

APPRAISAL

The Journal of the Society for Post-Critical Philosophy and Personalist Studies

Vol. 5, No. 3, March 2005

ISSN 1358-3336

Editor: Dr R.T. Allen

20 Ulverscroft Rd, Loughborough, LE11 3PU, England

Tel. and fax: 01509 552743; E-mail: rt.allen@ntlworld.com

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Notes on new contributors:

Prof. Gerhard Glück trained at the College of Education, Eßlingen, for teaching Grades 1-8 for all subjects, even Religion, Art and Sports (favourite subject: mathematics), spent three years teaching in secondary and primary schools, and then studied Educational Psychology, Education, Biometrics (medical

statistics) at the University of Tübingen. In 1970 he obtained a Dr. phil. ('Mathematical performance and mistakes at the end of Grade 2'). He taught at the University, in various fields, and also in Higher Education, becoming Full Professor at the College of Rhineland for Teacher Education in 1976, moving in 1980 to the University of Aachen, and publishing books on sex education and the HIV-AIDS Controversy. In 1988 he moved to the University of Cologne. He is a member of the Professional Association for Counselling, Education and Psychotherapy, Founder and first Speaker of the Commission on 'Humanistic Psychology and Education' 1995 in the German Society of Education. He hopes to retire in 2006 as Emeritus Professor.

YU Zhenhua is a professor of philosophy at East China Normal University, Shanghai, China. Now he is working on the theory of tacit knowing for his second doctoral degree at the University of Bergen, Norway. He has published a series of articles on tacit knowing both in Chinese and English. Three of his articles have appeared in *Tradition and Discovery*.

Colin D. Pearce holds a Ph.D. in political science from the University of Toronto. He has published in a variety of journals including the *Canadian Journal of Political Science*, *Clio*, *The Journal of the History of Ideas*, *Interpretation*, *The Kipling Journal* and *The South Carolina Review*. He has taught at a variety of universities and colleges, most recently at the University of Guelph in Canada and the University of South of South Carolina, Beaufort.

Antonio Casado da Rocha, after getting an MA degree in Philosophy at UCC (Cork, National University of Ireland), completed a PhD in Philosophy with a dissertation on Henry Thoreau's writings in the light of contemporary political philosophy. After a stage at the University of Iceland, he has worked in the field of bioethics as a research fellow at the University of the Basque Country, Department of Philosophy of Values and Social Anthropology. He also serves at the Hospital Donostia ethics committee and the Basque Society for Palliative Care. At the present moment he is working on the concept of disease in healthcare ethics.

Jere Moorman, MBA, has his undergraduate and graduate degrees from the University of Arizona, Tucson. He is a Resident Fellow of the Centre for Studies of the Person in La Jolla, California. He encourages an interest in applications of Polanyi to business and Christian theology.

EDITORIAL

In this issue Hans Popper reminds us of Hannah Arendt and Gerhard Glück introduces us to Ludwig Fleck, virtually unknown until his last years, who developed conceptions akin to those of Michael Polanyi. Yu Zhenhua examines Rorty's epistemology, and Wendy Hamblet considers a new relation between ethics and reality.

Her and Giorgio Baruchello's discussion of cruelty is joined by Colin D. Pearce, who employs Nietzsche on striving to do one's best and Lecky on progress in order to comment upon their previous discussions, and by Antonio Casado da Rocha who, independently, extends their discussion, as they do themselves in their latest contribution, to the question of the cruelty of non-human and non-conscious existence.

I wonder if this continuing discussion of cruelty may have an unfortunate consequence: when American enthusiasts for Polanyi's philosophy first formed a society they named it after the third part of *The Tacit Dimension*, viz. 'The Society of Explorers'. But they adopted the present and more prosaic title when they began to receive inquiries from people wishing to organise expeditions to remote parts of the globe. Will *Appraisal*, start to attract persons with a practical interest in cruelty, viz. sadists and masochists?

That aside, Jere Moorman and Giorgio Baruchello, contribute two further discussion items, on tacit knowing in business and pessimism, respectively. More such items will be very welcome, especially if others join in.

Discussion is also a central part of our Annual Conference. It is still not too late to book a place, nor even to offer a short paper: see the 'Conferences' pages, where notices are given of three other conferences with a personalist focus. Only some unexpected windfall will enable to go Braga in November but I hope to be in Warsaw in August and meet again the friends I made in 2001 at the corresponding event in Austria. If you, please try to attend one of these conferences: a group with a special interest in Polanyi should never be esoteric.

This time next year we shall be celebrating our tenth anniversary. Physical constraints prevent us from publishing an enlarged issue, but offers of suitable articles for a special issue will be very welcome.

INTERPRETING HANNAH ARENDT'S *THE HUMAN CONDITION*

Hans Popper

Hannah Arendt was born in Hanover in 1906, of a well to do Jewish family; she received the excellent school and university education that was open to Jews at that time. She studied Philosophy, Theology and Greek at the Universities of Marburg and Heidelberg, her teachers being Bultmann, Heidegger and Jaspers – to name but three of the leading scholars of the early 20th century; her doctorate on St Augustine was supervised by Jaspers and, but for Hitler's accession to power, a brilliant academic career would have opened up before her¹.

That is the positive dimension; the negative dimension arises from the rabid anti-Semitism which, despite such great, truly humane figures as Wilhelm Dilthey, or her own teachers, Jaspers and Rudolph Bultmann, continued to infect a large section of the population – including, for instance, Heidegger's wife Elfride.²

Indeed, Hannah's mother had warned her to stand up for herself, should she get under attack, at school or elsewhere.³ But although she did not come to any harm, the situation was sufficiently threatening for her to realise that it would be sheer folly not to emigrate, and to do so as soon as possible, while it was fairly easy to do so.

First she fled to France, where she worked for an organisation to help Jewish refugee children to get to Palestine; and, after the Nazis had occupied France, she was fortunate enough to get to the USA in 1941. At first she worked for the Conference on Jewish Relations, then occupied a number of posts, including the chief editorship of Schocken Books, finally a number of university posts, including California, Princeton, Columbia and Chicago.

She died in 1975.⁴

Being Jewish presented her with an emotional problem – her love affair with Heidegger;⁵ – a challenge to work effectively for her people; and what she came to realise as her political thinker's task, to uncover *the truth*: on the phenomenological level, the nature and the emergence of the two vices of her time, anti-Semitism and totalitarianism, and their rootedness in the ever-increasing domination of the machine over the life of society, threatening men at their very core as persons.

It is this latter threat that disillusioned Heidegger with the Nazi party from which he had hoped a national revival, but anti-Semitism does not appear to enter his purview of the situation. He again speaks of this problem in *On Humanism* (1946), and there he treats it as a problem threatening mankind as a whole. Indeed, this work is part of a series of

lectures and writings, as this problem had been troubling him over a long period of time; but neither he nor any of his contemporaries (e.g. Ernst and Friedrich Georg Jünger), had made this strong specific link between anti-Semitism and the problem of the dominance of science ('das Gestell' the framework of a machine), both part and parcel of the general trend of dehumanisation.⁷ The reason for this must be sought in the fact that Arendt's research is two-stranded; on the one hand, there are the responses to specific topical issues (the most famous being her covering of the Eichmann trial in Jerusalem – *Eichmann in Jerusalem. A Report on the Banality of Evil*; Viking Press, USA 1963; rev. and enlarged ed. 1963, Penguin 1977, 1994 – on behalf of *The New Yorker*); on the other hand, the systematic deepening and broadening of her inquiry regarding her confrontation with truth; first, her own situation as a member of the Jewish community, victim of murderous totalitarian systems of government, themselves at the centre of what grew into a federation of governments, progressively more tyrannical and aggressive, until they had embroiled both themselves and most of the rest of the world in a war which they lost.

After having, as a historian, described the two phenomena of anti-Semitism and totalitarian government, analysing its various structures, as she found her problem broadening out to encompass modern society, its character, due to the peculiar structure of its antecedents: i.e. the *condition* in which we find ourselves today, and how this came about; thence the need to set this condition in its spiritual and moral setting, an operation which is not only illuminating in its own right, but without which our seemingly insoluble conflicts can be neither understood nor brought to a conclusion.

Human activities unfold in response to three types of environment: that of a physical and biological nature which provides the means of livelihood extracted from the earth by physical *labour*; that of objects created when ingenuity is put to *work* and the artificial world of things comes into being, which she calls *wordliness*; and that of *action*, the sphere of intercourse between persons without which political life would not be possible.⁹ And here she touches on the most fundamental aspect of existence: Referring to the contrast between the Pauline and Augustinian use of the creation stories, she highlights Paul's emphasis, on the need for faith (1 Cor. 10 v 32-11 v 16; Gen. 2 vv 21-23) and Augustine's reference to Jesus' quoting of the other account of the creation of man (Mt. 19 v 4; Gen. 1 v

27) which is closely connected with action. Their common ground is the plurality of the members of the singular human species (*Conf.* XII 20-21), as against the many animal species;¹⁰ but not two human individuals are alike. This is of decisive importance, for it renders the future unpredictable, so that the grounds for anticipating disastrous decisions are without limit; but so are the possibilities for good and wise ways of acting: infinite horizons for despair, but also for hope, open up. In any one situation of conflict and mutual hatred, where the parties confront each other with seemingly no path open to reconciliation and to peace, there is always the possibility that the activity of goodness (not the utilitarian 'good for', the common currency of antiquity, but the absolute, the sincere, hidden mode enjoyed by Jesus) may yet break through the chain of vengefulness and forgive what is not forgivable;¹¹ the next step towards peace is reconciliation between individuals and groups who trust each other, who keep promises and form long-term covenants; in contrast to the contingency of a diplomatic manoeuvre (e.g. Hitler's Munich agreement); these covenants and constitutions are islands of predictability in an ocean of uncertainty. Two examples quoted by Arendt are the US Constitution and the operation of forgiveness and reconciliation in South Africa.¹² I would like to add a point made by Melancthon in the *Apology to the Augsburg Confession*, that faith (*pistis*) is more fundamental than love (*agap-*), because it consists in mutual trust;¹³ and, as a professional academic and as Luther's closest assistant in the politico-theological negotiations of the 1520s and 1530s, he certainly had experience of trust! It also throws light on the events in which the barriers of hostility are broken down to give way to the creation of constitutional structures which contain hostility between ethnic, economic or ideological groups. We can see this again in events like the demonstrations against the war in Vietnam, or the citizens' councils during the Hungarian revolution, where success was only on a limited scale: reconciliation does not come about like a suddenly erupting miracle from above, but by the *metano-sis* of a growing number of persons who have grown tired of the destructiveness of armed struggle which only engenders more hatred, more fear and seems to foreclose even the remotest hope for the leaders of either side – as a colleague of mine has recently written to me in a letter from Haifa – knowing *how* to make peace;¹⁴ Utopian models of political and social structures now appear sterile; and ordinary people in such situations come to look for a breakthrough where they (indeed, where we all) should have looked all along: in their basic humanity, the source of thought and volition, hence, of men's most fundamental

skill, that of *conversing* with each other truthfully and in concern for each other.¹⁵

The framework for such a way of living and conversing must, however, be brought about by political action; but that, in its turn, must be based on a clear realisation of our experiences, more especially our fears – the abandonment, therefore, of our thoughtlessness. Hannah Arendt has, therefore, written this book with a view to examining *what we are doing* to analyse the nature of the *vita activa*.¹⁶ But this can only be done by the exercise of man's highest and purest activity, that of thought; and this is far more than a series of inductions; it is, in fact, an exercise in mental stocktaking and this with the help of Book X of Augustine's *Confessions*¹⁷ which opens with the prayer, that God who knows him may also vouchsafe for him to know him in the same way ('sicut et a te cognitus sum'). The *vita activa* cannot, therefore, be known/understood (*cognosci*) unless it is inspected from the outside, and this, according to Arendt, following Augustine, has to be a prolonged scrutiny, under God's guidance, of the nature of his own human person. She therefore commits herself to the *vita contemplativa* as a basis for *examining what we are doing*¹⁸; in Husserl's terminology: to undertake an epoch – in order to face the pure phenomena of our pattern of human living by means of our *transcendental consciousness* (cf. p. 9 of *Appraisal* Vol. 5, No. 1, March 2004), or as she says, by means of metaphysical thought which leads her, under Augustine's guidance, to ask, who she is, but in the context of whom she loves, when she loves God; the answer: 'a human person and, indeed, body and soul..... one the outer, the other the inner. Which of these is it, from whom I have had to seek my God?'¹⁹ – Augustine searches through the riches of his memory to find his God, object of his love, for it is God only who can answer the question regarding the character of his person as a man, God only being able to speak about a 'who' as though it were a 'what'. Neither 'quis es?' Nor 'quid ergo sum, Deum meus?' can be answered by philosophy – unless, through it, we arrive at a transcendental location from which to view the human person ('homo', 'quis', 'quid') and, indeed, the condition of his existence (*labour, work, action, thought*).²⁰ For Augustine, it is the God whom he loves; and Jesus and the Christian tradition (together with analogous traditions preserved in other faiths) contribute absolute goodness, forgiveness and trustworthiness without which no dilemma of men living in community can be solved. If a community were to migrate to a different planet, the moral and spiritual bases of living together in harmony or clashing in mutual or in internal conflicts would not change. What would change, however, and what has changed as between different cultures on earth, and

with the passage of time, are modes and styles of behaviour, the circumstances under which moral and spiritual relationships are expressed in the concrete shapes adopted by society, in other words, the *conditions* under which societies provide for their daily food (*labour*), the artefacts which their *work* produces to transform their environment into an artificial, man-made world, covering the entire range, from material to aesthetic needs, and giving form to their *actions* through which they interrelate with the environment and with each other.²¹

Arendt takes issue with the perennial mistake of viewing society – ‘man’, in the singular – as if it were a cohesive mass of uniform, never changing biological matter, instead of the constantly evolving communities of individual men and women, unpredictable creators of ever new structures and conditions of living together, be it in harmony or in conflict.²² Accordingly, she takes a long historical perspective of our society, noting its changes and allowing her *transcendental consciousness* to see it as a meaningful whole. And the first feature that she highlights is the revolution undergone by the two spheres of living together, the *public* and the *private*, and how, with changing conditions, two new spheres, the *social*, followed by the *intimate*, conferred an entirely different character on our way of living.²³

In ancient Greek society, then most clearly in the *polis*, women, labourers and slaves produced the necessary physical conditions for living (supplemented by goods imported by merchants); this also applies to republican Roman society. The structure of this, the *private sphere*, is hierarchical, the head of the family being the absolute ruler. The latter (provided he owned the house in which the family were living) was the free citizen, participating with his fellow-citizens in the business of government.²⁴ A major shift in the power structure takes place with the advent, first of emperors, then of feudalism, which, although still distinguishing between the sexes, in that the man goes out to fight and the woman stays at home and runs the business of the household, political power is shared between the two, for the polity consists of a loose federation of families, the ruling dynasty being the first *inter pares*.²⁵ The public and the private spheres become absorbed into the *family*. The ethos of the society is pervaded by a Christian faith which is controlled by the church that sets off the darkness of everyday living by the splendour of its ceremonial.²⁶ The sharp division between the public and the private spheres of antiquity would have been incomprehensible,²⁷ in the Middle Ages, when politics consists essentially in the interests of private groups (being represented by those of their members who are capable of defending them). A major dimension of mediaeval conflicts consists,

therefore, in family wars, and these are extended into the dynastic wars of the early modern period, when the successful rulers are the ones who, with the Papacy, also ally themselves with the rising bourgeois merchant class; where the latter's sphere of operations is overseas trade and colonisation, the Tudors, as promoters and patrons, derive maximum political and social advantage. Their status is, indeed, symptomatic of the processes whereby the society of leading families got transformed into the nation-state of post-Renaissance Europe, for the most part ruled over by one leading dynasty, the rest of the nobility becoming officials at the royal court (defeated in the *Frondes*, or in the wars of the Roses; in the case of the German-speaking countries, the medium-sized principalities holding power until absorbed into the kingdom of Prussia, or under its sphere of influence, thence the ‘second’ German Empire and the separatist Empire of Austria-Hungary), competing with each other for influence, wealth and status. They had the double function of supporting the commercial and industrial classes, while at the same time keeping a check on ‘over-mighty subjects’. The monarchs, therefore, wielded the political power, which meant protecting and expanding territory, whilst the *social class* absorbed the functions of the private and family classes of earlier periods.²⁸ Gone was the political power of the noble and patrician classes of antiquity, as the nation-states came to be ruled by absolute monarchs; gone, also, was the privacy of the mediaeval dynasties.

With the expropriation of land, the wealth of the leading members of society came to be turned into money, whether in its fluid form of cash for consumption, or of capital to be used for buying property or capital for investment to create even more wealth. The nation-state has come to take over the functions of the families of feudal society; it is, as it were, one family (allowing for competing interest groups) administering the functions which make the coexistence of its citizens viable (education, policing, traffic and all other forms of public control). But with the private sphere of the Middle Ages and of antiquity gone, one dimension of modern society, the *intimate sphere*, has taken over the function of culture and of visionary thought.²⁹

Arendt speaks of the great flowering of literature and music in the later 18th and earlier 19th centuries.³⁰ This has to be refined, for the poetic and musical culture of the baroque and Augustan ages was not properly understood during Arendt's intellectual development. A small, but telling example, symptomatic of the rising culture after c.1750, is the writing of sonnets, which was non-existent in the early and mid-18th century, that is, in the period of largely cerebral, extrovert

writing, very obviously distinct from the literature of sensibility and the architectonic, contrapuntal, rather than diatonic music (we might say, of the Enlightenment). In the latter part of the 18th century, the intellectual and the sensibility-type of writing merged into a deeply emotional, but also revolutionary, prophetic and metaphysical art of various types of Romanticism which are what Arendt regards as the chief glory of modern culture since the French Revolution.

We must now turn to the other function of what had been the 'private' sphere of the societies of antiquity and of the Middle Ages, that of producing the material necessities of life.

In a world dominated by the mainly mercantile upper and middle classes, the workshops, manufactories and factories were shut off from public view as far as possible.³¹ *Labourers* (including what had once been slaves) were economically ground down, the despised members of society. But with improved technology, their conditions of work and life also improved in the course of the 19th century, so that they and the *workers* have come increasingly to share in the leadership of society.³² With the vast increase in the population, its evaluation by means of the new science of statistics,³³ men have come to be seen, not as persons, but as quantifiable units. They are measured according to their conforming to general observations – so-called 'laws'. What statisticians necessarily leave out of account is their power of speech, the words that express their thoughts and feelings, their volitions and their attitudes as persons. Throughout the 19th century economists took it for granted that *man* (in the singular) is governed by self-interest.³⁴ And when self-interests clash, there is no hope for peace. Only where individual persons live, speak and think together as true communities, can a reappraisal of the moral dimension lead to goodness, trustworthiness, hence forgiveness, as discussed above. Only this *activity of goodness*, as Arendt calls it, will give depth to a truly balanced mode of existence, where the practicalities of life are given their just value, and where things produced by work are understood correctly in the ways in which they both *unite* and *separate* men.³⁵ However it is this depth, the sense of a just value, that our society seems to have lost. Arendt refers to an article, published by Simone Weil under the name of Emil Novis (*Reflexions à propos de la théorie des quanta*) in *Cahiers du Sud*, Dec. 1942 (cf. Footnote 53, pp. 287-88), in which the creation of an hypothesis can never be directly confirmed or disproved; what emerges is merely 'la convenance plus ou moins grade'; we are reminded of the greater convenience of the heliocentric over the geocentric model of the solar system, only one step further, as Arendt reminds us that Whitehead

has pointed out, towards complete relativization of our picture of the solar system according to our point of view.³⁶ But the end result is our loss of something 'infiniment plus précieux' than science, 'namely the notion of truth'; but this ushers in 'the greatest perplexity in this state of affairs... the undeniable fact that these hypotheses "work"'.³⁷ With the phenomenal progress of the natural sciences since Copernicus and his predecessors, the 14th century Oxford mathematicians, the sense of the ontological status, *the truth*, of these discoveries, has receded into the background, leading to 'a feeling of frustration due to the lack of clarity in the understanding of the fundamental principles on which the new science must be based' (*Appraisal*, op. cit., p 10); – but *who* feels frustrated: the scientists themselves, or Husserl, who is anxious to lay a new foundation to philosophy as a 'strict academic discipline' ('streng Wissenschaft': *ibid.*, p. 9), the concern of philosophers, but not of experimental scientists?

A malaise there certainly ought to be, for since the scientists who founded the Royal Society founded their power-generating discoveries on 'exemplary moral standards',³⁸ most academic scientists (like Leonardo da Vinci) will accept lucrative contracts from their respective ministries of defence to produce machines of infernal destruction which puts the Hiroshima bomb in the shade! The truth that will make us free (John 8, 32) is the true aim of scientific, as of all, work and it needs to be troubled about, today as much as ever.

As regards the truth of our situation, the last section of *The Human Condition*³⁹ shows how, with the shift of the Archemidean fixed point away from the earth, so that we can observe ourselves critically from the outside,⁴⁰ a series of revolutionary developments have taken place, which started with the invention of the telescope,⁴¹ the indispensable *prima causa*, but whose end is not in sight: the *telos* (in its double meaning of 'end point in time' and 'purpose', 'objective') is missing.⁴² The reason for this may be deduced from the fact that its invention, due to natural curiosity, must be seen against a broader perspective: researchers of that period were no longer motivated by *what* and *why* they were inquiring into the object of their work; instead, it is the *efficient causation* that interested them; it is the *history* of phenomena – the genesis of the solar system, of societies, of literary works of art (*Naturgeschichte, Geistesschichte*) – which came increasingly to take pride of place among areas of study; and for facilitating their work, the appropriate *tools* had to be fashioned, and this by man the toolmaker (*homo faber*), who replaced man the thinker (*homo sapiens*) and who was, in his turn to be replaced by man the labourer (*homo laborans*) as shaping society.⁴³ The general context within these

changes is the reversal of what is given most distinction among intellectual activities.

Basing himself on Platonic precedent, Aristotle establishes the hierarchy of disciplines, with *dianoia*, *epist-m- praktik-* (practical insight; political science) at the bottom, *epist-me poi-tik-* (science of fabrication, creative work) on the next highest rung, and *theōria* (contemplation of truth) as man's highest pursuit – essential, indeed, for *poi-sis*, for a creative piece of work needs a model from which to take its cue.⁴⁴ Hence, the *vita contemplativa* became, for many centuries, the ruling mode of life over the *vita activa*. But their roles came to be reversed in the early modern period. With the mathematical substructure of nature becoming more abstruse and less comprehensible – although its practical application in applied science became sensationally successful – and this in the context of Cartesian doubt and Humean criticism of causality, the formal and final cause tended increasingly to cede pride of place to efficient causation.⁴⁵ But choice of tool for discovering or bringing about a course of events depends on Theaetetus' man as measure, hence of planner, of all operations – a reversal of Socrates' wonder (*thaumazein*) at beholding a truth (in Christian terms: 'divinae dulcedini inhiare') which is the beginning, indeed, the very essence, of philosophy.⁴⁶

In the era of the primacy of the *vita activa*, *contemplation* gets dismissed as a meaningless experience, thought a mere reckoning with consequences, a function of the brain, better carried out by electronic instruments, and action the making and fabricating of tools to eliminate the toil of labouring in promoting the functioning of the life process.⁴⁷ The *labouring society* has become a *society of job holders*, who draw their wages and carry out what they are commanded to do in their work contract. But the hardest task, even in a tyranny, is omitted:⁴⁸ thinking. And that presupposes a conception of the human species which turns the *homo laborans* upside down: the image of *men, persons*, whose sense of responsibility in thinking and feeling must be an incomprehensible nightmare to the 'clown' Eichmann⁴⁹ whose trial Hannah Arendt reported from Jerusalem.

It is more than high time that we recommence the search for the *telos* and again become active in *thought* which Arendt says in her concluding paragraph,⁵⁰ 'would surpass' all other activities – which is, in effect, the Socratic wonder at the truth, when it is, not *invented* (*Theaetetus*), but *faced* fairly and squarely.

