterized narrowly as a counterenlightenment movement rather than as a movement that says something new (nothing really new can be said from the point of view of Absolute Reason).

In a fashion, this manifest bias has its clear value. In none of Habermas's previous books has he been so obviously the Hegelian rationalist, and this finally is the local significance of this book: it sheds a retrospective light on all of Habermas's previous books and helps to throw into sharp relief just how rationalist they really were. But the greater significance of Habermas's Hegelianism lies in what it allows him to do with the postmodern. This term is accorded an extreme definition synonymous with irrational, reactionary, counterenlightenment, and, yes, counterrevolutionary. It is not within the purview of Habermas's urbane style to go all the way down this list, but he does not stop too far short of its Marxian *Endstation.* The dice are clearly loaded against the postmodern.

III

In the *New Shortsightedness,* Habermas continues his critique of any effort to refute the absolute reason embodied in the modern age. The second book lacks the philosophical argument of the first but makes up for this by applying Habermas's thinking to the contemporary world. As already noted, it is a collection of newspaper articles, interviews, introductions to other books, and otherwise unpublished papers written recently by Habermas. It is seemingly a jumble of unrelated pieces, but with the help of the sharp Hegelian focus of the first book, it finally comes together nicely.

The argument of one piece can be used to illustrate the structure of Habermas's applied thinking. Habermas defends *modern* architecture against the re-

cent phenomenon of *postmodern* architecture. I believe this argument is significant because it is a political argument. That is to say, architecture really does have to do with the actual making of the city, the *polis,* and it cannot help but have political significance. It shapes the public space, and for better or worse, we do well to be conscious of it. I am thus looking at Habermas's comments on architecture as an indirect political argument.

The conventional modernist formula that form-follows-function is taken by Habermas to be an absolute, and the classical examples of modernism in the buildings of Wright, Mies van der Rohe, or Corbusier are taken to be buildings that cannot be improved upon. Granted there was a decline in post-World War II modernist architecture, but this is no reason to abandon the functionalism that determines it. Here, in the modernist claim that form ought to follow function, I take Habermas to be restating the basic Marxist proposition that economics ought to determine politics. Habermas's latent Marxism also dictates his view of postmodernism. The signature of the postmodernist movement is its willingness to freely quote the past, and this suggests to Habermas its reactionary quality. Archaic values are resurrected and put into place, the public place, in the form of stone. The details are literally tablets handed down to us from on high. They thus represent for Habermas an attempt to give an outdated definition to essentially public spaces.

However intriguing it is to read the politically conscious Habermas as architectural critic, an even more interesting section in the second book is his lengthy piece on political neo-conservatism. This topic may come as a surprise for those who are not aware that there is such a thing as *neu-Konservatismus* in Germany, and so therefore it has the potential to provoke an intense response. The reader is initially inclined, after the piece on architecture, to equate neoconservatism with postmodernism and assume that Habermas will simply pour the same arguments into different containers. But this prejudgment is quickly overcome as the reader is pulled up short by one of the more unexpected moves of this book.

Habermas does a comparison of American and German neo-conservatism that is remarkable for its generous treatment of the distant American phenomenon and is helpful insofar as it allows the American reader to become oriented in respect to German neoconservatism. What impresses Habermas about American neoconservatism is its commitment to democratic values and its reliance on interpretive sociology to make its case. Habermas is careful not to lay too much praise on American neoconservatism, but considering the source, this is a most remarkable treatment. Partly, however, Habermas is generous toward American neoconservatism so that he can set it off against German neoconservatism, which is taken by Habermas to be undemocratic and basically unsociological (read: unrealistic) in its presentation of itself. But then this sketch of German neoconservatism turns out to be startlingly incomplete—that is to say, Habermas does not really make the neoconservative argument—and because of this incompleteness, which could be called one-sidedness, it is clearly wrong. Where Habermas

can be let off lightly for his shortcomings as an architectural critic, the same cavalier generosity cannot be accorded his view on German neoconservatism.

The German neoconservative argument—and here I am following the thinking of Carl Schmitt, Arnold Gehlen and Joachim Ritter—begins with a move that distinguishes *neo* from *old* conservativism in Germany.[1] Where old conservatives hold that there is still life in traditional institutions like the family or the church, neoconservatives draw out the logic of Nietzsche's claim about the death-of-god and accept the corresponding demise of traditional institutions based on religious sanction. Therefore, because of this religious skepticism, German neoconservatives are themselves enlightenment thinkers, and it is precisely this that makes them so menacing to Habermas.

Let me put this key point in a different way. By definition, the institutions of any traditional society depend upon a divine sanction. Indeed, *tradition* makes no sense if it is not the passing down from generation to generation of the sanction that was originally revealed at creation. Correspondingly, and also by definition, any and all modern societies are modern precisely because they cease to believe in a divine sanction for worldly institutions. God is not necessarily dead, but the deity is at least put on hold in respect to societal institutions. Therefore, a new sanction is needed for societal institutions, and philosophy's claim is that reason (*logos*) provides this sanction. The definition of *modern* therefore has to do with the reasoned sanction provided by a philosophy that understands itself as the new authorizing agent, fully operating under the dictates of *logos*.

Habermas, as a modernist in the above sense, has no problem if he is dealing with traditionalists, but he has a real problem if he is dealing with someone or some group that claims to be providing a better reason than he and can back up the claim with persuasive argument. This is what the German neoconservatives claim and as someone who has, I presume, read his Plato and understood the enlightened desirability of putting an opponent's argument in the best possible light, Habermas falls far short of his own enlightenment standard. He does not admit that German neoconservatives are also modern enlightenment thinkers. He treats them as reactionaries and thereby avoids their argument.

That argument continues as follows: while accepting the liberation from god and the corresponding release from the restrictions of tradition, German neoconservatives also claim that relativization of traditional structures without a corresponding provision of a new reasoned sanction for worldly institutions is a shortcoming in the articulation of enlightenment. Freedom mandates a legitimate basic constitutional order. This sounds like a contradiction—*freedom mandates order*—but for German neoconservatives it is a dialectical truth of the first water. Freedom is not the elimination of all order. Under such conditions, as Dostoev-

1. There is no adequate study of German neoconservatism, but by consensus the founding fathers are Carl Schmitt, Arnold Gehlen, and Joachim Ritter. More recent neoconservatives are Ernst Forsthoff, H. Schelsky, and Günter Rohrmoser. Habermas is familiar with the writings of all of these thinkers.

ski's Grand Inquisitor would have it, everything or nothing is permitted. The allowance of something, rather than everything or nothing, is premised on the existence of some legitimate order. Hence the dictum that freedom mandates order, and hence the German neoconservative insistence on the provision of legitimate—and that means constitutionally restricted—authority of some type.

The needed concept of order is to be found in limited, constitutional government (the *Rechtsstaat*), and German neoconservatives are committed in principle to supporting this embodied principle of order. This argument, now political, may be put slightly differently. The European Enlightenment was originally characterized by premises acceptable to reason, namely, that traditional forms of community were unreasonable because they unnecessarily repressed human freedom. These premises were also restated as political goals, and with their achievement—that is to say, with the political relativization of the traditional authority of family, church, and principality—the goals of the European Enlightenment were reached and the premises thereby made academic. But absolutist enlightenment continued, more or less like a rebel without a traditional cause, or more accurately, like a rebel whose cause it was to eliminate all forms of authority, even the rational authority of the *Rechtsstaat* that guarantees the freedoms achieved by the Enlightenment. The contemporary revolutionary Left thus tends to be absolutely—and this means mindlessly—antiauthoritarian, and German neoconservatism draws the line because this position is irrational.

