# Phronimon

Journal Of The South African Society For Greek Philosophy And The Humanities

Volume 5 (2) 2004

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# Contents

# The Special World of Cavafy's Poetry: from Symbol to Reality

## A lecture presented at the University of Michigan sponsored by the Cavafy Professorship, Ann Arbor, Michigan. October 8, 2003

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## Abstract

*The essay focuses on the literary theme of* nostos, *as it was handled in post-Homeric poetry, especially the* nostos *of Odysseus concerning "the sweet day of return" and the pangs of* nostalgia. *The occasion in this essay is C. P. Cavafy's well known poem "Ithaka." It shows how the central emotion of* nostos *has been altered in leading works of post-classical poetry and replaced with a quest for the post-Ithaka voyage of Odysseus ending for Dante in the Purgatorium and for Tennyson in unspecified transatlantic explorations. Nor was Kazantzakis an exception to this altering of* nostos *when he had Odysseus' last move end with his death on the iceberg. The post-Homeric rejection of Ithaka as the center of* nostos *and of Odysseus' voyage has dominated the "Ulysses theme." It also transformed the hero's post-Ithaka adventures by placing the legendary hero outside the original Greek perimeter.*

*Cavafy undertook to "repatriate" Odysseus by re-introducing the idea of* nostos *in a number of poems, all centered on a selective and original poetic intuition related to the quest of* hedone, *whereby the classical virtue of* andreia *was now recast and made central to a new "brave man of pleasure." The pursuit of* hedone *is expected to take place as the end of the hedonic voyage in the environment of a universalized conception of Ithaka. In essence it is a Grecian response to* nostos *promising new vistas of the splendors of the Mediterranean. Such was Cavafy's celebrated repatriation of Odysseus to his native land as fulfillment of an enriched idea of* nostos.

## I. Cavafy, the Alexandrian Poet

Constantine P. Cavafy (1863-1933) lived and died in Alexandria. Today he is recognized as one of the major poets of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Naming the recently endowed professorship of Greek Studies in the Department of Classics of the University of Michigan the Cavafy Chair is therefore an excellent choice and a just recognition.

Cavafy's personal life was rather uneventful, typical middle class, and almost pedestrian, except for the poet's inner turmoil and his exceptional genius. The monotonous life in Alexandria in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and the young poet's frustrated ambitions, probably account for the mediocre quality of his early poems. Born in 1863 of Greek parents – his mother tongue was English, a language his governess taught him. The family enrolled him at an early age in a private school in England. He returned with the family to Alexandria where he finished the last year of high school. He never had the benefit of college education but became an ardent reader of history and literature.

The loss of the family's social standing in the Greek parochial community after the father's early death and decline of his once flourishing business, brought in their wake a confluence of events that affected the young poet so deeply as to cause a prolonged crisis in the form of a threefold predicament: self-alienation, depression due to unfulfilled aspirations, and erotic ambivalence. Years later, when financial difficulties forced him to seek employment, he accepted a position as a clerk with the Irrigations Service in Egypt then run by the English administration. He became an alcoholic for a while and was tormented with guilt over his covert homosexuality. His early sporadic publications of poems show dependence over a long period on fashionable European and English literary styles, especially symbolism. While the period of crisis lasted, he found it impossible to rid himself of the strong urge to escape. The mood of darkness of soul was powerfully expressed in his 1894 poem "The City" (Η πόλις). Although neither Alexandria nor the Mediterranean world is mentioned in the poem, both loom largely in the background of the theme. This modern Alexandrian-Greek was ready for a voyage, more exactly an escape, but there was no Ithaca in sight. He felt condemned to spend his life as self-alienated prisoner of the city he denounced as his own. When the day of conciliation to his Alexandria and the emancipation from dependence on foreign literary styles came, Cavafy was able to speak in his authentic voice. He was on his way to become a first-rate poet.

E.M. Forster, who met Cavafy in Alexandria during the first World War and made his poetry known in England, wrote of Cavafy in his book *Pharos and Pharillon* (1924) the following: "A Greek gentleman, in a straw hat,

standing absolutely motionless at a slight angle to the universe." After the poet's death in 1933, Lawrence Durrell immortalized him in his *Alexandrian Quartet* as "the wise man of the city."

## II. The themes of my lecture

I will focus on two topics: Cavafy's choice of poetic topography and the raising of sensuousness to the heights of a virtue: ανδρεία, courage.

No two poems of Cavafy's early period form a more antithetical pair than the "Polis" (1894/*1910)* and "Ithaca" (1910/*1911*). By date of composition they were written 16 years apart. By way of publication date, however, they are separated only by one year.

POLIS[1]

You said: "I'll go to another land, go to another sea.
Some other city will be found, better than this.
Each one of my endeavors is a written verdict;
and my heart—like the dead—lies buried.
My mind, how long will it remain in this decay?
Wherever my eye turns, wherever I gaze
I see my life's black ruins here,
where I spent, and spoiled and ruined so many years."

Other places you'll not find, you'll not go to other seas.
The city will always follow you; the streets you'll walk
will be the same. In the same neighborhood you'll grow old,
and in the same houses, your hair will turn white.
Always in this same city you'll arrive. Don't hope for other places.
There is no ship for you, there is no road.
Just as you spoiled your life here,
in this small corner, you ruined it everywhere on earth. (A15)

Let us now turn to its counterpoint:

ITHACA

As you set out on the journey to Ithaca,
wish that the road will be long,
full of adventures, full of learning.
The Laistrygonians and the Cyclopes,
5      angered Poseidon, do not fear,
you will never meet with such things on your way,
if your thought can stay high, if an exquisite
emotion touches your spirit and your body.
The Laistrygonians, the Cyclopes,
10     the fierce Poseidon, you will not encounter,

unless you carry them inside your soul,
if your soul doesn't raise them up before you.

    Wish that the road may be long.
    Many may be the summer mornings
15    when with what joy, what delight,
    you will be entering harbors never seen before;
    to stop at Phoenician trading posts
    and purchase the attractive merchandise,
    mother of pearl and coral, amber and ebony,
20    and sensual perfumes of every kind,
    as many as you can of sensual perfumes;
    to go to many Egyptian cities
    to learn and learn from the knowers.

    Always keep Ithaca before your mind.
25    Arrival there is your mission.
    Yet do not hurry the journey at all.
    Better that it last many years;
    and be quite old when you drop anchor at the island,
    rich with all you will have gained during the voyage,
30    not expecting Ithaca to give you riches.

    Ithaca gave you the beautiful journey.
    Without her you wouldn't have set out to go.
    Ithaca has nothing else to give you now.

    And if you find her poor, Ithaca did not deceive you.
35    Wise as you have become, with so much experience,
    you will by now have understood what Ithacas mean. (A 23)

Note now how different the two poems are in theme and intent. The first impression is that they were not written by the same hand. The "Polis" reads like a dirge song lamenting the ruination of the persona's life. It almost projects the anticipation of the inevitable burial of one's own self. We hear the poet gradually receding into the dark corner of a "no-exit" situation. We can empathize and understand what depression can do to a sensitive person.

    After many years and many poems mostly elaborations of the morbid predicament of self-imprisonment and hopelessness ("Trojans" [Τρώες] "Windows" [Παράθυρα], "Candles" [Κεριά], also "Finished" [Τελειωμένα]) and others, the poet would occasionally let his imagination indulge the bitter-sweet imagery of a few past moments of stolen pleasure brought back in lonely recollection ("Voices" [Φωνές], "Desires" [Επιθυμίες]), he finally found the way to the exit, and in 1910 he wrote the enchanting and oft-quoted "Ithaca," actually his last poem of the symbolist period.

    A new world suddenly opened before him. It was a bold run to freedom, a move from the no-polis to the open horizons beyond, to Ithaca.

The poem addresses every reader, inviting us all to embark on a journey to a life free of restrains and fears, full of promises and pleasures, to see and enjoy the splendors of a world, presumably the Mediterranean. However, make no mistake. Ithaca has only the reality of a poetic universe. Be that as it may, the journey's magic is tempting and inviting, but not available to the *persona* of the "Polis." He is beyond redemption, being full of Laistrygonians and Cyclopes, forever fearful of angry Poseidon. And now for the big question: How does one get ready for the voyage? The answer is hidden within the poem: You will not encounter these terrifying things especially

> if your thought can stay high, if an exquisite
> emotion touches your spirit and your body...

If..., what a tantalizing "if"! The miserable *persona* of the "Polis" is forever excluded, never having experienced "an exquisite emotion." I think the full answer is given in another poem, "I Went," [Επήγα, Α 59] written in 1905 but for special reasons, related to the poet's fears, it did not get published until 1913! :

> I didn't bind myself. I let go completely and went.
> To the sensual pleasures that were half-real,
> half-turning in my mind,
> I went into the luminous night.
> And drank from the strong wines just as
> The brave men of pleasure drink.

The Greek text reads: ανδρείοι της ηδονής. The expression has a glorious antecedent. It goes back to Plato's *Laches* at 191e 4-7. Socrates: "Now all these persons are courageous, but some have courage in pleasures and some in pains, some in desires and some in fears. And some are cowards under the same condition, as I should imagine." We know what Plato meant when he defined courage as a virtue, as knowledge of what to fear and what not to fear, and recognized as one of the four cardinal *aretai.* But neither Plato's *andreia*, i.e., being skilled not to succumb to desires or pleasures, nor the other virtue, *sophia*, is what Cavafy understands as the needed preparation for the voyage to begin. Where Plato recommended resistance to pleasure, Cavafy urged the opposite, pleasures of the strong sort, which is what he means by the Greek expression "the strong wines of *hedonē*." If so, the persona of the "Polis" is a coward, as there are many sorts of cowards in this life, condemned never to come close to the *sophia* Cavafy promises in his "Ithaca." The splendors of the poet's Mediterranean world are beyond the reach of cowards, for they have either shunned or distorted the hedonic experience.

But before I go on with the full significance of the "brave men of pleasure," I should stop to relate a few pertinent things about the cowards,

the failures of life, the outcasts of *hedonē*. I will cite three examples, two from the well-known poems, the 1898 "Waiting for the Barbarians" (Περιμένοντας τους Βαρβάρους, 1898/*1904*) and the 1910 "The God Abandons Anthony" (Απολείπειν ο θεός Αντώνιον (1910/*1911*), which is also the first non-symbolist poem; also one less known, "From the School of the Renown Philosopher." (Απο την σχολήν του περιωνύμου φιλοσόφου, Β 28). Now for the first case, the barbarians. Let us listen to what the "citizens" of this decadent city, cowards that they are, say:

> ...Why isn't anything happening in the senate
> Why do the senators sit there without legislating?

Again:

> Why did our emperor get up so early
> and why is he sitting at the city's main gate
> on his throne, in state, wearing the crown?

Also.

> Why have our two consuls and praetors come out today
> wearing their embroidered, their scarlet togas

And:

> Why don't our distinguished orators come forward as usual
> to make their speeches, say what they have to say?

And the refrain in each case echoes the same:

> Because the barbarians are coming today...

When the citizens hear that there are no barbarians, they exclaim in despair:

> And now, what's going to happen to us without barbarians?
> They were, those people, a kind of solution. (Keeley and Sherrard trs.)

These citizens, if citizens indeed, don't have to be defeated or conquered. They are already cowards, emasculated, politically marginalized, non-hedonic, with no saving virtues of any kind. They can neither legislate nor act. Why should the barbarians even bother with such people even if they existed?

Let me turn briefly to the marvelous "The God Abandons Anthony" 1910/*1911* (A 20).

> At midnight when suddenly you hear
> an invisible procession going by
> with exquisite music, voices,
> don't mourn your luck that's failing now,

work gone wrong, your plans
all proving deceptive– don't mourn them uselessly:
as one long prepared, and full of courage,
say goodbye to her, to Alexandria who is leaving.
Above all, don't fool yourself, don't say
it was a dream, your ears deceived you:
don't degrade yourself with empty hopes like these.
As one long prepared, and full of courage,
as is right for you who were given this kind of city,
go firmly to the window
and listen with deep emotion,
but not with the whining, the pleas of a crowd;
listen – your final pleasure – to the voices,
to the exquisite music of that strange procession,
and say goodbye to her, to the Alexandria you are losing. (Keeley & Sherrard)

Alexandria, absent in "Ithaca" is now before us in full dress. But where is the brave man of pleasure? The event takes place at midnight right in the heart of the city. Anthony has his last chance to prove his loyalty to Eros. But he cannot respond. The deep emotion never occurred. After Actium he became an imperial failure, a coward, and despite his bragging when the circumstances were favorable, he was but a thief of *hedonē*. Cleopatra, on the other hand, lived up to the erotic standards of her city; her coward lover could not. In fact, Anthony never really set out on a voyage to Ithaca. He had opted for power and glory. Still, he believed that he was born the son of Dionysos-Eros. He had frivolously named his obedient slave Eros, the servant who refused to execute the master when the end was near.