7 Mirador Crescent
Uplands
Swansea, SA2 0QX

Notes:

1. For Arendt's life, see Simon Critchley and William R. Schroeder (eds.), *A Companion to Continental Philosophy* (Blackwell, Oxford, 1998, 1999), pp. 478-83; Peter Baehr (ed.) *The Portable Hannah Arendt* (Penguin Putman, New York, 2000 – hereafter PHA), pp. vii-lvii.
2. cf. Rüdiger Safranski, *Ein Meister aus Deutschland, Heidegger und seine Zeit* (Hanser, Munich and Vienna, 1994), esp. pp. 90ff, 109, 157, 166ff, 201ff, 297, 369ff, 387ff, 490.
3. cf. *Portable Arendt*, p. viii.
4. *ibid.* p. xlv, where it is shown that the last period of her life is again devoted to her 'first love', pure philosophy.
Concerning the strong need for investigating the moral and existential basis of the *vita activa*, if the latter is not to be perverted, when 'how' pushes 'what' and 'why' into the background, as is discussed in the last section of *The Human Condition* (U. of Chicago P., Chicago, 1958, 2nd ed. 1998 – hereafter HC). It is not surprising that this should be the starting-point of a renewed exercise in *contemplation*: cf. *The Life of the Mind*.
5. PHA, pp. viii-ix and notes thereto, xlv-xlvi. Heidegger seems to have imagined that an *arrangement à trois* was feasible. All the more admirable is the support she was given by Heinrich Blücher, her second husband, and that of her life-long friend, Karl Jaspers. Cf. Safranski, *op. cit.*, pp. 166ff, 431ff, 489ff.
6. Heidegger's apprehension vis-à-vis the dehumanising effect of Nazi administration, as pervaded by technology: Safranski, *op. cit.*, esp. pp. 336-8. Arendt, in *The Origins of Totalitarianism* (2nd ed. Harcourt Brace, New York, 1979) pp. 1-20, obviously assumes the existence of connections between antisemitism and various types of totalitarianism, esp. Nazism and Stalinism. But no direct link is made with technology. But see pp. 474ff on isolation as a common dehumanising factor. The theme of the labouring classes is fully worked out in HC.
7. cf. HC esp. pp. 130-5, 144-53, for an account of modern antisemitism, distinct from anti-Judaism yet connected with it, see Robert S. Wistrich, *Antisemitism: The Longest Hatred* (Thames Methuen, London, 1991), chaps. 4-5, pp. 43ff, 252, for etymology: cf. Safranski, *op. cit.*, pp. 453ff and esp. pp. 458ff.
8. HC pp. 6, 30. Framework for the *vita activa* in Chap. I, sec. 1, pp. 7ff; cf. further Margaret Donovan's illuminating 'Introduction', pp. viiff.
9. On *action*: HC Chap. V, pp. 175ff; introduced as one mode of the *vita activa*, Chap. I, sec. 2, pp. 12ff; On *labour*: central treatment in Chap. III, pp. 79ff; first introduced, Chap. I, sec. 2, p.12. On *work*, done by *homo faber*, first introduced, Chap. II, sec.4, pp. 22ff; central treatment, Chap. IV, pp. 136ff.
10. HC P. 8, esp. n. 1. In *De Genesi imperfectus liber* (XVI 54-8), Augustine distinguishes between God (in the singular) making the animal species, and 'faciamus' (the Father through the Son) creating man. For 'ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram' (Gen. 1, 26), he distinguishes between many possible

resemblances, which are ‘not like God’, and man, His image, ‘ab ipso quidem genitum’.

11. HC pp. 236-43.
12. HC pp. 215-20, 243-7. As a matter of fact, she ranges far more widely: not surprisingly so, in view of her sense of obligation to respond to the more important conflicts of her time by which she shapes her thinking: cf. Margaret Donovan, ‘Intro.’ pp. xv, xvii-xix.
13. *Die Bekenntnisschriften der evangelisch-lutherischen Kirche. Herausgegeben im Gedenkjahr der Augsburgischen Konfession 1930*, 4th rev. ed., Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, Göttingen, 1959; official publication of the German Evangelical Church. See esp. pp. 174-6, 185: ‘faith’ – ‘fides’, ‘fiducia’; ‘love’ – ‘dilectio’/‘Glaube’, ‘Liebe’. (The whole of Art. IV is on pp. 158-233.)

Art. IV. Faith is based on God’s promise to justify all who listen to his gospel: it is a strength (Rom. 1, 16: ‘virtus’, ‘dynamis’) of God (genitive: proper to, belonging to, of the essence of his nature), directed into the saving (eis sōt-riān) of/for everybody who believes/trusts (panti tō pisteuonti), first the Jew, then the Greek. It is, therefore, both universal and unshakeable, being G80od’s strength devoted to everybody who trusts (present participle). It is, therefore, both absolute and person-based. It is diametrically opposed to something *you do*; and this includes both good works and love. Useful as these are, they depend on a person’s decision (therefore impermanent and unreliable) and they follow on from (they do not initiate) God’s directing his saving strength at the trusting person.
14. See n. 12 above. The letter from Haifa: a private communication from a friend who teaches at the University of Haifa.
15. cf. HC esp. pp. 175-83, 207-8, 236-8. On *nous* and *logos*: p. 27. On inner dialogue and the ineffable words: p. 291; cf. II Cor. 12, 4 (‘arrh-ta rh-mata’). This topos has a long tradition, some of which I worked out in my doctoral thesis, *Jacob Boehme’s doctrine of a natural language (‘Natursprache’) with special reference to its influence on Novalis and others*, Bristol, 1959.
16. cf. HC p. 5. The principal discussion of its effect on a society deprived of its roots in ‘the lack of clarity in the understanding’ of ‘its fundamental principles’ (Husserl: cf. the quotation from *Appraisal*, Vol. 5 No. 1, Mar. 2004, p. 10, quoted further on in the text) occurs in Chap. VI, pp. 248ff.
17. cf. HC pp. 10-1.
18. cf. HC p. 5.
19. Augustine, *Conf.* X, 6.
20. We note that the discussion of human conditions (pp. 8-9) breaks off at the point where the distinction between organic and man-made conditions is shown to have the conditioning effect of human life in common. The next paragraph (pp. 10-11) describes the Augustinian meditation (*Conf.* X, 6) on *who* and *what* those men are, existentially, who are being conditioned. Only when the result of this introduction is shown up as mystery – however vital! – can the Archimedean point, outside the questioner, be occupied, in order, first, to examine human nature *ab extra*, as analysed by the natural sciences (p. 11).

These mysterious (*ab intra*), yet clearly observed beings (*ab extra*) are now (pp. 12ff) ready to be, in fact, observed in their encounters with the conditions under which they are challenged to create their biological (labour), social (work) and political (action) life.
21. cf. HC pp. 7-9.
22. cf. HC pp. 38-46, 182-8; Chap. V sec. 34, pp. 243ff.
23. cf. HC Chap. II, sec. 9, pp. 68ff, 38ff, 167-70.
24. cf. HC pp. 29-32, 64-5.
25. cf. HC p. 29, n. 14.
26. cf. HC p. 34.
27. cf. HC Chap. II, secs. 5-6, pp. 28ff.
28. *ibid.*
29. cf. HC pp. 38-9, 45, 68-75 (introspection as flight from ‘worldliness’); 210. cf. the poet Gottfried Benn’s frequent descriptions of the artist as a craftsman, or an experimenter, in any case, a person who *produces/makes* (macht) a poem (*Gesammelte Werke in vier Bänden*, ed. Dieter Wellershoff, Limes Verlag, Wiesbaden, 1959-63), e.g. I, 389-90 (laboratory), 576 (artist’s workroom, *Atelier*), 259-60 (experimentation), 531 (vivisection), 545, 565 (making), 524 (the absolute poem, which gets fitted/assembled in a fascinating manner (*faszinierend montieren*), 510 (the word is the phallus of the spirit: *der Phallus des Geistes*); 517 (the lyrical poet, a solitary worker, obeys an inner voice, not knowing whence it comes).
30. cf. HC, esp. p. 39.
31. cf. HC pp. 72-3, 118-9.
32. cf. HC, esp. pp. 45-7.
33. cf. HC pp. 40-45.
34. cf. HC, esp. p. 42 n. 35; but notice the whole line of argument, pp. 41ff.
35. cf. HC, esp. pp. 76-7.
36. cf. HC Chap. VI, secs. 36-7, pp. 257ff; 40, pp. 285ff. Beside *Science and the Modern World*, to which Arendt refers, cf. ‘The First Physical Synthesis’, pp. 227-42 in A. N. Whitehead, *Essays in Science and Philosophy*, Pt IV *Science*, Philosophical Library, New York, 1947.
37. cf. HC pp. 287-8, n. 53.
38. On the Royal Society, cf. esp. HC pp. 271-2.
39. See n. 8 above.
40. cf. HC Chap. VI, pp. 248ff.
41. cf. further to the above note: pp. 257-9, 274, 290-1, and Whitehead’s *The First Physical Synthesis*, mentioned in n. 36 above.
42. ‘The First Physical Synthesis’ p. 307: the inevitable result of reversing ‘the hierarchical order between the *vita contemplativa* and the *vita activa* (p. 289), hence of *world alienation* (p. 248).
43. We note that the defeat of *the Dria* by *homo faber* goes beyond providing the necessary tools for facilitating the life devoted to *thaumazein*, in order to result in its own defeat by *animal laborans*, in the pursuit of 18th-19th century eudaimonism. This takes the form of a ‘pain-pleasure calculus’ which ultimately denudes true ‘worldliness’ to the state of the bare ‘principle of life itself’ (p. 311): cf. esp. as from p. 294.
44. cf. HC p. 301.
45. cf. HC pp. 296-9.

Continued on p. 159

LUDWIK FLECK'S IDEAS IN SCIENCE COMPARED TO SIMILAR CONCEPTS OF MICHAEL POLANYI WITH SOME CONSEQUENCES FOR TEACHER EDUCATION.

Gerhard Glück

1 Biography of Ludwik Fleck

Fleck (1896-1961), a Polish Jewish medical doctor produced a book in German 1935 which aimed to clarify how a scientific fact is established and developed. The monograph was published by Benno Schwabe in Basel (Switzerland) in an edition of 640 copies, of which about 200 were sold. German intellectuals, especially when they had Jewish ancestry, had to take care in respect of continuing in their professions and for their families and their own lives, and so the book could not receive the audience and attention it would have merited. Fleck was deported by the Nazis to the concentration camps Auschwitz and Buchenwald, where he joined the underground political group around Eugen Kogon.

He worked with other deported medical doctors, to produce a vaccine for typhus. He, his wife and his son survived and after a position as full professor in Lublin 1950 and Warsaw 1952, member of the Academy of sciences 1954, the whole family emigrated to Israel. His last paper, 'Crisis in Science. Towards a Free and More Human Science' (1960), written in Israel and quoting Polanyi's *Personal Knowledge* and *The Study of Man*, was refused by four journals as 'not topical'.

In the seventies two groups prepared a second edition of the main book from 1935, one in English (1979) by Robert K. Merton and Thaddeus I. Trenn (University of Regensburg, Germany), a second in German (1980) by Lothar Schäfer and Thomas Schnelle, and a third in German by Schäfer und Schnelle with a selection of 8 papers on methodology, taken from about 140 chemical, medical and methodological papers, written by Fleck together with colleagues and published, from 1927 to 1960 – see 2.2 below on 'thought collectives' or 'thought communities'.

In the introduction to these second editions Schäfer and Schnelle (1980, S. VIII) compare *Genesis and Development of a Scientific Fact* with Descartes *Discours de la méthode* and Thomas Kuhn's *Structure of Scientific Revolutions*. Kuhn wrote in a forward (1976) to the English edition, that Fleck's book remains 'a brilliant and largely unexploited resource'.

I became acquainted with Fleck's ideas through Hans Georg Neuweg's remarkable, comprehensive and analytic book on Michael Polanyi (1999) last year via a paper, published in the German *Zeitschrift für Pädagogik*. So I am at the very beginning on my studies on Polanyi and Fleck.

2. Summary of the paper

My first aim is, to compare the main ideas of Fleck with some of Polanyi's considerations. So far – as I could examine – Polanyi had not cited or even mentioned Ludwik Fleck. That seems amazing, as both had written in German and 8 copies of Fleck (1935) were available in American libraries in 1980.

My second aim is to exploit Fleck's and Polanyi's ideas for my domain of teacher education and I regret that I cannot write so clearly and intuitively as Fleck could when he was 39 years old.

My third aim is to pose some questions. The thesis, in §2 1 is a phenomenological observation within a thought community. One could accept it or not by insight – I accept this thesis.

To convince any opposition to accept this thesis or insight: Could this assumption be tested empirically by matching two equal groups of novices? The exp.-group receives a verbal and personal master-imitation introduction, but the control group receives only a verbal instruction for the same time by equally good masters as in the exp.-group.

Examples could be the domains which I quote from Fleck and Polanyi in the following paragraphs, e.g. to identify diphtheria, reading an X-ray, microscopy, and diagnosis of an ability or inability with children or the most complex ability: good teaching.

3 Fleck's central concepts and their similarity to Polanyi's

1 Implicit and explicit knowledge

Ludwik Fleck had already 1927 published in the *Polish Journal of the History and Philosophy of Medicine* Michael Polanyi's later thesis that we know more than we can say and can logically declare. Fleck argues:

The best medical diagnosticians are unable to demonstrate concretely from what specified observations they reason – and not deduce! – that the whole appearance is typical for these or that disease (Fleck 1983, S. 39f.).

It is the discrepancy between book knowledge and the intuition and art of a good physician. He claims:

The best logical doctor is worst in diagnosis especially in the profession of medicine we observe similar symptoms and characteristics which do not indicate the same disease, not even related or allied diseases. So the profession called this 'pseudo' or 'para' e.g. Typhus – Paratyphus, e.g. Krupp – Pseudokrupp.

Fleck published a paper 'On scientific observation and awareness in general' in a Polish philosophical journal in 1935. I translated 'Wahrnehmung' with 'awareness' – that's a familiar concept in Gestalt-Methodology and not with the more scientific concept 'observation'.

He reports from his medical praxis, that he has to check cultures of diphtheria under the microscope and he sees an amount of lines (or hairlines), with a specific structure e.g., colour, shape and order. He tries to describe these three elements of the pictures so, that with words a layman can identify the picture. Normally a layman is unable to distinguish the lines which indicate diphtheria from those which do not.

2 My personal memory, 1961-2004

When I was studying, at the age of 19, to be a teacher we had also a course in method for biology at the College. Self-discovery and experimental methods were arranged by Dr. Fritz Haug. The students in school would get a microscope to check whether materials were suitable for digesting food.

To be able to teach this exacting and demanding art of teaching we were prepared each with a microscope and some materials. I had to identify certain things and procedures. I remember very clearly 43 years later that I tried and tried, turned on the small wheels to get a sharply-defined picture and I succeeded very poorly. I become very angry that I saw things, which by no means corresponded to the shapes which others of my peer-group saw and which we should be able to see. I had received no training hitherto to handle a microscope and to look and see something in particular. And it's the same today, when the surgeon lets me see in the x-ray photograph my knee or my wrist. I see some shadows and I wonder why the expert is so sure about what is wrong and what medicine or operation to suggest.

3 Back to Fleck's paper:

All students – after a while – gain the capacity to identify (to a high degree) the right lines of diphtheria.

The novice must learn to accept an authoritative teacher who knows the right diagnosis and it's sometimes a hard constraint or sometimes softer, but you have to obey.

It's impossible to enter such a training with doubts or scepticism, with which the mainstream in Germany thinks that a student at university should be motivated.

4 Thought collectives

A thought collective exists, whenever two or more persons are actually exchanging thoughts (p. 102). Thomas Kuhn describes a thought collective as 'an individual mind writ large because many people possess it (or are possessed by it)'. It seems like an

legislative authority, who compels the individuals to think and argue in a specific manner, mode, way and style, even a constraint upon thinking (pp. 64, 80, 133, 141, 159).

Fleck himself introduced the example of the world of fashion and declares, that the same constraint works within a thought collective of science. The elite of fashion producers (esoteric circle) has no immediate contact which the most dedicated followers of fashion. The motivation is not low or petty – the mass (exoteric circle) will be simply told:

- 'á Paris, la femme porte',
- 'ce qu'il vous faut pour cet hiver' or
- 'Lancé au printemps par quelque jeunes femmes de la société parisienne' (Fleck 1979, p. 108).

These messages appear with a self-evident necessity.

In Chapter 1 Ludwik Fleck described the passage of the syphilis concept from one thought community to another. Through these passages occur metamorphoses and a harmonious change of the entire style of thought. Change in readiness for direct perception offers new possibilities for discoveries and creates new facts. As I am not familiar with medical concepts of syphilis, I omit these chapters of Fleck's argumentation.

A personal memory: 11 years ago I got into contact to a remarkable thought collective: the AIDS-Rebels – founded about 1990 in Germany and still existing in the USA as Reappraising AIDS, with a board of 15 Directors, journalists and M.D.s.

These men and women supposed and believed – and are still today convinced – that the HIV-virus is almost harmless, a marker of bad state in health. HIV does not lead to AIDS, which is a summary of 25-30 diseases, none of them is new. Historically new is the cumulative incidence of an immune-deficiency of drug-consumers and some – not the majority - of homosexual men in the metropolises of Cologne, Berlin, New York and San Francisco.

About 50 people mostly in the medical professions, e.g. Rappoport and Duesberg, belong world-wide to this alternative thought collective and they find it extremely difficult to present the alternative view of HIV and AIDS in mainstream journals or in TV and broadcasting.

Together with a pedagogic colleague of University of Erlangen, Hans-Walter Leonhardt with whom I taught sex education for future teachers, I published in 1994 a paper in a popular psychological magazine (the German version of *Psychology Today* – *Psychologie Heute*). We had 10 pages to argue why the accepted concept of HIV-AIDS is very doubtful and an alternative causal explanation is – for us – even more convincing. This article was followed in the next number with an interview in which I questioned

Dr. Juliane Sacher a medical doctor in Frankfurt, who had worked with AIDS-patients.

We had almost no reaction to our paper, very few letters from readers were sent and the mainstream officials submitted nothing to controvert our arguments. So the journalists of *Psychologie Heute* were disappointed and refused to publish a paper from a medical doctor, Heinrich Kremer who had worked with drug and AIDS-patients and had retired from his position as a Medical Director of a clinic – because he was not willing to separate the AIDS-patients from the rest of society. So he published his idea later on in a separate book (2001).

Not one of my students – the exoteric circle – could accept that our alternative view had some valid arguments. Only one of my 5 colleagues in biology and education at the University Cologne reacted positively to the paper Leonhard/Glück 1994, but not in writing still less a published paper. The other 4 said nothing, no critics of our thesis.

That is another proof that there exists a thought constraint in the scientific community as well as in the general public. Even the homosexual communities refused our explanation of AIDS and are still going along with the mainstream and are seldom open to alternatives. Thinking is a collective activity – writes Fleck – or even a vocation, such as singing in a chorus or having a discourse with others.

Polanyi does not mention 'thought collectives'. He is fascinated by the inquisitiveness of a researching person and he describes – more than Fleck – the individual discoverer, 'the heroes of invention'. On the other hand, he acknowledges the importance of interpretative frameworks and cultural heritage. Regarding the normative orientation of men, the collective plays a significant role for mankind. Polanyi even proposes, that a (liberal) religious orientation will be helpful for survival individually and for society.

5 Truth and fact

Truth is not a convention: it is

1. an 'event in the history of thought' and
2. in its contemporary context, stylised through constraint. (Fleck 1979, p. 100).

Fleck is convinced that we cannot approximately approach to an absolute reality (Schäfer/Schnell 1980, p. xxii).

The thought collective forces its members to think almost in parallel. This functions by low degrees of force or by obligation. The novices in a scientific community have to learn how the masters work and argue. That corresponds to Polanyi's institution of a Master-Student-Relation. Doubt is not the main attitude required for introduction into a science which is more of an initiation.

In the field of cognition, the signal of resistance opposing free, arbitrary thinking is called a fact.

Every fact bears three different relations to a thought collective:

(1) Every fact must be in line with the intellectual interests of its thought collective.

(2) The resistance must be effective within the thought collective. It must be brought home to each member as both:

- a thought constraint and
- a form to be directly experienced.

(3) The fact must be expressed in the style of the thought collective (Fleck 1979, p. 101 f.).

Facts are a function of thought styles, and these vary in a non-progressive way with time and culture.

Truth is neither relative nor subjective nor absolute and objective but essentially determined by a given thought style: there are many 'correct' theories for the same problem.

6 Gestalt-seeing

Fleck quotes a story of mass suggestion by Le Bon, *Psychologie des foules*: the entire crew of a ship, while searching for a boat in distress, saw the boat, heard shouts and saw signals ... 'this collective hallucination was suddenly dispelled but only during the last minutes of approach: ... it was a tree with branches and leaves drifting in the water' (p. 180). This is an example for Gestalt-seeing, its sudden reversal to a very different shape.

While Le Bon interprets this phenomena as negative debited to a mass of non-individuals, Fleck explained, referring to the German author Hans Kelsen (1922) in the journal *Imago*, to the normal and positive explanation:

We might assume that besides the individual psyche there is also a collective psyche filling the space between the individuals and embracing all individuals. But if logically thought through, and because experience shows that a psyche without body cannot exist, this concept must lead to the assumption of a collective body, similarly distinct from the individual bodies, in which the collective psyche is supposed to be lodged (p. 180).

Fleck's point is that individualist epistemology is an artificial and inadequate concept of scientific knowledge. Science is managed co-operatively by mankind, and we need to consider the sociological connections and convictions among the scientists.

The instrument is the thought style, which is common to a thought collective. This thought style can be completed, amplified or changed (Schäfer/Schnelle 1980, p. XXIX).

7 Gestalt-Seeing against axiomatic logic

Fleck (1935 b, 1983, p. 59 f.) concludes:

A comprehensive axiomatic structure of knowledge is impossible, because no words and neither sentences will be enough to comprehend the whole content. A non-logical factor is implied in science.

Would Polanyi agree with this conclusion?

The ability to differentiate and diagnose correctly must be learned for each domain separately in science as in daily life. One can be excellent in one domain and blind in another. Fleck claims that it is necessary to be superior in diagnosis in one domain and inferior in another.

To recognise a Gestalt one must abstract the possibilities of other Gestalten in other sciences. To establish a good diagnosis we must be ready to differentiate the pictures, which are used in a different science for the same thing. And this capacity to direct perception of form (Gestaltsehen) requires much training, and we lose the ability to see something that contradicts the form (1979, p. 92).

Fleck reports a historical note: Joseph Löw, M.D., published a book about urine 1809 (2nd ed. 1815). The book is conceived in the spirit of 18th century *Naturphilosophie* (1979, p. 127 f.).

In his particular mood, which to us seems fanciful and mystical, Löw is ready to see mysterious, deep connections ... This is his own particular thought constraint, which becomes intensified until he directly perceives appropriate gestalts (p. 133).

And he sees himself as a rational researcher, because he describes, what he sees.

8 Discovery and Facts

Fleck criticises the positivistic concept of fact in a line with Wittgenstein and Popper and uses the insights of Gestaltpsychology

The first condition for a discovery is a intellectual disposition and mood or a readiness (Fleck 1935 b, 1983, p. 78 f.).

He claims that an observation, pure and unprejudiced, is not possible, independent of an environment, a tradition and the historical context.

All 'legitimation' of the data of observation is the result of the thought style, the elements of the logical structure of a science (p. 81).

The discovery and creation of new facts happen when a thought style changes. Changes of thought style happen by means of intercollective communication. That contradicts one's own belief and mainstream opinion. Fleck is also convinced that consequent and exhausting work within the collective will produce new theories This work will bring forth supplementation and a development but no transformation of the thought style. The harmony of truth and error will end when new facts come to light.

An individual belonging to more than one collective at the same time may be led to create 'a special style on the borderline of the field of research'.

By standing at the intersection of several thought collectives, the creative scientist can form the nucleus of a new thought style' (Merton/Trenn 1979, p. 163).

9 Fleck's concept of discovery

Fleck described the passage of the syphilis concept from one community to another. Each passage involved a metamorphosis and a harmonious change of the entire thought style (1979, p. 110).

Change in readiness for directed perception offers new possibilities for discovery and creates new facts ... Logically contradictory elements of individual thought do not even reach the state of psychological contradiction (p. 110).

Persons are engaged in different thought collectives. Through communication between different thought collectives the ideas were transformed and 'always involves a stylised remodelling' (p. 111) which *intercollectively* yields a fundamental alteration and achieves corroboration within the collectivity.

Three stages are typical for invention and discovery:

- (1) vague visual perception and an adequate initial observation;
- (2) a non-rational, concept-forming, and style-converting state of experience;
- (3) developed, reproducible, and stylised visual perceptions of form

This means seeing good Gestalten named 'Gestalt-Sehen' (p. 94).

10 A dialectical view of discoveries

When two ideas conflict with each other, all the forces of demagogy are activated. And it's almost a third idea, that emerges triumphant: one woven from esoteric, alien-collective, and controversial strands (p. 120).

I don't know an example from my domain which fits this dialectic procedure (G. Glück)!

11 Individual or collective responsible for discovery

Very often it is impossible to find any originator for an idea generated during discussion and critique. Its meaning changes rapidly; it is adapted and becomes common property. Accordingly it achieves a superindividual value, and becomes an axiom, a guideline for thinking (p. 121).