German neoconservatives, in the application of this political thinking, see an integral connection between the student movement of the 1960s, the terrorism of the 1970s, and the peace movement of the 1980s.[2] They argue that a red thread of absolutist antiauthoritarianism runs through these so-called liberation movements. This antiauthoritarian attitude constitutes the unreason of dissident German intellectuals and pits them against the legitimate authority of the Federal Republic which, however faulty and clumsy under Helmut Kohl, is nonetheless a real *Rechtsstaat*. Specifically, the German Federal Republic is a representative democracy, and the German neoconservatives are to be found defending this classical Enlightenment political form.

In opposition, the German New Left seeks to arrive at a *direct democracy*, a phenomenon which has its charms at the local level of Green Party meetings (although even here the charm is wearing thin) but which at the level of the German nation-state has proven to be dangerous illusion. The reason is not hard to find. Direct democracy is for German neoconservatives the equivalent of Habermas's famed *ideal speech situation*. Writ small, direct democracy and ideal speech situations are perhaps desirable models of decision-making. But writ large—that is to say, projected onto the nation-state—problems of a different magnitude arise, and Habermas has never recognized these. Direct democracy writ large, call it plebiscitary democracy, is not a liberation from all extraneous authority. It is rather an invitation to the tyranny of powerful private interest groups or, if they

2. See Günter Rohrmoser, *Revolution—Unser Schicksal?* (Stuttgart: Seewald, 1974).

are extinguished, to the tyranny of a single, absolute authority, like the bodily needs of the people. Like Rawls's famed veil of ignorance, Habermas's ideal speech situation is only apparently a device for excluding outside interests from determining political decisions. In reality it is a device for ensuring that a certain kind of decision will always be made, and this is one that compels decision-makers to decide in favor of equality. Coercionless coercion (*zwangsloser Zwang*), Habermas once called this essential characteristic of the ideal speech situation, and this is for German neoconservatives hardly a reasonable basis for a political constitution.

Habermas's second book, *The New Shortsightedness*, is a disappointment because it continually refers back to contemporary German neoconservatism as the intellectual opponent of the New Left but never once adequately confronts the philosophical-political argument made above and suggestively referred to in his pages. This is too bad, for coupled with the first book, *The Philosophical Discourse on the Modern*, Habermas's most recent thinking is liable to have a strong influence in the next few years on the American academic debate over *postmodernism*. It would have been ideal if Habermas had actually locked horns with his chosen opponent, but these books pull up just short of that confrontation.

IV

Cultural formations, shorn of their divine sanction, are ripe material for relativization, and relativization means that they will be understood as the expression of one or another human interest in domination. In this respect, the only difference between Habermas and Karl Marx is that Habermas believes that free-floating cultural formations still have influence, even a decisive influence, in the world. Marx, perhaps mistakenly, wrote off culture, the residue of the departed gods, as now being fully determined by economics. Habermas does not disagree with this as a basic Enlightenment goal, but his claim—deeply informed by his reading of Freud—is that archaic cultural forms are nonetheless still possessed of the dead power of tradition that can determine action, even economic action.

Culture, shorn of its divine sanction, becomes mere *convention*, and the question why anyone should obey convention is a legitimate one, with or without Marx's opinions on the issue. In a traditional society, that is to say, in a society still more or less centered on infallible authority, culture is a mode of ensuring temporal continuity by passing divinely sanctioned values from one generation to another. But when Judaism or Christianity ceases to be a religion and becomes a *way-of-life*, the children are going to ask *why* and are not going to be satisfied with the answer that this is the-way-it-has-always-been. In the absence of god, they will want good reason. The issue then is whether mere convention can be reformulated as reasoned argument.

Habermas has never persuaded himself that an autonomous political commu-

nity ought to exist, but I believe the reasoning here presented makes the argument that is missing from his thinking. In the presence of an established and functioning deity, culture does not need reason, but in the absence of such an otherworldly establishment, human beings need reasoned political discourse to provide agreed-upon norms and prevent this or that private human interest, even the private interest of bodily needs, from overwhelming and privatizing the painstakingly created public forum. This sounds at first glance like a formula for cultural authoritarianism, and in a fashion it is just that. It is similar in motivation to the enlightenment reason that loaded the United States Constitution with guarantees against the excesses of majority rule. Indeed, if one is to believe Madison in Federalist # 10, the United States Constitution is a conspiracy of enlightenment reason against the dictates of the populist body.

Put differently, authority in a desacralized world must be a reasoned thing, and this implies that mind find it within its scope to erect limitations to even its own activities, especially when these are determined by the compelling "arguments" of the body. Such reasoning leads logically to the idea of the limited constitutional state, or in German, the *Rechtsstaat.* Habermas has never been clear that this is the direction of his reasoning. I would argue that in Habermas's latest books, especially the *Philosophical Discourse on the Modern,* what he is really attempting to do is secure the condition of the possibility of absolutist intellectual culture in the modern world, what one German commentator once called the *Diktatur des Sitzfleisches* (the Dictatorship of the Sitting Class, namely, intellectuals). This involves convincing us of the absolute inescapable necessity of reason as an inescapable consequence of the death-of-god. But it also involves the substitution of a new worldly absolutism—the bodily functions that should determine the mind's form—for the otherworldly absolutism that has passed away. The suspicion here—and I fully credit German neoconservatives like Arnold Gehlen for arousing this suspicion[3]—is that in substituting worldly absolutism for otherworldly absolutism, we have made no change at all. Only by shifting from absolute to limited authority do we meaningfully record the death-of-god, and Habermas does none of this.

Like postmodernism in architecture, German neoconservatism is a mixed experience. I wish I could say it was humorous, but it is hardly this. More often than not, it is heavily Germanic in the way it is expressed and received. But insofar as its argument can be construed lightheartedly and not as a manifesto issued from a crenelated castle tower, it is not putting forth a program of consistent traditional values, designed to do combat with the dragons of a godless modern world. It is rather arguing for a *Rechtsstaat* that will secure the open society or, the same thing put differently, will secure a space in which all values may be set to play.

Play suggests games, and the chief character of any genuine game is that it is

3. Arnold Gehlen, *Moral und Hypermoral* (Bonn: Atheneum, 1969) and *Einblicke* (Frankfurt, 1979), referred to on pp. 45–47, 55 of *Die neue Unübersichtlichkeit.*

not serious. Above all, this means that there is no end outside of the playing of the game. Similarly with the *Rechtsstaat,* its own legitimacy depends upon it having no ulterior motives or goals. Just as functionalism is a goal that is ulterior to the forms of an authentic architecture, so too the social functions that form Habermas's thinking and cause him to question the legitimacy of the *Rechtsstaat* are ulterior motives to legitimate politics. This primacy of politics is a rather embarrassing claim in the modern world, but it is still the claim that is central to German neoconservatism.

German neoconservatism actually does take politics *seriously* because it does not take it to be an expression of some forces or purposes outside itself. Habermas, in contrast, questions the legitimacy of the *Rechtsstaat* because he does not, finally, take politics seriously. Somewhere in his soul Habermas believes that economics, which is morbidly serious, ought to determine politics. His New Left claim that politics, as an aspect of culture, can determine economics is only a claim about what is in fact the case in a less than utopian reality. What Habermas wants is the banishment of the city itself, at least the city that still controls its destiny, and this is, after all, the only kind of city worth keeping.