The poem depicts a spectacular hedonic failure. The Roman Anthony surrendered to the Roman Octavian wishing to die a Roman death. He never quite learned what it meant to die as a brave man of hedonic courage. This brand of virtue was Greek, not Roman. It never crossed the Adriatic sea. Ithaca was not available to Anthony or any of his likes.

But what about Ithaca and *wisdom, sophia*? We now come to the pathetic case of the disoriented student of philosophy, the nameless *persona* in the poem "From the School of the Renown Philosopher" (B28):

For two years he studied with Ammonius Sakkas,
but he was bored by both philosophy and Sakkas.

Then he went into politics.
But he gave that up. The Prefect was an idiot,
and those around him solemn, officious nitwits:
their Greek– poor fools– barbaric.

After that he became
vaguely curious about the Church: to be baptized

and pass as a Christian. But he soon
let that one drop: it would certainly have caused a row
with his parents, ostentatious pagans,.
And right away they would have stopped–
Something too horrible to contemplate–
their extremely generous allowance.

But he had to do something. He began to haunt
the corrupt houses of Alexandria,
every secret den of debauchery.

Here he was fortunate:
he'd been given an extremely handsome figure.
And he enjoyed the divine gift.

His looks would last
at least another ten years. And after that?
Maybe he'll go back to Sakkas.
Or if the old man has died meanwhile,
he'll find another philosopher or sophist:
there's always someone suitable around.

Or in the end he might possibly return
even to politics– commendably remembering
the traditions of his family,
duty toward the country,
and other resonant banalities of that kind. (Keeley and Sherrard trs.)

This spectacle of failure is simply unbeatable. The chain of false pleasures forms a vicious circle. Corruption has infiltrated every fiber of the persona's soul, turning the faculty of desiring into a many-headed monster destined to devour itself. Again, Ithaca is nowhere in sight. The failure is total and the loss inconsequential. There is another case worth mentioning, where a beginning was made but flawed from the very start. The persona in the poem "Myris: Alexandria A.D. 340" ("Μύρης. Αλεξάνδρεια του 340 μ.Χ." B.74), after making a promising start, guilt and repentance finally got the best of him. Anyway, Myris died young, and a coward at that. He drowned somewhere during the early stage of the journey before catching a glimpse of an Ithaca. The Christian ethic declared victory on the persona's deathbed. Myris' pagan friend has surreptitiously entered the home of his deceased companion in their wild parties:

... I stood in the corridor. I didn't want
to go further inside because I noticed
that the relatives of the deceased looked at me
with obvious surprise and displeasure
.....

I stood and wept in a corner of the corridor.
And I thought how our parties and excursions
wouldn't be worthwhile now without Myris...
...and I thought how I'd lost forever
his beauty, lost forever
the young man I'd worshiped so passionately.
.....
We'd known of course that Myris was a Christian
know it from the very start.
When he first joined our group the year before last.
But he lived exactly as we did:
more devoted to pleasure than all of us...
.....
He never spoke of his religion.
And once we even told him
that we'd take him with us to the Serapeion.
But – I remember now –
He didn't seem to like this joke of ours.
And yes, now I recall two other incidents.
When we made libations to Poseidon,
he drew himself back from our circle and looked elsewhere.
And when one of us in his fervor said
"May all of us be favored and protected
by the great, the sublime Apollo"–
Myris, unheard by the others, whispered: "not counting me."

The Christian priests were praying loudly
for the young man's soul.
I noticed with how much diligence,
how much intense concern
for the forms of their religion, they were preparing
everything for the Christian funeral.
And suddenly an odd sensation took hold of me:
indefinably I felt
as if Myris were going from me:
I felt that he, a Christian, was united
With his own people and that I was becoming
a stranger, a total stranger. I even felt
a doubt come over me: that I'd been a stranger to him.
I rushed out of their horrible house,
rushed away before my memory of Myris
could be captured, could be perverted by their Christianity. (Keeley & Sherrard)

## III. Repatriating Odysseus: the new brave man of pleasure

In January 1894, before the writing of the "Polis," he wrote a poem "The Second Odyssey," a poor imitation of Tennyson's "Ulysses." It was literally unsalvageable, but the theme suited his escapist mood as he was while

picturing himself as a post-Ithaca Odysseus. Le me indulge your patience and cite a few pertinent lines:

> Second Odyssey and greater
> than the first. But alas
> without Homer, without hexameter.

The poem ends with the following flat verses:

> When the shores of Ithaca
> gradually fainted from his sight
> and he sailed west full speed
> toward Iberias, on to the Herculean Gates
> 35    away from all that was the Aegean Sea,
> he felt he lived again, that
> he cast off the hateful bonds
> of things known and familiar.
> And his adventurous heart
> 40    rejoiced frozenly, emptied of love.

One must give Cavafy credit for not publishing the poem. The text, survived somehow in his own handwriting. None of the component elements of "The Second Odyssey" survived in the 1910 "Ithaca." By 1910 he was ready for what turned out to be his first original transformation of the Odyssey theme. I could put it a bit stronger and say that his was perhaps the most interesting conception of the mythical voyage since Homer.

When he wrote "Ithaca," Cavafy was forty-seven years old. He had just entered the mature phase of his creative life. Cavafy's poetic imagination has now rediscovered the landscapes and seascapes of the Mediterranean world. Odysseus has returned as a symbol taking on a striking non-temporal quality with universal appeal. The theme went beyond the announcement of the exodus from the psychological predicament of the poet's self-alienation. The new exit, though vaguely resembling the one in Plato's myth of the cave, was not designed for the philosopher who exits and returns to bring the message of the sun to the prisoners inside the cave. The Platonic mission of the philosopher and the kingly mission of Homer's Odysseus are both gone. A brand new voyage has taken their place: the beginning of a totally different journey, where the power of sensuality defines its own *nostos*.

The reader is not expected to start with Odysseus's plans after his return to Ithaca, as is the case with the literary motif that has dominated the major conceptions of Odysseus in the history of the Ulysses theme. To be sure, Cavafy undertook the repatriation of Odysseus, but as a literary act that differs radically from what other great poets had done with the post-Ithaca voyage. Dante and Tennyson, to mention two influential versions of

the post-Ithaca Ulysses, took the ancient hero out of the Greek environment. Dante put him in the Inferno while Tennyson took him out of the Mediterranean world.

Cavafy had two tasks to perform with this motif. First to bring his hero back under the Grecian sky and, having done that, to universalize the concept of the brave man of pleasure by recasting Odysseus as a symbol of a new *andreia*. The first was not difficult, but the second called for a radical reworking of the idea of a voyage, one with a open-ended *nostos*, and also the re-defining of *andreia* as one of the four classical cardinal virtues. Right away we notice that the poem "Ithaca" does not mention the Homeric hero. It addresses anyone who is willing to try his/her wings as a free hedonic voyager.

Two items need identification to grasp the thematic richness of Cavafy's "Ithaca": (a) the transformation of the classical hero's epic identity, and (b) the promising splendors of the new space. The importance of Cavafy's originality lies in the way he sought to restore the Odysseus in all of us in the domain of sensuality. Both items have serious cultural and political implications. I will discuss them in conjunction with a brief review of three types of transforming the Homeric Odysseus and the Hellenic idea of *nostos* in Western literature. The first major transformation came with the medieval Dante, the second with the English Romantics,[2] and the last with the Alexandrian-Greek poet Cavafy.

The series of the transformations of the figure of Odysseus is not my theme. They have already been explored in Stanford's book, *The Ulysses Theme*. I will only make a few stops and relate three select moments in the grand changes of the myth of Odysseus and tie them to my topic. My first stop is the major transformation that came with the closing of the Middle Ages: The Odysseus of Dante, Ulysses, as we find him pictured in the *Inferno*.

## IV. Dante's Ulysses

Dante moved Odysseus from the natural world to the subnatural realm of the *Inferno*. Faithful to the early Christian symbols, he simply denied the Greek hero the possibility of salvation, a twist the modern Europeans were glad to ignore. Briefly put, a serious fight had been going on for centuries in epic and lyric poetry, including prose, if reference be allowed to Joyce's *Ulysses*, over the body and the soul of Odysseus. Homer's account of Odysseus and the legends about the last days of the hero require no further comment. The later ancient poets, Greek and Roman, worked with the tradition, regardless of moral evaluations, as is the case of Virgil. It was Dante who exiled Odysseus to the Inferno, far below the Mediterranean, never to return, forever deprived of *nostos*.[3]

We find Ulysses in Canto XXVI.[4] Ulysses is now in the inferno burning in eternity with no *nostos* and no Ithaca. The soul of the hero has been indicted in accordance with the Christian dogma concerning the punishment of sin. Virgil's harsh judgment had already set the pace for the indictments that were to follow.

A few verses will suffice to drive the point home. Dante shows at the same time a certain degree of compassion and justice when he asks Ulysses about his *last voyage*. Ulysses replies that nothing could stop him from listening to his zeal "to explore the world and search the ways of life..." We read that Dante had Ulysses pass the pillars of Heracles – forbidden by the gods for men to do so – and follow "the track of Phoebus". Ulysses sailed southward along the coast of Africa, where the Carthaginian had long ago explored, until a whirlwind struck his ship and sank it. It all ended there:

> When I from Circe broke at last,
> Who more than a year by Gaeta (before
> Aeneas had so named it) held me fast,
> Not sweet son, nor revered old father, nor
> The long-due love which was to have made glad
> Penelope for all the pain she bore,
> Could conquer the inward hunger that I had
> To master earth's experience, and to attain
> Knowledge of man's mind, both the good and bad.
> But I put out on the deep, open main
> With one ship only, and with that little band
> Which chose not to desert me.[5]

Such was the motive. Clearly, Dante's Ulysses did not stay home after the sack of Troy. He became instead the wandering explorer of the unknown world and died before he got very far. The novelty in the wandering type of voyage does not concern us here, but the fact that Dante took Odysseus out of the Mediterranean world and soon after that out of the natural world at large, is very significant. Odysseus is found guilty of excessive pride and unquenchable desire of knowledge not given to man to satisfy. Dante's indictment of Odysseus is moral and political, a thesis that sets Dante and Homer worlds apart. Ulysses's *hubris* is beyond the reaches of faith, hence beyond Christian salvation. This is also a cultural judgment. Later on, during the Renaissance, Dante's way of looking at Odysseus will be gradually abandoned, and what was repudiated as sin will become a source of inspiration. What is important to our theme is that the Church had no room for the humanism of the pagan mind and no compassion for the Promethean spirit. The joy of knowledge was allowed only with the blessings of the faith. The hedonic splendors of the Mediterranean world had lost their glorious appeal while most of its cultural monuments were being

abandoned and reduced to ruins. The Renaissance came with no promise of resurrection. The world of Odysseus was gone.

## V. The Romantic Odysseus

The Romantics simply restored him back to the surface of earthly activities, this time with a mission outside the classical setting to explore the trans-Atlantic regions. Numerous variations of this theme were elaborated in late medieval and modern literature, but it was the nineteenth century romantics, Tennyson in particular, who took Odysseus out of the Mediterranean sea never to return to his Ithaca. But Cavafy, the Alexandrian Greek, transformed the post-Ithaca voyage of Odysseus in 1910 and had him return to the Mediterranean and its splendors. Ithaca became an open-textured end of the nostos: the hedonic voyage. Many years later, in 1938, another Greek poet, Nikos Kazantzakis, published his epic, *The Odyssey, A Modern Sequel*, and did the extreme opposite with Odysseus; he completed and terminated the romantic voyage beyond the Mediterranean; Odysseus dies on an iceberg in the South Pole.

The romantics relied on an old Greek legend, the prophesy of Teiresias, that Odysseus was destined not to die on his own island. After his return to Ithaca, Odysseus departed again and, as Teiresias's prophesy had announced, he kept wandering to find the place of his final rest somewhere in Greece. The romantics found the legend more exciting and in accord with the spirit of their time; they took Odysseus not only out of the Mediterranean world but also decided to absolve him of Dante's indictment that had made the Atlantic an agent of damnation.