Polanyi estimates some more the individual discovery? But when the invention is not accepted from the social background, it may even not reach publishing in good journals and be rejected by all journals.

4 The relation between teacher and pupil

1 A biographical memory and retrospective

In the years following 1968, the student revolution came from Berkeley (1966) and Paris (1967) to Berlin and also to smaller University towns, like

Tübingen, where I was studying. I was elected for a year as the speaker of the 200 students in Philosophy and Education, and so I changed my outward behaviour to my teachers. When I tried before 1968 to fulfil the formal verbal and written address to a dean of the Faculty of Philosophy, which is not fully correct with 'Professor', I had to use 'Spektabilität', and likewise 'Magnifizenz' to the Rector, both Latin-German foreign words. I don't know, if these words exist in English Universities – or were used there – I haven't found them in the German part of Cassell's German-English.

A half year later I tried to avoid even 'Professor' and 'Doctor' and dared to address the Dean as 'Mr Müller' and to use to the professors, who would examine me a year later, only their names without any titles. Correspondingly we wanted to evaluate the lectures and to develop central questionnaires to check how well the professors were teaching. Critique – not obedience – was the central obligation for a politically awakened student.

This attitude prevailed in Germany for the 10 or 15 years: the following generation of students were more docile and correct.

Polanyi's and Fleck's conceptions of the teacher-novice relation directly contradict my former conception in 1968 of a student-professor relation. I can accept the hierarchical relation, when it is possible to change the teacher or several different teachers changing in the periods of a half or a full year.

2 The teacher-novice relation according to Fleck and Polanyi

They differ in word and style but not in the content. That's astonishing! (Is it possible, that Polanyi had known Fleck's book?) Fleck:

The initiation into any thought style, which also includes the introduction to science, is epistemologically analogous to the initiations we know from ethnology and the history of civilisation. The Holy Ghost ... descends up on the novice, who will now be able to see, what was hitherto invisible to him (1979, p. 104).

Polanyi:

By watching the master and emulating his efforts in the presence of his examples, the apprentice unconsciously picks up the rules of the art, including those which are not explicitly known to the master himself. These hidden rules can be assimilated only by a person who surrenders himself to that extent uncritically to the imitation of another

Practical wisdom is more truly embodied in action than expressed in rules of action. PK, pp. 53-4.

Fleck reports that different collectives of thought styles gain different results from the same experiment. They have no implicit knowledge of handling the equipment and the instruments.

5 Some consequences for teacher education in thesis-form

1. Some false concepts in Germany for good teaching

- 1.1. The mainstream in Germany contradicts some concepts of Fleck and Polanyi.
- 1.2. Theory dominates practice. Any kind of implicit knowing is very seldom mentioned in psychological theories, except for Bednorz and Schuster (2002), who rely on the American psychologist, Reber, who began with implicit learning in 1976..
- 1.3. Student Teachers in a 7-semester (3 1/2 years study should gain the status of a learning researcher (Forschendes Lernen).
- 1.4. Student teachers should acquire not only methodology; they should also be able to criticise the methodology.
- 1.5. Student teachers should not imitate their good practical teachers: they should be able to practise alternative methods and change the school system and methods towards a better status (especially since PISA showed that German 15-year old boys and girls range in the examination lower than the average of 30 countries).

2. The consequences of accepting the epistemological concepts of Polanyi and Fleck

- 2.1. The teacher has to initiate the novices with a thought constraint; it may be softly but effective.
Novices must learn the thought style in three or four disciplines. As they have Education, Psychology and two or three domains, which they will teach the younger generation, they are not able to criticise and comprehend fully the methodology of 3 to 5 areas of science.
- 2.2. From the beginning they should have good school teachers in a school on the campus, where they will be one half-day in each week for the first 5 semesters. This will be a training college, where they see good teachers and professors and how they teach, and will develop through imitation and alternatives their own styles. The teachers should change every term, and thus the trainee teachers would have a minimum 6 to 8 models of teaching.

Each student teacher would have to teach about 25 lessons until the end of the 5th term, which were counselled in a humanistic way (more Rogers and understanding, less Perls and confrontation).

A German group (Goll/Schlee 1999) has developed and practised for many years a model four counselling with some formal rules:

- a lesson of 45 or 50 minutes requires a counselling with the teacher and the peers for 60 minutes;

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- the teacher and Professor and all peers and the peers write on a red slip of paper, what was good, exactly: 'I was pleased with ...';
- the same group writes on a green slip of paper, what alternatives they imagine exactly: 'I want to discuss with you ...'

I have experienced in the winter term this counselling model with student teachers in the second and third years of study. They had four weeks' practical finishing in a school outside the university, where they could give some lessons. Without exception this model proved to be suitable for those groups, not to frustrate but to acknowledge what they are able to by personality or what they have learned in the four weeks previously.

Educational Department
University of Cologne
D 50931 Köln
Germany

Note: My relation to Polanyi

First connection with Polanyi's concepts thanks to an article by Hans-Georg Neuweg, January 2003.

My implicit conviction, how teacher-training should be established for a better methods, received strong support through the ideas of Polanyi. My consequences differ far from those of Neuweg, who proposes first theoretical studies, then training in teaching.

Fleck's book was mentioned in Neuweg's book in a German paper by Bromme (1992), dealing with thought-style. It was translated into English and published in 1979. As I am not very good at English, I quote many concepts of Fleck out of the English translation.

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A CRITIQUE OF RORTY'S CONCEPTION OF KNOWLEDGE IN THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE THEORY OF TACIT KNOWING¹

Yu Zhenhua

1. The Rorty-Allen debate

In this paper, I will pick up one of the clues in the debate between Richard Rorty and Barry Allen's about epistemology and knowledge.² Though Rorty blatantly announces the end of epistemology, Allen's claims that Rorty's critique of traditional epistemology presupposes a philosophy of knowledge. In a simplified manner, traditional epistemology can be described as centring on knowing-of or knowledge-of which characterizes knowledge basically as a relation between persons and objects, while the conception of knowledge that Rorty assumes focuses on knowing-that or knowledge-that which understands knowledge as a relation between persons and propositions.

Locke, and seventeenth-century writers generally, simply did not think of knowledge as justified belief. This was because they did not think of knowledge as a relation between a person and a proposition. Locke did not think of knowledge that as the primary form of knowledge. He thought, as had Aristotle, of knowledge of as prior to knowledge that, and thus of knowledge as a relation between persons and objects rather than persons and propositions.³

Intimately connected to knowledge-of are the features like representationalism, foundationalism, the confusion of justification and causation and so on, of traditional epistemology. In contrast, knowledge-that emphasizes social justification of beliefs, holism and conversation, etc. Having pinned down the inconclusiveness of Rorty's arguments against traditional epistemology and for his own position, Allen's further claims that, Rorty's conception of knowledge shares a couple of biases with traditional epistemology that he attempts to overcome: propositional bias, belief-plus, discursive bias, and the misplaced good of knowledge. The epistemology of propositional belief-plus offers an entirely discursive conception of knowledge. Knowledge is limited to propositions that stand up to methodological, logical, or conversational tests.⁴ In Allen's view, this understanding of knowledge cannot offer a satisfactory account of the value of knowledge. Unsatisfied with the linguistic and conversational obsession of Rorty's conception of knowledge, Allen's argues for a kind of epistemology which emphasizes the primordially of knowing-how or knowledge-how embodied in various forms of artefacts.

The assumption that knowledge has to be true, or that the most important instances of knowledge are propositional, makes the distinction between knowing-that and knowing-how seem greater than it is. Of course propositions, sentences, statements are all artefacts, things we must know how to make before we can know that they are true. Also the knowledge it takes to know that a proposition is true is not itself propositional knowledge. All knowledge is like that, building on operational, effective know-how, and the artefacts (including but not limited to those of conception and communication) that we know how to use.⁵

If you want an obvious example of knowledge, don't think of an obvious true sentence. Think of an obviously sophisticated artefact, or any artefact used in a sophisticated, artful, excellent manner. It is this performative quality that makes the difference between knowledge and belief, and proves that it is the artefact, not the sentence or belief, which is the unit of knowledge, the foci around which all our practice of knowledge and all its results gravitate.⁶

Bluntly, if Rorty overcomes knowledge-of of traditional epistemology with knowledge-that, it is Allen's goal to overcome Rorty's philosophy of knowledge by emphasizing the primacy of knowledge-how over knowledge-that.

How does Rorty respond to Allen's criticism? Briefly, Rorty's argument runs like this: it is knowledge-that rather than knowledge-how that is distinctive of human beings. Rorty points out that

when we just talk about know-how, the distinction between the human and the non-human fades out. For know-how goes a long way down the great chain of being. (Think, for example, of all those insidiously clever viruses.) When we want to zero in on the human, however, we have to go propositional and start talking about knowing-that. This is because only language-users have that sort of knowledge.⁷

By just focusing on knowing-how, we will be confronted with the continuity between men and beasts; in order to identify the discontinuity between ourselves and the brutes, and thus to recognise the uniqueness of human beings, we are obliged to concentrate on knowing-that and neglect knowing-how.

Facing this back and forth of arguments between Rorty and Allen's, what stand will I take? Basically, I am sympathetic with Allen's position. The connection between Allen's argument and Gilbert

Ryle's famous distinction between knowing-how and knowing-that is obvious.⁸ Knowing-how is a broad concept. It takes various forms. Allen's emphasis is patently on the technical, artefactual knowing-how. In my view, Allen's general theory of artefacts can be read as an effort to revive the classical Aristotelian notion of *techne* in order to challenge the long entrenched conception of knowledge in Western philosophy that has been first and foremost influenced by the notion of *episteme*. I am sure that Allen's efforts will find strong support from the wonderful researches that have been going on for about two decades in the Swedish Centre for Working Life in Stockholm. In addition, I would argue that we can also question the mainstream conception of knowledge by appealing to the concept of ethical know-how, for instance, the Aristotelian *phronesis*. I have discussed this in detail elsewhere.⁹

In this paper, I would like to join force with Allen's by drawing on other intellectual resources to argue for the primacy of knowing-how over knowing-that. Allen's position can be strengthened by a Polanyian approach and a Wittgensteinian approach to the problem of knowledge.

2. A Polanyian critique of Rorty's construal of knowledge

The propositional bias of the traditional understanding of knowledge in Western philosophy has a long history. It can be traced back to Greek philosophy. For instance, in Plato's dialogue *Laches*, the theme of which is courage, Socrates claims that which we know we must surely be able to tell.¹⁰ Laches, who is a distinguished general, says in the discussion:

I fancy that I do know the nature of courage, but, somehow or other, she has slipped away from me, and I cannot get hold of her and tell her nature.¹¹

According to Socrates' standard, now that Laches cannot tell the nature of courage, he does not know what it is.¹² The idea that what counts as knowledge must be capable of being verbally articulated and what cannot be told is not knowledge developed into the ideal of wholly explicit knowledge in modern times, to use Polanyi's terminology. From Galileo's famous saying, 'The Book of Nature is written in mathematical language', to Leibniz's dream of a universal language, i.e., his *characteristica universalis*, to the Logical Positivists' view of knowledge, the propositionally oriented understanding of knowledge became more and more prominent and influential. Kjell S Johannessen, a Norwegian Wittgensteinian, points out that within the framework of logical positivism,

[K]nowledge and language are woven together in an indissoluble bond. The requirement that knowledge should have a linguistic articulation becomes an unconditional demand. The possibility of possessing knowledge that cannot be wholly articulated by linguistic means emerges, against this background, as completely unintelligible.¹³

Obviously, Rorty shares this propositional bias of the understanding of knowledge. The difference between Rorty and modern epistemology in this regard lies only in the fact that in Rorty the propositional bias is connected with conversationalism, while in modern epistemology, it is related to representationalism.

When Polanyi coined the term tacit knowledge in 1958, the target of his attack was just this deeply ingrained propositionally oriented understanding of knowledge. His famous saying We know more than we can tell which illustrates the concept of tacit knowledge is diametrically opposed to the aforementioned claim by Socrates: that which we know we must surely be able to tell.

Polanyi says:

[H]uman knowledge is of two kinds. What is usually described as knowledge, as set out in written words or maps, or mathematical formulae, is only one kind of knowledge; while unformulated knowledge, such as we have of something we are in the act of doing, is another form of knowledge.¹⁴

The first kind of knowledge is called explicit knowledge, also articulate knowledge, and the second is called tacit knowledge, also inarticulate knowledge. In a world where the ideal of wholly explicit knowledge prevails, knowledge is normally understood as something articulated by verbal means. However, tacit knowledge does not take verbal forms. It is a kind of knowledge that we have when we are in the act of doing something. It is a kind of action-inherent knowledge or action-constitutive knowledge. It is not difficult to see that Polanyi's distinction between tacit knowledge and explicit knowledge is quite close to Gilbert Ryle's distinction between knowing how and knowing that. According to Ryle, knowing-that covers a variety of things, the common feature of which is that they all can be articulated in propositions. Sometimes knowing-that refers to our knowledge of certain facts, and we express it in descriptive propositions. Sometimes it takes the form of inductive generalisations which are often expressed in hypothetical propositions, like when so and so then such and such. It can also be our knowledge of certain rules, norms and principles; in this case, the propositions that we employ to express it are regulative. In a word, it is safe to say that knowing-that is a kind of propositional knowledge.

In contrast, knowing-how is non-propositional. It is knowledge in action, or knowledge in practice. When a person knows how to do things of a certain sort (e.g., make good jokes, conduct battles or behave at funerals), his knowledge is actualised or exercised in what he does.¹⁵ As a kind of action-inherent knowledge or action-constitutive knowledge, tacit knowledge is tantamount to Ryle's know how. It refers to man's ability, capacity, competence in knowing and action. Therefore, on many occasions, Polanyi feels quite natural to substitute tacit powers for tacit knowledge.

Empirical researches show that, phylogenetically and ontogenetically, man's intelligence is not quite different from that of animals before he acquires language. However, after he acquires language, man's intelligence develops rapidly and leaves animals far behind. The watershed, as it were, between man's intelligence and that of animals lies in the acquisition of language. Man's intellectual superiority over animals depends on the use of language. To many, this is in favour of the ideal of wholly explicit knowledge. As I understand it, this is the consideration that lies behind Rorty's claim that it is knowing-that or propositional knowledge that is distinctive of human beings.

But this is not the whole story. It leaves some important aspects of knowing in the dark. Fully acknowledging that the intellectual superiority of men over animals is due to the acquisition of language, Polanyi nevertheless argues strongly for the thesis that tacit powers predominate in the domain of explicitly formulated knowledge. He claims:

[W]e can explain after all the tremendous intellectual advantage of articulation, without in the least derogating from the supremacy of man's tacit powers. Though the intellectual superiority of man over the animal remains due to his use of symbols, this utilisation itself the accumulation, the pondering and reconsideration of various subject matters in terms of the symbols designating them is now seen to be a tacit, a-critical process.¹⁶

The utilisation of language is a tacit process. To spell out this point in a more detailed manner, let's take a look at sense-giving and sense-reading of certain linguistic symbols, without which explicit knowledge will not make any sense. Polanyi claims that these two processes are all tacit.

On the one hand, nothing that is said, written or printed, can ever mean anything in itself: for it is only a person who utters something or who listens or reads it, who can mean something by it. All these semantic functions are the tacit operations of a person.¹⁷ (Italics original)

The meaning of the symbols is given by the tacit performance of the knower who utters, says or writes. If the tacit coefficients of the knower are

abolished, all written words, formulae, and graphs will be meaningless. On the other hand, the realisation of explicit knowledge depends on our understanding of linguistic symbols, and the understanding of words and other symbols is also a tacit process.¹⁸ Mathematical formulae, written words and graphs can convey various kinds of information, but they cannot convey the understanding of these information. Only by virtue of this act of comprehension, of this tacit contribution of his own, can the receiving person be said to acquire knowledge when he is presented with a statement.¹⁹

Polanyi thus concludes:

While tacit knowledge can be possessed by itself, explicit knowledge must rely on being tacitly understood and applied. Hence all knowledge is *either tacit or rooted in tacit knowledge*. A wholly explicit knowledge is unthinkable.²⁰ (Italics original)

Infants and animals live in the purely tacit domain. Adult knowers are equipped with linguistic means. However, even in the domain of explicit knowledge, it is the tacit powers that are decisive and predominant. Every piece of explicit knowledge has a tacit root. Tacit powers represent man's ultimate faculty of acquiring and holding knowledge. The uncovering of the tacit dimension of human knowledge undermines the ideal of wholly explicit knowledge and the propositionally oriented conception of knowledge. Even though Rorty pays a lip service to Allen's claim that the knowledge it takes to know that a proposition is true is not itself propositional knowledge, he sticks to the traditional propositionally oriented construal of knowledge and refuses the invitation to look into the non-propositional or tacit dimension of human knowledge.

As mentioned above, an important reason for Rorty's refusal to acknowledge the primacy of knowing how is that, in his view, what distinguishes human beings from animals is knowing-that, not knowing-how. But again, this is only a partial observation. It is true that there is continuity between animals and human beings as far as knowing-know is concerned, which makes possible Polanyi's tracing tacit powers back to the inarticulate intelligence of infants and animals. But it is also true that the knowing-how of animals is not parallel to human knowing-how. It is important to draw a distinction between the purely tacit knowledge of animals and infants and the adult tacit knowledge mediated by language.

Admittedly the scientist's art of knowing, which I have surveyed previously, is on a higher level than the child's or the animal's and can be acquired only in conjunction with a knowledge of science as a formal discipline. Other intellectual skills of a high order are acquired similarly in the course of a continued formal

education; and indeed our mute abilities keep growing in the very exercise of our articulate powers.²¹

The epistemic fact that our mute abilities keep growing in the very exercise of our articulate powers indicates a productive interplay between the mute and the articulate, the tacit and the explicit in human knowledge. Out of this dynamics comes the strictly human tacit knowledge which is mediated by language. Maps, graphs, books, formulae, etc., offer wonderful opportunities for reorganising our knowledge from ever new points of view. And this reorganisation is itself, as a rule, a tacit performance.²² Apparently, the tacit performance mediated by our articulate devices, of which, the scientists art of knowing is a brilliant example, is on a completely different level than that of the tacit knowing of infants/animals.

Therefore, in contrast to Rorty who claims that focusing on knowing-how, we will see only continuity between men and animals, the point that I want to make here, with Polanyi, is that there is both continuity and discontinuity between animals and human beings in terms of tacit knowing-how. On the one hand, the tacit performance of reorganising our experience running through all levels, from the pre-verbal level to the verbal level, thus we are justified to talk about the continuity between them. On the other hand, the creative performance of the scientists art of knowing mediated by language is qualitatively different from the tacit powers function at the pre-linguistic level, hence the discontinuity. Rorty sees the former but loses sight of the latter. He does not have the whole picture of the problem of human knowledge.

3. *The pragmatic turn in epistemology from a Wittgensteinian perspective*

The Polanyian concept of tacit knowledge is embraced and further elaborated by the Wittgensteinians in Scandinavia. The leading figure in the Wittgensteinian approach to the problem of tacit knowledge is Kjell S Johannessen. Johannessen advocates a pragmatic turn in epistemology based upon his practice-centred interpretation of later Wittgenstein's philosophy.

The theme of rule-following has been recognised as the very centre of Wittgenstein's later philosophy since the 1980s. Different from Gordon Baker's interpretation of rule-following, the emphasis of which is more on the rule-aspect of rule-following activities,²³ Johannessen highlights the practice-aspect of rule-following.²⁴

[T]here is far more to rule following than the rule that is followed. The rule itself is the least important element in the analysis that Wittgenstein made of the phenomenon of rule-following. It is the *very act of*

following it and how to establish its identity that occupies the centre of his interest.²⁵ (Italics original)

To understand to practice-aspect of rule-following behaviour, it is important to see the difference between a rule and its application. Wittgenstein claims that a rule can be interpreted in different ways, therefore, it cannot determine how it is to be applied. But can we formulate another rule which will lay down how the first rule should be applied? To Wittgenstein, this is a futile effort, because the same problem will arise once again to the second rule. Thus, if we try to solve the problem of the application of a rule by appealing to further rules, we will end up with an infinite regress. In a word, the application of a rule is not determined by the rule itself and by other rules.²⁶ Johannessen summarises this line of argument by saying that: The application of rules is accordingly in principle ruleless.²⁷

This implies a pragmatic view of linguistic meaning. The crucial question is: What gives words meaning? What makes various kinds of signs meaningful vehicle of human communication? According to Wittgenstein, it is not interpretation, but practice which is decisive in sense making. In the context of the discussion of rule-following behaviour, interpretation is characterized by Wittgenstein as the substitution of one expression of the rule for another.²⁸ Johannessen points out that interpretation to Wittgenstein is something that involves conscious intellectual activity and that to interpret means to form a hypothesis. Interpretation as a hypothesis-making intellectual activity cannot determine meaning. Wittgenstein makes this point crystal clear with the following remarks:

Any interpretation still hangs in the air along with what it interprets, and cannot give it any support. Interpretations by themselves do not determine meaning.²⁹

Therefore, if we submit to the idea that acting according to rules is a matter of interpretation, we will find ourselves in the following predicament: on the one hand, by one interpretation, every course of action can be made out to accord to with the rule; on the other hand, by another interpretation, it can also be made out to conflict with it. Thus we end up with an inevitable conclusion which is absurd: there would be neither accord nor conflict here. Wittgenstein's way out of this logical impasse is the following:

What this shows is that there is a way of grasping a rule which is *not an interpretation*, but which is exhibited in what we call obeying the rule and going against it in actual cases³⁰. (Italics original)

This non-interpretive way of grasping a rule is acting (obeying a rule or going against a rule) in

actual cases, that is, practice: 'Obeying a rule is a practice'.³¹

Back to the question of what gives various signs meaning so as to function well in human communication, we have seen that interpretation does not determine meaning. But this is only a negative answer. Positively, what determines meaning? At this juncture, the concept of practice is called upon by Wittgenstein accomplish the task: 'Practice gives words their meaning'.³²

The pragmatic view of meaning is interwoven with a pragmatic view of concept. What is the nature of concept? In Johannessen's view, one of the features of the traditional understanding of concept is that it takes it for granted that concepts can be verbally articulated in their entirety.³³ We can have a glimpse of it by looking at what is taught even today in logical textbooks concerning the nature of concepts:

A legitimate and scientifically respectable concept is established if and only if we are able to specify the necessary and sufficient conditions for using the verbal expression of the concept.³⁴

This is called into question by the pragmatic view of concept which emphasizes the constitutive role of practice in the formation and application of concepts. According to the pragmatic view, our conceptual hold on the world is not exclusively revealed in our ability to formulate correct propositions about reality. It is in a fundamental sense anchored in certain forms of action. If one claims to have mastered a given concept, one has to be accepted as a competent performer of the established form of action which incorporates the concept. Thus is the principle of conceptual mastery of the pragmatic view of concept:

The grasp that a given concept gives us on the world is basically and most adequately expressed in practice.³⁵

The performance of a certain practice is considered to be the primary mode of expression of a given concept. Johannessen illustrates the pragmatic view of concept with an example of the concept of chair. The mastery of the concept lies not so much in the ability to produce propositions with the linguistic expression chair as in the ability to deal with real chairs in an adequate way, for instance, sitting on them with ease, take them as furniture in our actions, etc.³⁶

With the pragmatic view of meaning and concept, we are at the threshold of the pragmatic view of knowledge. Johannessen points out that an important presupposition of the traditional propositionally oriented conception of knowledge is that knowledge only makes sense as some sort of product.³⁷ Obsessed with knowledge as a finished product, the mainstream conception of knowledge

completely loses sight of the process-perspective on knowledge which takes knowledge also as a part of an ongoing process embedded in particular kinds of human activities aiming at certain goals. In this regard, logical positivism can be cited as a paradigm case of the mainstream conception of knowledge. For logical positivists, an important task of philosophy is the logical analysis of science. Science is basically taken by them as a finished product, that is, a system of statements rather than as a process, that is, the activity of working scientists. The proper function of philosophy has to do with the logical analysis of science as a system of statements, the main content of which is logical syntax and semantics. The reflections on the science as the activity of scientists are driven out the domain of philosophy of science and relegated to psychology or sociology of science. In a word, the logical positivistic understanding of scientific knowledge is more product oriented than process-activity oriented. In contrast, the pragmatic view of knowledge underlines the process-aspect of knowledge³⁸:

Conceptions of knowledge incorporating the process-perspective are normally called 'pragmatic', derived from the Greek word *pragma*, which among other things mean *action*.³⁹ (Italics original)

According to Johannessen, our practically acquired knowledge about reality has a complex structure. He takes pains to spell out the important factors involved in human knowledge from a pragmatic process-perspective:

1. The *linguistically articulatable content* of our practically acquired conceptual hold on reality. To the extent that this content is verbally articulated *de facto*, it is legitimate to talk about *propositional knowledge*. It is a product which is abstracted from our practical hold on reality.
2. The *performative aspect* of the enacted practice which encapsulates certain conceptual content. It constitutes the basis of the above-mentioned abstraction. Johannessen suggests calling it the *skill aspect* of knowledge, or simply *competence knowledge*.
3. The *familiarity aspect* of our practically acquired conceptual hold on reality. It is achieved by means of specific encounters with the conceptualised phenomena. Johannessen calls this the familiarity aspect of knowledge, or *familiarity-knowledge*.
4. The *judicious aspect* of our practically acquired conceptual hold on reality. By this Johannessen means the judgmental power employed in the establishing, application and mediation of knowledge.