If you are interested in the study of politics
and government, you are invited to join

THE SOUTHERN POLITICAL SCIENCE ASSOCIATION

MEMBERSHIP INCLUDES

THE JOURNAL OF POLITICS

THE JOURNAL OF POLITICS is a quarterly devoted to enriching and advancing the knowledge of politics. Inside its pages all methods, positions, conceptualizations, and techniques are expounded by authors who know their subjects and who back their ideas with careful research and positive scholarship. There is no bias in THE JOURNAL OF POLITICS—toward theory, American politics, or anything else. It is an open journal. Missing it is missing an adventure into the character of political variety.

Upon receipt of this form you will begin a one-year membership in The Southern Political Science Association, including a subscription to THE JOURNAL OF POLITICS.

_______ INDIVIDUAL . . . . $ 20.00
_______ STUDENT OR RETIRED . . . . $ 10.00
_______ INSTITUTION . . . . $ 30.00
_______ POSTAGE OUTSIDE USA . . . . $ 5.50

NAME ____

ADDRESS ____

____

____
ZIP CODE

Please make check or money order payable to THE JOURNAL OF POLITICS. Send to:

THE JOURNAL OF POLITICS
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL, USA 32611

Book Reviews

Jerusalem vs. Athens: In Quest of a General Theory of Existence. By Paul Eidelberg. (Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1983. xviii + 393 pp.: cloth, $27.50; paper, $18.50.)

WILL MORRISEY

"In the history of mankind, two cities stand above all others and vie for men's souls: Jerusalem and Athens." To "almost all participants in this conflict," Jerusalem stands for religion, revelation, and traditional authority whereas Athens stands for philosophy, reason, and freedom of thought. Eidelberg dissents.

> These dichotomies are not only superficial; they are a distortion of the truth. We shall present evidence indicating that there is far greater rationality and intellectual freedom in the city of King David and King Solomon than in the city of Plato and Aristotle. We shall show that the Tree of Knowledge, which bore fruit in Athens, cannot survive without the Tree of Life whose roots are in Jerusalem. Indeed, we shall see how the Athenian tree of knowledge, without the Tree of Life, yields madness and death.

Eidelberg's claim should not be unthinkingly dismissed. As a student of Professor Leo Strauss he had guidance through many of the most obscure yet important neighborhoods of "Athens." Fortified by the teachings of logician and Torah master Rabbi Dr. Chaim Zimmerman, Eidelberg boldly challenges Strauss on Straussian territory:

> Unfortunately, Prof. Strauss did not penetrate the esoterics of the Torah or of the Talmud. Had he done so he would have transcended the quarrel between ancients and moderns of which he was otherwise the master.

Eidelberg makes the still bolder claim that modern historicism, Strauss's *bête noire*, glimpses a truth denied by the best Greek philosophers: theory and practice can ultimately harmonize, and humanity is perfectible. He makes perhaps the boldest claim of all in calling true revelation entirely rational, superior to philosophy and modern science; the Torah contains the means by which human perfection can be achieved.[1] Eidelberg intends to provide a "general theory of existence" based upon a rational understanding of the Torah. In doing so, he intends to show that modern mathematical physics is not the paradigm of true knowledge; the attempt of modern social 'scientists' to use this physics as a model must fail.

Eidelberg writes ten chapters. The first and most complex of these contains

1. By "true revelation," I do not refer to the subjective experience of the prophet, which may or may not be rational, but rather to what the prophet says.

the "basic principles" of the "Torah Theory of Existence." Following Zimmerman, Eidelberg discusses twentieth-century physics, arguing that both quantum mechanics and the general theory of relativity disprove the physics of classical Athens but do so by pointing beyond physical existence itself.[2] This tends to confirm the Torah principle that an epistemology based upon "the postulation of any physical or mental existent, process, or law as self-sustaining" and unified, is a form of idolatry, the worship of a created thing. Thus the Torah stands against any form of monism, as distinguished from monotheism. Although many scholars contend that there is no Hebrew equivalent of the word 'nature,' Eidelberg observes that one of the names of God, *'Elohim*, appears in relation to the multiplicity of cyclical forces manifested in creation. However, these forces do not constitute the self-sustaining nature of the philosophers, the nature of which man is a part; rather, "the universe owes its existence to the ceaseless Will of the Creator." Another of God's names, *HaShem*, appears in relation not to cyclicality but to linear, providential, teleological laws "more fundamental" than the cyclical 'natural' laws. This exemplifies the principle of "asymmetric complementarity" whereby nature and history are ordered by means of dualities, one element of each duality being the stronger. In this case, the physical world has 'its own' laws but these are governed, finally, by nonphysical laws. "Judaism's distinctive task" is "to sanctify the physical world so that the latter is brought into harmony with the nonphysical world." Far from being a handbook for mystics, the Kabala "embodies knowledge" about "the structure of creation, about the relationship between nonphysical and physical existence," with scientific and mathematical rigor. Judaism thus avoids the "self-gratification and self-glorification" of the Cainites and the "one-sided asceticism or spiritualism" of the Sethites. Two systems of law—the Finite Halacha (*Dinei Adam*), governing immediate daily activities, and the Infinite Halacha (*Dinei Shamayim*), governing "the conduct of individuals and nations throughout history"—combine law, rationality, and morality in a manner Plato and Aristotle would regard with considerable skepticism. But the philosophers are the descendents of Esau, "the nations" or *goyim*, who despite their best efforts inhabit and exploit the physical world and serve egalitarianism. The descendents of Jacob, the Israelites, inhabit the spiritual domain that will master the physical in accordance with Torah principles of hierarchy. Both the descendents of Esau and the descendents of Jacob serve laws that conduce to the perfection of mankind. One might say, however, that the best of the descendents of Esau know that they do not know what they are doing, whereas the best of the descendents of Jacob do know something of what they are doing.

In the second chapter Eidelberg contrasts philosophic pride with Torah *anava*, usually translated as 'humility.' He observes that Plato's Socrates 'forgets' justice and gentleness in his final enumerations of the philosopher's virtues. (The

2. See Chaim Zimmerman: *Torah and Reason: Insiders and Outsiders of Torah*, Jerusalem: "HED" Publications, 1979.

word Eidelberg translates as "gentle" is translated as "tame" by Allan Bloom.) He goes so far as to argue (citing the *Republic* 501a and 541a) that Socrates would have all citizens over the age of ten exterminated, a somewhat harsh reading that allows him to call the ancient/modern dichotomy exaggerated. He also contends that if the unexamined life is not worth living, "it would not be unjust to eliminate those unfit to pursue the philosophic life"—the very ones eliminated from Plato's republic. But this as it were deadly serious reading of Plato fails if justice is not the philosopher's virtue or purpose.[3] Eidelberg charges that Plato and indeed all the philosophers deify the intellect and attempt to murder God. This manifests their pride. "Pride of intellect is the human vice par excellence." The Torah man, who is *anav*, "does not even regard himself as ultimately *deserving* any credit for his wisdom or greatness," for the means of achieving these were given to him.[4] "Judaism is based on gratitude," gratitude not only to God as the giver of nature's cyclical laws, apprehensible by the human mind, but the laws of *HaShem*, inaccessible to the unaided human mind. (Eidelberg denies that this veers into mysticism; Torah laws, once given, "must and can be tested like any scientific theory: by its internal logical consistency and by its power to elucidate nature and history. . . .")