The first post-Dantean romantic Ulysses appears in Alfred Lord Tennyson's poem written in 1833, about seventy lines long. The following lines from his "Ulysses" suffice to reveal the new motive:

> This gray spirit yearning in desire
> To follow knowledge like a sinking star
> Beyond the utmost bound of human thought.

The curse of Dante is now then gone. The power of new knowledge was on the rise. The conquests of the Elizabethan era of the worlds beyond the shores of the Atlantic called for a new Odysseus, unrelated to the Mediterranean, and free of the classical devotion to his little Ithaca. Odysseus, or rather Ulysses, now belongs to the New World. He cannot return to an old Greco-Roman sea, the greater portion of which had been conquered by the warriors of a different faith, yet still confined between the pillars of Hercules and the shores of Lebanon and Egypt. What matters here is that Tennyson's Ulysses bears no Grecian marks. His soul is without *metron*.

A brand new world to be conquered, tamed, and turned into transatlantic colonies has replaced Ithaca. This is one aspect in Tennyson's Ulysses the early Cavafy did not suspect when he was imitating the British Muse.

## VI. Cavafy's Everyman Odysseus

Cavafy's own, the symbol, is more human, more hedonic, more believable, and closer to us. Yet, there is another side to the poetic vision: the *power of the open nostos*. The first thing we must note is that the goal of the *nostos*, the very end of the journey, be it of Odysseus or any other hero representative of this literary genre, if taken to stand for the high moment of human aspiration, is a complex topic. Seen as a symbol, it may be seen as co-extensive with the pursuit of an ultimate goal or purpose of a life. Small wonder then that *nostos* became of great interest to philosophers and theologians who used the concept symbolically, as is the case with Plotinus and the Church Fathers. The latter especially sought to replace the *nostos* in Homer with the heavenly end of salvation: the return to God. Aside from the theological use to which the Christian tradition put it as a symbol, the changes the concept underwent in modern poetry and how the idea of the end of the journey was redefined, remains a topic of considerable interest in the philosophy of literature.

The journey hoped for, when Cavafy wrote "The City" in August 1894, intimated the escape in light of the romantic motif of an "Odyssey," once the romantic Odysseus of Cavafy and Homer's Odysseus parted company Alexandria had to be invested with the meaning of an inverted Ithaca. Cavafy's "everyman," the Odysseus in all of us, urges the reader to listen to the sirens, to share the lotus, to yield to Circe, to submit to Calypso, to pursue the pleasures that the voyage promises to offer to any person willing to become a *andreios tes hedones*. But the hedonic adventure cannot start without the skills of the redefined virtue of courage. How else is one expected to come close to *sophia*? If there is no conceivable Ithaca neither is there a point to asking for political *aretē*.

The world of Homer is gone, but so is the world of Dante and that of Tennyson. There is nothing left but the return to the Mediterranean in hope of finding there the splendors it once possessed. An Italian poet, Pascoli, made a valiant effort to do just that in his 1904 poem *Ultimo viaggio*. He too went back to Teiresias' prophesy but with a painful twist. He brought Odysseus back to the Mediterranean world only to have him revisit all the places where he wandered after the sack of Troy. On the ninth year after his return to Ithaca, Pascoli's Odysseus leaves again but not for a new world. He must go back to the places he once made his stops, from Calypso's

island to the land of the Laestrygonians. This he does, but what he found collectively in all of them were parts of a vast *nekropolis*. Everything had died or vanished, even the goddess Calypso. The only thing left for the aged Odysseus was the ultimate rest of Nirvana. With Pascoli the return to the Mediterranean was a walk to the cemetery.

Did Cavafy know about Pascoli? I have no knowledge. What is important is that Cavafy's *dramatis persona* in his "Ithaca" rediscovered the Mediterranean world and found it to be what it once was and now had become: a sensuous Alexandria. Though not exactly an Ithaca, it proved to be where our Ithacas are spawned. Any spot is good enough to spawn an Ithaca, good enough to visit and stay in hope of gaining in hedonic wisdom until the day would come to understand the meaning of the voyage. And who knows, perhaps some day hedonic wisdom may give birth to an offspring, to the political virtue suitable to human beings at last free of fear, free of wars, no longer given to the abuse of power and the distortions of the human mind. Perhaps Cavafy was right. Whether the sprawling expanse of the globalized cosmopolis of consumerism can provide the right environment for the voyage of the new brave men of pleasure, is a terrifying prospect. I confess to be unable to fathom its darkness. The fear this prospect generates is more than any available conception of *andreia* can handle. Measureless fear can paralyze even the best of the virtuous. Perhaps we might be forced to mumble the last verses of Cavafy's "Barbarians," even in our sleep:

> And now, what's going to happen to us without barbarians?
> They were, those people, a kind of solution.

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**Endnotes**

1.     The translations are mine unless otherwise indicated in parentheses.

2.     Stanford, W.S. [1963] 1968. *The Ulysses Theme, A Study in the Adaptability of a Traditional Theme*, (Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press): "...Odysseus has been moved from a classical to a romantic environment" (p. 175).

3.     See Stanford, ch. xiv.

4.     In *The Ulysses Theme*, Stanford calls Dante's portrait of Ulysses "the most influential in the whole evolution of the wandering hero" (p. 178).

5*.     Milano, P. (ed) 1947. *The Portable Dante*, edited, and with an Introduction by Paolo Milano (New York: The Viking Press), "Inferno," tr. by Lawrence Binyon, p. 141, verses 91-102.

# Do animals have moral worth?
# The contemporary debate with special reference to Aristotle

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## Abstract

*This paper examines reasons why animal existences can be regarded as subjects of moral concern. This debate is examined in conjunction with contemporary discussion on this issue, with Aristotle's thinking on animals in the background. The change in thought brought about by thinking on sentience is taken account of. The issue whether animals are moral agents like humans, as argued in Aristotle and contemporary thinkers, is addressed. In particular the recent views of Bekoff and Cohen are examined. With reference to Irvin and Bekoff, the moral relevance of cognitive capacities in animals is considered. The article concludes that higher capacities, especially self consciousness, are indeed morally relevant to the issue.*

## Introduction

Animals have become a focus of interest in philosophy and other sciences. In the past, apart from the zoological, anatomical and physiological (veterinary science) fields, animals were not thought to constitute a field of interest. Apart from fascination with the majesty and beauty of many animals, philosophical issues such as cognitive capacities were not even thought of. These functions were considered to be uniquely human. Even sentience is still regarded by many observers as exclusively human. To even consider the further possibility that such capacities could be of moral concern did not arise. Although this approach is still strong, many philosophers have succeeded in postulating the importance of sentience. This is regarded as the sole criterion for moral relevance. Other capacities in animals were discussed but only in a very loose fashion. This article intends to take other capacities not only seriously, but also as relevant for moral concern. I do this by taking into account the recent views of authors in contemporary discussions. Looking at this discussion, I felt that Aristotle's contribution to this debate cannot be neglected. Although his influence is not direct, I discuss the topic with Aristotle as an important background.

## Aristotle: humans and animals

Aristotle is the first person, as far as is known, who called the human an animal, but a *rational* animal. As far as we know he was also the first commentator who wrote scientific treatises on animals. He is known for his knowledge about the Asian and African elephant and is reported to have been the first observer of dolphins. His *De Generatione Animalium*, *Historia Animalium, De Partibus Animalium* (all of which we shall use as well as his *De Anima*) are rich in empirical detail and facts. He compares animals with plants as well as humans, remarking for example: "now it is by sense perception that an animal differs from those organisms which have only life" (Aristotle a:680). Aristotle noticed that there are some borderline cases between plants and animals where it is not possible to clearly distinguish between the two. "But the function of the animal is not only to generate (which is common to all living things), but they all of them participate also in a kind of knowledge, some more and some less, and some very little indeed. For they have sense perception, and this is a kind of knowledge. (If we consider the value of this we find that it is of great importance compared with the class of lifeless objects, but of little compared with the uses of intellect...)" (Aristotle a:679-680). Aristotle here makes distinctions that are today still relevant as they have become part of the debate on moral concern, namely lifeless objects, plants, animals and humans. For Aristotle they are definite and distinct categories.

"All men by nature desire to know. An indication of this is the delight we take in our senses" (Aristotle c:689). Something of this capacity is also to be seen in animals: remarkable is Aristotle's distinction between what in (current discussion) are called sentient and non-sentient animal beings: "By nature animals are born with the faculty of sensation, and from sensation memory is produced in some of them, though not in others. And therefore the former is more intelligent and apt at learning than those who cannot remember; those who are incapable of hearing sounds are intelligent though they cannot be taught, eg. the bee, and any other race of animals that be like it ; and those which besides memory have this sense of hearing can be taught" (Aristotle c : 689). This is the first systematic analysis of capacities in animals.

The soul, which is in both humans and animals, is pained and pleased, bold or fearful, angry, perceiving and thinking (Aristotle b:548). He adds: "In the great majority of animals there are traces of psychical qualities or attitudes, which qualities are more markedly differentiated in the case of human beings. For as we pointed out resemblances in the physical organs, so in a number of animals we observe gentleness or fierceness, mildness or cross temper, courage or timidity, fear or confidence, high spirit or low

cunning, and, with regard to intelligence, something equivalent to sagacity" (A e:634). **However,** "The case of mind is different; it seems to be an independent substance implanted within the soul and to be incapable of being destroyed... Thinking, loving, and hatred are affections not of the mind , but of that which has mind, so far as it has it" (Aristotle b :548). We notice in the quoted remarks that Aristotle, like several scientists and philosophers today, would regard some animals as intelligent, but without rationality or reason. This means that reason is not seen as a necessary condition for intelligence. This is somewhat problematic, because how does one then make sense of intelligence? Even what is today called emotional intelligence is not understood without thinking capacities. Unlike Plato, who worked with the idea of a World Soul, which became more pronounced in Neo-Platonism, Aristotle thinks that nothing is ensouled beyond animals and humans. If a soul should reside in air or fire, Aristotle asks why it does not then form an animal and why the soul in air would be higher and more immortal than in animals.

Hierarchies are an important part of the contemporary debate but also go back to Aristotle. He clearly thinks **hierarchically** about animals, but makes no explicit pronouncement on the moral standing or value of animals. We can however deduce that he does not regard them as moral agents. This is clear from the only reference to animals in his Nicomachean Ethics: "It is natural, then, that we call neither ox nor horse nor any other of the other animals happy; for none of them is capable of sharing in such activities" (Aristotle d:946). Happiness has to do with lengthy character building and with virtue where politics and reason play an important role. For Aristotle the capacity of reason is absent in animals. This view, although not necessarily for the same reasons, is still defended today by well known scientists like Rawls and Bekoff. By expressing it Aristotle laid the foundation for current thinking in this matter.

**Aristotle and contemporary science**

In both Aristotle and contemporary discussion, the issue of hierarchies is linked to capacities. Our problem today however is whether capacities and species in a hierarchical sense make a meaningful difference regarding moral standing and treatment. Since animals, according to Aristotle, do not possess the capacity of reason, as we saw, they are morally indifferent. He does not even discuss such a possibility in his ethical works. Only those who possess the capacity of reason are moral agents and have moral standing. Yet the style of Aristotle gives the impression that he would be willing to revise his views in the light of new evidence. Let us briefly consider the following: "We have no evidence as yet about mind or power to

think...reflection confirms the observed fact..." (Aristotle b:558,559) and "this *apriori* event is confirmed by the facts... What occurs in birds and oviparious fishes is the greatest proof that neither does the semen come from all parts of the male nor does he emit anything of such a nature as to exist within that which is generated, as part of the material embryo, but that he only makes a living creature by the power which resides in the semen (as we said in the case of those insects whose females insert a part of themselves into the male" (Aristotle a:677). We note Aristotle's frequent usage (there are many more instances) of terms like *evidence*, *proof*, *confirm*. I argue that in this there is an important philosophy of science lesson to be learnt: the idea of empirical proof is not a positivistic heritage, but rather an Aristotelian one. One could say that the positivistic emphasis on and usage of verification and proof is a later narrowing down of the original Aristotelian usage. Aristotle is a good example of a scientist who is strongly empirical, but is clearly far from taking a positivist stance. He i) by implication states that confirmation, proof, evidence are criteria of scientific thinking and ii) is by implication open minded and would be willing to change **his** views in the light of new evidence.