The pragmatic analysis of knowledge reveals that our knowledge of reality is not a purely intellectual affair. Our practically acquired conceptual hold on

reality cannot be exhausted by propositions. Factors like the *skills* involved in *handling* the conceptualised phenomena, our reflective *familiarity* with them, expressed in the *sureness* in our behaviour towards them, and the *judgmental power* exercises in applying or withholding a given concept on a particular occasion are all relevant to the establishment of knowledge, but they cannot themselves be fully and straightforwardly articulated by verbal means.⁴⁰ (Italics original) We have seen that the linguistically articulatable aspect is a product of the abstraction of the non-linguistic aspects of our practically acquired knowledge of reality. It is the competence-knowledge, familiarity-knowledge and judgment that make propositional knowledge possible.

Propositional knowledge is not something that can be acquired independently of other elements of knowledge. A whole group of considerations are indissolubly interwoven and will always be more or less present in all situations leading to the formation of knowledge. Propositional knowledge simply cannot be established in the absence of competence-knowledge, familiarity-knowledge and a certain degree of judgment. We could therefore take as our motto the claim that all propositional knowledge rests on an inescapable foundation of competence-knowledge, familiarity-knowledge and judgment.⁴¹

Johannessen accepts Polanyi's term, 'tacit knowledge', to designate the non-linguistic aspects of our practically acquired conceptual hold on reality. On another occasion where he discusses the mastery of natural language, he reformulates the above insight of pragmatic view of knowledge in the following way:

There is more to our language mastery than can be expressed in a system of rules or propositions. This tacit, surplus knowledge is displayed in the very acts of *applying* or abstaining from applying language in all sorts of contexts. In fact, we have now set the stage sufficiently to realise that the following reasoning represents a cogent argument: since propositional knowledge is essentially verbal, and since tacit knowledge is involved in any kind of linguistic mastery, it follows that propositional knowledge is essentially dependent on tacit knowledge.⁴² (Italics original)

I guess no one will fail to notice the similarity between this conclusion and Polanyi's remark on the tacit root of explicit knowledge which I quote above.

4. Conclusion

I would like to conclude this paper by making the following two points:

Firstly, the introduction of tacit dimension in the discussion of the problem of human knowledge, debunks the partiality and superficiality of the ideal

of wholly explicit knowledge or the propositional bias of the traditional understanding of knowledge. The inadequacy of the propositionally oriented conception of knowledge consists, among others, in its failing to see the tacit root of explicit knowledge, and consequently in its blindness to the rich dynamics between the explicit and the tacit in human knowledge, thus inevitably narrows down the scope of epistemology and meanwhile only scratches the surface of the problem of knowledge. In stressing the centrality of knowledge-that and in refusing to acknowledge the primacy of knowledge-how, Rorty is still trapped in the propositional bias of the traditional understanding of knowledge and is therefore not immune to the defects designated above.

Secondly, the introduction of the tacit dimension has no intention to create any kind of mysticism in the discussion of the problem of knowledge. To make this point clear, it might be helpful to take a look at the three levels that are relevant to human knowledge: the psychological, the propositional and the practical. Tacit knowledge is not something subjective, private, and idiosyncratic. Tacit knowledge is very often personal knowledge. However, the personal is not the same as the subjective. This is the central thesis that Polanyi devotes the whole volume of his *Personal Knowledge* to demonstrate. While what is subjective is defined as being private, personal participation of the knower is a responsible act claiming universal validity. Such knowing is indeed objective in the sense of establishing contact with a hidden reality.⁴³ In the strict sense of the word, tacit knowledge is what we know but for logical reasons we find it difficult to fully articulate by verbal means.⁴⁴ Under certain circumstances, when we are justified to talk about tacit knowledge, like in the analysis of skill and connoisseurship, we run up against the limit of human language. Tacit knowledge is a term which indicates the inadequacy of verbal articulation. But the knowledge we have which cannot be verbally articulated, will nevertheless find non-verbal modes of articulation. Here what is needed is a broad notion of articulation which covers not only verbal articulation but also non-verbal articulation. Among the non-verbal modes of articulation, action is the one that we want to highlight. At this point, the concept of practice enters into the picture. What cannot be said can be shown by doing. There is nothing mysterious here. The realm of action is just as public and transparent as the realm of language. In summary, in our conceptual geography, the concept of tacit knowledge is located neither on the psychological level, nor on the propositional level but on the practical level. This is what the pragmatic turn in epistemology is all about.

In this three level conceptual scheme, it is the latter two, i.e., the propositional and the practical that is the focus of this paper. The pragmatic turn in epistemology points to a kind of theory of knowledge which tries to do justice to both of them. The discussion of tacit knowledge in the pragmatic perspective has no intention to downplay the importance of language in human knowledge. What it tries to accomplish is to find the right position for explicit knowledge or propositional knowledge in the whole structure of human knowledge. I suggest calling the picture of human knowledge that Polanyi and Johannessen adumbrate a thick conception of knowledge, while the traditional propositionally oriented understanding of knowledge a thin conception of knowledge. In my view, Rorty's understanding of knowledge can be characterized as a discursive, conversational version of the thin conception of knowledge. Negatively speaking, the pragmatic turn of epistemology is to overcome the thin conception of knowledge, and positively speaking, it embraces the thick conception of knowledge which emphasizes the importance of action-inherent knowledge or what is often called tacit knowledge. Rorty is so overwhelmed by the linguistic turn in philosophy in the 20th century that he strongly buttresses the traditional propositionally oriented understanding of knowledge. The pragmatic turn in epistemology, however, while trying to preserve the insights of the linguistic turn in philosophy, goes a step further and introduces the perspective of the philosophy of action into the discussion of the problem of human knowledge.

Department of Philosophy,
East China Normal University,
Shanghai,
China
ecnuyu@hotmail.com

Notes:

1. The paper was read at the conference Rorty, Pragmatism and Chinese Philosophy held in East China Normal University, Shanghai, in July 17-18, 2004. I am grateful to professor Rorty for responding to it.
2. Cf. Barry Allen's, 'What was epistemology?' Richard Rorty, 'Response to Barry Allen', in Robert Brandom ed. *Rorty and His Critics*, Blackwell, 2000, pp. 220-41.
3. Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, Princeton University Press, 1979, pp. 141-2.
4. Barry Allen's, 'What was epistemology?' in Robert Brandom ed., *Rorty and His Critics*, Blackwell, 2000, p. 229.
5. *ibid.*, p. 228.
6. *ibid.*, p. 232.
7. Richard Rorty, 'Response to Barry Allen', in Robert Brandom ed. *Rorty and His Critics*, Blackwell, 2000, p. 238.
8. Barry Allen's, 'What was epistemology?' in Robert Brandom ed., *Rorty and His Critics*, Blackwell, 2000, p. 235. Allen acknowledges this connection in note 8, where he contrasts Gilbert Ryle and Michael Oakeshott with Wilfrid Sellars.
9. Cf. Yu Zhenhua, 'To Challenge the Mainstream Conception of Knowledge in Western Philosophy: Phronesis in the Perspective of the Theory of Tacit Knowledge'. *Academic Monthly*, No. 12, 2003, in Chinese.
10. Plato, *The Collected Dialogues of Plato*, edited by Edith Hamilton and Huntington Cairns, Princeton University Press, 1961, p. 133.
11. *ibid.*, p. 137.
12. I am indebted to Harald Grimen for seeing the origin of the propositional bias of the traditional conception of knowledge in Greek philosophy. Cf. Grimen, 'Tacit Knowledge and the Study of Organizations', LOS centre working paper, Bergen, 1991.
13. Kjell S. Johannessen, 'Rule Following, Intransitive Understanding, and Tacit Knowledge', in *Essays in Pragmatic Philosophy, II*, Norwegian University Press, 1990, pp. 104-5.
14. Michael Polanyi, *SOM*, p. 12.
15. Gilbert Ryle, 'Knowing How and Knowing That', in *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society*, Vol. 46. 1946, p. 8.
16. Michael Polanyi, *SOM*, p. 25.
17. *ibid.*, p.22.
18. *ibid.*, p. 21.
19. *ibid.*, p.22.
20. Michael Polanyi, *KB*, p.144.
21. Michael Polanyi, *PK*, p. 70.
22. Michael Polanyi, *SOM*, p.24.
23. Cf. Gordon Baker, 'Following Wittgenstein: Some Signposts for Philosophical Investigations §§143-42' in S. Holtzman and C. Leich (eds.), *Wittgenstein: To Follow a Rule*, Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1981, pp. 31-71.
24. Kjell S. Johannessen, 'The Concept of Practice in Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy', *Inquiry*, Vol. 31, No. 3, 1988, pp. 357-69.
25. Kjell S. Johannessen, 'Rule-Following and Intransitive Understanding'. in Bo Goeranzon and Magnus Florin eds. *Artificial Intelligence, Culture and Language: On Education and Work*, Springer-Verlag, 1990. p. 40.
26. For the textual evidence of this interpretation of Wittgenstein, I would suggest §§84, §85, and §86 of Wittgenstein's *Philosophical Investigations*.
27. Kjell S. Johannessen, 'Rule Following, Intransitive Understanding, and Tacit Knowledge', in *Essays in Pragmatic Philosophy, II*, Norwegian University Press, 1990, p. 122.
28. Wittgenstein, *Philosophical Investigations*, translated by G.E.M. Anscombe, Blackwell, 1967, §201.
29. *ibid.*, §198.
30. *ibid.*, §201.
31. *ibid.*, §202.
32. Wittgenstein, *Remarks on Colour*, edited by G.E.M. Anscombe, Basil Blackwell, 1977, &317.
33. Kjell S. Johannessen, 'Rule-Following, Intransitive Understanding, and Tacit Knowledge', in *Essays in Pragmatic Philosophy, II*, Norwegian University Press, 1990, p. 126.

34. Kjell S. Johannessen, 'Action Research and Epistemology', in *Concepts and Transformation*, Vol. 1, No. 2/3, 1996, p. 292.
 35. *ibid.*, p. 293.
 36. Kjell S Johannessen, 'Knowledge and its Modes of Articulation', in *Uniped*, Vol. 22, No. 3, 2000. The paper is originally published in Norwegian. I am referring here to the manuscript of the English translation.
 37. Kjell S Johannessen, 'Knowledge and Reflective Practice', manuscript, 2004.
 38. In my conversation with professor Kjell S Johannessen, he emphasizes that we should give credit to Michael Polanyi for giving prominence to the process-aspect of human knowledge.
 39. Kjell S Johannessen, 'Knowledge and Reflective Practice', manuscript, 2004.
 40. Johannessen, 'The Concept of Practice in Wittgenstein's Later Philosophy', *Inquiry*, Vol. 31, No. 3, 1988, p. 357.
 41. Johannessen, 'Knowledge and its Modes of Articulation', in *Uniped*, Vol. 22, No. 3, 2000.
 42. Johannessen, 'Action Research and Epistemology', in *Concepts and Transformation*, Vol. 1, No. 2/3, 1996, p. 294-5.
 43. Michael Polanyi, PK, p. vii. I have discussed the difference between the personal and the subjective in detail elsewhere. See Yu Zhenhua, 'Overcoming Objectivism', in *Journal of Dialectics of Nature*, No. 1, 2002, in Chinese. Also, Yu Zhenhua, 'Two Cultures Revisited', in *Tradition and Discovery*, Vol. 28, No. 3, 2001-2.
 44. One of the important contributions of the Wittgensteinians to the discussion of the problem of tacit knowledge is that they make a clear distinction between the strong thesis of tacit knowledge and the weaker theses of tacit knowledge. Cf. Grimen, 'Tacit Knowledge and the Study of Organizations', LOS centre working paper, Bergen, 1991.
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TO BEING OR NOT TO BEING? THAT IS THE QUESTION FOR ETHICS

en arch— —n ho logos. John 1:1.

Wendy Hamblet

In the beginning was the *logos* – language, reason, argument, account, tale – the story. Since the beginning of human time, we have been trying to recapture that tale, to recapture the revitalising power of beginnings, to understand who we *really* are. This paper investigates whether a story of Being (a truth, a myth, an ontology, a metaphysics) is necessary in order to provide a ground (an *arch*–, a foundation, a ruling beginning) upon which to erect an ethics to guide thoughts and actions in the world, as Hans Jonas contends, or whether an ethics is more ethically productive when, with Emmanuel Levinas, we abandon our hopes of attaining a firm and secure foundation and understand the Good as an interruption in the word – an event occurring outside of our stories and our myths, our inventions, our institutions and our systems, as a rupture in our meaningful creations.

The *logos* of *ontos* (the story of Being) is set down in the domain of philosophy called metaphysics (*meta-physis* meaning above/over/beyond nature). This domain articulates the supra-physical hierarchy that names the ontological levels of Being, as distinguished from the study of Being under some particular aspect. Webster's dictionary defines ontology/ metaphysics as the branch of philosophy that deals with the nature of being or reality. Quoting Archer Butler, it states:

The science of ontology comprehends investigations of every real existence, either beyond the sphere of the present world or in any other way incapable of being the direct object of consciousness, which can be deduced immediately from the possession of certain feelings or principles or faculties of the human soul.

Ontology is synonymous with metaphysics, the definition concludes. Ontology is the theory of being *qua* being, the science of the essence of things. Aristotle calls ontology/ metaphysics 'first philosophy', since it studies the fundamental principles of the real. The objects of metaphysical cognition are, for Aristotle, 'first' in the natural order. They comprise the most complete generalisations available to the human intellect.

Hans Jonas, student of Heidegger, lifelong friend and eminent colleague of Hannah Arendt at the New School for Social Research, is loyal to Aristotle in his placement of Being as primary of all philosophical investigations. Human beings need a metaphysics, Jonas states, because we require an ontological foundation to ground an ethics. Being comes first,

then the 'how' of our being, described in the domain of philosophical enquiry called Ethics. Why does ethics require a 'ground?' It is a 'need of reason', explains Jonas, that an 'imperative of responsibility' have its grounding.¹ And so, at the outset of his book, *Mortality and Morality: A Search for the Good after Auschwitz*, Jonas announces his metaphysical intentions: 'I enter this now abandoned arena with a certain good cheer, ready to encounter metaphysics, so often declared dead'.² This 'cheerful' re-entry into ontological terrain now marked defunct is justified, for Jonas, because it is '[b]etter to have it lead one to new defeats than no longer to hear its song at all'.³

In declaring that ethics needs the 'song' of metaphysics, Jonas echoes the siren call of the *logos* of beginnings, voiced in John 1:1. Jonas reasons the need for a metaphysical grounding for ethics on the argument that Being is not only the event of the arising of beings, but defines the advent of responsibility as well. Responsibility, he posits, is an *ontological* fact, inscribed, from the first, in human being as a capacity, as a power. The bare fact of that capacity's embodiment in human being, reasons Jonas, necessitates our species' hearkening to being, hearkening to the fragilities, the vulnerabilities, the fears and the frailties of other beings. Humans, claims Jonas, are granted being *under obligation*. We *are* only as subject to an ethical call. Human beings – because they *are* differently from other beings, because they *are* in the full awareness of the contradictoriness of mortal existence – are always already subject to the imperative, the living embodiments of the ontological fact that other beings require, and Being demands, our attendance upon others – our care for the world.

Humans, for Jonas, reasonably awaken to their capacity (and the imperative contained therein) only through an awakening to Being. Attending to the *logos* of *ontos*, hearkening to the 'story of Being,' humans come to face the true nature of their own capacities and the implications of those capacities for the human role in the care of world and other beings.⁴ Thus, according to Jonas, a return to the 'dead' domain of metaphysical inquiry can open to view the commandment to responsibility inscribed in, and proceeding from, the being of things themselves. We must return to nature, explains Jonas, to rediscover a truth set down in the fundamental nature of things.

We have been studying nature for millennia, some may argue, and yet the primary student of nature, the scientist, has proven his quite remarkable capacity for blindness to his responsibility with regard to the earth and its myriad beings. Jonas sees the problem with the scientific view: he explains that responsibility has become eclipsed in the study of natural science because that domain of inquiry has traditionally pursued a pure, value-free knowing, a pursuit that eclipses the ethical. Jonas suggests that, if we rethink nature from a new morally-informed perspective, we will see that the ontological chain, comprised of the myriad things of the world, have, in their mere claim on human perception, a claim on our respect as well. Simply by virtue of the fact that every singular one of these living beings comes to be, each has always already proven itself to be value-possessing. To be worthy of life is to be worthy. Moreover, continues Jonas, each, by the very fact of its mortality, demonstrates its rightful demand upon human being, its deserving-Ness of our care.

Human power has, in the technological age, reached such heights of grandeur, that humans have reached a pinnacle of power, from whose dizzying heights not even the cries of their fellows can be heard, let alone the cries of other lowly beings clamouring on the bottom rungs of being. Modern people, and especially the most powerful, have become remarkably adept at resisting the imperative of Being, deaf to the summons to care for the lesser things. In fact, in their value-free quest for knowledge, modern humans have, ironically, created a situation in which coexistence with our death-defying species has meant increased vulnerability for, rather than careful attendance upon, the more vulnerable.

This is precisely why Jonas reopens the question of responsibility and places its imperative in the nature of things. Jonas insists that it falls to humans to return to Being, to rediscover their responsibility to care for the lesser things. To be 'at the mercy of my power', states Jonas, is to be 'at the same time entrusted to it'.⁵ The universal call 'thou shalt not murder me' issues from all beings, and the cry, we would think, must be deafening, given the enormity of human destructive potential and the number of beings at risk. 'Responsibility is a function of our power,' asserts Jonas, 'and proportional to it'.⁶ Therefore, by Jonas' logic, human beings of greatest power are human beings of greatest caring potential. But, clearly, the ones with greatest power, those least limited by their lesser fellows – the Mao's and the Hitler's and the Stalin's and the Mussolini's – are hardest of hearing of all?

How, we might ask Jonas, do we persuade the ones with greatest power that they *must* hearken to the call to responsibility? *We* don't, Jonas would

respond. In a radically singularising move, Jonas states: 'the call [to responsibility] is very concretely meant *for me* and becomes an imperative *for me*'.⁷ Between the two 'ontological poles' of human freedom and the valuableness of Being lies the responsibility of the human *as a species*, and yet the call comes to *one* respondent, *one* ethical mediator, at a time. Each is singularly summoned to insert herself in moral duty between her fellow beings and the not-being that haunts their mortal existence.

Jonas finds the answer to the problem of freedom and the threat of death that is carried within it, in a metaphysics embodied in nature – in a cry issuing from the fragility of beings themselves. In this metaphysics, human power, a capacity that, ill-used, can end all life, is a gift endowed at the cost of a trust, an injunction, to use that power to good ends – to defer the death of the more vulnerable. What is the *logos* behind this ethic – whatever was Nature thinking! – in entrusting the future of the world and all its inhabitants to a species so deaf to the inner summons to care? How is it, if responsibility is carved into our being as a 'function of our power and proportional to it', that human beings, the more powerful we become, grow proportionately deaf to that imperative? Jonas' metaphysics represents a radical overturning of traditional understandings of ontological gradation. In placing responsibility *within* Being, he attempts to disarm the dangerous tendencies of metaphysical thinking, placing greatest responsibility in the hands of the powerful super-species that have fought their way to the top of the great chain of Being. By placing greatest imperative at the top of the ontological chain, Jonas hopes to launch a new appeal to care for those below. The motivation is commendable.

However, aside from the difficulty of marketing this highly improbable 'story of Being' to a species whose awareness exceeds that of all other beings, given the overwhelming empirical evidence against it, there remains the troubling question of whether the placement of human being at the top of the ontological chain leaves open the option of interpreting that chain as a moral entity. It seems that all metaphysical visions assume a structure that threatens to order, arrange and subsume its parts rather than to celebrate their diversity. But this particular metaphysical vision reconfirms the rightful place of humankind as masters of the universe – a claim altogether consistent with the Enlightenment ideals that, to begin with, got the world and its myriad beings into their present most vulnerable state. These 'questions' need to be addressed *before* a new 'song of Being' lures the listener onto its rocky shores. A post-Holocaust world has seen where the path of mastery leads and is aware of the need for greatest attentiveness in the ways we think about Being. The questions raised by and within

metaphysics are questions precisely *for ethics*.

One could argue that philosophy, in the wisdom of its unknowing, has long been the birthplace of swan songs and noble lies to comfort the death-haunted and inspire the nobler instincts in a fallible and morally fragile humankind. However, it has also been argued, not least passionately by Jonas himself, that, in the wake of the horrific events of the twentieth century, philosophy must admit its failure at the task of noble story-telling. It has need, indeed, to rethink its 'songs' and to consider whether the world can afford to let new metaphysical tunes 'lead us to new defeats' – new Crusades, new witch-hunts, new conversions-at-gunpoint, new genocide projects, new nationalisms, new religious intolerances, new global economic and terrorist gangsterisms – new extermination camps and new gulags. Every power structure looks to a metaphysical vision to justify its actions in the world. The 'songs of Being' have, thus far in the history of the species, led almost inevitably to brutality, torture and bloodshed. Ironically, the good works – the tending of the forgotten, the uplifting of the lowly and the feeding of the poor – have rarely been accomplished by the powerful named most responsible by Jonas' imperative, but by the simple Samaritans and the selfless Mother Teresa's. Can we truly say, when we look over the ledger of human works – over the centuries and the millennia since metaphysical visions were at labour grounding their ethical systems and dictating their moral imperatives – that the world is truly 'better' for the 'hearing' of these songs? Or, after two thousand years of their seductive melodies, ought we finally surrender the naïve hope that metaphysics leads to a 'better' world and face the cold hard fact that human beings may be 'better' without the alluring refrains of metaphysics?

The latter suspicion guides the philosophical work of Emmanuel Levinas. In a radical overturning of the identification of ontology with metaphysics, Levinas tears us from our comforting stories and lays bare the violence of our conscious constructions, however beautiful to the eye and seductive to the ear of the artist and the listener. With Levinas' phenomenological reformulation, metaphysics still occurs as a transcendence, but not as a transcendent *structure* or *domain*. It is, rather, as a 'passing over to being's *other*, an otherwise than being'.⁸ This 'otherwise' of the metaphysical is not to be confused with a passing over into not-being. 'Not to be otherwise,' Levinas insists, 'but *otherwise than being*'.⁹ Levinas, in this difficult distinction, is attempting to transcend Jonas' account of mortal existence as paradoxical meeting point of dialectical opposites – of mortal being as a tightrope walk between being and not-being. For Levinas, Being – whether the faceless Being-in-general from which a being issues as an act of radical freedom, or whether

the being of enacted freedom itself, the radical self-enclosure that describes the 'ontological' adventure of conscious life – always subsumes its opposites. For Levinas, Being occurs as an inescapable violence to self and other, a suffocating encasement, a buzzing, an insomnious menace, the threat of archaic gods and haunting 'elements'. Clearly, in Levinas, Being reveals its dark side, hidden in traditional understandings, and metaphysics ceases to be understood as a 'domain' ordered by the fundamental principles of Being. With Levinas, metaphysics ceases to be understood at all; it ceases to be understandable. Metaphysics is not an order of Being, not an ordering of Being. Nor is it a domain beyond being, a realm of death or a state of not-being. It occurs as a rupture in the conscious life of meanings and understandings. Levinas transcends the dialectic of being and not-being because, for him, these seeming opposites never truly accomplish separation and always remain in the service of Being. They merely:

illuminate each other and unfold a speculative dialectic which is a determination of being. Or else the negativity which attempts to repel being is immediately submerged by being. The void that is hollowed out is immediately filled with the anonymous rustling of the there is, as the place left vacant by one who died is filled with the murmur of the attendants. Being's essence dominates not-being itself.¹⁰

In Levinas' reformulation of the structure of Being, metaphysics happens as a 'difference over and beyond that which separates being from nothingness – the *very difference of the beyond*, the difference of transcendence'.¹¹ In a stunning recapture of an insight caught only 'during flashes' in the history of philosophy – in Plato's Good that is not the Beautiful (Hipp. Maj. 297c & ff., 303e & ff.), that lies beyond Being (*Rep.* 7.517bc.) and that is preserver and benefactor to all (*Rep.* 10.608e), in Husserl's pure ego as transcendence in immanence, in the Cartesian idea of God that is greater than the thought that would contain him, and in Nietzsche's irrepressible laughter that 'reverses irreversible time in vortices... [and] which refuses language'¹² – Levinas redefines the metaphysical as the event where the Good passes by. It does not come to presence, it is not enacted *by some agent*, but, rather goodness occurs as a violation of the violation that comprises the 'ontological adventure' and a loss of the freedom that keeps beings in being. Goodness happens as a 'metaphysical extraction from being',¹³ a rupture in Being itself. In undercutting Jonas' metaphysics that posits dialectical opposition as the ground for ethics, Levinas also overturns the Socratic logic upon which philosophy took flight millennia ago. He states:

...the Good is not presented to freedom; *it has chosen*

me before I have chosen it. *No one is good voluntarily.*¹⁴

Responsibility for the other does not occur, for Levinas, as a function of the true being of human being, as it does with Jonas. However, Levinas remains consistent with Jonas in his placement of the call to responsibility in the face of the other vulnerable being. Responsibility for the other 'commands me and ordains me' with no *reasons* other than the bare empirical fact that I am the first on the scene. The other's need, simply by 'proximation' to me, compels me to respond, makes me approach, makes me 'neighbour' to the other where I might otherwise only ever remain a stranger passing by. The moral response thus 'diverges from nothingness as much as from being'.¹⁵ Responsibility, for Levinas, occurs outside of being, outside of not-being, as a glorious excess to essence.