> The man of Torah does not want to make a name for himself; he wants only to sanctify the name of *HaShem*. To sanctify the name of *HaShem* requires not the union of wisdom and power, so much as the union of wisdom and *anava* from which power in the form of just rule and dominion follows.

In this way the judges of the Sanhedrin excel Plato's philosopher-kings.

In the third chapter Eidelberg writes that "Machiavelli only vulgarized Plato or made public what Plato preferred to remain private." Plato's "city in speech" is "founded on force" and "preserved by force mitigated by fraud yet all serving the quest for truth." (One must ask, Does Machiavelli's city serve the quest for truth? If so, is Machiavelli's 'truth' identical to Plato's?) Eidelberg contrasts the inhumane Platonic founding (whether that described in the *Republic* or that described in the *Laws*) with the founding of Israel, and particularly with the efforts of "the most *anav* man on the face of the earth," Moses.

> Infinitely removed from the idolatry of nationalism and imperialism, Israel, serving only God, would be proud as a nation (Deut. 33:29), yet, at the same time, each individual member of this nation would be, like Moses, *anav*. This complementarity of humbleness and pride corresponds to a perfect complementarity between the individual and society which is to be found only in the Torah of Israel.

3. Put another way, Socrates can be said to argue, in effect, that those who want justice more than anything else must commit acts of injustice to obtain their end. 'Do you want justice *that much*?' he may be said to ask. Socrates, a lover of wisdom and not so much a lover of justice, clearly does not want justice that much.

4. This does not prevent a man of *anava* from recognizing himself as the wisest of mortals, if this is the fact. There is no merely conventional view of humility, here.

Thus Judaism overcomes the tension between the wise individual and the community—a tension best described by Plato. Eidelberg argues that philosophy makes this tension inevitable because philosophy understands cyclical nature only; *anava* would be irrational in a meaningless, ever-wheeling cosmos. Indeed, what has lately come to be called 'self-actualization' "is a fit and all-consuming imperative in such a universe," as Spinoza more-or-less openly taught. Instead of the tension between the philosopher and the *polis*, Judaism poses a problem, if not necessarily a permanent tension, between the Creator and the created. "How can the Absolutely Transcendent be Immanent?" The problem is "insoluble" by the finite human mind; "mysticism, insofar as it involves a supposed *unio mystico* with *HaShem*, is utterly foreign and abhorrent to the Torah," a denial of God's transcendency or holiness. We can only know God "indirectly through His works or actions": through nature, history, and especially through His most illuminating work, the Torah, which "harbors a pure system of symbolic logic" whose rules of exposition are given orally "only to the Jewish people, and then only to those who, through long and rigorous discipline, have mastered the logical system and esoteric wisdom underlying the deliberately disordered teachings of the Talmud."

The six following chapters include two on history, two on science, and two on what might very loosely be called psychology. In the chapters on history, Eidelberg writes that "the primary historical function of Greek philosophy was to destroy the Greek pantheon, that is, primitive idolatry." Platonic "rationalism" identifies Being with being known," thus deifying intellect. "In the denial of creation *ex nihilo* is the fundamental conflict between Athens and Jerusalem." Aristotle's "empiricism" also deifies intellect by working its way to a "Prime Mover," defined as "thought thinking about itself." "A Creator-God would be absolutely inscrutable, an offense to the philosopher's intellect." Eidelberg observes that this deification of mind paradoxically "imposes limits to man's intellectual power and creativity" because it "denies the possibility of man ever achieving a *radical* power over nature," the power to "modulate" natural laws. This power "presupposes knowledge of nonphysical laws from which the laws of nature are derived." The moderns, one might say, absurdly try to use nature to conquer nature. But the only way to truly conquer nature is to employ nonnatural laws; creativity 'in God's image' rather than the ersatz creativity of self-deifying philosophers, is the promise of Judaism.

In destroying the Greek pantheon, the classical philosophers weakened the *polis* and encouraged universalism—the conception of "man qua man." Despite their attempts to conceal this apolitical teaching, the classical Greek philosophers thus served the idea of equality in the sense that all nations could be regarded as equally artificial. As Eidelberg asks, "How is it that 'nature' fails to produce one good regime?" Further, this nature fails to produce the sense of obligation needed to sustain a just hierarchy. Eidelberg sees that such Torah incidents as Abraham's binding of his son Isaac and the severe methods employed during the

conquest of Canaan might easily be cited if one wished to raise questions concerning the justice of God and the Israelites. Accordingly, he argues that "Abraham's sacrifice . . . teaches us that although man is nothing in relation to God, he is the acme of God's creation." As for the destruction of the Canaanites, it was done "to stamp out the pagan practice of *sacrificing the innocent for the sake of the guilty*." Jewish practice contrasts with the perhaps proto-Machiavellian acts of Plato's founders. It also contrasts with Christianity, which Eidelberg blames for sanctioning just such a 'pagan' sacrifice. "The pagan practice of sacrificing the innocent for the guilty is a form of *aristocide*," hence egalitarian. In practice,

> by eliminating the coherent and comprehensive system of laws of the Torah, Christianity was forced to adopt the patchwork laws of pagan nations, laws which could not but conflict with and eviscerate the unguarded teachings of the Nazarene or his disciples. Hence Christianity was and still is compelled to render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and to God the things that are God's, when in truth, nothing in a monotheistic universe belongs to Caesar.

The church/state separation leaves Christianity vulnerable to the separation of morality and politics effected by its enemy, Machiavelli. Eidelberg decries the "sacrifice of intellect" required by the Christian doctrine of salvation by faith. "The Book of Truth requires infinitely more than belief or faith"; it requires acts in the form of observance of the commandments. "The suicide of the mind . . . is the final consequence of the mind's deification."

Modern science provides a different way to this suicide. Chapters six and seven concern 'classical' (i.e., Galilean/Newtonian) and twentieth-century physics, respectively. Galileo preserves Plato's esteem for mathematics but discards the Platonic *eidos*; "the loss of this upper rung of Plato's mental hierarchy brings Galileo closer to epistemological democracy." For in contrast to Plato Galileo believes the universe infinite and irrational, with no natural warrant for distinguishing curved from straight, circumference from center. Relativity or egalitarianism "entered cosmology." Add Galileo's antiteleology, subjectivism, and atomism, and we see the grounds for an atheist positivism. Eidelberg calls this an advance, in one sense, because it destroyed "a farrago of Greco-Christian elements which, having fulfilled their historical function of destroying paganism or primitive idolatry, were now preventing mankind from recognizing the only true God." Newton added an empiricist determinism to this modern brew. Twentieth-century physics in turn counteracted early modern physics. Einstein substitutes a nonmaterialist determinism for Newtonian mechanics. Eidelberg objects that Einstein's laws "leave no room for contingency or uncertainty"; Einstein "assumes that the universe exists by immanent necessity and not as a result of the will of a Creator." Relativity theory not only deifies human intellect but overlooks the necessary incompleteness of any mathematical system—a necessity demonstrated by Gödel. It also contradicts the microphysical indeterminacy posited by another branch of contemporary physics, quantum mechanics. For these and other reasons, Eidelberg can insist that physics now suffers from theoretical

disarray, despite spectacular practical successes. He points to the concept of *creatio ex nihilo* as the only remaining solution to the many problems.