It would in my view not have been too surprising if Aristotle, had he encountered contemporary scientific findings, would have welcomed and even enjoyed them. Aristotle did not know anything of evolution or evolutionary continuity (it is not clear whether Aristotle took note of the first evolutionary proto-theory of Anaximander). However his final theory of causality in the biological world and the increased complexification in nature, could have paved the way for modern evolutionary thinking and theory. When reading this theory, it almost seems that he is describing something of evolution: "Nature proceeds little by little from things lifeless to animal life in such a way that it is impossible to determine the exact line of demarcation, nor on which side thereof an intermediate form should lie. Thus, next after lifeless things in the upward scale comes the plant, and of plants one will differ from another as to its amount of apparent vitality; and in a word, the whole genus of plants, whilst it is devoid of life as compared with an animal, is endowed with life as compared with other corporeal entities. Indeed, as we just remarked there is observed in plants a continuous scale of ascent towards the animal. So, in the sea, there are certain objects concerning which one would be at a loss to determine whether they be animal or vegetable" (A e:635). Something reminiscent of design in nature can also be discerned, but it is considered in terms of the Greek concept of order in nature, as can be seen in: "For just as human creations are the products of art, so living objects are manifestly the products of an analogous cause or principle, not external but internal, derived like the hot and the cold from the environing universe" (A f:649).

The present genome project would have challenged some of Aristotle's ideas on animals. In genetics the sequencing of the chimpanzee genome was finished in 2004 and that of humans is well under way. It appears that the difference as to chromosomes between chimps and humans is slightly larger than previously thought. Earlier molecular comparisons suggested that the two species are very similar at nucleotide sequence level — a difference of only between 1.23% and 5%. Results now show that the chromosome 22 proteins of chimpanzees differ 83% from that of humans. In other words only 17% is identical. (Holding, C. The New Scientist: 1-3). Derek Whitman, a molecular scientist involved in the genome project, however explicitly states that there is no major difference between chimps and humans (Ibid). These new insights, like some previous ones, are altering the focus not only to the differences between humans and animals, but also to the similarities. In my view these similarities together with evolutionary continuity, prompt deeper thinking on rationality, consciousness and intelligence regarding both animals and humans. Would Aristotle be willing to classify the chimpanzee into a different category from his animal category or perhaps with humans?

## The contemporary strong thesis: animals are animals

Even so, the possibility that animals may have moral worth is not taken for granted by all. A strong thesis still quite prevalent today in thinking on animals is that *animals are animals*. They are as a whole a separate species differing in a fundamental sense from humans. Inspired by a particular religious interpretation of Genesis 1 and 2, the view is strong that animals have only instrumental value. They are means to human ends. This concept was reinforced by the Cartesian view that animals are *automata,* soulless, lifeless beings devoid of reason, brutes. A thing cannot have moral worth. It is largely due to philosophers that this view was ruptured and that a change in thinking started to take place. By so doing philosophy succeeded in its task because it is indeed the task of philosophers (apart from other things) to puncture cosy beliefs, and start new thinking. Although there are some precursors who paved the way, like Jeremy Bentham, it is only in contemporary times that the influence of philosophers like Peter Singer, Tom Regan, Mary Midgley and David DeGrazia, has brought about new views, which have opened the gate for other scientists to do research on animal consciousness. These new perspectives conversely influenced philosophers to think even more fully about animal consciousness. In this area, Aristotle had not yet arrived at the idea of self consciousness. Yet he did express proto-ideas on this issue, e.g. concerning nous he refers to *νούς νοήσεως* (reason reflecting on reason, itself) which could be a precursor of self-consciousness.

Aristotle's thinking on mind and reason made contemporary thinking on consciousness possible. However, up to the present most philosophers have appealed to *sentience* as the primary criterion for determining whether a being is worthy of being given moral consideration. Singer used utilitarian arguments for this purpose, while Regan argued in terms of animal rights. The capacity for suffering and enjoyment is the only defensible boundary for moral concern, because all and only sentient beings have this capacity. Singer regards other possible capacities as irrelevant to the question of whether a being deserves moral consideration. Regan puts it this way: "Individuals are subjects-of-a-life if they have beliefs and desires; perception, memory and a sense of the future, including their own future; and emotional life together with feelings of pleasure and pain; preference- and welfare interests; the ability to initiate action in pursuit of their desires and goals; a psychophysical identity over time; and an individual welfare in the sense that their experiential life fares well for them, logically independently of their utility for others and logically independently of their being the object of anyone else's interests" (Regan, T. *The case for animal rights* p 247 in Irvin:74). Irvin is right in inferring that Regan would exclude animals like mollusks, crustaceans, and insects (Ibid:74).

Not to view animals as one fixed single category, as Aristotle did, is very difficult to accept with an open mind (even though I consider that if Aristotle had taken part in today's discussion, he would have been more open minded). On the grounds of the strong thesis it is believed that "something else cannot be, because it may not be!" New ideas in science are nearly always unpopular and are even viewed with hostility, because they tend to puncture one's comfort zone. Before Aristotle, Aristarchus had to flee Athens as a result of his propounding the first heliocentric theory, while Galileo Galilei later on is a notorious example. Though Charles Darwin, Albert Einstein and Niels Bohr did not need to flee, their new ideas caused a considerable stir. New ideas on animal existence similarly make us feel uncomfortable. It is more reassuring to know that animals are devoid of sentience, thinking, have no intrinsic moral rights. We have nothing to be worried about, have no further responsibility and no need for further thinking about animals. Furthermore all animals form one separate class as Aristotle saw it. This view is still largely maintained. It is generally accepted that the proverbial mouse differs from an elephant only by size, physiology and anatomy. There is nothing more to it. Thus even when evolution is accepted, it does not lead to radical rethinking. However, new insights from neurophysiology, ethology and psychology cannot be hindered and ignored for all time, and are slowly beginning to revolutionize our understanding of animal minds. These insights point to the fact that this equalizing view (animals are animals) can no longer be maintained, that certain species like

cetaceans, primates, elephants and others can be grouped with humans and constitute a radical difference from the others.

## Animals not moral agents?

We have noted that Rawls, like Aristotle, did not regard animals as moral agents because they themselves cannot apply moral norms and evaluate ethically. But can such a view be maintained today? Let us consider *Carl Cohen*, who agrees that animals are not moral agents. However unlike the Cartesian approach, he does not see animals as machines, but as sentient beings who ought to be treated humanely: "We have a universal obligation to act humanely, and this means that we must refrain from imposing pain on sentient creatures so far as we reasonably can... [animals] ought not to be made to suffer needlessly" (Cohen in Nobis:54). Nobis (55) rightly asks whether this implies for Cohen that animals have a right not to suffer needlessly. We can see that even Cohen was not unaffected by Singer and Regan's thinking on sentience. However, for Cohen only humans are able to conceive of their actions using moral concepts; only we are able to believe we can do right and wrong and choose to act in accordance with (or in violation of) the moral law: only we can freely restrict our own behaviour out of respect for others. If an individual has these properties he or she has the capacity for free moral judgment; holders of rights then must have the capacity to comprehend rules of duty, governing all including themselves (Ibid:44). "Rights arise, and can be intelligibly defended, only among beings who actually do or can, make moral claims against each other. Whatever else rights may be, therefore, they are necessarily human; their possessors are persons, human beings... Animals cannot be the bearers of rights because the concept of rights is essentially human; it is rooted in, and has force within, a human moral world" (Cohen in Nobis:53,54,55).

But why would animals not be objects of moral concern or rights? Animals are not beings of a kind capable of exercising or responding to moral claims. They have no rights and they can have none.

More formalized in argument form, Cohen's main view, according to Nobis (Ibid:45), looks like this:

1. If an individual lacks the capacity for free moral judgment, then he or she does not have moral rights.
2. All animals lack the capacity for free moral judgment.
3. Therefore, animals do not have moral rights.

Nobis then critiques Cohen's notion of kinds. He asks whether this would include the cells of a human being's flesh, or an embryo? He argues that kinds, like species, are abstract concepts, classificatory devices or

metaphysical entities. They cannot exercise or respond to moral claims. Individuals of a kind can respond to moral claims, but not the kind as a whole. To explain a kind as something normal or natural is also difficult as a criterion, because it does not entail that all humans have it (e.g. a human with only one leg). Cohen thus could modify the first two premises to "*individuals of a kind*". But from this it will follow that marginal humans also have rights and then we face the problem of many animals who, like primates, possess higher capacities and intelligence than many retarded humans. These humans then are objects of moral concern, have rights, but not these animals.

Should one question Cohen as to whether a human embryo which also cannot make moral judgments, **has** rights and **is** a object of moral concern, he would reply that an early embryo is a potential human person and thus indeed an object of moral concern. Singer and Dawson have indicated the flaw in such an argument (although not in response to Cohen). They probed the meaning of potentiality. Possibility, real physical possibility, according to them is a necessary condition for potentiality. The difference between an egg or sperm is a difference in degree rather than kind: "In our view the fact that the embryo, but not the egg has a uniquely determined potential does not suffice to show that the embryo is a different individual from the egg, or that it, but not the egg, is a potential person" (Singer & Dawson 2002:199-207). Nobis argues that a specieist must be able to specify why a being of the type "biologically human" is indeed itself a morally relevant type. "It appears not to be, since human biology seems neither necessary or sufficient for having rights: friendly space aliens could have rights and dead, human cells in a Petri dish do not" (Nobis:52)

"Being of the kind 'biologically human' is neither logically sufficient nor conceptually necessary for having rights: biological kinds are not in themselves morally relevant. Furthermore, we share little, morally, with human cells in flasks or organs in an icepack: bare biology does not count much" (Ibid:57). Taking my own and Nobis' critique on Cohen, I would conclude with Nobis that Cohen has not provided any rational support for the view that animals have no rights or moral standing. It seems that he should have gone beyond mere membership of biological species in his biological argument.

## Capacities other than sentience

Singer regards other possible capacities (besides sentience) as irrelevant to the question of whether a being deserves moral consideration. Singer and Regan regard sentience as the only criterion and borderline for considering moral concern. Other capacities, like self awareness, rationality or cognitive

capacities similar to humans, have up to the present been put forward in a somewhat loose way, for example by DeGrazia and Griffiths. However unlike the sentience argument, other capacities never figured very strongly as a criterion for moral consideration. Singer logically would then not support the idea that humans deserve more moral concern, but in tension with this he does incorporate the idea that humans do deserve more moral concern, when he argues that it might be worse to kill a human rather than a mouse. Even though I tend to agree with him, there is somewhat of a tension between sentience as the only criterion for moral concern and regarding humans as on a "higher" level for concern. However his argument is not specieist, since he argues from capacities as such and not merely from the biological species of the human. By implication, then, he does appeal to capacities more than mere sentience, since he appeals to hope and future planning. Unlike the killing of a mouse, the killing of a human who can plan for the future, hope, work on some future goal, "...is to deprive that being of the fulfillment of these efforts".

This does not apply to beings who do not or cannot hope and act **in a future directed way.** Singer here distinguishes (and rightly so) between self-conscious beings and non-self-conscious beings. Mere conscious beings are replaceable, self-conscious ones not. Let Singer formulate this himself: "To take the view that non-self-conscious beings are replaceable is not to say that their interests do not count. I have elsewhere argued that their interests do count. As long as a sentient being is conscious, it has an interest in experiencing as much pleasure and as little pain as possible. Sentience in a being suffices to qualify it for equal consideration of interests; but it does not mean that the being has a personal interest in continuing to live. For a non-self conscious being, death is the cessation of experiences, in much the same way as birth is the beginning of experiences. Death cannot be contrary to a preference for continued life, any more than birth could be in accordance with a preference for commencing life. To this extent, with non-self-conscious life, birth and death cancel each other out; whereas with self-conscious beings, the fact that once self-conscious one may desire to continue living means that death inflicts a loss for which the birth of another is insufficient gain" (Singer 2002:118). Singer finds the view that only language users can be self-conscious unconvincing (Ibid:119). I concur. An argument of Singer's is that higher level capacities increase the value **of** an individual. The magnitude of these interests may depend upon certain higher level capacities. Calculation of these interests ought to be taken into consideration. Normal human adults will suffer more than animals if their interests are frustrated, because of "higher" capacities. In addition to magnifying these interests, higher level capacities also give rise to additional interests, such as an interest in seeing one's plan realized in future.

Individuals with more highly developed capacities require greater delicacy of treatment, since they will be harmed more by death and will suffer more by ill treatment (Ibid:63). According to Singer's line of argumentation, a human has much more to lose than a mouse which is sentient, but does not have the sense of future goals, etc. I would add that one has to do with the qualitative difference between a sense of future and sense of meaning on the one hand and satisfactions on the other. The former makes the loss more profound.