Thus, Levinas disarms metaphysics, as it has traditionally been understood, by refusing its synonymy with Being and ontology. In so doing, goodness can still happen, but only as a rupture in the neat hierarchical ordering practised by beings.

Metaphysics may still be the *meta* with regard to *physis*, but, contra Aristotle, 'first philosophy' can, for Levinas, only be Ethics. As long as we think ethics as grounded in a metaphysics, no matter how seemingly benign the ordering structure, the world remains fixed within a 'logic of domination' that has ruled since the beginning of human time and mastery remains the only form in which humans can hope to compel the Good to appear. In a world that has witnessed Holocaust, and continues to witness, daily, more holocausts than the human mind can count, a rupture in the logic of orders and structures offers a new way of understanding human being in the world, and offers hope for a new form of the Good – a gentility and a humility of such potency that it defeats freedom and mastery and the rational calculations of our super-species.

Levinas' phenomenology, as a descriptive account of human existence, is as troublesome as that of Jonas, in terms of the difficulty of proving it to be a *description* of actual moral response. Again, one can offer overwhelming empirical evidence to show that many acts of kindness are altogether intentional and that many ontological worlds are impervious to metaphysical rupture. However, as a

normative account of human existence, as an ideal of moral response that circumvents all calculations of utility and consequence, Levinas' extraction of the metaphysical from the ontological makes for a 'story' *outside* Being, a *logos* that is truly *meta*-with regard to *ontos*. Whether that 'story' is able to humble human dreams of mastery of the universe, whether it is able to disarm Being and retrieve the Good from its powerful heights above the heavens, is another question for ethics. It is likely that only in the living of Levinas' humbling 'story' of the metaphysical rupture of Being can the question of whether an ethics requires a metaphysical 'grounding' ever be finally answered.

Philosophy Department
Adelphi University
Garden City, New York. 11530.
hamblet@adelphi.edu

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- Emmanuel Levinas, *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence*. Alfonso Lingis, tr. Dordrecht: Kluwer Academic Publishers. 1991.

Notes:

1. *Mortality and Morality*, p. 55. Jonas names the article in which he asserts this claim: 'The Need of Reason: Grounding An Imperative of Responsibility in the Phenomenon of Life'. c.f. *The Imperative of Responsibility*, p. 8.
2. *Mortality and Morality*, p. 101.
3. *ibid.*
4. *ibid.*
5. *ibid.* p. 102
6. *ibid.*
7. *ibid.*, emphasis mine.
8. *Otherwise Than Being or Beyond Essence*, p. 3.
9. *ibid.*
10. *ibid.*
11. *ibid.*, emphasis mine.
12. *ibid.*
13. *ibid.*
14. *ibid.*, emphasis mine.
15. *ibid.*

DISCUSSION ON CRUELTY

1 PURSUING VIRTUE AND EXPECTING PROGRESS: NIETZSCHE AND LECKY ON THE QUESTION OF CRUELTY

Colin D. Pearce

1 The malice of virtue

Professor Baruchello introduces his discussion of cruelty by briefly indicating various views on the subject as expressed by some of the great names in the Western tradition – Pascal, Aristotle, Seneca, Machiavelli, Montaigne, Hobbes, Hume, Montesquieu, Smith, Rousseau, Leopardi and Nietzsche. Professor Baruchello concludes that ‘for Western philosophers, ‘cruelty’ is by no means univocal’.¹ It involves both deliberation and indifference, justified and unjustified force, evident wickedness and beneficial decisions, human choice and metaphysical necessity, and rarity and frequency. In Baruchello’s estimation, we are forced by the evidence to conclude that there is not ‘one’ but many ‘cruelties’. As examples of manifest cruelty in its various forms Baruchello mentions executions, eruptive violence, libertine tortures, prisoner abuse, political assassination, and the everyday human struggle against ‘death, illness, need, frustration and disillusionment’. But in this list of possible ‘cruelties’ Baruchello does not suggest that striving to ‘be at one’s best’, or to ‘do the right thing’, or to be a ‘virtuous person’ is in fact to practice a form of cruelty. Nevertheless this is precisely the claim made by Nietzsche in the thirtieth aphorism of his *Daybreak* entitled ‘Refined Cruelty as virtue’. Here Nietzsche suggests that we should ‘not think too highly’ of ‘a morality which rests entirely on the *drive to distinction*’ (Nietzsche’s emphasis). His thinking here is that we should first ask ourselves ‘what kind of a drive’ it is that seeks for distinction and what kind of psychology ‘lies behind it?’ And when we do find an answer to these questions, Nietzsche says, it will be that we wish to make others suffer. In seeking to ‘do our best’ we are in fact seeking ‘to make the sight of us *painful* to another and to awaken in him the feeling of envy and of his own impotence and degradation’ (Nietzsche’s emphasis). When we do someone the ‘supposed favour’ of being complimentary and drop some of ‘of *our honey*’ (Nietzsche’s emphasis) on to ‘another’s tongue’ we are all the while ‘looking him keenly and mockingly in the eyes’. This is because ‘we want to make him savour the bitterness of his fate’. Nietzsche goes on to provide a few examples of good deeds or laudable conduct that illustrate the cruelty underlying our

attempts to live up to the higher standards of virtue and excellence. If we see some person who ‘has become humble and is now perfect in his humility,’ then we should ‘seek for those whom he has long wished to torture with it!’ ‘You will find them soon enough!’ Nietzsche adds. If someone is ‘kind to animals and is admired on account of it’ then there must inevitably be ‘certain people on whom he wants to vent his cruelty by this means’. The ‘great artist’ is another exhibit in Nietzsche’s gallery of cruelty because of ‘the pleasure he anticipated in the envy of his defeated rivals’. It was the anticipation of this pleasure which he would feel in the envy of others that ‘allowed his powers no rest until he had become great’. ‘(H)ow many bitter moments has his becoming great not cost the souls of others!’ Even ‘the chastity of the nun’ is nothing but this drive to cruelty. It looks with ‘punitive eyes’ into the faces of women ‘who lived otherwise’. ‘How much joy in revenge there is in these eyes!’ Nietzsche exclaims. So for Nietzsche the ‘theme’ of the cruel intentions underlying our efforts to be virtuous ‘is brief’, but ‘the variations that might be played upon it’ might indeed ‘be endless’. And these many variations will not be ‘tedious’ to us at this point because it is ‘still a far too paradoxical and almost pain inducing novelty that the morality of distinction is in its ultimate foundation pleasure in refined cruelty’.²

Nietzsche goes on to explain that he is not arguing that every action at every time by every person seeking to ‘do their level best’ is motivated by the cruel desire to make others suffer. By the ‘ultimate foundation’ of the morality of distinction Nietzsche means this morality’s ‘first generation’. This hypothetical first generation began the process of civilisation by becoming ‘individualistic’ enough to seek recognition by others of their superior talents and virtues. But individuals inherit ‘the habit of some distinguishing action’ they may not in fact be behaving out of cruel motives. This is because ‘the thought that lies behind (the action) is not inherited with it’. ‘(T)houghts’, Nietzsche says, ‘are not hereditary ... only feelings’. And provided the feelings of cruelty behind these actions aimed at distinction and recognition are ‘not again reproduced by education’, even so soon as ‘the second generation’, there is a failure ‘to experience any pleasure in cruelty in connection with (them),

but only pleasure in the habit as such'. This pleasure in simply doing the virtuous action out of habit and tradition however is what Nietzsche calls 'the first stage' of the 'good',³ which is to say the first stage of the attraction to human beings of the fine and the beautiful in itself without any thought of 'selfishness' or *amour propre*. So Nietzsche is explaining to us that although we ourselves might not be 'doing good' for cruel reasons alone, at some point in the past our ancestors certainly were. And so he traces the many 'cruelties' expressed in the drive to excel to a common root in the psychological history of the species.

While stating that there are many 'cruelties' (in the plural) Professor Baruchello nevertheless allows that we could 'be talking still of various "types" of the same thing'. In order to retrieve this thing, he says, 'we must look at very general features, common to most of the cruelties listed above, or at least a set of family resemblances'. But if Baruchello does not include the 'drive to distinction' as among the examples of cruel behaviour he may not ultimately be led to the common root which Nietzsche's says underlies it. For his part, Nietzsche focuses on the basic feature common to all forms of 'striving to do well' or to 'do one's best,' which is to say the anticipated pleasure in seeing one's rivals and other observers suffer under the knowledge that they have not likewise succeeded in doing these things, or that they lack the natural abilities to make even a passable try. Baruchello by contrast, focuses on that which is common to the 'recipients' of cruelty which is to say their suffering. But the suffering to which he refers is not that of the politician defeated in a close electoral race, the employee terminated by an arrogant boss, the student who is beaten by a classmate in a scholarship or athletic competition, or the academic who is denied tenure while his colleague receives it. Rather Baruchello's focus is on those who have to deal with oppression, discrimination, violence, illness and despair. These examples of suffering no doubt remind us how cruel life can be, and certainly raise the question of 'man's inhumanity to man', but they do not point the inquirer in the direction of the paradoxical conclusion at which Nietzsche wishes us to arrive, i.e. that our virtuous behaviour, at least in its deepest origins, is in fact rooted in a kind of egoistic malice, or an Iago-like craving to see others in pain.

So following out the suggestion of Nietzsche's aphorism we learn that there may be many forms and kinds of goodness or virtue evident in our efforts to impress other members of our species but for all that there is underlying these various behaviours one unifying motive and that is the wish to make others suffer in some way. In this context at least, Nietzsche manages to make goodness or virtue

multifarious and cruelty 'univocal', to use Professor Baruchello's term.

2 *The cruelty of indifference and the cruelty of vindictiveness*

Both Professor Baruchello and Professor Hamblet attempt to distinguish between a cruelty of intention or what be termed 'positive' cruelty and a cruelty of neglect or callousness which we may call 'negative' cruelty. Baruchello talks of a cruelty of 'human agency' which in turn could be divided itself:

between that which stems from 'delight' in another's suffering, and that which stems from 'indifference' to another's suffering; this suffering being determined either by the 'action' or the 'inaction' of the perpetrator.

Professor Hamblet echoes Professor Baruchello's distinction between the cruelty of 'delight' and the cruelty of 'indifference' when she says:

Cruel intentions subdivide into two categories – where the agent exhibits pleasure in harming; or where the agent is indifferent to the harm that he effects to others. Where there is pleasure in harming, we may safely use the term 'pathological', and admit its rarity. Where there is indifference, we have a graver problem: we must admit that almost everyone has the potential for cruelty.⁴

For help in assessing the implications of the delight/indifference distinction suggested by Professors Baruchello and Hamblet we can turn to a useful passage in W.E.H. Lecky's *History of European Morals*. Lecky says in the first volume of this work that the key issue in the cruelty question is to do with 'realisation' by which he means the capacity of human beings to 'realise' the effects on others of which their cruel delight/indifference is the cause. By focusing on this question of 'realisation' Lecky manages to turn the cruelty question into one of civilisation or the ethical education of mankind. 'To an uneducated man', Lecky says, 'all classes, nations, modes of thought and existence foreign to his own are unrealised, while every increase in knowledge brings with it an increase of insight, and therefore sympathy'. But Lecky stipulates that the addition to knowledge is 'the smallest part of this change'. The most important consideration is the way in which the 'realising faculty is itself intensified'.

Every book he reads, every intellectual exercise in which he engages, accustoms him to rise above the objects immediately present to his senses, to extend his realizations into new spheres, and reproduce in his imagination the thoughts, feelings, and characters of others, with a vividness inconceivable to the savage.⁵

So civilisation's effect on us is to endow us with 'sensitive humanity' and this means that our 'realising faculty' has been cultivated and we should therefore 'recoil from cruelty' almost instinctively

as it were. At this point Lecky takes up the distinction insisted upon by professors Baruchello and Hamblet. For him it is 'an important distinction to draw'. 'Under the name of cruelty are comprised two kinds of vice, altogether different in their causes and in most of their consequences', Lecky says. There is firstly a cruelty which 'springs from callousness and brutality,' and then there is 'the cruelty of vindictiveness'. The first kind of cruelty 'belongs chiefly to hard, dull, and somewhat lethargic characters' and 'appears most frequently in strong and conquering nations and in temperate climates'. This kind of cruelty 'is due in very great degree to defective realisation'. The 'strong and conquering nations' are 'insensitive'. The second kind of cruelty is the cruelty of 'delight' and it is 'usually displayed in oppressed and suffering communities, in passionate natures, and in hot climates'.⁶ 'Great vindictiveness', he says, 'is often united with great tenderness, and great callousness with great magnanimity'. By the same token 'a vindictive nature is rarely magnanimous, and a brutal nature is more rarely tender'. Be this as it may however, Lecky is confident that both forms of cruelty will be 'diminished with advancing civilization'. Civilization then works on these two kinds of cruelty, albeit 'by different forms and in different degrees'. The long term result of this process should be on the one hand that 'callous cruelty is diminished before the sensitiveness of a cultivated imagination' and on the other that 'vindictive cruelty is diminished by the substitution of a penal system for private revenge'.⁷

So Lecky is arguing that we in the West should (a) be less cruel over time because our 'realizing faculty' has been cultivated over the centuries making us less indifferent to 'sensitive humanity' and (b) that we should be less 'vindictive' or cruel of intention because the rise of the modern system of penal justice means that we do not have to seek out those who have injured us ourselves and mete out to them a punishment which in our view they deserve. With the rise of the modern state we can stand back and watch our public agents administer justice on our behalf. We thus lose the habits of vigilanteism and become less and less capable of inflicting direct harm on others using our own means.

Lecky's arguments here are at odds with the claims of Professor Hamblet. She does not see 'advancing civilization' as reducing the extent of the cruelty of 'indifference'. She seems to suggest that the increase in knowledge and enlightenment in the West has not in fact heightened our 'sensitive

humanity'. Indeed, for Hamblet, 'Indifference to the woes of other human beings is an almost universal human feature'. 'If cruelty is indifference,' she says, 'then almost every person on the planet is cruel, and most certainly those of us in the West who have access to certain knowledge about the suffering masses on earth and go on with our lives in complete obliviousness to the fact of their misery'. 'Otherwise,' she asks, 'how is it the case that, with twenty five thousand children dying each day from hunger and hunger-related diseases, the world has not gone mad with compassion [from com (with) + passus (suffering)] in the suffering-with of these vast masses of innocents'.⁸

So we have here a situation where Lecky's and Professor Hamblet's conclusions are incompatible regarding the development of Western morality. For Lecky 'progress' means less cruelty, for Hamblet it means perhaps even more. Such a division of opinion between a nineteenth century student of cruelty and one from the twenty-first century shows how far we have come since the 'idea of progress' was the unquestioned faith of the educated classes. The disagreement over the nature of cruelty in contemporary society reflects a disagreement over whether the modern West and its purposes was on the whole a sound project to which reasonable and thoughtful people could be dedicated, or whether there was something misconceived and futile in the whole idea of 'the improvement of mankind' from the start.

University of South Carolina
Beaufort, CA
USA

Notes:

1. 'What Is Cruelty?' *Appraisal* 5:1 (March, 2004), p. 34.
2. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak: Thoughts on the Prejudices of Morality* trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge University Press, 1982), p.23.

The Christian apologist William Paley says that he knows no 'stronger stimulus to exertion' than 'envy.' Indeed, 'many a scholar, many an artist, many a soldier, has been produced by it'. However 'since in its general effects it is noxious, it is properly condemned, certainly is not praised, by sober moralists'. Thus Jesus censures 'love of distinction and greediness of superiority'. William Paley, *A View of the Evidences of Christianity*, (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, n.d.), p.340. To this point of Paley's we may add another from W.E.H. Lecky:

Continued on p. 159

2 CAN EXISTENCE BE CRUEL?

1 An answer by Giorgio Baruchello

One of the closing remarks from our previous essay hinted at a provocative hypothesis: existence itself – or, otherwise named, nature, life, the universe – can be cruel. Here we will consider whether that hypothesis may be correct.

Clearly, detriment of all sorts affects the life of most creatures, if not of all of them; certainly at certain stages of their development, and possibly at most or even all of them. Yet, this detriment is often the result of events that appear to have no intentional agency at work behind them. How can there be cruelty, then? As Professor Hamblet and I highlighted in our former textual and conceptual analyses, cruelty seems to entail some degree of moral responsibility which, in turn, entails some form of intentional agency, whether direct or indirect, actively detriment-seeking or wilfully blind. Does existence – or nature, life, the universe – possess any intentional agency?

On the one hand, the answer is most obviously negative. We dwell in a valley of tears: *c'est la vie*. The notion of cruelty applied to entities incapable of intentional agency is not appropriate or, at most, symbolic. 'Not appropriate' implies that we know what the actual, proper understanding of 'cruelty' ought to be like. 'Symbolic' does not, for it indicates a mere convergence of opinions or widespread tendency. In effect, the existing literature comprises some cases of just such a linguistic usage, which is not extremely common, or even so common as the one involving intentional agency, especially amongst ethicists. Also, common sense does not discard such a possibility, insofar as, for instance, the 'cruel world' from which the self-murderer escapes is neither entirely nonsensical (who cannot grasp at least some of the reasons for which a person wishes to die?) nor uncommon (around 30,000 people a year commit suicide in the USA alone). Hence, let us conclude that such a meaning of 'cruel' is, as a minimum, symbolic.

On the other hand, however, one may answer positively: there is some form of intentional agency behind the world's imposition of detriment onto the living ones, which we may even want to praise. For instance, we saw how the Marquis de Sade speaks of cruelty as 'nothing but the human energy that civilisation has not yet corrupted ... Cruelty, far from being a vice, is the first sentiment that Nature has imprinted within ourselves.'¹ Analogous, but with a tragically different twist, is Giacomo Leopardi's description of Nature as 'our common mother... an immense female shape, sitting on the ground with her torso erect, leaning on the side of a

mountain... with a face partly beautiful and partly frightening, and with the darkest eyes and hair.'² Leopardi writes of an unfortunate Iclander who, while wandering around the world in the vain attempt to find a trouble-free place where to settle, met accidentally this sublime giantess. Thus spoke Nature to him:

Did you believe that the world had been created for you? You must know that in my makings, orders, and operations, and with very few exceptions, I have always had and still have intents that do not contemplate men's happiness or unhappiness. Whenever I offend you in any way or fashion, I don't realise it, if not in very rare cases; and usually, if I please or help you, I don't know it; I didn't do, as you believe, such things or actions to please you or to offer you aid. Indeed, if it happened that I make your entire species extinct, I would not be aware of it.³

Friedrich Nietzsche, possibly recovering de Sade's stronger-than-detriment *joie de vivre*, commends 'cruelty' as 'as one of the oldest and most indispensable elements in the foundation of culture,'⁴ proper to nature's 'sorry scheme of things [that consists in...] begetting, living, and murdering.'⁵ Nietzsche's understanding of reality influenced many following thinkers, such as Antonin Artaud, Clément Rosset, and, most importantly, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari.

For Deleuze and Guattari, in fact, civilisation starts with the institution of the State apparatus – no matter how minimal and barbaric this apparatus may be – which is meant to mould and control its members by all sorts of symbolic means: dialects, taboos, totems, textbooks, mating rituals, penal codes, etc. Fundamentally, any such apparatus relies upon the constriction of biological individuals within the categories of social life, which one achieves initially by inscription of 'signs directly on the body... a system of cruelty, a terrible alphabet [of...] blood, torture, and sacrifices.'⁶ Once this apparatus is firmly established, then can the State function efficiently. Also, the State's need for super-individual standards turns any individual deviance from the governing 'system of signs' into the utmost crime, and utilises cruelty in order to keep this danger at bay: 'Above all, the State apparatus makes the mutilation, and even death, come first. It needs them pre-accomplished, for people to be born that way, crippled and zombielike.'⁷ Consistently with this picture of social life, the State is said to be an 'Anal Oedipus,' i.e. an obsessive accumulator of chaos-prone individuals, who hates the father-chaos from whom all were born, back to whom all would

naturally lead him, and against whom he forces all to work, i.e. against themselves.

Deleuze's and Guattari's grim picture of the State draws from their direct professional experience in the field of psychotherapy. Their philosophy is pervaded by the awareness of the complex and extensive consequences of the generally unnoticed and, perhaps, tragically (cruelly?) inevitable traumas of the social development of the human psyche. I have emphasised their account hereby because they, like Sade and Leopardi, relate the unavoidable presence of cruelty in the world to some kind of intentional agency. Specifically, de Sade, Leopardi, Deleuze and Guattari *personify* nature or states as the fundamental source of cruelty, thus allowing for the ascription of moral responsibility to an agent, no matter how unique or peculiar this agent may be. By revealing the works of Nature and of the anal Oedipus, they implicitly stress the importance of the notions of moral responsibility and of intentional agency for the possibility itself of conceiving of cruelty.

Naturally, we could say that their personification of such impersonal entities is, in fact, symbolic. I do not intend to dismiss this interpretation of their work. On the contrary, I regard it as plausible and ethically significant, for it advances from the fear of blurring the distinction between 'actual' cruelty, which points indignantly at the evildoer, and a blame-insensitive cruelty, which 'sprays' evil onto all possible dimensions of being and reduces the space available for any sensible ascription of guilt.

Possibly, one can find a solution to the apparent threat of blame-insensitive cruelty by considering that, were existence cruel in itself, then the blame-worthy evildoer would be the one who does not care about the amount of detriment deriving from his/her actions. Such an individual would not try to achieve a certain goal with the least degree of detriment reasonably foreseeable. Instead, he/she would display indifference to the detriment involved by his/her action. Indeed, he/she could also derive delight in producing that detriment, as he/she opts for measures that cannot but manifestly involve or amplify the detriment. In other words, even if it were impossible not to be cruel, we would still have to decide whether to act under the assumption that we are trying to minimise the detriment to come (i.e. to act morally) or not (i.e. to act immorally), either by being indifferent to the detrimental outcome (i.e. to act brutally) or by maximising it (i.e. to act sadistically).

2 Reflections upon Professor Baruchello's answer

This question poses what is perhaps the most provocative issue in regard of our subject, cruelty: can existence itself be cruel? As Professor Baruchello

has said, it seems to defy the conclusions set out in our very definitions of cruelty to answer positively to this question. How can existence be labelled 'truly' cruel if the term 'cruelty' indicates ill intention or wilful heedlessness in regard of the suffering of others? Most people are prepared to admit that, according to our best knowledge of things, nature has no such intention or will as our definition insists are implied in the term 'cruelty.'

On the other hand, it is often the case that the *phenomenal* experience of the 'truth' of a thing – in this case, of 'cruelty' – challenges our conventional notions of 'truth' and raises new questions in regard of our fundamental assumptions concerning things. The 'phenomenal gaze' looks upon the lived experience of a subject and attempts to discover and articulate, in its most naive sincerity, the 'truth' of the subjective encounter of a thing or event, rather than some certain, scientific, 'objective' 'Truth' that exists for all subjects. In regard of the subject's phenomenological understanding of nature, then, the 'lived experience' of nature's event often tells another story from the cold, objective, scientific account that refuses will or intent to the natural world.