Whitehead "admits" the existence of one such problem when he writes that "apart from some notion of 'imposed law,' statistical law or 'the doctrine of immanence provides absolutely no reason why the universe should not be steadily relapsing into lawless chaos.'" Eidelberg goes further, following Zimmerman, and asserts that statistical laws "are not self-sustaining" because, if they were the only laws in operation, "the universe would now be in a state of complete entropy." *Contra* Einstein, "God *does* play dice with the world, only the dice are 'loaded.'" This assertion allows Eidelberg to introduce the claims of chapters eight and nine, which concern the human soul as seen in Jews and in non-Jews. Aside from God Himself, what prevents the decline into entropy is human action, insofar as those actions serve God. The human will should serve the divine Will, and the most willful, "stiff-necked" people—the ones best fitted to serve that Will—are Jews. "The creativity of the Jew is *sui generis* and so abundantly manifest as to require no elaboration." The Jew is "man *par excellence*." The non-Torah world, by contrast, has sunk into deification of, first, the human mind, then the human will. In its 'pluralism,' it now deifies even baser emotions, a suicide of the intellect comparable to that which Eidelberg imputes to Christianity.

Eidelberg returns to Plato for an explanation of this. He advances a Nietzschean interpretation of Socrates' last words: "I owe a cock to Asclepius" means that life is a disease, an absurdity. When Socrates "told the Athenians that the unexamined life was not worth living, he was, in principle, condemning Athens (and the bulk of mankind) to death. . ." (One might reply that if life is absurd, then Socrates in fact condemned the bulk of mankind *to life*, leaving the philosopher as the one who learns to 'die.') "Socrates conquered all his emotions—all save one, the desire for truth." Having severed this "emotion" from the others, Socrates effectually unleashes them. The artificial constraints he recommends must eventually fail. Only the "discipline of the Torah" provides the necessary restraints on these innocent but indeterminate forces of the soul. The standards for discipline "cannot be determined by categories of reason nor by logical inference from the facts of experience if only because life is infinitely richer than any set of mental concepts or accumulation of empirical data"—an argument opposed to the philosophers' contention that no legal system can respond sufficiently to the range of human circumstance. In setting standards, the Torah neither suppresses nor indulges the emotions; it guides them to assist men to fulfill "the Torah program for overcoming the cyclicality of nature and the death principle." Obviously, unaided human reason cannot know the "Infinite Halacha" on which this overcoming depends. As for "emotions" other than the *eros* of intellect, Eidelberg restates the difficulty noticed by Leo Strauss, Stanley Rosen, and others.

> It is always the case that the adherent of any reductionist or emotive theory of ideas or mentality runs into the paradox of exempting *his* thought from its own conclusions—an exercise in self-deification, a sort of parody of the Biblical verse, 'My thoughts are not your thoughts.'

Unfortunately, these 'gods' characteristically lack the gracious restraint of *HaShem*.

Eidelberg titles his tenth and final chapter "The Conquest of Death." In the course of advancing a non-Kabalistic interpretation of the Eden story, he offers some hints on how to interpret the Torah. By eating from the Tree of Knowledge, Adam asserted that he, not God, 'owned' the Garden. He thereby subordinated his higher, God-perceiving faculties to his senses or sensuous desires—in the very act of searching for knowledge. In descending to a lower level of existence, man caused tension between his mind and his body, yielding death on the one hand and shame on the other. Had Adam and Eve then eaten from the Tree of Life their misery would have been eternal. As it is, Socrates was right; life, for "anthropocentric man," is "sickness unto death." God allowed man to redeem himself by effort. But "to go beyond the finite, but *without leaving the domain of reason*, the Kabala of the Torah is necessary." It can yield a science whose units of measurement "synthesize quantity and quality" and enable man to "create matter," overcoming the merely natural principle of conservation-of-energy. *Qedusha*, the "nonphysical energy" that nonetheless can govern the physical world, "distinguishes and separates Israel from the nations."

Thought's enemy, complacency, will find no refuge in this book. Eidelberg makes good his promise to challenge "many cherished convictions, skeptical and dogmatic alike." In doing so, he leaves one wanting to see more detailed and extensive treatment of his theme. This *eros* for completion could easily reach an impasse, however.* In order to fully understand Judaism as Eidelberg represents it, one needs instruction in the esoterics of the Torah and the Talmud. To receive this, one must become Jewish—that is, one must decide the issue in advance, at least provisionally. (Else one must become the greatest dissembler in the world.) The Torah master can thus argue that for all practical purposes the Torah master is to the philosopher what the philosopher says he is to the nonphilosopher: a man who knows both the true life of the mind and the false life, thus enjoying the advantage over men who 'know' only the false.

Does God smile?

*Part of the problem arises from the scope of the book. Although he discusses large areas with much depth, Eidelberg must seize the main points, not the nuances. This means that the book's weaknesses (if they are that) come from its strength, and were unavoidable once Eidelberg chose to give it that strength.

How Does the Constitution Secure Rights? Edited by Robert A. Goldwin and William A. Schambra. (Washington and London: American Enterprise Institute for Public Policy Research, 1985. 125 pp.: cloth, $13.95; paper, $5.95.)

WILL MORRISEY

The discrepancy between political speeches extolling rights and the unrighteous deeds of political men has not gone unremarked. Some of this discrepancy results simply from the difference between theory and practice. But much of it does not. Most regimes today fail to defend rights. Their rulers give every sign of unwillingness or inability to do so. Their citizens—and that is scarcely the term—have almost no civil recourse against tyrannical abuses. Because the United States Constitution does not merely mention rights but actually helps to secure them, understanding it can make "a valuable contribution to the safety and happiness of the people of the world." The editors have selected six essays intended to strengthen that understanding—three by 'liberals,' three by 'conservatives.'

The first two essayists present historical interpretations of Constitutional rights, focusing on Madison's campaign to add the first ten amendments, the Bill of Rights. Historian Robert A. Rutland writes that Madison "became the father of the Bill of Rights" when hostile voters threatened to reject the Constitution in its original form. Rutland argues that public opinion and the "national and state bills of rights" are reciprocally influential. He goes so far as to call the Constitution "a living, breathing document" for this reason, although his one example of this (that we no longer have slaves) required nothing less than a civil war and an amendment to be effected, as we lived and breathed.

Rutland evidently regards the Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment (as interpreted by twentieth-century Supreme Court justices) the principal Constitutional guardians of Americans' rights. Public opinion alone rarely protects our rights adequately, he contends. Abolitionists, religious zealots, suspected Confederate sympathizers, IWWs, pacifists, conscientious objectors, "supporters of the newborn Soviet Union," labor leaders, and suffragettes were "denied" their civil liberties until the Supreme Court "spread [the] broad umbrella" of the Fourteenth Amendment to cover all public speech and action that do not immediately threaten the peace. To this day, public opinion "can never be ignored" in our republic, but public opinion continues to favor abridgement of rights; accordingly, "the Supreme Court and an executive branch dedicated to the preservation of our individual rights must be strong enough to withstand the vagaries of public opinion," which "today is not nearly so well informed" as in previous eras. Rutland deplores apathy, indifference, and the Reagan Administration. He remarks a "wide difference between public opinion and the more advanced judicial interpretations of certain civil rights," although the meaning of 'advancement' becomes obscure when the 'liberal' faith in progressive enlightenment dims.