As we will see, Bekoff even regards the presence of sentience as not decisive but argues that there are no good reasons why non sentient animal beings should not also deserve moral consideration. Species alone cannot guarantee moral worth. While this is acceptable, the question is whether his giving more weight to human life in terms of capacities for hope, does not nullify such a non-specieist stance. This does not however mean that an appeal to capacities is wrong, as we shall see later.

Another valuable perspective (and in my view one of groundbreaking importance since Aristotle) that Singer has put forward is to focus thinking on *individual* animal existence. Up to the present, thinking on animals has revolved around species and the conservation of species. The species of whales ought to be protected from extinction, but the individual whale does not come into consideration. A good contemporary example is furnished by the countries who insist on the resumption of whaling. It is argued that some whale species have recovered their numbers and that their numbers are even increasing more than "necessary". But necessary for what? For whom? So the species is safe, therefore "surplus" whales can be slaughtered. There is not even an inkling of the value of the life of the individual whale. The thought simply does not occur, that the whale's life may be more than of instrumental value for humans. In the light of my argument here, Singer's approach that we should shift our attention from the species to the individual is therefore a major shift in thinking, and most important. If the individual becomes more relevant and important, so do capacities.

## Bekoff and specieism

Marc Bekoff, well known researcher in animal ethology, is quite critical as to classification schemes of "higher" and "lower" among animals. He regards these as misleading, because they fail to take into account the lives of, and worlds of, the animals themselves. Recently Sherri Irvin has also argued for the context of animals to be taken into account (Irvin, S: 68-75). Bekoff argues that the placing of species in some hierarchical order of higher and lower on the phylogenetic tree, after which we humans then decide which is morally more relevant or not, presents serious problems if one were to argue

convincingly that animal species should be ranked on a single scale. He calls this "humanocentric" — who are we as humans from the vantage point of *our* species to decide who has moral worth? Such hierarchies are usually specieist and primocentric because we group higher primates with humans.

Unlike Aristotle, Bekoff argues that humans ought to give moral consideration to all animals, not only the sentient ones. This point of view will require that the rights of all animals be respected when moral decisions are being made about them (Bekoff:638). First appealing to cognitive difference and then making decisions about higher or lower levels is misguided. Bekoff refers to (as we mentioned before, rather loose attempts to define) cognitive capacities of chimpanzees, gorillas and orang-utangs. Usually their ability to learn human sign language is referred to. The argument then runs: we can do it, primates can do it. Mice cannot do it. Mice therefore deserve less moral concern than we and primates do. The reason why Bekoff rejects this argument is that animals have to be able to do what they need to do in order to live in their own worlds (Ibid:639). It can be expected that specie differences will be the rule rather than the exception. These variations should not be viewed as being "good" or "bad", or used to place animals "higher" or "lower" on a linear scale. This narrow minded primatocentric and humanocentric specieist cognitivism (as he calls it), should be resisted when applied to decisions about how animals should be treated. Some writers think that only non-human primates have rich cognitive lives. Bekoff notes that claims for the view that apes are "more intelligent" than monkeys are not solid. There are few naturalistic observations, if any, that will substantiate such broad-based general specie claims (Ibid:639). The point cannot be dismissed that at least some non primate individuals also have rich cognitive lives. Researchers are far from having an adequate database from which meaningful claims about taxonomic distribution of various cognitive skills can emerge. However he concedes that it is still possible to discuss whether chimps are smarter than, e.g., mice or dogs. That is, researchers need to be clear about the criteria that are used to make comparative statements about smartness or intelligence – what they mean when and if they claim that chimps' social lives are able to solve more complex or difficult problems than mice, or show more versatile patterns of behaviour in response to environmental changes. To draw moral boundaries at species level, using some set of average specie-typical characteristics, is fraught with difficulties. He quotes R Hubbard: "At that point I was working with squid, and I think squid are the most beautiful animals in the world. And it just began to bother me. I began to have the feeling that nothing I could find out was worth killing another squid" (Hubbard as quoted by Holloway in Bekoff:640). Remarkably similar sentiments have been expressed by researchers as to other animals.

Bekoff is right in claiming that there are and may be other animals than primates that also have "higher" cognitive capacities. In fact, cetaceans', like dolphins', capacities probably even exceed those of primates! The elephant is another example. That others may be discovered is rather to be welcomed. However to argue, as he does, that these capacities do not make them morally more relevant, because animals have to do what they must do, is not convincing. The latter is correct, but not the conclusion he reaches on moral worth. His assumption is perhaps that some animals do not need these cognitive capacities. This is granted. Many animals without these cognitive skills, like bats, are highly complex and marvellous beings — even astonishing, as is their sonar system. This however is not a convincing reason not to regard certain cognitive skills as more advanced — advanced also in the sense that they enhance self awareness. These more advanced skills link up with the more developed and advanced brain in humans, cetaceans, elephants and primates. It is the profoundness and richness of experience which higher capacities make possible which in turn appeal to judgements regarding higher moral concerns. This excludes a narrow primatocentric approach. A point that Bekoff has made, that there is no solid case for claims that the "higher" primates like chimpanzees are more intelligent than "lower" primates like monkeys, seems worth considering. Research indeed could pursue this further.

Bekoff, like Aristotle, argues that animals are not moral agents. This is why humans are not only part of nature, but also have a unique responsibility to nature. Those who appeal to the "brutality of nature" to justify the bad treatment by humans of animals, fail to see that animals are not moral agents (Ibid:641). Animals are, rather, moral patients in that they cannot be held responsible for their actions as being right or wrong, good or bad. Deep ethics also implies that one should be sensitive to the world of animals themselves, and make serious attempts to adopt their point of view. When all animals are admitted to the community of equals, they will be protected regardless of their cognitive skills or their capacities to experience pain, anxiety and suffering. We cannot override their rights (Ibid:641). Bekoff argues that when we are unsure about an individual's ability to reason or think, then we should assume that he or she can do so, in his or her own ways. And if we are unsure about an individual's ability to experience pain, anxiety and suffering, then we must assume that he or she can do so. We should therefore be on the side of animals (Bekoff:641). I could not agree more. Bekoff notes that when, as humans, our own moral sensibilities develop and our scientific understanding increases, moral distinctions are likely to change as well (Ibid:641). I concur, although I think the change in moral sensibilities is already happening.

While I consider that he is right that the brutality of nature is no excuse

for bad treatment of animals, the view that all animals are not moral agents is however quite debatable. That lions versus non-lions are indifferent to morality seems plausible and could be argued for. When we come to the four "higher" species mentioned, as well as many others, the supposed indifference is not so clear. The world renowned primatologist, Frans de Waal, confirmed a definite sense of morality and justice among chimpanzees. Records are more than anecdotal in cases of cetaceans, like dolphins, but also elephants, rescuing individuals of other species (including humans) from imminent danger and death. This strongly suggests compassion but also moral awareness. In March 2004, when an elephant was severely injured by a train on a railroad track in eastern India, a large number of the same group of elephants blocked the rail on both sides of their wounded conspecific. This gave medics time to rush in and save the life of this elephant. This event could hardly be anecdotal as it comprised a large number of elephants (TerraNewsletter 2004:1). This behaviour was not only witnessed by reliable witnesses, but is also consistent with many other examples of elephants saving the lives not only of conspecifics, but also of individuals of other species, like dogs and humans. To claim that these elephants did not behave like this out of compassion and with a sense of morality, would be difficult to explain.

Bekoff concludes that "we" versus "them" dualisms just do not work. It is the similarities rather than the differences between humans and animals that drive much of the research in which animals' lives are compromised. Although not exactly for all the reasons Bekoff mentioned, I agree.

**Capacities and context**

Recently *Sherri Irvin* **has** also argued against mere capacities as a criterion of moral worth. Like Bekoff she also supports the idea of the moral worth of animals, but philosophically counters the idea that capacities like rationality etc. could be a criterion of the moral position of animals. The problem is not capacities as such, but that they are not seen in conjunction with their context: "Context shapes the development of a being's capacities and helps to determine the value of these capacities. The shaping of capacities by context is a salient aspect of human development" (Irvin:63). An example is the education of children. Their flourishing is stimulated by the capacities for meaningful relationships, for physical prowess and dexterity, artistic expression and many others, which in turn may all be promoted by the stimulations of one's early environment. Context affects the development of a human in a quite straightforward way throughout his or her life span (Ibid:64). The value and worth of a capacity for well being, depends on one's context.

If one does not take the context into account then one will not really be able to discriminate between alternatives, and one cannot have a preference between them. Beings with greater capacities would have a correspondingly larger number of interests to choose from. Although it is not exactly clear how she distinguishes between the two, Irvin thinks that expected utility is a measure not of *potential* for satisfaction, but of *likehood* of satisfaction (Ibid:65). "And the discrimination model does not establish that beings with more advanced capacities, have a greater likehood of satisfaction, thereby making their lives more valuable. Indeed, it is at least equally plausible that the expected utility of such beings will be lower: for only *satisfied* interests contribute to utility, and frustrated interests tend to detract from utility...this model involves a progressive narrowing of interests, and it seems that the narrower one's interests become, the less likely they are to be frustrated... if my interests become narrower, frustration is more and more likely" (Ibid:65, 66). One, then, is not better off. She asks why or how the satisfaction of these interests counts morally for anything: why would it count for more than, say, a cow's munching on her hay? (Ibid:66). "Thus, although higher level capacities may lead to a greater quantity of interests, there is no reason, on the discrimination model, to conclude that these interests will translate into greater expected utility" (Ibid:66). Unless one is prepared to offer a further argument that my satisfaction is more intense, just by virtue of the greater refinement of my capacities or interests, it is unclear that we will end up with the likehood of higher utility scores for beings with higher capacities. So, beings with greater capacities will have more interests, but this does not establish that these interests are likely to lead to greater levels of satisfaction or to more valuable lives.

I have a problem with a crucial aspect of this argument. Irvin in utilitarian fashion argues using amounts and quantities. The way she does so is almost painful; it too clinically quantifies satisfactions. The argument constantly turns on *amounts of, pot of, interests greater than, more interests, greater levels, longer duration, add to the pot, spreading a fixed amount of satisfaction more thinly,* etc. I have no problem with a measure of quantities and satisfactions. This is even inevitable, important and useful up to a point. But only up to a point. A human or dolphin indeed has *more* than the cow munching. However to limit the capacity only to these quantities, is a too narrow way of understanding such a profound issue. The "more" in this context of higher activities (than munching) refers to something qualitatively different. In the case of experiencing a piece of music, or a stunning beauty, or an academic treatise, I would prefer rather to speak of fulfilment of meaning. This does not necessarily exclude satisfaction. To say, however, that the fulfilment in the case of an academic work endures several hours longer than the satisfaction of thirst, is perhaps less appropriate. Of course

the experience of meaning, in the case of say an academic work, cannot always be separated from that of satisfaction. An experience of fulfilment could, and many times does, accompany or effect satisfaction. The converse is less probable: Irvin's cow munching hay experiences satisfaction, but it is rather improbable that the same cow also experiences fulfilment of meaning. The cow is "missing" another kind of experience, namely such a fulfilment.

Irvin's appreciation model argues that there are some kinds of rich and valuable experiences that we can appreciate only because we have certain capacities. Our interest in intellectual stimulation obviously depends on the attainment of a certain level of intellectual ability (Ibid:67). Similarly, our psychological faculties will determine our close interpersonal relationships. The satisfaction to be had from these pursuits, may seem to be more intense and more enduring than the satisfactions that do not involve our higher faculties. These pursuits will add to the pot of satisfactions, rather than spreading a fixed amount of satisfaction more thinly. My ability to enjoy a mango is intuitively not compromised by my interest in love or Dostoyevsky (Ibid). Once again we note an increase in the amount or pot of interests. I would rather propose a qualitatively different pot. It is a pot of another kind. Hunger or sexual satisfaction in one pot is not necessarily less good in number than fulfilment of meaning through intellectual work in the other pot. In fact the latter pot is difficult to explicate in terms of numbers.