The scientist may claim that nature is without evil or beneficent intent; nature may 'will' no good or ill consequences to human life. Yet when we find ourselves confronted with Mother Nature in the raw – whether beset by a lightning storm in the reserve lands of rural Zimbabwe where fiery spears seem to lash out from the angry skies and to stalk the unlucky traveller, or whether teetering at the mouth of Mount Vulcano, reeling under the choking breath that menaces from the depths of the earth – the experience is often one of being *targeted* by a threatening menace, force or agent, driven by a very *personalised* objective and acting under an *intention* of cruelty. Mother Nature can appear to the terrified subject under her thrall as a wickedly malevolent parent with an enormous grudge to bear *against me* or a cruel indifference to *my* suffering.

Certainly the work of post-Holocaust phenomenologist, Emmanuel Levinas, the 'elemental' is presented in this way – as the realm of faceless, malevolent gods, taunting and menacing the terrified ego, even in the paradox of that ego's at-home-ness and enjoyment of the element. Levinas expresses this paradox:

To be affected by a side of being while its whole depth remains undetermined and *comes upon me* from nowhere is to be bent toward the insecurity of the morrow. The future of the element as insecurity is lived concretely as the mythical divinity of the element. *Faceless gods, impersonal gods* to whom one does not speak, mark the nothingness that bounds the egoism of enjoyment in the midst of its familiarity with the element.⁸

On the other hand, another post-Holocaust phenomenologist, Hans Jonas, sees danger in this view of natural forces. Jonas' naturalist theology seeks to provide ethically motivational counter-metaphors to what he sees as a lineage of nihilistic thought descending from his intellectual father-figure, Martin Heidegger. Jonas diagnoses, in this variety of modern nihilisms, the need to reconfigure the Earth Mother in a more positive light, so he attempts to re-metaphorize her in the tradition of the Greek ancients, as the hallowed ground of a sacred responsibility to preserve life as a *good in itself* and *for its own sake*, and not, as transpires under the technological frenzy of modernity, as a *good for the sake of* (profit, expedience, or accumulation of wealth).

Since Heidegger's existentialism had uncritically reasserted the metaphysical assumption of a dualism between the human world and nature, nature was reconfirmed as having little value of its own and as being indifferent to human purposes.⁹ Thus were lost the divine foundations of the cosmic order (*kosmos*); the ancient gods of Thales' pious world-view had abandoned the human world to chaos (*khaos*), both metaphysical and moral. Jonas states:

If values are not beheld in vision *as being* (like the Good and the Beautiful of Plato), but are *posited* by the will as projects, then indeed existence is committed to constant futurity with death as its goal; and a merely formal resolution to be, without a *nomos* [divine law, cultural edict] for that resolution, becomes a project from nothingness to nothingness.¹⁰

In short, if Heidegger is right about *Dasein's* meaning-positing here-being, nature does not care. For Jonas, that doctrine is ethically perilous. He asserts: 'That nature does not care, one way or the other, is the true abyss.' And this conviction composes an abyss that cannot help but culminate in a radical nihilism, existentially expressed by its faithful in both a lack of concern for the suffering bodies of the earth and an impoverished attitude toward life itself articulated in the vapid hyper-consumerist credo: 'Let us eat and drink. For tomorrow we must die.'¹¹

Jonas recognizes that to remove the intention (good, evil, just, punitive, sacred, benevolent, jealous) from our understanding of Mother Nature is to banish the gods from the earth and, in ethical effect, to relieve us of our responsibilities to the planet and its creatures. 'There is no point in caring for what has no sanction behind it in any creative intention.'¹² Perhaps one might see an explanation of Heidegger's flirtation with National Socialism in the nihilistic conclusions implied in his philosophy.

Can Nature be cruel? The scientists, with Nietzsche, tell us without hesitation that destructive forces are part of the natural power-mix. Coming-to-be entails passing-away, time dictates as just and right the phenomenon of material decay, and ageing and death can be cruel. There is a certain 'evil' in the natural that cannot be logically denied, even by the most 'objective' and rationalistic scientist.¹³

However, philosophers must, with Socrates, remain utterly humble about what *certain* knowledge we may hold in regard of such mammoth questions. What, ultimately, matters, philosophically and ethically, is not whether Nature *is indeed* cruel, but whether *we perceive* her to be capable of cruel (and benevolent and punitive and jealous and compassionate) intent. Without the 'mother' in Mother Nature, human beings may not feel called to the accountability of the good child, nor, by extension, to the obligation of the brother's keeper.

Notes:

1. Donatien Alphonse Marquis de de Sade (hereafter de Sade), *Philosophy in the Bedroom* (1795), Dialogue III (my translation). Retrieved from: *Oeuvres du Marquis de de Sade*, <http://desade.free.fr/>. I explain in more detail Sade's reasons for the acceptance of Nature's cruelty in 'The Politics of Cruelty,' *Appraisal*, 4(4), 165-74.
2. Giacomo Leopardi, 'Dialogo della Natura e di un islandese' in *Operette morali* (1827-34; my translation). Retrieved from: *Classici italiani*, <http://www.classicitaliani.it/index041.htm>.
3. Ibid.
4. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce Homo* (1908), Chapter 11. All of Nietzsche's texts are retrieved from: *The Nietzsche Channel*: <http://www.geocities.com/thenietzschechannel/ntexteng.htm> (translations by Walter Kaufmann et al.).
5. Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Greek State* (1872), Preface.
6. Deleuze-Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus* (New York: The Viking Press, 1977), pp. 144-5.
7. Deleuze-Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), p. 425.
8. Emmanuel Levinas, *Totality and Infinity*, Alfonso Lingis, tr., (Pittsburg: Duquesne University Press, 1969), 142. Emphasis mine.
9. Hans Jonas, *The Phenomenon of Life: Toward a Philosophical Biology*, New York: Harper and Row, 1963), 215.
10. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, John Macquarrie, Edward Robinson, trs., (San Francisco: Harper, 1962), 57, 187, 189, 356.
11. H. Jonas, *Phenomenon*, 233.
12. Ibid.
13. See for example Lyall Watson, *Dark Nature: A Natural History of Evil*, (New York: Harper Perennial, 1996).

3 HOW CRUEL IS DISEASE?

Antonio Casado da Rocha

The on-going discussion about cruelty between Dr Giorgio Baruchello and Dr Wendy Hamblet (published during 2004 as co-authored articles in *Appraisal*) has left an open question that I would like to address, both in order to continue the debate in one of the proposed directions and to further clarify its subject matter in a particular context. I have greatly benefited by this discussion and believe that its insights can throw some light on the topic of the cruelty of disease, which could be considered as a sub-topic of the alleged cruelty of existence, nature, life, or the universe.

The first article in the debate proposes a definition of cruelty as a list of general features that could be summarised as follows: real cruelty causes real suffering and displays either delight in or indifference to it.¹ To this condition of actual suffering brought about by an indifferent or delighted agent, the second article adds the consideration of the perspective from which the action is being evaluated, asking to take into account not only the agent's intentions, but also and even primarily the victim's suffering. As Baruchello puts it: 'Prudential considerations require that the victim's accusations, rather than the agent's declared aims, be the starting point for the assessment of cruelty'.²

I would like to use this approach to cruelty in order to explain why there are so many references to the cruel character of diseases in the philosophical and literary traditions of the West. To recall just an instance amongst the many referred to by Baruchello and Hamblet, in his *Confessions*, Jean-Jacques Rousseau included disease in a long list of cruelties. And looking further back in history, Seneca's seventieth letter includes an oft-quoted apology of rational suicide as the ultimate remedy against cruelty:

Should I wait for the cruelty of disease or man, when I can leave through the midst of the torments and sweep aside the obstacles. This is one reason why we cannot complain about life: it keeps no one. It is a good thing about human affairs that no one is miserable except by his own fault. If you enjoy life, live. If not, you can return to the place you came from.³

However, before proceeding we should ask first about the interest of such an analysis of the cruelty of disease. In my opinion, this issue is worth considering because there is something paradoxical about the claim that 'existence, nature, life, or the universe' could be cruel. Moral reasoning

traditionally distinguishes two types of evil: moral and natural. The standard view is that moral evil is the product of human agency and so includes phenomena such as 'war, torture and psychological cruelty', and that natural evil is the product of non-human agency, and so includes natural disasters such as 'earthquakes, floods, disease and famine'.⁴ In this standard view, disease is a natural evil, and as such it is the product of an agency to which intentions are not easily attributed.

One, of course, might appeal to the recourse of a God who intends 'natural evil' as a punishment or test for the human species, thus moralising it, but this is a line of thought that I will not pursue here. Instead, my starting point will be to consider that disease belongs to a more complex set of cases, which are appropriately analysed as a combination of moral and natural evils. The differentiation between disease and non-disease is fundamental to the theoretical and practical performance of medicine and the life sciences in general, and is consequential to policy and ethical standards in healthcare. Naturalist theories claim that disease is a value-neutral concept to be described by biology. On the other hand, normativist theories argue that the concept of disease is a social convention. With this background in mind, I would like to ask in what ways disease could be meaningfully said to be cruel.

First we should have a look at the existing definitions of disease. After a careful review of the philosophical literature on the subject,⁵ Rachel Cooper defines disease as 'a condition that it is a bad thing to have, that is such that we consider the afflicted person to have been unlucky, and that can potentially be medically treated'.⁶ The 'bad thing' criterion is required to distinguish the biologically different from the diseased, and the 'bad luck' criterion is needed to distinguish diseases from conditions that are unpleasant but normal (Cooper proposes teething as an example).

From this definition we can begin to understand why diseases are so often considered as cruelties. After all, Baruchello & Hamblet have shown us that for an act to be cruel it has to cause suffering (a 'bad thing') and it has to be caused on someone who could reasonably have hoped to have been treated otherwise ('bad luck' for him or her). Moreover, if we scrutinise deeper the concept of disease, we will find the same emphasis on perspective that has appeared in their discussion of cruelty.

Refining and improving the World Health Organisation's definition of health as 'a state of

complete physical, psychological and social well being', Hoffman (2002) has described the concept of disease as a triad comprising *disease*, *illness*, and *sickness*.⁷ The terms of the triad reflect professional, personal, and social perspectives and concern biological, phenomenological, and behavioural phenomena respectively. According to this author, *disease*, *illness*, and *sickness* are negative notions reflecting detrimental occurrences in human life ('bad things') and also normative notions, because they call for action in the face of 'bad luck':

Disease calls for actions by the medical profession towards identifying and treating the occurrence and caring for the person. Illness changes the actions of the individual, making him or her communicate their personal perspective of the negative occurrence to others, e.g. call for help. Sickness calls for a determination of the social status of the sick person; deciding who is entitled to treatment and economic rights and who is to be exempted from social duties.⁸

Thus in order to further investigate the cruelty of disease we might follow three different paths:

1 *The cruelty of disease from the professional perspective*

According to Hoffman, *disease* proper is negative bodily occurrences (that is, processes, states or events) as conceived of by the medical profession. What kind of cruelty can we find here? Many authors have argued for the essentially culture- and value-laden character of the concept of disease, as well as the instrumental character of diagnosis, prognosis and treatment. In such accounts, such concepts become warrants for medical interventions, enabling the diseased person to improve her condition, but also to suffer invasive or futile procedures that might cause unnecessary pain and suffering. Thus it is not difficult to read in medical journals controversies including statements such as: 'bilateral mastectomy is a *cruel* intervention which in itself cannot guarantee protection from breast cancer because of residual islands of breast tissue in ectopic sites'.⁹

Another controversial issue here is truth telling. In a clinical context, truth can be cruel, even though this possibility is strongly influenced by cultural and social factors: after a survey of 800 seniors from four different ethnic groups showed that Korean-American and Mexican-American subjects were much less likely than their European-American and African-American counterparts to believe that a patient should be told the truth about the diagnosis and prognosis of a terminal illness, Blackhall and others undertook an ethnographic study to look more deeply at attitudes and experiences of these respondents. They found out that

European-American and African-American respondents were likely to view truth-telling as empowering, enabling the patient to make choices, while the Korean-American and Mexican-American respondents were more likely to see the truth-telling as *cruel*, and even harmful, to the patients.¹⁰

2 *The cruelty of illness from the personal perspective*

Illness is negative bodily occurrences as conceived of by the ill person herself.¹¹ According to Hofmann, the critique of modern medicine directed at its ignorance of the subjective experience of the individual patient, brings about an epistemic and normative primacy of the concept of *illness*. Although this primacy does not result in an overall subjective approach (because the other two perspectives must be included in the assessment), this coheres with Baruchello and Hamblet's defence (2004b) of the non-exclusive primacy of the sufferer's perspective.

I would like to suggest that *illness* is felt as cruel not only because the person's pain is caused by an agency which is somehow indifferent to him or her (diseases are perceived as perfectly arbitrary in their choice of victims, and thus cruel: cancer arbitrarily kills people and thus people are 'victims' of its cruelty). As Susan Sontag has explained, not only we tend to think that disease is to be blamed for the suffering; very often we tend to think that the disease is *the patient's fault*, and therefore that the patient himself is to be blamed.¹² This punitive concept of disease might have to do with our own inability to think of disease as a pure instance of natural evil: in order to face it, we look at disease with an anthropomorphic disguise, and thus it becomes an instance of moral evil.

3 *The cruelty of sickness from the social perspective*

The third concept of the triad, *sickness*, is negative bodily occurrences as conceived of by the society or its institutions. Here we must remember the early work of Foucault, a challenge to the modern use of the terms 'mad' and 'mentally ill' as synonyms.¹³ Beginning in the nineteenth century, doctors and other therapists rejected such traditional conceptions of madness as divine ecstasy or diabolical possession in favour of the 'enlightened' view that madness is mental illness.

The implication of Foucault's analysis for our purposes is that the cruelty of sickness is to be attributed to society itself. After all, there was, even in the relatively recent past of our own culture, a view of madness which was radically different from our own and no less defensible. This alone, he suggests, should begin to undermine our idea that

there is something inevitable about our conception of madness. The modern experience of madness as mental illness restores a social locus to madness, seeing it as a deviation from norms (a *sickness*), not a rejection of the entire framework of rationality that defines these norms. He takes particular pains to show that, in spite of its veneer of scientific objectivity, the modern view is based more on a moral disapproval of the values implicit in madness than on any objective scientific truth.

In conclusion, by this discussion of the multi-dimensional cruelty of disease I hope to have shed some light on the different perspectives involved, thus stressing the complexity of ways in which we attribute cruelty to events, processes or states of things. Hopefully this would clarify some of the issues raised by Baruchello and Hamblet in their timely acknowledgement of the tensions between the perspectives of the agent and the sufferer of cruelty. I have argued that in the limited scenario of the clinical relationship, we must distinguish between the perspective of *disease*, where cruelty lies in the agent's (namely, the medical staff) evaluation, the perspective of *illness*, where it lies in the patient's, and finally the perspective of *sickness*, where it lies in an institution or in the society as a whole.

Department of Philosophy of Values and Social Anthropology
University of the Basque Country
Avenida de Tolosa 70
20018 San Sebastián
SPAIN
jonaranto@terra.es

Notes:

1. Baruchello G Hamblet W (2004a). What is cruelty? *Appraisal* 5 (1): p. 34.
2. Baruchello G Hamblet W (2004b). Is violence always cruel?; *Appraisal* 5(2): 93.
3. Seneca L A (c. AD early 60s). *Letters*; trans. R.M. Gummere. Loeb Classical Library, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1917-25 (10 vols), §15.
4. Floridi L Sanders JW (2001). 'Artificial evil and the foundation of computer ethics'. *Ethics and Information Technology*; 3 (1), p. 55.
5. This literature is quite rich, as the debate over the concepts of health and disease has been the defining problem of philosophy of medicine and remains one of the most controversial in the philosophy of biology. For a review, see Schaffner KF, Engelhardt HT (1998), 'Philosophy of medicine', *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. London: Routledge..
6. Cooper R (2002), 'Disease', *Studies in History and Philosophy of Biological and Biomedical Sciences*; 33, p. 263.
7. To distinguish these three technical uses from the general concept of disease, I will write them in italics.
8. Hofmann B (2002). 'On the triad disease, illness and sickness', *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy*; 27(6), p. 651.
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OTHER DISCUSSIONS

1 NEGLECTING THE TACIT DIMENSION OF KNOWLEDGE MAY BE HAZARDOUS TO YOUR BUSINESS.

Jere Moorman

James L. Hayes, past president of the American Management Association asserts: 'Those who try to paint a management picture "by the numbers" will always be amateurs'.

There is a belief reflected in much managerial behaviour is that one can become a rational logical, decision making, machine, with respect to business problems. 'Let's consider the problem coldly and objectively', he says; and he seek to persuade his employees to adopt this frame of reference as well.

I describe this sort of a manager, who is a rational, logical, decision-making machine, as note-sensitive and melody deaf; a master of explicit knowledge and unaware of the tacit dimension of knowledge.

A note-sensitive/melody deaf manager is like a bland chef. Both lack an adequate appreciation for the tacit dimension of knowing.

Says British Hotelier Rosa Lewis: 'Some peoples' food always tastes better than others, even if they are cooking the same dish ... because one person has much more life in them – more fire, more vitality, more guts than others'.

More fire, more vitality, more guts: those are the very things that the business leader-manager hopes to evoke from his employees.

I offer three simple notions that I intend to develop in this paper:

1. That the note-sensitive/melody deaf business leader-manager is like the bland chef.
2. That the melodic chef differs from the bland chef in that his dishes have more life in them – specifically more fire, more vitality, and more guts.
3. And that the difference between the bland chef and the melodic chef has something to do with having a more adequate appreciation of the tacit dimension of knowing.

The bland chef has a notion of a strictly explicit knowledge – perhaps cooking from a recipe out of the Cooking section of the newspaper.

Such a formal recipe, in itself, is deprived of the personal participation of the cook: an exact recipe means nothing unless we recognise and accredit the inexact, expert knowledge on which it bears and the person whose judgment upholds this meaning.

The bland cook's mind is largely dominated by the feeling that everything ought to be explained on one level: i.e. that the dish can be reduced to the ingredients and formal instructions of the recipe. But a gourmet dish – a successful meal – while it

arises from the recipe and the ingredients, and relies on the recipe and the ingredients, *is not determined by the recipe or the ingredients.*

To rely on a tidy recipe out of the newspaper may satisfy a longing for certainty, but ignores the fire, vitality and guts of the master chef.

The amateur, bland chef, like the note-sensitive/melody deaf business leader-manager, spends too much time analyzing and too little time acting. Something like faith precedes analysis. There is a profound difference between information and meaning; and information is pretty thin stuff, unless mixed with experience.

In seeking understanding of any part of reality we take a stand toward it, put ourselves into a certain relationship to it.

Esther Meek describes this in her book *Longing to Know*:

When we integrate to a coherent focus, we change our manner of relating to the particulars. We shift from looking *at* them to looking *through* them. We perceive them no longer as unrelated particulars but as clues to the whole, profoundly related in the pattern. (p. 107)

To indwell the particulars is not only to know them as something distinct from us but also as related to us.

The pattern, the whole, no matter how skeletal, comes first!! The melodic chef first has an idea about what he wants to create, to discover, about the 'coherent focus'. The passion of the master chef comes first, and is a necessary part of the act of cooking. The master chef has a keen sense of beauty – the beauty of a wonderful, gourmet meal!!

The master chef achieves his magic by the process of indwelling – by treating the particulars of his reflected, unreflected, and unreflectable experience in a subsidiary manner, attending *from* or through them – *to* a pattern on which he bring his focus, i.e. the *piece de resistance*.

The master chef, while partly conditioned by his environment and natural inheritance is able to commit himself to alter his environment, to take actions not determined by his environment and natural inheritance.

Only some such accreditation of the personal coefficients of all knowledge can afford us a basis

for navigating between a craving for certainty or the defiant rashness of the inexperienced cook..

A great dish is a discovery; and no great dish can be accredited as a discovery if it is achieved by a procedure following strict rules. If we explicitly refocus on the subsidiary 'framework' through which we have perceived a focal whole, it is no longer seen, *our perception of its structure has disintegrated*.

There is an explicit dimension to cooking. *And* there is an unspecifiable, tacit dimension which allows people to see when to apply the explicit part. Both dimensions, but especially the tacit, require 'practice' in a community of practitioners.

It is important to understand the difference between explicit and tacit knowing. If you lack the tacit dimension, the explicit dimension won't do you much good: you can't learn to be a master cook by reading about it.

The inexperienced, bland cook assesses a situation in terms of preconceived, fixed notions, while ignoring, or being unaware of, intangible, tacit signs.

However, it is tacit knowing that makes meaningful any explicit statements about real things. The master chef *discovers a realm* that cannot be discovered with recipe books, rules of cooking and other formal processes.

For the melodic, master chef, *it's what he learns after he knows it all that counts*.

Tacit knowledge is experiential and internalised; is difficult to communicate and is best learnt through the practical examples of one with superior knowledge through apprenticeship.

Polanyi asserts that the starting point for all human knowledge is that 'we know more than we can tell'. Once we accept this starting point – a tacit context for producing an 'intangible flavour' from a formal recipe assumes importance in its own right.

For the master chef, there is a tacit dimension to his knowledge which enables him to use knowledge which is not explicit.

'Grandma, how much salt shall I put in the recipe?'

'Just a pinch'.

'How much is a pinch?'

'You'll know it when you see it', says Grandma'.

Tacit thought becomes 'an indispensable element of all knowing' and the 'ultimate mental power by which all explicit knowledge is endowed with meaning'.

Some of the most important information is not explicit, cannot be measured: such things as the mood of a person, the 'flavour' of a context, and the discernment that something is 'just not right' – tacit

dimensions of the knowing situation that one knows but 'just can't put one's finger on'.

Much of what is 'going on' in cooking is tacit.

Despite its reputation as a second class citizen, tacit knowing is an integral part of the cognitive process which allows human beings to make sense of their surroundings and to communicate this with others.

The tacit dimension is an indispensable element of information production and exchange, and must be seen as such. We diminish this tacit resource at our peril.

As Drusilla Scott explains in her book *Everyman Revived* (p. 46)

To account for discovery as it actually happens, we have to allow there is another kind of knowledge besides the explicit, exact and testable kind, a sense by which we can be dimly aware of the direction in which we must seek for a solution, before we can formulate it.

The great French educational psychologist Piaget has differentiated reversible and irreversible acts of knowing. Reversible acts of knowing proceed on the basis of explicit premises. Irreversible acts of knowing proceeds toward a novel, hitherto undisclosed coherence or meaning upon 'premises' that have not and could not be identified as such. There is a desperate craving to represent knowledge as impersonal – to escape radical responsibility for our knowing. But in his magnum opus *Personal Knowledge*, Polanyi insists that

into every act of knowing there enters a passionate contribution of the person knowing what is being known, and that this coefficient is no mere imperfection but a vital component of his knowledge. (p. vii)

Drusilla Scott tells an illustrative story from the Oxford University Press. (p. 71)

An experienced typesetter was setting up a text of the Rig Veda, an ancient Hindu sacred text. He knew no Sanskrit, but he was able to point out where he thought there must be a mistake in the text. How could he know? He had got used to the regular patterns of the arm movements that he made as his hand moved from one compartment to another to pick up the type, and he was alerted by a movement that was different. He realized that this particular movement must indicate a combination of letters so unusual that it was most unlikely to be anything but an error, and he was right.

There was explicit reasoning in his conclusion, but what led him to notice the mistake was his bodily awareness of a complex and varied rhythm, and of a sudden change in this rhythm. An inexperienced compositor concentrating on each letter would not have noticed, for he would not have felt the pattern to which this movement was an exception. This man could be said to have been *indwelling* in his arm movements and attending *from* them to something

outside which he believed to have meaning. He did not know the meaning, but he sensed when the pattern of movement lost contact with it.

We may see here an example of Esther Meek's definition of knowing:

Knowing is the responsible struggle to rely on clues to focus on a coherent pattern and submit to its reality. (p. 13)

By accrediting the tacit dimension one may transform from a note-sensitive melody deaf, amateur chef to note-sensitive *and* melody sensitive, melodic, master chef!! The same is true for the note-sensitive/melody deaf leader-manager.

Polanyi helps us to remember our responsible, supra self enough to see what intangible resources may lie beyond the facts. He calls us to a recovery and an accrediting of our knowing selves and to an appreciation of the subsidiary clues that lie about us.

For Polanyi, there is no impersonal test of truth. Our knowledge rests on the responsible and skilled judgment of persons. The ideal of impersonal knowledge, i.e. objectivism, denies us the possibility of acknowledging this personal responsibility that Polanyi insists upon.

Personal knowledge is an intellectual commitment, and as such inherently hazardous. Only affirmations that could be false can be said to convey objective knowledge of a real person speaking with universal intent.