The late political scientist Herbert J. Storing contradicts Rutland's prime assumption by denying "the common view that the heart of American liberty is to be found in the Bill of Rights." In his campaign for the Bill of Rights, Madison intended to seal the Antifederalists' defeat by separating them from "the large group of common people whose opposition did rest, not on fundamental hostility to the basic design of the Constitution, but on the broad fear that individual liberties were not sufficiently protected." Storing doubts that the Bill of Rights makes Americans' rights any more secure. Without it, "our courts would probably have developed a kind of common law of individual rights to help to test and limit governmental power."

To use the Bill of Rights as a "set of maxims to which people might rally" is to risk "undermin[ing] stable and effective government." The Federalists identified "the main political business of the American people" not as self-*protection* against political power but as self-*government*. "Even rational and well-constituted governments need and deserve a presumption of legitimacy and permanence," Storing suggests, echoing Madison. Persistent recurrence to the Bill of Rights as if it were a statement of maxims or 'first principles' can interfere with this presumption, and thus with the practical business of republican self-government. Accordingly, the Bill of Rights comes "at the tail" of the Constitution, not the beginning.

> The Bill of Rights provides a fitting close to the parenthesis around the Constitution that the Preamble opens. But the substance is a design of government with powers to act and a structure arranged to make it act wisely and responsibly. It is in that design, not its preamble or its epilogue, that the security of American civil and political liberty lies.

One might even infer that Storing suspects some enthusiasts of the First Amendment go so far as to use it to further amend the Constitution without popular consent.

The second two essayists discuss contemporary ways of interpreting the Constitution. Law scholar Owen M. Fiss contends, first, that "rights are not premises, but conclusions" emerging "through a process of trying to give concrete meaning and expression to values embodied in an authoritative legal text," and second, that "a new form of constitutional adjudication has emerged," coinciding with a newly-emerged set of rights. Called "structural reform," this form of adjudication assumes that "the operations of large-scale organizations" threaten "our constitutional values" more formidably than individuals do. It further assumes that these organizations must be restructured, an assumption "reflect[ing] a healthy skepticism about the existing distribution of power and privilege in American society." The reformers intend to "create a new status quo." Their enterprise "requires a measure of activity on the part of the judge that is at odds with the picture of him as a passive umpire, simply choosing between two neighbors." The judge now "becomes the manager of a reconstructive enterprise." Fiss

charges that the older "dispute resolution" model of judicial conduct "begin[s] with indifference toward public values or ignorance of them." He does not substantiate this charge.

A familiar objection to such vigorous activity by judges is the rhetorical question, 'Who elected *them*?' Fiss replies that judges and courts form part of our political system, which is based upon consent. Judges' authority rests not on "some personal moral expertise, of which they have none, but on the process that limits their exercise of power and constitutes the method by which a public morality must be construed." This process involves dialogue, responsibility, and independence. One might note that although the power bringing independence also brings responsibility—obviously, the more powerful you are the more you are responsible for—it does not of course bring the responsibility meant by the phrase 'a sense of responsibility.' Further, a keen sense of responsibility can yield different, even opposite, results depending upon the public morality a judge derives from his authoritative legal text. Fiss himself suggests some of this by conceding that the judiciary itself becomes bureaucratized—itself becomes one of those dangerous, large-scale organizations—when given so much to do. Worse, "the danger is ever present that judges will temper their idealism and their commitment to justice by what is realistic." Fiss colors the picture darkly: "They will negotiate [he warns]; they will bargain; they will become adaptive." That is to say, having become politicized, judges get political.

Political scientist Walter Berns considers current notions of judicial conduct to be unusual, even irregular and eccentric. Under the Constitution, judges "owe their independence to the framers' judgment that only with it could they effectively exercise the power that by natural right belongs to someone else, the constituting people" who ordain, establish, and amend the Constitution. Judges today nonetheless "create rights," doing so "openly and avowedly," using the Fourteenth Amendment as if it empowered the courts instead of Congress to provide the substance of privileges and immunities. Until the 1925 case *Gitlow v. New York*, the Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment had not been conjoined. But subsequent justices have made up for lost time.

Far from commending 'idealism,' the American founders sought "to devise a system in which moral differences would not become political issues." The founders, Berns argues, conceived of rights in the modern way, as natural rights discovered in a nature with no *telos* except self-preservation and with such subsidiary rights (notably liberty) as self-preservation entails. Without spurning declarations of rights, the founders never supposed mere declarations sufficient. The defense of natural rights requires an artificial structure "designed to ensure that the country will be governed not by simple majorities but by constitutional majorities, majorities that respect constitutional limitations that are defined by private rights." This defense also requires another kind of artificial structure, a civil society sufficiently extensive and commercial to contain diverse interests, none strong or fanatical enough to dominate the others. While not noble, this

"great modern project" is "not ignoble"; it encourages liberty, prevents tyranny. Berns cautions that "while rights, properly understood, can be secured, not all wants can be satisfied." These wants include the ignoble wants of criminals, but they also include some of the noble wants of moralists. Berns tempts us to think the latter at least as dangerous as the former.

The assertion that human beings have not only the right to eat but the right to be fed combines the 'low' concern for survival with the 'high' language of 'idealism' in a manner that may be peculiar to our time. Few moralists before now could regard *governmental* alleviation of hunger as a superior moral undertaking. Charity has earned praise for centuries, but enforced charity, charity as a demand based upon "subsistence rights," appears mostly on recent lists of moral goods. Political scientist Henry Shue praises a document called the "International Bill of Rights." The "core rights" set forth therein are rights to "minimum economic security." Shue emphasizes the obligatory rather than the libertarian character of rights; "the whole point of having rights is to limit the liberty of other people by imposing duties," justifiable demands, upon them. Having the right to life, for example, means you can justifiably demand that I refrain from killing you. "Subsistence rights" extend the right to life to contemporary circumstances, wherein human beings control nature to a larger degree than ever before. Famine is no longer so much an act of nature as an act of men; "specification of sensible, well-informed principles for the allocation of responsibility is, I think, one of the central tasks of contemporary political philosophy."

Shue criticizes the Reagan Administration's replacement of "human rights" with "political rights" that foster "cold war goals." He charges the Administration with hypocrisy because, he claims, it overlooks human rights abuses by such allies as Turkey and Marcos' Philippines while condemning abuses in the Soviet bloc. "Genuine subsistence rights [are] betrayed in the pursuit of illusory ideological gains"—illusory because the Soviets see our hypocrisy and therefore will not change their own unjust tune. Leaving aside the question of whether the Reagan Administration actually has overlooked human rights abuses by allies, and leaving aside the pretty claim that the Soviets might repent if only they thought us sincere, it must be said that Shue here fails to argue consistently. If, given the extent to which men have conquered nature, famine now ranks as a political crime—Stalin in the 1930s and the Marxist rulers of Ethiopia today serve as obvious examples of this—then one cannot ignore the political or "ideological" reasons for the decision to cause famine. Attempting to separate "human rights" from "political rights" makes no sense if human beings are political animals who act differently in regard to "subsistence rights" when their conceptions of "political rights" differ. If commercial republics rarely or never deliberately cause famine, and if other regimes do, then the issue of political rights *is* an issue of human rights. If, moreover, certain kinds of regimes that spurn commercial republicanism (e.g., communist regimes) wield considerably more power than certain other kinds of regimes that also spurn commercial republicanism (e.g.,

right-wing dictatorships) then there is no hypocrisy or even inconsistency in concentrating one's public attention on the former and not on the latter. The decision to do so involves prudential deliberation and may be called into question by prudential deliberation. But to make that decision *primarily* a matter of rights undermines the exercise of the practical judgment that defends rights.