Irvin's *appreciation model* intends to account for the fact that beings with higher level capacities would have greater expected satisfactions and utility. According to Irvin, however, context largely determines this: in a context of freedom, yes; but in a context where there is a severe environmental constraint, the converse is true — it may lead to misery. "The claim that higher level capacities make for more valuable lives, then, must be read as conditional on assumptions about context" (Ibid:68). Chimps may have more interests in social relationships. And the expected value of the chimps' future satisfactions is greater than that of an impoverished human. Irvin uses the example of people in an overloaded lifeboat who are in danger of sinking in the sea: someone must be thrown into the sea to save the rest. If there is a large number of dogs on the boat, and we must choose, we will have to throw the dogs into the sea. Human contexts, being more enriching, suggest that the value of a human life is more than that of a dog. I revise the example: suppose there are some humans, one of which is a psychopath, and a chimpanzee. Whom do we throw into the sea to keep the boat above the water? The measure is once again the value of lives. In the light of our discussion up to this point, I would decide against the psychopath and in favour of the chimpanzee. The difficulty and complexity of such competing situations is clear in a more real example, namely the

case of a human far advanced in pregnancy when the life of either the baby or the mother is in danger.

Irvin is right that the value of human life is interwoven with context. The context must, however, not be stressed at the cost of the capacities. A human baby, e.g., does not and cannot experience meaning as an adult in a free, enriching context. Instead of using the expression "potential", I would rather formulate it this way: ontologically speaking the baby is a full human being, but empirically the baby still cannot realize this. The adult is already empirically realizing what is ontologically there. With the experience of more free and enriching contexts, this empirical realizing can be continued. This is why the argument against capacities is not convincing. Certainly, beings with higher capacities, like humans, do not always de facto experience meaning. The point is that they in principle can. To count the number of frustrations I suppose could be done, but does this explain the profundity of many experiences which are not frustrated? This point also applies to many animals. Research has confirmed the influence of human culture upon dogs over many thousands of years. A Hungarian team of veterinarian researchers established that the dog can and does follow the human gaze or where a pointed finger points, or tries to figure out what it is that we are looking at and seek out the target. This does not occur with the dog's ancestor, the wolf. In a more enriching human context of 15,000 years, the dog has picked this skill up from humans. Along with this, mental development and advance took place in dogs: the research team suggested an understanding by dogs of human mental states, indicating a "higher mind" on the dog's part (Arney, 2003:1-3). I would suggest that the primary implication of "higher mind" is self-consciousness.

Therefore we note that context influences transcend specie boundaries, just as within a specie; this of course without reducing the one context to the other. The question still remains: does the context relevance solve the problem of alternatives and discrimination? It seems to me, rather, that the problem is shifted from the capacity to context. Capacity presupposes context. In existentialist philosophy and philosophical anthropology this was always of primary importance.

## Restrictive contexts – animal experimentation

Without intending to discuss the whole issue of animal experimentation, I would like to consider it insofar as it relates to our topic of the moral worth of animals. "The contexts in which animals are sometimes brought into contact with humans, are very often such as to stunt the development of their capacities. Typical contemporary examples, in such areas as scientific experimentation and the meat industry involve rearing animals from birth in

the context of severe restrictions on movement, limited environmental stimulation and abnormal or absent social relations. It is to be expected that animals will develop abnormally. Moreover, little or no attention is given to promoting the capacities most likely to contribute to the animal's flourishing within such contexts... (Irvin:68). It is not always incidental that capacities are stunted by restrictive contexts...for example the development of veal calves is discouraged by the animal's placement in small enclosures which completely restrict their movement, so as to preserve the tenderness of their flesh for human consumption. It seems clear that such stunting of capacities, whether intentional or incidental, is morally reprehensible in itself." (Ibid:68). This can be compared with the capacities of humans also being stunted. A good example not explicitly mentioned by Irvin is that of Taliban Afghanistan, where women were so restricted in movement and ability to determine their own course of life that their flourishing was stunted. Education, outdoor exercises, clothing and public appearances and participating in a large number of activities were out of bounds for women.

Both animals' and humans' capacities are restricted when they are deprived of opportunities to pursue the satisfaction of their interests (Ibid:70). I add deprivation of fulfilling of meaning. Does this mean that because of this an animal's and human being's life is less valuable? No. Irvin argues that the problem cannot be solved by the *potential* for satisfaction the individuals should enjoy in a morally neutral context. The appropriate context for a human being is freedom. This view of Irvin's has strong rational support.

As just suggested, many animals have fewer capacities than humans, cetaceans or primates. We would never condone laboratory experiments like vivisection on retarded humans simply because their limited capacities make their lives less valuable than those of normal adult humans. Singer used this as a *reductio* argument as to experimentation: if we accept the experimentation on lower humans, we should accept it on humans with compatible capacities, since all the justificatory arguments are applicable. So, "Because we would not be willing to subject any human to such experiments, we should abandon experimentation on at least some animals... when it comes to human beings, we begin from the understanding that it is not morally acceptable to imprison and exploit them, regardless of their endowment of higher level capacities. When it comes to animals, however, no such understanding can be assumed" (Singer:80-94).

In spite of many places where there seems to be no change of conditions and of the moral standing of animals, it would be one sided to argue that matters have not changed appreciably in many localities. Ethics has appeared where there was none before. I would not credit philosophy alone for this change. There are many other factors, such as research and

influential persons like Jane Goodall and Frans de Waal, who have wielded a strong influence on the change of thinking. As to philosophy: just as the constitution of the USA and the Charter of the UNO were influenced by the natural rights philosophy of John Locke, so it now appears that the charters and constitutions of states and councils such as medical councils and others are clearly influenced by the thinking of the philosophers Peter Singer and Tom Regan. One state, Germany, was the first to safeguard animal rights in its constitution in 2003. New Zealand nearly succeeded in doing the same.

There are many instances and places where the restrictions on animals have been lifted and changed so that their needs are more fully met. Much is still to be done, though. However, even a worldwide and well known chicken industry, KFC, has changed unacceptable practices and restrictions as to the treatment of chickens in the USA.

Remarkable changes have occurred in areas of animal experimentation. The mark of philosophy here is even explicit. The move towards more humane treatment is motivated not only by appeals to sentience, but animals are also described as being not objects, but subjects worthy of moral concern. The British government recently made the bold move of banning laboratory or vivisection experiments on Great Apes. This is indeed a long time overdue.

## Conclusion

Contemporary discussion on animal existence and their moral worth has on the one hand moved quite far away from Aristotle's position. Nevertheless, Aristotle can be seen as the definite starting point for any academic discussion on animals. On the other hand, I consider that one can safely assume that without Aristotle's groundbreaking thinking on animals in the four works we made use of, contemporary thinking may have looked different or would not have occurred at all. Aristotle thus was perhaps not a necessary condition for current thinking, but one could say his work was a sufficient condition. His particular realist approach, his rich and sometimes elaborate empirical descriptions and explanations of animals and species, have been ingrained in the Western mind. For Aristotle the *general*, the *whole*, the *specie* and *genus* was of primary importance. For Aristotle the individual was relatively less important. This explains why he did not regard history as a science and that while he paid attention to so many sciences, there is practically nothing of history. For Aristotle no general conclusions or essences could be established in history. There were only individuals and individual events.

During the Romantic period this attitude started to change. However, as far as animals are concerned we have noticed how outlooks began to alter with Singer and others, moving from only focusing upon the specie, to

an emphasis upon the individual. We also noticed the move away from Aristotle's view that animals are devoid of reason, but also the post Cartesian approach's return to Aristotle (animals have souls): to what we today call sentience. Aristotle, throughout the four works used here, in a systematic way touched upon animal capacities and compared them with those of humans and plants. But his analysis of animal and human capacities paved the way for today's discussion of the same. In all this one may see the enormous influence wielded by Aristotle, logically as well as chronologically. His – (capacities have no moral relevance) turned into a + (the capacities gained moral relevance among many thinkers and scientists) This may be remarked of many paradigm shifts or turns to new insights in science. Immanuel Kant demonstrated that our knowledge of the world cannot be known unless through our human categories of space, time, causality and others. We cannot go beyond that. Beyond is the unknowable (by science) *ding-an-sich* world. Kant showed that the basic laws of Newtonian science can be derived from these basic *apriori* categories of understanding. No future experience can change this limitation of humankind. This is a limit, a –. Einstein, who studied Kant thoroughly, turned this – into **+,** in a sense. Einstein with his theory of relativity opened up perspectives of new worlds, other ways of seeing them than in terms of the Newtonian space and time. But – and this **is** important – without Kant this would have been rather improbable. I see a parallel to this **in** Aristotle's thinking on animals and **in** contemporary thinking. The emphasis on the specie and the non rationality of animals was a – turned into a + by contemporary thinking. Yet, the groundwork had been done by Aristotle. As with Newtonian space and time, the Aristotelian species approach and non-rationality of animals, was also thought to be **a** view that new experience would never change. Like many other views of Aristotle, these at one time nearly became canonized. However, as I have indicated, Aristotle's mindset was open and he surely would have been willing to consider new insights and revisions of some part of his knowledge.

In this article Singer, Cohen, Bekoff and Irving's views on related topics were discussed. The sentience approach chimed with that of Aristotle, but went further, in that a) it regarded sentience as morally relevant and held that animals thus are candidates for moral consideration and in that b) although in a loose way, other capacities came into consideration. I would turn Bekoff's approach around and argue that these "higher" capacities, especially cognitive capacities, can be developed, and are morally relevant. These ought to be approached in a more definite and systematic way. Self-consciousness of animals correlates to similar brain structure and brain activity and the same parts of the brain. Humans cannot have certain mental states if certain parts of the brain are not functioning. I argue this point

basing it on non-natural reasons and meaning. I argue that such a being is in an important sense higher than, e.g., a bat or mouse. This does not take away the fact that a bat is a marvellously complex animal with its sonar system. In this respect it may even exceed some human capacities. However a cetacean, also with a sophisticated sonar system, is much more capable because of self-consciousness and intelligence. Intelligence, especially with self-consciousness, cannot be easily dismissed as a trivial capacity amongst others. Nature itself does not make any ethical judgment on the value of consciousness or rationality or whether a human is "higher" than a bat. This is why rationality has to judge it. It is a circle (rationality judging rationality) but not a vicious circle. It is a fact that dolphins prefer the company of humans. Is that not also a judgment from the side of dolphins regarding something both have in common, namely rationality and self-consciousness? This is of course not a necessary condition for the presence of self-consciousness.

I would thus argue that apart from sentience, self-consciousness would be basic to "higher" capacities. Self-consciousness would either make rationality, thinking, conceptualizing, abstraction possible or enhance it. A self-conscious being is aware of its world but is also aware that it is aware, can make itself an object of cognitive interest. There is a sense of identity. In my view self-consciousness further involves an awareness of past, present, future. This awareness has been confirmed as to several animal species. This involves a very high value being placed on life. I conclude that self-consciousness, which is the very being of several species, constitutes a very high value. The presumption against killing such beings or using them as mere means to human ends, is not strong. It is absolute. The presence of self-consciousness can be scientifically confirmed or disconfirmed. But that self-consciousness has such a high value cannot be confirmed or disconfirmed. The high value it has and its moral relevance is a decision which I think is related to Aristotle's idea of *phronesis.* What is more – I am convinced that Aristotle, had he been acquainted with contemporary science, would have agreed concerning the moral relevance of animals.

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# The Sangoma[1] and the MD:
# The clash of Western Medical Science and Traditional Medicine in South Africa

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## Abstract

*The clash between traditional methods of healing and Western medical science in places like South Africa requires that we ask questions like "What is health?" "What does healing mean?" and "What is science?" This paper will first outline the presuppositions contained in the approach of Western medical science towards health and healing, and contrast it with the radically different vision of human being that emerges from some traditional South African medical practices. The author contends that the contemporary move towards the recognition of alternative medicine is concurrent with a shift in Western thinking on the nature of science, healing and human being. Some ideas on how the sangoma and the MD can work together, rather than against each other, are explored.*

## Introduction

Coping with health problems forms a significant part of the lives of people in Africa, most especially in the light of the HIV/AIDS epidemic. Access to basic health services, as well as the related infrastructure, such as water supplies, sanitary works and roads remains one of the biggest problems on the continent. Western-based medical care is inefficiently designed to cope with the demands of the African environment (in all senses of the word); dependent on expensively trained personnel working in expensive hospitals; and is often of limited relevance to the conditions of people living in so-called "developing[2]" countries (Good, 1989). Yet, the problem in South Africa is even more complex than this:

> Here in South Africa… we are confronted with the obscenity of a well-heeled, affluent (usually white) middle class being treated, at enormous cost, for complaints that frequently are themselves caused precisely by this affluence, while the greater part of the population is undernourished, badly housed and deprived of the most elementary hygiene. Basically, in South Africa… the problem is one of political economy[3]. (Hammond-Tooke, 1989, 13)

In South Africa, as well as in many other African countries[4], the influence of traditional medicine[5] and traditional medical practitioners is extensive[6], and so it remains a question as to what role these practitioners can play in promoting the well-being of communities and individuals in South Africa. Western bias against traditional healing practices is strong, with many asserting that traditional forms of healing are suspect, scientifically unfounded, "dangerous relics of the past, clung to by the 'backward' populations out of ignorance and superstition" (Connor, 2001, 9).