Drusilla Scott concludes:

Neglecting the tacit dimension of knowledge

No longer scorned and devalued because not experimentally verifiable, non-scientific knowledge shares with science the need for faith, imagination and daring. (p. 61)

And from an accreditation of faith, imagination and daring result more fire, more vitality and more guts in the acts of knowing of the melodic, master chef and the superb, melodic leader-manager, results akin to Wordsworth's description of being in contact with

...a motion and a spirit that impels
All thinking things, all objects of all thought
And rolls through all things'.

Accrediting the tacit dimension of knowledge may be precious to your cooking, and priceless to your business.

Jere Moorman
Napa, CA, USA
Jeremoor@sbcglobal.net

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2 NOTES ON PESSIMISM¹

Giorgio Baruchello

1

The present notes are a token of philosophical appraisal. They offer a brief theoretical and historical assessment of the theory of value formulated by an esteemed colleague and friend of mine – the Canadian philosopher John McMurtry – claiming that *life* constitutes the most fundamental value (or source of value) across individuals, cultures, and epochs. Specifically, in a recent manuscript of his, John McMurtry defends a life-based axiology capable of including all possible families of value (viz. aesthetic, ethical, economic, religious, etc.) as conscious or, more commonly, subconscious expressions of life-directed concerns.²

By arguing in this direction, McMurtry moves daringly against the dominating post-modern trend spreading value-relativism in all disciplinary fields, and especially in the humanities. He endorses the idea according to which, by carefully analysing Western as well as Eastern religions, the declared goals of left- as well as of right-wing political ideologies, the justifications of conservative as well as of progressive social programmes, the appreciation as well as the condemnation of novel artistic creations, we can individuate a common ground of value.

This ground of value can be expressed by a ‘universal formula of good and bad... a value of all values: *x is value if and only if and to the extent that x enables a more comprehensive range of thought/experience/action*’. The converse also applies: *x is disvalue if and only if and to the extent that x reduces or eliminates a range of thought/experience/action*’.³

The triplet comprising thought, experience, and action indicates what McMurtry understands life to be like. According to his theory, in fact, ‘life’ encompasses three planes of being:

[1] The plane of the organism’s biological capacity for movement (e.g. being capable of moving freely one’s limbs, or of breathing while asleep).

[2] The plane of felt being, feeling, or awareness (e.g. being capable of feeling enlightened by this paper, or of being more vividly receptive).

[3] The plane of cognitive abstraction, or self-awareness (e.g. being capable of any mental representation whatsoever: from the simplest image-thoughts to the most abstract forms of mathematical demonstration).

Thus, according to McMurtry, anything has value in proportion to the ranges of further biological

movement, awareness, and self-awareness that it enhances. Food, emotions, education, taxation, or its reduction, are valuable – good – if and only if, and insofar as, they guarantee the attainment of a broader scope for action, felt being, and thought.⁴

As for my presentation, I do not intend to explain in further detail or criticise this triplet of dimensions that, for McMurtry, define life. I find it sufficiently clear and compatible with our notions of common-sense about life; hence, I shall take it for valid. Rather, I intend to tackle the more basic issue of life being *actually* such a fundamental value (or source of value). Too many, in fact, are the voices that, from time immemorial, have utterly depreciated life.⁵

With respect to the history of thought, this negative attitude towards life took probably its most dramatic form in the 19th-century constitution of philosophical *pessimism* as a legitimate speculative current, the distinctive feature of which was the open negation of life as a value. I shall make use of two representative pessimist thinkers in order to test the validity of John McMurtry’s thesis, and to assess whether life can be consistently denied as a value (or as a source of value); or whether, as McMurtry’s thesis implies, life cannot but be the axiological basis for all discriminations of value – even for those of the pessimist itself.⁶

2

The first representative author whom I shall consider is the Italian poet and philosopher Giacomo Leopardi. Encyclopaedically familiar with classical literature at a very early age, he knew extremely well the tragic streak that, from Sophocles to Lucretius, had depicted life as a miserable, dreadful journey through valleys of tears, hells of pain, seas of sorrows, labyrinths of incomprehensible riddles.

‘Pleasure is the son of suffering’,⁷ for pleasure can occur if and only if we find momentary respite from unhappiness; for instance when ‘you sleep without dreaming, or have fainted, or somehow have the use of your senses interrupted’,⁸ namely when you are enjoying ‘anticipation of death’.⁹

Leopardi describes ‘our common mother’ Nature as

an immense female shape, sitting on the ground with her torso erect, leaning on the side of a mountain... with a face partly beautiful and partly frightening, and with the darkest eyes and hair.

An unfortunate Icelander, who was vainly trying to escape from her dominion, meets this sublime giantess accidentally in the African savannah, and is addressed by her with these words:¹⁰

Did you believe that the world had been created for you? You must know that in my makings, orders, and operations, and with very few exceptions, I have always had and still have intents that do not contemplate men's happiness or unhappiness. Whenever I offend you in any way or fashion, I don't realise it, if not in very rare cases; and usually, if I please or help you, I don't know it; I didn't do, as you believe, such things or actions to please you or to offer you aid. Indeed, if it happened that I make your entire species extinct, I would not be aware of it.¹¹

Nature does not care about human fortunes. Our suffering is of no point or interest to her. If there is any logic behind Mother Nature's work, we will never know it. Most tellingly, just an instant before Nature reveals her plans to the Icelander, the poor man is assaulted by two lions or, according to another account, a sandstorm befalls upon him and mummifies his body.¹²

The ending of this parable shows how Leopardi was incapable of finding any meaning in human existence. Suicide might be a plausible solution, but one that is almost impossible to select. Nature is a sadistic tyrant, in fact, and deprives most human beings of the strength of will that such an extreme action requires.

For those who have some more strength than the average, however, the long wait for death called 'life' is not the only alternative left on the scene. Our condition can be partially redeemed by one particular attitude: the stoical endurance of our cruel destiny.

In the *Dialogue between Tristan and a Friend*, we read:

If these convictions of mine originate from sickness, I don't know; I know that, whether I be sick or in health, I detest men's cowardice, I refuse any consolation or childish illusion, and I am brave enough to endure the absence of any hope, and to stare calmly at the desert of life, and not to lie to myself about men's infelicity, and to accept all the consequences of a painful, but true, philosophy, which may be useful to nothing else but allowing the strong man to see, with stoical gratification, all of destiny's cruel and hidden cloaks being stripped off.¹³

Still, it is at this point that doubts about the life-denying character of Leopardi's pessimism arise. The stoical gratification just praised by Leopardi is, in fact, a clear case, however minimal, of increase of life-ranges, specifically in terms of felt being and thought. Certainly self-indulgence is contained within it, as the hero Tristan derives satisfaction from the almost warrior-like strength of his own soul, which can stand up against the terrifying sight

of the truth. Similarly, Leopardi admires Tristan's intellectual attitude insofar as it is capable of embracing just this tragic truth, rather than fleeing cowardly from it, seeking refuge in the 'childish illusions' of religion, which tell the human being that the delights that are denied in this life will be enjoyed in another life to come.¹⁴

To a deeper scrutiny, Leopardi's apology of death itself appears to contain a life-based ground of value. Paradoxically, death is praised, or even called upon oneself, in the name of life. If anybody succeeds in killing oneself, he/she does so on behalf of the kind of life that he/she would like to possess, but which is denied to him/her. What makes this dreamt-of life desirable is its fullness in action, felt being, and thought. That which makes the actually-lived life unbearable is that it does not resemble the former in any respect. Life is, then, the ultimate ground for value-discrimination.

3

The other pessimist philosopher that I intend to examine, Arthur Schopenhauer, had already moved an analogous critical remark on suicide. He did not accept suicide as a justifiable escape from life, because he believed that the reasons that people have to kill themselves are always connected with their frustrated desires for a better life, rather than with the sincere recognition of the impossibility of *any* better life, for life, he argues, cannot be good in itself.

Schopenhauer described all biological life as the superficial – epiphenomenal – expression of a deeper, eternal, infinite, uncreated, irrational, metaphysical energy: the so-called Will to Live (or *Wille zum Leben*). This root of all being perpetuates itself through the eons of time by making all individual life-forms strive for survival. More complex creatures crave for pleasure and most significantly for the illusory sexual pleasure, which is as fleeting as it is attractive. In effect, there is actually no pleasure to be had. In this cunning way, every biological species continues to exist, making the individual believe that he/she is going to serve his/her own particular interests, when he/she is actually serving the interests of the species alone.¹⁵

In reality, individuals' life oscillates always and only between *pain* and *boredom*. On the one hand, we desire, we need, we hope, we tend towards something else, something new, something that we miss, and the lack of which makes us dissatisfied. On the other hand, that very something else, for which we craved so much, once it has been reached, proves to be of no value whatsoever, for our contentment does not last, and, as long as we do not go back to desiring, needing, hoping, we are left with a sense of emptiness:

Human life must be some kind of mistake. The truth

of this will be sufficiently obvious if we only remember that man is a compound of needs and necessities hard to satisfy; and that even when they are satisfied, all he obtains is a state of painlessness, where nothing remains to him but abandonment to boredom. This is direct proof that existence has no real value in itself; for what is boredom but the feeling of the emptiness of life? If life – the craving for which is the very essence of our being – were possessed of any positive intrinsic value, there would be no such thing as boredom at all: mere existence would satisfy us in itself, and we should want for nothing.¹⁶

All that we can hope for, according to Schopenhauer, is the interruption of this oscillation, which is not brought about by the satisfaction of any desire, but by the suppression of desire. Following the teachings of mainstream Buddhism, Schopenhauer strived for the creation of an articulated training directed towards the achievement of *nirvana*, namely the total annihilation of the Will to Live – the annihilation of desire.

What matters for my present study is that, by outlining exactly this Will-suppressing ‘training’ Schopenhauer identified three specific ways out of the tragic fluctuation between boredom and dissatisfaction: art, humanity, and asceticism.¹⁷

At least two of these three specific ways out are, in fact, life-affirming:

[a] *Art*, which Schopenhauer intended as the aesthetic contemplation of the abstract forms of being, consists in nothing but the enhancement of wider ranges of thought and, in particular, of felt being. Music, poetry, beautiful architectures are capable of lifting our spirits up to a higher dimension of experience, whence we forget about our miserable existence. We become capable of embracing the universal, as if transcending the particular, which is our ordinary mode of existence.

[b] *Humanity* too is an enhancement of wider ranges of thought, felt being, and action. Schopenhauer depicted this form of negation of the Will to Live as human agency aimed at relieving other people and/or living creatures from their suffering, rather than fighting against them in view of ultimately unattainable pleasures. Whether the agent’s life-range benefits directly from it or not, i.e. whether he/she feels morally good in being humane or not, the recipient of humanity is necessarily going to experience an increase of his/her own life-range.

[c] Only *asceticism*, which Schopenhauer represented as solitary self-maceration and chastity, appears to be a real denial of life, although I suspect that an element of life-affirmation is contained within it as well. In the course of the practices of self-maceration, in fact, it is not unlikely that

mystical experiences may take place. Even if not necessarily, asceticism seems to leave room to peculiarly powerful openings of the plane of felt being, as the individual may lose his/her sense of selfhood and rejoice in that boundless field of consciousness, which the nirvana, according to mainstream Buddhism, is supposed to be. Perhaps, the entire project of Schopenhauer’s negation of the Will to Live is merely an itinerary towards a higher, richer way of living.¹⁸

4

In conclusion, my reflections lead towards the acceptance of McMurtry’s main assumption. Even the seemingly opposite theoretical position appears to make use of this very same axiological basis. The two eminent pessimist philosophers hereby scrutinised did actually confirm McMurtry’s point. Perhaps, with the individuation of this ground of value, McMurtry has really found a foothold to avoid value-relativism. Perhaps, this ground of value is too broad and ambiguous to be of any clear use. Most certainly, further investigation is necessary – but not in the present article, as my philosophical appraisal is complete.

Faculty of Law and Social Science
University of Akureyri
IS-600 Akureyri
ICELAND
giorgio@unak.is

Notes:

1. This paper is the fruit of a long and engaging exchange with John McMurtry and with his thought. An earlier draft was written as a theoretical test of McMurtry’s theory of value and was given to him. A successive draft, not much different from the present text, was presented in January 2003 to a group of colleagues at one of the bi-weekly Faculty Colloquia held at the International Study Centre of Herstmonceux Castle.
2. McMurtry’s *Searching for a Unifying Theory of Value* has circulated only in the form of a manuscript. I quote it hereby with the author’s permission.
3. McMurtry’s *Searching for a Unifying Theory of Value*, VI.3.1
4. Incidentally, not only does McMurtry’s theory of value suggest that actions, events, intentions, or phenomena have value insofar as they promote wider ranges of life, but also that valueless ones, i.e. life-destructive actions, events, intentions, or phenomena, can be mistaken for, or misrepresented as, life-promoting ones: *One thing is to claim that x is value, another is that x is, in fact, value.*

Continued on p. 159

BOOK REVIEWS

Andrew Welburn

Rudolph Steiner's Philosophy and the Crisis of Contemporary Thought

Edinburgh: Floris Books, 2004. Pp. 286. £45.00. ISBN 0-86315-436-0.

This is a valuable book, not just for persons interested in the thought of Rudolph Steiner. It is valuable as well for anyone seeking to find a way forward amidst the shattered fragments of the modern worldview, a way beyond the nihilistic dead end of deconstructive post-modernity. Uncannily, according to Welburn's account, before the turn of the 20th century, Steiner anticipated the crisis associated with post-modernity we have been facing for some time now and proposed an innovative, constructive way forward, a way remarkably akin to and significantly compatible with the work of Michael Polanyi, among others – something I had no sense of before reading this book.

I must confess that my knowledge of Steiner's work independently of this book is superficial and relatively minimal. A quick survey of the extensive materials available on the Internet discloses aspects of Steiner's life and thought that constitute a markedly different picture of Steiner (Theosophist, Rosicrucian, and follower of other occult ideas and practices) than the sober and serious philosopher presented in this book. Though I call attention to this apparent contradiction, I shall not attempt to reconcile these two sides of Steiner nor otherwise discuss matters that fall outside Welburn's account, though surely it is a serious weakness of Welburn's book that he makes no serious attempt to explain for his reader these other dimensions of Steiner's life and thought and minimises what little he says about them. I am left with the impression that the picture that Welburn does present is a deliberate abstraction and refinement of what he believes to be essential and sound elements in Steiner's philosophical thinking and a deliberately minimising, ignoring, and covering over the dross that would otherwise turn off a philosophically inclined reader. My main point is that what Welburn does abstract and refine is well worth serious consideration.

Welburn does a remarkable job at disabusing its readers of certain prevalent attitudes that have dismissed Steiner as idiosyncratic and simply too far beyond the mainstream of modern Western philosophy to be of serious interest. These attitudes have sometimes been occasioned by unfortunate word choices on Steiner's part (e.g., 'occult' to refer to unspecified elements in our knowing – close, it seems, to what Polanyi means by 'tacit') and at

other times by persons claiming support in Steiner's works for their own metaphysical views. On the contrary, Steiner, according to Welburn's account, was explicitly anti-metaphysical and was committed to aligning his views with what he understood to be truth in a broadly naturalistic, though not unspiritual, evolutionary account of man and nature. Though Steiner developed his early views in sympathetic dialogue with Nietzsche's writings, he went considerably beyond him and successfully avoided what he saw to be the nihilistic tendencies of Nietzsche's thought. While many of his ideas have much in common with and relevance to mainstream 20th century intellectual movements (e.g., phenomenology), there is a unique and unclassifiable character to Steiner's work that makes it independent of them all.

Steiner calls his philosophical orientation 'anthroposophy' – 'human wisdom' – to emphasize its humane, human centredness, in contrast with philosophies that in one way or another lose sight of, deny, and/or fail to keep in balance the tensions or polarities that constitute the essentially humane, human centre of all significant thought. (Polanyi uses the term 'personal' to refer to much of what Steiner means by 'human.') The polarities of greatest interest to Steiner can be grouped under the general headings of assimilation (or absorption of the other into the self) and adaptation (or accommodation of the self to the other) – which connect for him with fundamental features of psychological development, evolutionary biology, the growth of knowledge and understanding (in all areas of thought), cultural history, and, interestingly, archaic myths of the Fall. Assimilation refers to the way we handle and interpret what we encounter in our experience in terms of the framework or schema we bring to that encounter with which we are already well familiar. We categorize, pigeonhole, and interpret things in terms of the categories, concepts, paradigms, maps, etc., that we already have. It involves asserting and maintaining the self-identity vis-à-vis what we are encountering that we already have. (In this respect, Steiner rejects Empiricism and seems to agree with Kant.) Adaptation, on the other hand, refers to the way we creatively modify, or develop new, categories, concepts, paradigms, maps, etc., out of respect for things in our experience that are (or seem to us) unassimilable to our current framework or schema. There is thus, for Steiner, no absolute framework, no final and definitive set of categories. Adaptation involves losing our prior and autonomous self-identity (vis-à-vis what we are encountering) for the sake of that other, the

unknown, and the dynamism of change and development. Imbalance between these polarities can occur in either direction: either through an inflexible attachment to a current schema (and correlative self-identity) out of fear of change and loss of control or through leaping recklessly into change and the unknown out of fear of stasis and constraint.

On the one hand, assimilation and the passion connected with it is powerfully symbolized for Steiner in the Judaeo-Christian myth of Lucifer, especially in connection with the story of the Fall. On the other hand, adaptation and the passion connected with it is powerfully symbolized for Steiner in the Zoroastrian myth of Ahriman. Accordingly, he speaks of the 'luciferic drive' and the 'ahrimanic drive' and the wise balance and reconciliation between them symbolized in the God-man Christ, in which a renewed, reborn, or resurrected self-identity emerges. Not only does all significant growth in individual and social life involve achieving and maintaining this balance through change, but for Steiner all significant knowledge and understanding comes about thereby as well. Knowledge for him is inherently dynamic and never static; authentically understood, it essentially involves change and development. It is a dynamic (and value-laden) relation to a transcendent reality – a reality which is never reducible to our current grasp of it yet nevertheless truthfully, if partially, grasped in that relationship. (Nor is the knowledge-relationship itself reducible to our current, conceptual-framework-mediated explicit grasp.) Even so, knowledge for Steiner is thoroughly contextual and social and fraught with human subjectivity, though it is not determined thereby. For it is our authentic humanness, our creative freedom, at its heart that enables us to transcend current understandings and move on.

The Kantians and other Rationalists, according to Steiner, rightly understand the assimilation side of our knowing, but they fail to understand and account for adaptation. They identify overmuch with the luciferic drive. This, by the way, is the problem with traditional, rationalist metaphysics for Steiner. Its quest to arrive at a set of unique and absolute first principles from which the rest of reality can be deduced is simply a radical manifestation of the luciferic drive that presumes it can overcome and dominate the other and reduce it to the same. The Romantics in a mirror opposite way identify overmuch with the ahrimanic drive for accommodation to an Other that transcends our categories and schemata, and lose the truth of assimilation and of science in particular. Wisdom is found in what unites the truth of Romanticism and the truth of Rationalism together in one whole. This is where the realisation of authentic human freedom (and human history) lies. Thus, Steiner relocates the

human knower in the world, in nature (including our place in biological evolution), in culture, and in history, but does so in a way that always leaves room for the indeterminately foreseeable adaptability of human freedom and creativity.

My summary of this book's content is dense and overbrief, I realise. But I would not do justice to the book if I did not whet your appetite for more. Again, it is well worth careful reading and study. Although I found some things I would have liked Welburn to have explained more fully and clearly, with the exception of the matters mentioned in the first of the review I find no serious fault with the book or with Steiner's views represented in it.

Dale Cannon

Mark Garnett

The Snake that Swallowed its Tail: Some Contradictions in Modern Liberalism

Exeter: Imprint Academic, ISBN 0 907845 886 (paperback), £8.95, pp. 95.

I have a book before me written by a politics lecturer at a British university. Is it A) An original work of critical scholarship B) A brainless slab of Leftist bigotry? If you put your money on A) and won, you would be richly rewarded. As it happens it is the usual tripe, and so you lost. Betting on A) is like betting on a Wimbledon Tennis Championship being uninterrupted by rain, it happens but not very often. Garnett is not a fan of a free society. He gives it various names 'hire-and-fire capitalism' 'selfish materialism' 'consumerist society' but his favourite expression is 'hollowed-out liberalism'. He mentions that he could supply us with a critical look 'at the attempt to engraft liberalism in the former countries of the Soviet block' but limits himself to lamenting that the 'challenge from Marxism has been washed away by Cold War propaganda' written by people such as Isaiah Berlin, who claimed that extensive State intervention would destroy freedom in Britain 'without illustrating his argument with a single example drawn from concrete experience', and Hayek, who alleged that socialism was a 'Road to Serfdom' while ignoring the fact that pre-Thatcherite income tax rates of 98 pence in the pound for top rate earners still 'permitted accumulation beyond the conceivable needs of any individual'. Eric Fromm, a 'wiser opponent of totalitarianism than Berlin and Hayek' warned that 'liberty could not be trusted in the hands of underdeveloped human beings'. The trouble is that 'people like being told that they are already rational enough to enjoy freedom' a mistake that supporters of Marxism, which he describes as 'a commendable idea', managed to avoid.

Even by the low standards he sets himself, the

sheer witless predictability of the next chapter on 'The Media' will leave even *Guardian* readers struggling to keep awake. With the exception of *The Guardian*, 'There is more solid sense and pleasing prose even on the sports pages of one day's *Guardian* than the combined wit or wisdom in a year of the tabloids' and the 'something of value' in the legacy of Piers Morgan, who had to resign because he published fake photographs [of what Garnett describes as British 'atrocities'] supposedly from Iraq, the free press, needless to add especially the Murdoch press, is condemned. The very possibility that people can go into a shop and buy a newspaper which does not contain the sort of 'proselytising on behalf of genuine cultural achievement' which he approves of disgusts him. You feel that if it were not 'analytical television programmes like Channel 4 News or Newsnight' he could bear it no longer and would have to emigrate. Heroically resisting the temptation to turn his chapter on politics into another bout of media bashing, Garnett dates the decline of British political life to 1950 'when the Conservatives chose the irresponsible slogan 'Set the People Free' to explode the residue of wartime comradeship and enlist the spirit of conspicuous consumption in the fight against the Attlee government'. Garnett laments that although Gordon Brown is said to retain 'some faith in the constructive role of the state' his tax and spend policies [Garnett professes not to understand what this means] have still left the public sector with less than 42% of GDP, compared to an EU average which is more than 5% higher.

Garnett reminds us that 'Plato was not particularly troubled by 'ordinary' people who base their everyday decisions on opinion rather than knowledge' and suggests that 'Plato and other classical writers who warned about the dangers of democracy deserve to be treated seriously today'. In the final chapter he launches into a hymn of praise for public sector workers, rejecting the Public Choice argument that public servants have interests of their own to pursue, as superficial. How foolish of ministers to reject the advice of Civil Servants 'who had accumulated years of relevant expertise after selection through competitive tests', and as for privatisation of government functions, this would have the consequence of removing the incentive for becoming a government minister! He declares that it would be both trite and untrue to say that the policy solutions to the dependency culture that the Thatcher government put in place were worse than the disease: 'They were identical to the disease; they were the disease itself'. According to Garnett although all serious politicians accept privatisation 'almost everybody else hates it'. He finds even the possibility of health services, prisons, air traffic controllers, places of learning, the BBC, being cast

adrift in the market place horrifying. His assumption that this would lead to chaos reveals that, despite his assiduous consumption of *The Guardian* and 'analytical television programmes like Channel 4 News or Newsnight', he has somehow failed to come away without even the faintest glimmer of comprehension of why centrally planned economies fail. I very much doubt that the thought that he is not one of the enlightened will cross his mind.

C.P. Goodman

Éva Gábor (Edited, with the assistance of Dezs Bánki and R.T. Allen):

Selected Correspondence of Karl Mannheim, Scientist, Philosopher, and Sociologist.

The Edwin Mellen Press. Lewinnton, Queenston, and Lampeter, 2003. xiv + 475 pp. ISBN 0-7734-6837, £84.95

The volume is due to Éva Gábor, one of the founding fathers and mothers, and currently President, of the Hungarian Michael Polanyi Association, who had been for a long time eager to go for all over the world and into many archives for the letters of Karl Mannheim, and published the first edition of his correspondence in Hungary in 1996. She managed to gather about three hundred letters from the Sociological Archives of the Sociological Faculty of the University of Konstanz, Germany, the Lukács Archive of the Hungarian Academy of Science, the Regenstein Library of the University of Chicago, and also from Routledge and Kegan Paul Archives and Manuscripts, University of Reading, the Andover-Harvard Theological Library, Harvard Divinity School, Manuscripts and Archive Office, and more – just to pick up one of them at random – Keele University Library. Yet, several letters are in the possession of the editor. Thus, the gathering work was tremendous, and we have to pay tribute for it to Éva Gábor. She had been an expert in Karl Mannheim's *oeuvre*, published several papers dealing with him, and made every efforts to collect the letters and to gain permissions to publish them.