John Locke might associate "subsistence rights" as Shue conceives them with patriarchalism. For example, Confucius tells the Chinese emperor to feed the people, who are his 'children.' The absence of state-guaranteed "subsistence rights," as distinguished from the natural right to consume the fruits of one's labor, perhaps reflects Locke's reservations about the ruler-as-father, reservations originating in the philosopher's dislike of tyranny and his esteem for human industry. In the volume's most substantial essay, Nathan Tarcov examines the conception of rights seen in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. He finds it more individualistic than Shue does, but not simply individualistic.

Tarcov observes that the Declaration of Independence speaks of both individual and collective rights. But the latter exist to secure the former. A "people," in the Declaration, does not mean an organic entity, a race or nationality. Shared sentiment helps constitute a people, but that is not enough. A people constitutes itself by its acts: emigration to a new land, the acquisition of that land by labor and by the risk of individuals' lives and fortunes.

> The acts of naturally free individuals, in particular the expenditure of life, liberty, and property that by nature belong to each of them, are what constitute a people. The Declaration recapitulates and reconfirms that ultra-Lockean origin by its final pledge of signed individuals' lives, fortunes, and sacred honor.

Although Tarcov is surely right to call this definition of a "people" ultra-Lockean, one should also notice that the Declaration's closing formulation—lives, fortunes, and sacred honor—differs significantly from its opening formulation—life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. Go so far as to concede that the pursuit of happiness means the attempt to acquire property (a concession that decisively confirms the Declaration's Lockean character, although it is not a concession that need be made), and you still cannot accurately contend that "sacred honor" makes sense in Lockean terms. The sanctity of honor sounds far more aristocratic than anything Locke endorses, and more careful research is needed to fix the meaning of this evocative phrase.

This notwithstanding, Tarcov clearly shows the relation of individuality to collectivity in the Declaration. The Constitution, he argues, embodies an analogous relation between the country and humanity. Universalist but humanitarian, Constitutional rights inhere in human nature itself "but their security is primarily something each people must accomplish for itself." Locke teaches that "civil society has the right to secure the rights only of those who have consented to it"; accordingly, "we have believed that American patriotism is the most effective form of philanthropy." American nationhood, then, directly serves the rights of the individuals who consent to participate in it while indirectly serving (by exam-

ple) the vast numbers of human beings who cannot participate in it. Against those who contend that the Fourteenth and Fifteenth amendments fundamentally alter the Constitution's moderate individualism, Tarcov observes that "the amended Constitution protects the rights of individuals against violation on the basis of their race, not rights of racial or ethnic groups as units"; "the interests of classes derive from the more fundamental property rights of individuals." *Constitutional* majorities rule not as classes (as the Athenian *demos* did) but as shifting coalitions of individuals and interests whose views are refined and enlarged by their elected representatives. Extensive use of the power of judicial review to effect policy thus undermines the very constitutionalism it depends upon—by stripping constitutional majorities of their proper function.

Tarcov distinguishes the natural rights of individuals protected by the Constitution from natural right as propounded by classical political philosophers. Classic natural right involves the distribution of goods, the direct cultivation of virtues, the fostering of political unity, and the teaching of truth. The classical *politeia*

> . . . is the form taken by a political community, determined by who rules it. The dominant characteristic of the ruling part determines both the political goal of the whole regime and the personal goals of the individuals in it. This conception reflects the view that political rule is natural. The American conception of a constitution, in contrast, is that of a fundamental law, preferably written in a single document, understood as the expression of the will of the whole people. The Constitution grants powers of government from the natural right of individuals, not so that some can rule others or form their goals, but so that the remaining rights of all can be more secure.

The Constitution does not constitute a classical timocracy (*Federalist* #8 explicitly contrasts the agricultural and commercial pursuits of the American states with the ancient republic, a "nation of soldiers"), an oligarchy ("Securing property rights is of special advantage not only to the wealthy but to those who would acquire wealth"), or a classical democracy.

Tarcov does not mean that the Constitution recommends blinding ourselves to the question of the desirability of our several desires. While securing rights, the Constitution is "compelled to distinguish lawful from lawless desires."

> Exclusive reliance on rights generates irritable litigiousness and empty yearning. Our public discourse is impoverished if we only invoke our rights and never debate what is good for us, if we only assert our right to pursue happiness and never discuss what would make us happy.

In protecting the right to speak by means that reward civility and rationality, the Constitution subtly orients some American souls toward distinctively human happiness and away from either the irritable self-righteousness of men who mistake themselves for gods or the appetitive yearnings of men who mistake themselves for beasts. Both these mistakes incline men to tyranny.

WHAT IS THE "HISTORY OF IDEAS"?

"In its second principal aspect,
our (New) Science is
a history of human ideas . .
—Giambattista Vico (1744)

Forthcoming
William Bouwsma on Blumenberg
Allan Megill on Foucault
Jonathan Culler on Wellek
John Pocock on his critics
Ronald Aronson on Sartre
Daniel Wilson on Lovejoy
Donald Kelley on intellectual history
William Courtenay, Neal Gilbert, Heiko Oberman
and Charles Trinkaus on Ancients and Moderns

"1. The history of philosophy
2. The history of science.
3. Folklore and parts of ethnography.
4. Some parts of the history of language.
5. The history of religious beliefs...
6. Literary history...
7. What is unhappily called comparative literature.
8. The history of the arts...
9. Economic history...
10. The history of education.
11. Political and social history, and
12. The historical part of sociology...'
—Arthur O. Lovejoy (1938)

Read all about it in:

JOURNAL OF THE HISTORY OF IDEAS

An International Quarterly Devoted to Intellectual History

Executive Editor: Donald R. Kelley

Subscriptions: $15/yr., $27/2 yrs
(back issues available)
Send checks or money orders to:
Journal of the History of Ideas
Rush Rhees Library
University of Rochester
Rochester, N.Y. 14627

Short Notices

Freedom of Expression: Purpose as Limit. By Francis Canavan. (Durham, N.C., and Claremont, Calif.: Carolina Academic Press and The Claremont Institute for the Study of Statesmanship and Political Philosophy, 1984. xv + 181 pp.: cloth, $19.75; paper, $9.95.)

WILL MORRISEY

"One of the most curious developments in recent intellectual history is the metamorphosis of freedom of speech and press into freedom of expression *tout court*." Words are inseparable from reason—in principle if not in practice—and the substitution of *expression* for speech, oral and written, betokens the redefinition of ideas as tastes and tastes as urges. "Expression, in this understanding of it, becomes detached from rational purpose." Canavan writes "to disturb [this] insufficiently reflective public opinion."