This paper will therefore explore the relationship between traditional African methods of healing and Western medical science in South Africa, first by outlining the presuppositions contained in the traditional approach of Western medical science towards health and healing, and then contrasting it with the radically different vision of human being that emerges from some traditional South African medical practices. The author contends that the contemporary Western move towards the recognition of the value of so-called "alternative" as well as "traditional" medicine is concurrent with a shift in Western thinking on the nature of science, healing and human being. Some ideas on how the *sangoma* and the Western-trained medical practitioner can work together, rather than against each other, are then explored.

## What is health? – A Western perspective

Modern Western medicine is a manifestation of a very distinctive worldview. In his *The Turning Point* (1982), Fritjof Capra discusses what he calls the "biomedical model", which, he claims, is the underpinning of the Western approach to health and healing. Capra notes that the influence of the Cartesian paradigm on Western thinking has resulted in viewing the human body as a machine; and that by concentrating on smaller and smaller fragments of the body, modern Western medicine often loses sight of the patient as a human being (Capra, 1982, 118). Disease is seen as the breakdown of the machine, and the doctor's task is reduced to the repair of that machine. Death is seen as failure – of both the patient and the medical practitioner.

Under the sway of the biomedical model, the sacred body of ancient times becomes the secular body (Kimbrell, 1993). The view that the human body was created by the gods/God gives way to the view of the body as machine. This "doctrine" of mechanism has flourished in the age of biotechnology in which we live, one that was born in the mechanistic view of nature that began during the Enlightenment. What is significant is that this vision of human being as machine has provided a philosophical basis for the commercialization and colonisation of the human body by technology. If

the human body is merely a machine (albeit a very complex one), why can it not be bought, sold and manipulated in the same way as other commodities?

In this context, La Mettrie's *Man a Machine* (1748) can be seen as one of the most important steps in the philosophical mechanisation of human being (La Mettrie, 1912). Whereas Descartes, in his *Discourse on Method* (1637), maintained the separateness of humans and non-human animals by positing that although the human body was machinelike (in the same way that the bodies of non-human animals were machines), humans were special because of their immaterial, immortal souls (Descartes, 1912). La Mettrie saw no need for this dualism, claiming that humans, like other animals, were soulless machines.

The biomedical model is based on a worldview developed from the 17th century ideas of Isaac Newton. Newton's vision of the universe was one of a vast clockwork, functioning according to deterministic causal principles. The Newtonian observer is seen as independent of the phenomena observed, and reality is seen as "out-there", waiting to be discovered. Scientific objectivity is both an ideal and a reality, where unbiased observers obtain facts, and science is elevated to the status of being the only way to obtain "truth". This view can be called the "common sense" view of science (Chalmers, 1999).

With Newton, we see the further development of a process that began with Copernicus and Francis Bacon, with this process continuing into our own times. Science becomes the new religion in Western culture due to its profound intellectual effects on us, not only in terms of the extraordinary range of inventions which have transformed our lives, but also in terms of changing how we think about ourselves and our world. "If science has replaced religion… as the unifying focus of modern culture, then medicine is part of the central faith of our times" (Branson, 1987, 25).

In the biomedical approach, all authority and responsibility is given to the (usually male[7]) medical practitioner. This patriarchal tendency obviates the need for the patient to be seen as a responsible individual who plays a role in the healing process. It is also interesting to note the symbiosis between medical practitioners and the pharmaceutical industry, where profit and loss often overshadow the needs and humanity of the patient.

## What is health? – A traditional African perspective

African traditional medicine can be defined as the:

> … total body of knowledge, techniques for the preparation and use of substances, measures and practices in use, whether explicable or not, that are based on…personal experience and observations handed down from

generation to generation, either verbally or in writing, and are used for the diagnosis, prevention or elimination of imbalances in physical, mental or social well-being (Bannerman, Burton & Wen-Cheih, 1983, 25).

Traditional medicine, like its Western counterpart, is closely bound up with a people's worldview. A proper understanding of a culture's traditional healing practices thus also requires knowledge of the prevailing religion and cosmology. According to Kasenene (2000), two important ethical principles that underlie African life can be identified. Firstly, Kasenene (2000) asserts that African society is based on the recognition of a "vital force" that individuals seek to acquire[8]. Supreme happiness is to possess the greatest vital force; while the diminution of this force results in illness, depression, suffering and other social or physical evils.

Secondly, Kasenene (2000) asserts that African ontology is underpinned by the principle of communalism. The communalism principle can be expressed well by what Ramose (2002, 230) calls "...the root of African philosophy": *ubuntu. Ubuntu* (a Zulu word) is a worldview enshrined in the Zulu maxim *umuntu ngumuntu ngabantu*, i.e. "a person is a person through other persons" (Shutte 1993, 46). Individuals become real only in their relationships with others – in a community or group (Okolo, 2002: 213). It is the community that makes the individual – without the community the individual has no existence (Mbiti, 1969). The human being forms a link in the chain of vital forces and so the self is essentially a social person in relation to others.

In traditional African societies, healing is therefore all-inclusive, taking into account the whole person, as well as his/her social environment. "Shamanic therapy means the healing of an entire life, rather than just healing failing functions and disruptive pains. For shamans, healing involves philosophy, a view of life" (Kalweit, 1992, 3). Traditional medicine and its materials and practices do not simply deal with physical symptoms. Rather, they can be used to:

> … supply personal strength and power, they provide protection against the malevolence of gods and spirits and the enmity of lose human rivals. They can also be used to influence the behaviour of others, to win a person's affection or induce them to do a favour. This demonstrates the all-embracing or holistic nature of traditional medicine (McLean, 1987, 10).

African traditional medicine is based on examining the causes of an illness, rather than the symptoms. The causes are oftentimes seen as social, in the sense that they relate to persecution by a third person in the form of witchcraft (Hours, 1987, 47). Hence, therapeutic strategy is also then a social strategy. The social and economic setting in which healing takes place is of great importance and the diviner's role is seen to be restoring a natural

balance and order (Ngubane, 1977, 27) by bringing the patient into a new way of being.

## A shift in Western Thinking – Human being and Healing from a new perspective

With the advent of relativity theory and quantum mechanics[9], the Western understanding of reality and a human being's place "in" that reality has undergone a major change. The observer now becomes an integral part of the process of observation, and the observable and observations can only be expressed as correlations, rather than simple, linear causes and effects. According to Zohar and Marshall:

> Today's physics requires that we learn to see the physical world in different terms. The old Newtonian categories are inadequate for the new understanding… The familiar certitudes of classical physics – rigid categories of space and time, solid, impenetrable matter and strictly determined laws of motion – have given way to the strange world of modern physics, an indeterminate world whose almost eerie laws mock the boundaries of space, time and matter. A new kind of physical holism has replaced the classical emphasis on separate parts, and new patterns of dynamic relationship replace the old tension between isolation and collision. Where classical physics drew a sharp line between human beings and the material world, the creative dialogue between observer and observed in quantum physics suggest the possibility of an altogether more integrated relationship between ourselves and physical reality (1994, 11).

The new vision of human being and her world has set the scene for renewed interest in what have been called "alternative" or "complementary" therapies in medicine. Barrett (1998), for example, notes that the "alternative movement" in medicine can been seen as part of a general societal trend towards the rejection of science as a method of determining truths. According to Barrett (1998), this movement embraces the postmodernist doctrine that science is not necessarily more valid than pseudoscience and that scientific medicine is but one of a vast array of health-care options. This does not mean that we are becalmed on the waters of relativism, but rather that we need to change our rigid ways of thinking about "truth". Adopting a pragmatist stance, in other words, working with what "works", can be a very fruitful way of thinking about the "truths" of science in general, and medical science in particular[10].

> Our bureaucratized and materialistic medicine – this mechanical model with an active therapist and a passive patient that reduces the patient to an object and relegates healing to the long corridors of the hospital – has failed. This kind of healing belongs to the mechanical age. Today, however, we are already daring to make the transition to 'organic'

medicine, 'spiritual healing' through personal transformation, though the transformation of consciousness on all levels (Kalweit, 1992, 2).

Kalweit (1992, 244) claims that a number of the world models of contemporary physics (most especially quantum theory), when compared to the shamanic worldview, show that contemporary Western science and shamanist concepts converge. This controversial idea, which has attracted a faddish and almost cultlike following in terms of the supposed convergence between Eastern mysticism and quantum theory, can be called the convergence theory (Pine, 1989). The philosophical consistency between the results of contemporary science and shamanism does not "… prove much by itself" (Pine, 1989, 246). There have been many historical instances of a philosophy/religious view being consistent with the science of a time, and the resultant rush to claim that the new science validates that philosophy/religion. What is more interesting, and meaningful, in my opinion, is that the so-called convergence of these ways of thinking opens up to us a space in which new ways of thinking about health and healing can be accommodated.

In the 1978 Alma Ata resolution, the World Health Organisation suggested that African governments might make use of "traditional practitioners" in primary health care (McLean, 1986, 8). This suggestion, however, revealed a number of problems in practice:

> Most African healing systems have not been formalized in print so that their principles could be open to outside scrutiny. Part of the ethics of many African healing systems is secrecy: this protects the society against the indiscriminate use of such medicine by certain individuals. Such secrecy also reflects the fact that the knowledge of indigenous medicines can be an index of one's power and influence in society. Just as Western practitioners of medicine guard their professions through tedious methods of registration and induction, so does the African traditional medical class obtain the same protection through secrecy. Unfortunately the success of that secrecy has resulted in a serious blow to the credibility of the entire system. (Ademuwagun, Ayoda, Harrison & Warren, 1979, p. vii)

Additionally, in trying to force an integration of traditional medicine with its Western counterpart, a number of factors that preclude this integration can be identified (McLean, 1986):

1. Modern medicine is based upon an entirely different set of concepts from traditional medicine.
2. The spiritual, psychotherapeutic and social dimensions of traditional medicine are ignored, since it is easier to focus on studying herbs, an aspect of traditional healing which is visible, tangible, measurable and manageable[11].
3. In some countries like Ethiopia for example, the existence of severely separate forms of traditional medicine makes integration complicated.

4.  Western trained professionals are mostly those who occupy positions at the national level of health care, and their bias towards traditional healers as 'quacks' could hinder integration.
5.  Traditional practitioners may not be effectively organized to act as a pressure group, and so be less powerful in this respect than members of the Western medical tradition.
6.  Political instability in African countries could hinder integration, since a programme of integrating traditional medicine requires political commitment.
7.  Limited economic resources in African countries could hinder integration, since instituting such programmes is very costly.
8.  Practical problems, such as the selection of traditional practitioners for integration, systems of sorting, registration and licensing, payment, responsibility, as well as training and evaluation of the integration programmes, could hinder the process.

The above notwithstanding, the question we need to ask is "Why official *integration*?" Integration could imply great danger for traditional medicine and its practitioners, since from the point of view of modern Western medicine it means incorporation into a national health system dominated mostly by Western-trained professionals. This is not necessarily bad in itself, but when one considers the possibly significant negative bias against "traditional" healers, integration might turn into assimilation, and the contribution of "traditional" healers being lost in the process. It is also my contention that forced integration is another example of the patriarchal, colonising tendency of the West, in attempting to impose a superficial order on Africa. Scientific, "modern" technologies, based on a knowledge system deemed superior to the pre-existing knowledge system that will hopefully be supplanted, is, in my opinion, merely colonialism and imperialism in disguise.

The concept of medical pluralism is, in my opinion, the better option. Medical pluralism can be defined as the politics of therapeutic practices, i.e. "...how relationships of power and meaning are played out between diverse practices in a given context, and how they change over time" (White, 2001, 172). Differing models of healing should be respected – inclusion, rather than integration will aid us in avoiding doing violence to both systems. Exposing the relationships of meaning and power inherent in our conceptions of health and healing, rather than forcing one system to fit into another, could yield much more to us in terms of therapeutic practice. The peaceful co-existence of the traditional healer and the MD could represent a realistic vision for the future of a new type of health care. Institutionally independent, they could work together where necessary without laying claim to the supervision of the health activities of the other.