The book contains 277 letters in a chronological order, and 4 in an appendix which summed up of the thoughts of an Hungarian émigré in the twenties. Those written in English or German are printed in those languages, but those originally in Hungarian have been translated into English. The correspondence follows closely Karl Mannheim's long trips from Hungary, his native country that he emigrated in 1919. He went first to Vienna, then Heidelberg (1920-1930), Frankfurt (1930-1933) and London (1933-1947). His correspondents were mostly taken from Hungarians, Germans and Englishmen. Let me sort out some names of them at random:

Hungarians: Georg Lukács, the great Marxist philosopher (about whom we will speak later); Lajos Fülep, a pastor of the Reformed Church and university professor in the theory of art; Béla Balázs the poet and librettist of Béla Bartók's opera *Bluebeard's Castle*; Géza Révész, a psychologist who also was forced to emigrate from Hungary in 1919; Charles Tolnay the renowned historian of arts; Oszkár Jászi who played a founding part of the first Hungarian Sociological Association, formerly Minister of Foreign Affairs in the government of Mihály Károlyi in 1918, then emigrated to the USA. Accordingly, the letters to and from Hungarians were written in Hungarian (translated in English by Dezs Bánki whose name sad to say is not mentioned as such, but only in tandem with the assistance of R.T. Allen), German and English, ranging from the most diverse nationalities up to the sundry issues. German correspondent partners: Franz Oppenheimer from whom Mannheim took over the Department of Sociology in Frankfurt; Paul Siebeck the renowned editor; Gustave Radbruch the theoretician of Law, who, as being non-Jewish, first emigrated from the Nazi-Germany; Werner Sombart the outstanding economist and sociologist; Otto Neurath, a leading member of the Vienna School in philosophy; Max Wertheimer, one of the founders of Gestalt-psychology. Finally, some of the English partners: M.R. Richardson who was instrumental to the publishing the *Ideology and Utopia* by Routledge and Kegan Paul; Walter Adams, director of the London Schools of Economics; Lous Wirth, a former disciple of Mannheim, who encouraged him to publish *Ideology and Utopia* in English.

The book contains a foreword written by Tibor Frank, professor of English language in the Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, in which he rightly esteems the editor's 'dedication and perseverance', for she managed to organise and arrange 'a fine collection of letters which still prove to be eminently readable and very exciting' (p. iii). Then comes the introduction by Éva Gábor that conveys the necessary information about the life and work of Karl Mannheim for the inquiring reader (pp. v-xiv).

As for the themes and the genres of the letters, they varies from the most personal things through official business up to essayistic topics. It is impossible to make an extensive amount of such a richness that figure in the correspondence, therefore each reader is left alone to discriminate those for that he or she is interested in. Therefore let me select three personages whom I am more or less familiar with, the ones who played major roles in the life of Mannheim.

The very first letter of the volume is to Georg Lukács to whom Mannheim wrote the letter (March 13, 1911) after that he was 'coming across /his/

writings'. In the note written to this letter (pp. 381-382) it is assumed that Mannheim must have read an essay entitled 'Regina Olsen and Sören Kierkegaard' published earlier in the progressive periodical, *Nyugat (West)*. However, it must be an error, since Mannheim is speaking in plural ('writings'). Therefore, it is very likely that he must have read the collection of essays of 'A lélek és a formák' ('The Soul and the Forms') that was already published in the previous year in Hungary. In the same year as when Mannheim wrote to Lukács, the essays were also published in Germany, even extended with two other important essays, namely 'The Metaphysics of Tragedy' and 'Desire and Form'. Just for these essays Lukács gained an echo in the German-speaking world after he published his book's German version *Die Seele und die Formen* (Egon Fleischel et Co. Berlin, 1911). Such German personages of high esteem as Max Weber realised the importance of the writings of Lukács and referred him as a 'modern aesthetician' in one of his papers, and Thomas Mann, the author of *The Buddenbroke House* had also paid respectful attention to the young Hungarian philosopher. Yet, at that time Lukács was not yet a Communist philosopher whom he became at the end of 1918, and later conceived the 'Geschichte und Klassenbewusstsein' that was challenged, though without reference to him by name, by Martin Heidegger at the end of his *Sein und Zeit* (as Lucien Goldmann, another French and Marxist philosopher claimed it). Not at all, at the time when Mannheim wrote to him the 8 letters by which opens up the volume, he was a subjective Idealist who totally opposed the contemporary world, included Hungary. As he described it, in his old age reviewing that period of his life, he was oscillating between Kantian morality and Hegelian 'Sittlichkeit', between legality and morality, but he was not satisfied with either of them. As he writes:

In an other context I have referred to it that I could never accept the Hegelian acquiescence with the reality (*Versöhnung mit der Wirklichkeit*) ... It was for this that, even *pace* Hegel I was searching for the grounding of an ethical philosophy transcending the Moral and the Law. In accordance to this, in this period of my development I never repudiated the Kierkegaard's criticism of Hegel. And further to this, I was searching for such ethical endeavours both in the past and the present which would meet these, though at that time Romantic Anti-capitalist – requirements. Therefore, it was Tolstoy by whom the ideal of critique of my young beginner pushed in the background Ibsen, and more intensely was done by Dostoyevsky, and it was that which attracted me to the designs of humans by Goethe and Gottfried Keller, and I was eager to search it for in Kierkegaard, and it was this that rendered attractive for me the Middle Ages' thinkers, heretics in this field, first of all Meister Eckhart and some of major

manifestations of the Eastern philosophical Ethics. (György Lukács: *Utam Marhoz. Elszó. /Foreword. In: My way to Marx./* Magvet. Budapest. 1971. pp.14-15.)

Thus, it is not surprising that the young Mannheim, 18 years of age, addressed to such a well-educated man already of great repute in Hungary, and sent him his first essay on mysticism by wording it thus:

I therefore wish to approach you on the basis of the opportunity afforded by culture. Perhaps I should wait – I should forbear from presenting to you my treatise on the mystics – the very first document of my life which still hold my interest. However, impatience drives me to ask you to tell me what you think of it and whether you see the path I am following.’ (p.1.)

According to the note of this letter we are learned that Lukács suggested a meeting three week later who ‘found /Mannheim’s/ work very interesting and that he want to have a serious conversations with /him/’ (p. 382). After having got to know each other they met several times and they co-operated in the such projects as Mannheim’s translation of Hegel. In Note No. 2, the reader can find very interesting details of Mannheim’s diary concerning the conversations with Lukács. Later on a friendship was formed between them, but in the course of time, they became alienated because of the growing divergence between their ‘Weltanschauungen’. In 1910-20, on the effect of the German ‘Geisteswissenschaften’ Lukács was approaching first to a ‘spiritual revolution’ for he consider the situation of the world as to be in the vollkommene Sündhaftigkeit (perfect sinfulness) (taking over the term from Fichte) from which it is not possible to break out but for by the above mentioned spiritual revolution. Just before entering the Communist Party at the end of 1918 the ‘idealist trends had come to their climax’ (as he put it in the foreword referred above), and he became a ‘progressive Idealist’ on the ethical tenet of Kant assuming that ethics and politics were in a stark opposition with each other since they seemed form him to be in a heteronomous relationship the one to the other. Therefore, ethics had only one task in the field of politics, that of getting rid of the obstacles to the free deployment of the personality that must not become a means for any reason, including the institutions of the State. After having given up this Idealist position, he became a convinced Communist, giving up all of his spiritual independence. The tacit break happened to them because of the publication of *Ideology and Utopia*, particularly, after 1929.

Thus, the relationship was abandoned for many years, and only after the war did Mannheim happen to write a letter to Lukács to offer him an opportunity for the publication of some of his writings in

the field of Sociology of literature in the series that he was editing. Lukács replied with a long letter by enumerating some of his essays, and switching Mannheim’s attention to some Marxist authors that Mannheim was also inquiring about. But Mannheim died some weeks later, and so they could not discuss their old and divergent views.

An interesting intermezzo happened in Mannheim’s life just after the war when he was invited to take over the Department of Sociology at Budapest University. He repudiated it for, on the one hand, he had already taken over the Chair of Education at London school of Economics, and, on the other hand, he seemed to be offended by the former Hungarian Prime Minister, Paul Teleki who was also a professor of Geography in Budapest university, and, to one of Mannheim’s friend, after having learned from whom that Mannheim was a teacher in Frankfurt, he said: ‘it was not a big deal – he should try to be one *here*’ i.e. Budapest (p.340.). The story throws more light in the pre-war intellectual climate in Budapest

Another interesting personage in the correspondence and who emerges from the sea of letters, is Oszkár Jászi. We mentioned some facts about some of his background above. He went ahead of a generation of Mannheim, as a founder of the first Hungarian Sociological Association, 1901, and later on he was the founder of the Hungarian Bourgeois Radical Party (1914). As the President he entered the Government of Mihály Károlyi as the Minister of Minorities at the end of 1918 after the victory of the so-called ‘revolution of the Michaelmas daisy’. Under the Communist regime he emigrated to Vienna, and then the United States, in 1926. In Oberlin, Jászi became a professor, and as a referring point he was able to carry on an enormous correspondence among both Hungarians and foreigners. After his death his bequest was settled in the Regenstein Library at Columbia University, New York. When I was there on a scholarship I counted the numbers of letters to and from Jászi in a year, if I remember well, in 1943. They amounted to more than one thousand letters. I remember that some of them can be considered as quite long papers or essays, e.g. a letter to Aurel Kolnai, a Liberal Catholic philosopher and sociologist, dealing with the issue of infallibility of the Pope. However, Mannheim regarded Jászi with great respect for he wrote to him:

I have been an admirer of your activities and my youthful impressions of purity of your character are so deep that all your reproof affects me profoundly and seems as if were coming from my father. This is not a polite turn of phrase, it is a confession. (p.181.)

The ‘reproof’ was due to the term used by

Mannheim for 'planning for freedom' by which Mannheim tried to meet the challenges of his time. He wanted to progress straightforwardly and at the same time to remain faithful to human rights. And as we know from a letter to Imre Csécsy, the chief editor of *Századunk* (the successor of *Huszadik Század*) written a little later, that Jászi reproached Mannheim for this misuse of the word, that 'every steps on this road lead towards the dictatorship of "Planwirtschaft" [planned economy] as Mannheim's book proved'. And Mannheim developed his idea in this letter according to which he as sociologist aimed 'to assert liberal values with the help of modern technique of mass society – perhaps a paradoxical undertaking, yet the only viable alternative' (p.182). Yet, Jászi could not share this view, and he added that the reason for that kind of endeavour, and for Mannheim's, was that 'the conception of a free, self-governmental and co-operative Socialism had not yet been elaborated'. It is very likely that the 'reproofs' mentioned by Mannheim related to a review of Mannheim's book *Mensch und Gesellschaft im Zeitalter des Umbaus*, published in *The American Political Science Review* (see p.165.), in which Jászi anticipated his opinion of 'planning of freedom'. Afterwards Mannheim wrote the respectful reply quoted above. In answer, on 19th of December, Jászi was to discern the causes dividing them from each other. First, he emphasized that he could not believe in 'a hundred percent reorganisation of the state even the most arbitrary dictatorship'. Second, he denied the aim of sociology of knowledge by claiming that Mannheim's 'philosophy reduces individuality to zero, making it strictly determined, thus into a mere effect of social development'. Third, in contrast to Mannheim's view of human nature which saw it 'merely in terms of adaptation and change', he maintained that human nature had an 'unchanging substratum against which no policy can count on lasting success' (p.183).

The third personage is Michael Polanyi. Both of them had been living in England for more than a decade when, in January 1944, Michael Polanyi wrote to Mannheim, to whom, as he mentioned, he had been sending occasional reprints, to offer him, as the editor of a new series, the plan of book collected from a series of essays (pp. 309-10). In a quick reply, Mannheim received the idea of publication with happiness and offered a personal meeting. Later on a friendship developed between the two scholars. Mannheim invited Polanyi to the sessions of The Moot (about which we can suggest a good essay of Eva Gábor in *Polanyiana*, 1992/1-2 pp. 1206), and we owe to Mannheim a letter of 'confession of faith' in that Michael Polanyi told his conversion. The letter was of great significance with

regard to Polanyi's intellectual development. Let us quote some passages of it:

As a boy and young man I was a materialist and a disciple of H.G. Wells. My religious interest were awakened by reading the Brothers Karamazov in 1813. For the following 10 years I was continuously striving for religious understanding and for a time, particularly from 1915 to 1920, I was a completely converted Christian on the lines of Tolstoy's.

In the same letter Polanyi tells Mannheim of his repugnance regarding the term 'planning for freedom', just as Oszkár Jászi did some years before. He assumed that the word 'planning' should be used only in a strict sense for 'indiscriminate dispositions over an aggregate of particulars ... should not be called planning but simply legislation' (p.304). And in the same vein he emphasises – one again in accordance with Jászi – that he strongly reject such a view that

makes social conditions anything more than opportunities for a development of thought. You seem inclined to consider moral judgments on history as ludicrous, believing apparently that thought is not merely conditioned, but determined by a social or technical situation' (p.314).

Further to this, Polanyi, who was at that time already elaborating his idea of tacit knowledge but had not yet used the term, anticipated one of the central concepts of his *Personal Knowledge* (pp. 299-300), namely, fundamental belief. He expressed it by introducing tacit knowledge:

Evidence, in short, can neither kill nor create fundamental belief. What we accept or reject in these matters is life itself. To some extent we can choose our forms of existence, to some extent we are born to them, to an other part again we may be battered by experience to abandon one form for an other. The Russian trials dislodged many people from one kind of faith (though I would prefer to call it a creed) while the Battle of Britain caused many to discover another, temporarily forgotten, faith. But even in the midst of such enormous tides of rising and falling convictions there remains fixed a deeper secret pivot of faith, round which we keep revolving, we follow throughout a code of duty of which we are so unconscious that we could not formulate on single syllable of it (p.318).

Thus, the selected letters of Karl Mannheim can be recommended to the historian of ideas, to those interested in the sociology of knowledge, and also for those who want to know about the interesting destiny of a East-European intellectual in the XXth century.

Endre Nagy

CONFERENCES

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No more than one submission by the same author will be considered. Email as an attachment a copy of your paper and/or abstract in rich text format to jmclachla@email.wcu.edu. Also, paste a copy in the body of the email (in case the attachment is unreadable). Please title your paper as follows: Lastname_Firstname.rtf, for example, Locke_John.rtf.

Papers and/or abstracts will be reviewed by a committee. Notification of acceptance will be made via e-mail in late May. Each paper will have a commentator. Those interested in commenting should send a note to jmclachla@email.wcu.edu by May 15 of availability and areas of interest. Persons whose papers are accepted will be expected to serve as commentators if asked. Copies of papers will be available July 1st. E-mails of authors will also be available for purposes of sending your commentary in advance of the conference.

Keynote speaker: Rev. Prof. Czeslaw Stanislaw Bartnik, General Editor of the biannual *Personalism*. Other guests to be announced (possibly Lech Walesa).

The International Conference on Persons has reserved rooms at the hotel on the campus of the university. Hotel rooms: 70 Euros per day (full board).

Reservations should be made by contacting the host organiser of the conference at personalism@wp.pl. The address of the hotel is: ul. Dewajtis , 01-815 Warsaw, Poland. Bus transportation will be provided from the Warsaw airport to the hotel.

A registration fee of 70 Euros will be collected upon registration at the conference. There will also be a special banquet, price 30 Euros.

For those who wish a day of sightseeing on Sat. Aug. 13th, 2 all-day bus trips to Cracow and to Gdansk, are being planned, at 50 Euros each.

JOHN MACMURRAY FELLOWSHIP

Annual Conference, 29th Oct. 2005

Friends' Meeting House, St Giles, Oxford

Speakers will include Julian Stern (Dept of Ed., U. Of Hull),

probably on 'Macmurray, religion and education'

Contact: Richard Thompson, Friends' Meeting House,

St Giles, Oxford, OX1 3LW, oxfordpm@yahoo.co.uk

International Congress of Philosophy

Person and Society:

Perspectives for the Twenty-First Century

Braga, Portugal: November 17-19, 2005

In the tradition inaugurated by the organization of the First National Congress of Philosophy in 1955 and the First Luso-Brazilian Congress of Philosophy in 1981, the Faculty of Philosophy (Braga) of the Catholic University of Portugal and the *Revista Portuguesa de Filosofia* plan to host an International Congress of Philosophy in November, 2005. In the very year in which we shall celebrate the centenary of Emmanuel Mounier's and Emmanuel Levinas's births and the first fifty years after the deaths of Pierre Teilhard de Chardin and Albert Einstein, the Congress wishes to offer the occasion to bring into discussion the great philosophical questions concerning the nature of the human person and his/her place in society and the cosmos. Besides those who are involved directly in the study and teaching of philosophy, the Congress would like to address the interests of theologians, jurists, educators, psychologists, as well as researchers in the natural and human sciences. The aim is to reaffirm the ongoing relevance of the philosophical issues that every generation is obliged to confront anew and differently. For this reason, the Congress seeks to explore, also taking into account the historical dimensions of the problem, the perspectives on the human person for the twenty-first century according to the following thematic areas:

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|--------------------------|------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Anthropology | 6. History of Ideas | 11. Philosophy and Literature |
| 2. Art and Communication | 7. Mind and Body | 12. Problems in Bioethics |
| 3. Economy and Politics | 8. Metaphilosophy | 13. Religion and Culture |
| 4. Ethics and Justice | 9. Multiculturalism | 14. Science and Technology |
| 5. Gender Questions | 10. Ontology and Metaphysics | 15. Information Society |

The languages used in the addresses given in the Congress by its participants will be Portuguese, English, Spanish, French and Italian; the organization will try to provide translations of the addresses given by the invited speakers. In each of the three days, there will be plenary sessions and symposia proffered by internationally known thinkers. In addition, there will be parallel sessions for those who wish to give a paper in the domain of one of the above-mentioned thematic areas. With the understanding that the presentation of these papers is not to exceed 15-20 minutes, the organization asks those interested to send a summary of a proposal (300 words maximum) until **April 15, 2005**. The organization further requests that a complete text of the accepted proposals be sent until **September 15, 2005**. A selection of these texts will be published. The costs for participation (registration until October 15; there after add **20 Euros**) will be the following: **50 Euros** for professionals; **20 Euros** for students. For further information, please contact:

Dr Joao J. Vila-Cha

Faculdade de Filosofia, Praca da Faculdade 1, P - 4710-297 Braga PORTUGAL

e-mail: jvila-cha@facfil.ucp.pt, rpf@afacfil.ucp.pt

www.facfil.ucp.pt for details of accommodation and booking form

CONTINUATIONS

From p. 116:

46. 'inhiare': 'Quid enim pulchrius, quidve dulcius, quam inter tenebras huius vitae multasque amaritudines divinae dulcedini inhiare, et aeternae beatitudini suspirare, illique teneri ubi vera haberi gaudia certissimum est?' – one of a chain of prayers and meditations by Anselm (*Oratio XIX*, PL 158, 899C-900A. *Thaumazein*: cf. esp. HC pp. 301-4. *Theaetetus*: esp. HC pp. 157-9; I am thinking especially of the readiness on the part of Theaetetus, a disciple of Protagoras but also an adherent of *thaumazein* being the foundation (*arch-*) of all philosophy (155D), to make use of Socrates' offer to test, by means of his art of dialectical midwifery (*maieuomai*: 157C), Protagoras' thesis of man being the measure of all things (*pantōn chr-maton metōn*: 152A).
47. See n. 43 above.
48. cf. HC pp. 324, 270.
49. *Eichmann in Jerusalem. A report on the banality of evil*, op. cit. in the text above (I am using the 1994 ed.): cf. esp. pp. 47-55, 135-8, 252, 25-6; further: 31-3, 47-8, 126, 232, 175, 241-3, 247-8, 276.
50. cf. HC p. 325; further pp. 287-8.

From p. 137

- (T)he philosophies of ancient Greece and Rome appealed most strongly to the sense of virtue, and Christianity to the sense of sin... It is impossible to look upon the awful beauty of a Greek statue, or to read a page of Plutarch without perceiving how completely the idea of excellence was blended with that of pride. It is equally impossible to examine the life of a Christian saint, or the painting of an early Christian artist, without perceiving that the dominant conception was self-abnegation and self-distrust'. (William Edward Hartpole Lecky, *The History of the Rise of Rationalism*, 2 vols. (New York: D. Appleton, 1884), 1 p. 356.
3. *ibid.*, p.23.
 4. Wendy C. Hamblet, 'A Reply to Giorgio Baruchello?' *Appraisal* 5:1 (March, 2004):35.
 5. William Edward Hartpole Lecky, *History of European Morals from Augustus to Charlemagne* 2 vols. (New York: D. Appleton, 1875) Vol. 1, p. 139
 6. *idem.* Like Montesquieu before him, Lecky thinks the role of climate in the formation of moral and mental habits and tendencies is pivotal. See Charles de Montesquieu, *The Spirit of the Laws* Part 3, chaps. 14,15,16.
 7. Lecky, *History of European Morals*, Vol. 1, p. 140.
 8. Hamblet, 'A Reply to Giorgio Baruchello', p.36.

From p. 150 .

- As early as the 6th century B.C., the Greek poet Theognis of Megara wrote: 'The best of all things is never to have been born on earth, never to see the rays of the burning sun. And once a man is born the best thing for him to do is to travel quickly to the gates of Death and lie at rest under a close-fitted coverlet of earth'. And in his *Oedipus Tyrannus*, Sophocles echoed: 'Count no mortal happy until he has reached the very end of his life free from misfortune and pain'. Both quoted in Philip Wheelwright, *The Presocratics*, MacMillan, 1966, p. 30.
6. It is important to note that the philosophical and religious positions that I am bringing about are *explicitly* criticising a positive consideration of life. They are not denying life as a value because they are forgetting about it. A forgetfulness or oblivion of life is revisable, for example, in the case of the scientific-technological *Weltanschauung* that, according to Martin Heidegger, has been dominating the 20th century, or in the case of the market-economy paradigm, which, according to John McMurtry, can only deal with reality by reducing it to a collection of predictable, invariant series of phenomena that are assumed to behave like the inanimate objects of physics. Both cases represent two life-blind 'value-programs', whose conceptual-methodological endorsement of a late Newtonian mechanistic epistemology rules out *a priori* life as a possible variable in their calculations.
 7. Giacomo Leopardi, *Il Sabato del villaggio*, in *Canti*, retrieved at www.liberliber.it/biblio/L/Leopardi/canti.htm.
 8. Giacomo Leopardi, *Dialogo di Malambruno e Farfarello*, in *Operette Morali*, BUR, 1980.
 9. Giacomo Leopardi, *Dialogo di Federico Ruysch e delle sue mummie*, in *Op. cit.*
 10. Giacomo Leopardi, *Dialogo della natura e di un islandese*, in *Op. cit.*
 11. *ibid.*
 12. *ibid.*
 13. Giacomo Leopardi, *Dialogo di Tristano e di un amico*, in *op. cit.*
 14. See 'Dialogo della natura e di un islandese' and 'Dialogo di Federico Ruisch e delle mummie' in *op. cit.*
 15. 'The ultimate aim of all love affairs, whether they are played in sock or cothurnus, is really more important than all other ends of human life, and is therefore quite worthy of the profound seriousness with which everyone pursues it. That which is decided by it is nothing less than the *composition of the next generation*. The *dramatis personae* who shall appear when we are withdrawn are here determined, both as regards their existence and their nature, by these frivolous love affairs. As the being, the *existentia*, of these future persons is absolutely conditioned by our sexual impulse generally, so their nature, *essentia*, is

- determined by the individual selection in its satisfaction, *i.e.*, by sexual love, and is in every respect irrevocably fixed by this'. From Arthur Schopenhauer, *Metaphysics of the Love of the Sexes*, retrieved at http://www.concentric.net/~Wkiernan/text/Schopenhauer_Love_of_the_sexes.html.
16. Arthur Schopenhauer, 'Sufferings of the World', in *Complete Essays*, Willey Book Company, 1942, pp. 4-5.
17. This 'training' is outlined most notably in his famous book *The World as Will and Representation*.
18. Incidentally, there is another life-affirming point that can be seen as pertaining to Schopenhauer's case: his immense longevity, and his fame as a playboy – Schopenhauer was a womaniser: he even cuckolded Lord Byron during a trip to Italy – suggest that he may have incurred into a performative contradiction, *i.e.* that he preached in favour of life-denial, when his own life was an extraordinary example of life-affirmation.
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