The book's first and finest chapter contains an uncommonly reasonable discussion of the First Amendment to the United States Constitution. Canavan reminds his readers that any freedom must have some purpose, and this purpose defines, that is, limits, the freedom served by it. For example, if, as the Supreme Court has consistently recognized, the First Amendment's primary purpose "is to produce a government controlled by a public opinion that has been formed through free and rational debate on public issues," then reasoned speech and pornography are not created equal. Amusingly enough, some of the more libertarian Justices, while professing to discover no Constitutionally valid distinction between *The Federalist Papers* and *Fanny Hill*, easily discern important differences between political speech and commercial advertising, the latter deemed legitimately ruled by strict laws. Canavan would end such arbitrary judicial expressions by redirecting attention to the distinction "not between speech and conduct but between irrational and more or less rational speech."

In six of the remaining seven chapters, Canavan examines the teachings of nine noteworthy writers on freedom of speech: Milton, Locke, Spinoza, Wortman (a Jeffersonian democrat and author of *A Treatise Concerning Political Enquiry, and the Liberty of the Press*, published in 1800), Mill, Bagehot, Laski, and two twentieth-century American legal scholars, Zechariah Chafee, Jr. and Alexander Meiklejohn. Having insisted upon distinctions among kinds of expression, Canavan does not fail to acknowledge the sometimes considerable differences in intellect and learning among these men. (Almost necessarily, his reading of Locke's complex writings will be more controversial than his treatment of Laski). Be that as it may, Canavan convincingly shows that liberty's great and near-great defenders in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries defended freedom of speech as an inducement to reason, not passion. Indeed,

Bagehot went so far as to argue that "government by discussion" would rechannel sexual into intellectual energy.

Canavan shows that this defense of free speech first weakened when Mill and his followers optimistically presumed that moral *progress* must result from liberty, and then began to collapse when such writers as Laski and Meiklejohn utterly abandoned the "appeal to Nature and Nature's God" as progressivism's optimism receded. "[T]o assert that truth is beyond the reach of reason is the constant temptation of contemporary liberals." Canavan's final chapter eloquently summarizes the argument:

> Freedom to speak and publish was originally advocated for the services it would render to reason in the pursuit of truth. Now it is defended on the ground that, not only is there no definitive standard by which we may judge what is true, there is not even any standard by which we can distinguish reason in the pursuit of truth from passion in the pursuit of pleasure, or greed in quest of gain, or the *libido dominandi* in its drive for power. But to take this position is to undermine the whole case for the freedom of the mind and its expression in speech and publication.

Nihilism makes a poor shield for right.

One might ask if modern political philosophy bears nihilism within itself from the beginning, in contending that reason is a scout for the passions. Modernity's 'rationalism' may attempt more to make reality than to apprehend it. This question takes one beyond Canavan's study, which carefully leads us to it, thus providing a cogent introduction to the issues raised by the modern right to freedom of speech.

Philosophical Apprenticeships. By Hans-Georg Gadamer. Trans. Robert R. Sullivan. (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1985. 205 pp.: $17.50.)

JOAN STAMBAUGH

The title of this intellectual autobiography should remind us of Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeships*. It is not an *auto*biography in the usual sense, but primarily makes accessible to the reader the entire university atmosphere of twentieth century Germany, including the devastating effects of Nazism and the recovery therefrom. The book's motto, *de nobis ipsis silemus,* incorporates the author's characteristic hermeneutical stance of not focusing on himself in a self-reflective Cartesian fashion, but of providing the sensitive optic for the personages and situations with which he came in contact.

There are separate chapters on Paul Natorp, Max Scheler, Martin Heidegger, Rudolf Bultmann, Gerhard Krüger, Richard Kroner, Hans Lipps, Karl Reinhardt, Karl Jaspers, and Karl Löwith; but many other figures, some perhaps less known to English readers but equally important for Gadamer, are discussed in an ingenuous and revealing way. Gadamer leads us through the university

communities of Marburg, Leipzig, Frankfurt and Heidelberg, discussing at first his fellow students and professors and later on his colleagues and friends. We are made aware of his interest and work in Greek philosophy, particularly Plato, and in the poets, most notably Hölderlin, Rilke and Paul Celan.

It is, of course, not possible to discuss all of this rich material in a brief review. We hear about the neo-Kantianism that was a predominant influence during Gadamer's youth in Marburg. We hear about his *Habilitation* with Heidegger, about whose thought he makes many insightful remarks, two of which might be mentioned here.

> The term 'turn' refers to a bend—a hairpin or switchback—in the path that goes up a mountain. One does not turn around here; rather, the way itself turns in order to continue going up. Where to? The question is one that cannot be easily answered.

> Heidegger was then orienting himself to an intensive interpretation of Nietzsche that would find expression in a two-volume work, the real counterpart of *Being and Time* (p. 51).

There is substantial discussion of Nazism, highlighted by the following pivotal sentences:

> That I had failed to see any danger in this pale instrument is easy to understand. It was a widespread conviction in intellectual circles that Hitler in coming to power would deconstruct the nonsense he had used to drum up the movement, and we counted the anti-Semitism as part of this nonsense. We were to learn differently (p. 75).

The descriptions of trying to maintain his university activities under the supervision of the Nazi party border on the surreal. It was not an easy time for anyone.

Gadamer's tales are not without humor.

> Among Marburg students, it was then said of Krüger and me: With Krüger one learns how everything has come to be exact; with Gadamer one learns how little we know about what exactness is (p. 64).

One gleans insight into what Gadamer thought of the growing influence of contemporary educational methods as familiar to us now as to him then. Thus, anthologies and xeroxing are anathema to him; verbal exams are the only genuine kind; introductory courses should be taught by full professors, not by beginning teachers; one cannot normally speak of "educational influence" at the university level; by then it is too late.

Of the most condensed philosophical interest, of course, are Gadamer's remarks on hermeneutics, scattered throughout the book and systematically put forth in an appended essay "On the Origin of Philosophical Hermeneutics." Early on we are told:

> Meanwhile, hermeneutics has become a fashionable term, but this means that it is mostly used as a new hat for old things, especially for a "hermeneutic method" that is not at all new, or even for a nonmethod of divination and enthusiasm, which is as old as the unrequited love for philosophy itself (p. 147).

We are told that hermeneutics has less to learn from the theory of modern science than from old traditions that are worth remembering. There are some very interesting remarks on remembrance and history that indicate a direction differing from that of Heidegger.

> Whenever the attempt is made to philosophize, the remembrance of being happens in this way. But nonetheless it seems to me that there is no history of being. Remembrance has no history. There is a growing forgetfulness, but in the same manner there is no such thing as a growing remembrance. . Philosophy has no history. The first person to write a history of philosophy that really was a history was also the last: Hegel (p. 187).

Finally, Gadamer calls for a return to the primordial dialogic of the human experience of the world, to the unending dialogue of the soul with itself (and others), which is what thinking is. Hermeneutic philosophy is not an absolute position, but a way of experience.

To appreciate the inimitable mood and charm of this book, one must simply read it. It recaptures an era now forever lost to us.

Forthcoming Articles

Harry V. Jaffa	Equality, Liberty, Wisdom, Morality, and Consent in the Idea of Political Freedom
John C. Koritansky	Socratic Rhetoric and Socratic Wisdom in Plato's *Phaedrus*
James C. Leake	Tacitus' Teaching and the Decline of Liberty at Rome (first part)

Discussion

Pamela Jensen	The American Constitution and the American Character
Will Morrisey	Delimiting Philosophy

Reviews	Philip J. Kain on Gisela N. Berns; Will Morrisey on Forrest McDonald and Walter Berns; Stephen M. Krason on John J. Schrems

ISSN 0020-9635