Surely, the aim of any healing system is to promote the health and flourishing of the patient and community? If this is so, then methods to ensure the safety of the patient should be considered to be of primary

importance, whichever medical tradition is being used. The practice of traditional healing practice should be standardized, regulated and have a code of practice to ensure that any harmful practices can be controlled. Instead of a forced integration, the establishment of an independent body to monitor and evaluate the practices of both systems, as well as foster dialogue between them, would be valuable.

## Conclusions

Health care attitudes and methods have to take into account a people's philosophical and cultural concepts of disease and health (Kasenene 2000, 350), but "The work of the African healer complements that of the hospital – it is not a substitute for it. Each system functions side by side in its own distinct sphere" (Fyfe, 1986, 4).

> …Even though it is desirable to keep both systems going, and ensure intercommunication between them, it is inopportune to integrate traditional practitioners into the hospital services, as some experts have proposed…African medicine does not permit governments to save money by neglecting to provide health services and a coherent public health policy. Nor can it cope with epidemics. Its place is elsewhere. What it does, is to take care of most social pathology…It declares (and declares because it knows) that sick people live in society, that sickness is also social, and therefore that no therapeutic system should ignore this dimension – neglect of which is the great weakness of so-called scientific medicine (Hours, 1987, 57)

Traditional medicine relies on the resources of the past, but to remain valuable to contemporary society, it must remain open to the future and in dialogue with the total culture of which it forms part[12]. A new paradigm of healthcare delivery is required, not to integrate African medicine and Western approaches, but rather one that ensures access to and dialogue between both treatment modalities. With Capra, I admit that the biomedical approach to health will remain extremely useful, as long as its limitations are recognized (1982, 164). The reductionist analysis of the body-machine has not and will not provide us with a complete understanding of illness. Biomedical research should be integrated into a broader system of patient-centered health care where human illness is seen as resulting from an interplay of human being and environment.

Unfortunately, South Africa is lagging behind other African countries in recognizing traditional medicine and establishing structures for traditional healers and medicine. A number of problems need to be addressed in this context, such as the problem of intellectual property rights, negative and sensationalist articles in the popular media and unethical behaviour of healers relating to the treatment of patients. Yet, the role that ethical and

well-educated traditional healers can play in South Africa's response to the HIV/AIDS crisis, as well as to contribute to improving the efficacy of its health system is great[13]. In line with the "Traditional Health Practitioners Bill" of 2003, a regulatory framework that ensures the efficacy, safety and quality of traditional health care services can provide a means to allow the Sangoma and the MD to work together as partners, without suspicion. A respectful attitude of open exchange and information is essential. What should be remembered, however, is that the new emphasis on collaboration should not serve as a substitute for the West's failure to provide the world's poor with adequate medical care (Farmer, 1992).

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**Endnotes**

1. The terms *isangoma* (traditional diviner) and *inyanga* (traditional doctor) should not be confused. In South Africa, in most groups, there are two clearly distinguishable types of healers – the diviner and the herbalist. The diviner is called to her vocation by the ancestors, and identifies the cause/s of illness and misfortune if they are the result of supernatural forces (*Isangoma* are predominantly women, whereas *inyanga* are usually male (Faure, 2002)). The herbalist, on the other hand, is not mystically called. Herbalists are masters of medicine and have knowledge of the medicinal value of roots, plants and other substances. They could be compared to Western-trained pharmacists; whilst sangomas can be compared to Western-trained medical doctors. In this paper, reference will be made to both sangomas, and inyangas, since it is recognised that both play an equally important and complementary role in traditional African systems of healing.

2. The use of the words "developed" and "developing" is itself problematic, since it is indicative of the continued hegemony of the West in terms of deciding what development should mean and be.

3. Even though this quotation was written pre-1994, I assert that the problem it outlines is still of great relevance in South African society today. The ostensible "end of apartheid" with the first truly democratic elections in 1994 did not magically erase racism, inequality or strife in South African society, although it was a first step in this direction.

4. See for example Good (1987, 2).

5. The use of the word 'traditional' is problematic, since as Hours (1987) points out, it implies that the tradition is an abstract, unchanging corpus of practices and knowledge. Instead, these practices and knowledge are evolving in a dialectical relationship of adaptation and competition with what is called 'modern' (i.e. 'western') medicine. It is also a confusing term, since it has also been used to refer to Western-based 'scientific' medicine (Barrett, 1998, 4). The WHO (Traditional Medicine Strategy 2002-2005, 2002) draws a distinction between 'traditional medicines' and 'complementary and alternative medicines', where the latter refers to a broad set of health practices that are not part of a country's own tradition, such as acupuncture or homeopathy.

6. The WHO estimates that up to 80% of the population in Africa makes use of traditional medicine (Traditional Medicine Strategy 2002-2005, 2002, 1). It is, however, difficult to estimate how many South Africans make use of traditional healers and how many traditional healers practice their trade. Possible reasons for this include the fact that the South African government has only recently embarked on the process of formally recognising traditional healers and setting up traditional healer organisations (For example, the "Traditional Health Practitioners Bill" was only published on 11 April 2003); as well as that the majority of studies focussing on traditional healing in South Africa have focused on black African traditional healers. Very few studies have focused on other groups within the South African tapestry of cultures.

7. The position of women in postcolonial Africa in relation to the values, policies and practices of Western-based medicine is important to mention here. Women, as patients, and more specifically as child-bearers, have been subjected to invasive forms of surveillance and control by state health systems. In the drive to subject all to the superior

capacities of Western-based medicine, women's expertise as healers has often been rendered valueless.

8.    This concept of universal energy has been conceived in many ways, for example, the Sotho call it *moya*, the Masai speak of *ngai*. The same is also meant by the Chinese *ch'i*, the Hebrew *ruach* and the Indian *prana.*

9.    These theories will not be discussed in detail in this paper. See Pine (1998) for an excellent introductory look at these theories and their philosophical implications.

10.    Pragmatism is, in my opinion, compatible with realism (i.e. the idea that a real physical does exist). Similar to Chalmers, I assert that even though we must concede that the common sense view of science is fraught with difficulty, we can, however, still maintain that there is a real world that human beings can investigate (Chalmers, 1999: 9). The problematisation of the common sense view is summarized well by Thomas Nagel when he points out, "...there is no view from nowhere" – we "can't get outside of ourselves completely" (Nagel, 1986: 6)

   In "Unended Quest" (1976) Karl Popper claims that the evolution of physics will be one of never-ending correction and approximation. Even if one day we should reach a stage where our theories are no longer open to correction, they would still not be complete. For Popper (1976), this realisation does not prove that the objective physical world is incomplete, or undermined, but rather only reveals the essential incompleteness of our efforts as human beings. For Popper, science is distinguished by its critical approach, and not because of its "habit of appealing to empirical evidence in support of its dogmas" (Popper 1979: 27).

11.    See, for example, Chavunduka (1987, 70).

12.    Traditional healers are undergoing a process of change as Africa modernizes. Colonial powers and structures have played an important role in changing the cultural landscape in which traditional healers practice, such as the Witchcraft Suppression Act of 1957, as well as the Witchcraft Suppression Amendment Act of 1970 (Jolles, F. & Jolles, S., 2000).

13.    See for example Green (1994) for details of studies focusing on bridging the gap between traditional healing and modern medicine in Africa, with a special focus on HIV/AIDS and STDs.

# The Promise and Problems of Intercultural Philosophy

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## Abstract

*In this paper I sketch the main elements of Heinz Kimmerle's conceptualisation of intercultural philosophy: a new concept of difference that makes possible a new take on "different and equal", which is the foundation for real dialogue. I interrogate the concept of culture in intercultural philosophy, and argue that for the South African context sufficient emphasis must be placed on power relations as they impact on cultures and the legacy of a history of cultural domination. I try to show that Kimmerle's notion of the equality of cultures implies that a particular context is taken seriously as a valid instance of the human condition, and in that sense it is of equal status with all other situations. All "localities" are linked in some way or another. It thus belongs to adequately conceptualising the thoughts and feelings of a specific locality that the need for dialogue should be reflected. A philosophy that negates these shifts would be disqualified as inadequate. The fact that it seeks dialogue is indicative of the experience of an aporia. It is lack, incompleteness, which is universal. I also tentatively propose "contextual philosophy" as a more appropriate name for intercultural philosophy in South Africa.*

## Introduction

The first part of this paper is a description of the main elements of intercultural philosophy as conceptualised by the German philosopher Heinz Kimmerle, who taught at the Erasmus University in Rotterdam since 1976, and since his retirement in 1995 heads the Foundation for Intercultural Philosophy and Art in Zoetermeer, The Netherlands. His interest in intercultural philosophy has developed as a result of a research project on what he prefers to call the philosophies of difference (generally referred to as postmodern philosophy). The theoretical and highly abstract phase of this project was followed by an inquiry into the consequences of the new concept of difference for cultural difference – as a kind of test case. The notion of cultural difference within the framework of the philosophy of identity

(Western philosophy from Plato to Hegel) has had a destructive legacy. The challenge was to show that the new concept of difference makes possible a conceptualisation of "different and equal" against the trend of the processes of globalisation to force everybody and everything into line. These efforts led to the formation of the Dutch-Flemish Society for Intercultural Philosophy, and the institution of a special chair at Erasmus University for Foundations of Intercultural Philosophy, with Heinz Kimmerle as its first occupant.

With nobody else in the Society interested in Africa (maybe symptomatic of the situation at the time in European academia outside the discipline of African Studies) Kimmerle devoted the last intensive period of his professional career to African philosophy, and the intercultural dialogue between Western and African philosophers. In 2003 Unisa awarded him with an honorary doctorate for his contribution in this regard. He has spent academic semesters at various African universities as a guest professor, including a stay of six months at the University of Venda in 1997. As has been his habit throughout his career (see, for instance, Kimmerle 1978), he motivated a group of scholars here to embark on a research project. The publication that resulted from this initiative, which under the leadership of Norman Duncan also became an exercise in academic authorship development, is titled *Discourses on Difference. Discourses on Oppression* (see Duncan 2002). The present paper is a kind of sequel to my contribution to this volume titled "Discourses on cultural difference and liberation?" (Hofmeyr 2002).

In the above-mentioned chapter I rely mostly on Derrida's concept of difference, and on Kimmerle's (2000b) book on philosophies of difference. In the mean time I have come into the possession of a little-known book by Kimmerle (1985) in which he has published a series of aphorisms penned in 1980 on Nihilism and the thinking of difference. Here we have in a nutshell the new concept of difference, with which I start my exploration of intercultural philosophy as conceived by Heinz Kimmerle. It is followed by a discussion of the equality of cultures, and of his alternative to a linear progress view of cultural history. I also address his alternative to the binary opposition of cultural relativism and universalism. The first part of the paper culminates in a description of Kimmerle's most recent thinking on intercultural philosophical dialogues, in which his interpretation of the dialogues of Socrates as described by Plato plays an important role.

The second part of the paper addresses certain issues raised by intercultural philosophy from a South African perspective. In order to emphasise the historical context of our discourse on culture I explore Bulhan's concept of cultural in-betweenity as derived from Frantz Fanon. The appropriate definition of culture against this background is then addressed, and subsequently the tricky issue of the equality of cultures. Here I use Charles Taylor's analysis and the distinction he makes between a politics of

dignity and a politics of respect to situate Kimmerle's concept of "different and equal". In the last section I compare intercultural philosophy with what is known in South Africa as contextual theology and ask whether the term "contextual philosophy" would not be more appropriate to describe the agenda of intercultural philosophy for a "multi-cultural" situation like ours.

## Intercultural Philosophy as conceived by Heinz Kimmerle

### A new concept of difference

Kimmerle (1985:71) situates the new concept of difference within the discourse of Nihilism. Nothingness is the result of negation. In the history of western metaphysics it is the not of the one, which it can be in two ways: as the annihilation of the one, and as its transformation into other things. To think difference involves being other without being antagonistic. Antagonisms where they exist should not be hushed up. At the same time mere otherness should not artificially be declared antagonistic. Antagonisms exist within a unity. Being other is a opening up to multiplicity.

The expression "the abyss of nothingness" means that nothingness is an abyss for a kind of thinking that wants to bring everything into a system. That which does not fit into the system falls into nothingness. For the thinking of difference nothingness loses its terror, as the presupposition that everything must fit the system is given up. The one meaning is superseded. This implies superseding the Western-European tradition of philosophy in which even two were always one too many. One alone, or the one and only could give tranquility and security – nothing remains outside, nothing falls into nothingness. But this was extremely difficult and tiring, as the unity was a unity of opposites, the unity of the one and the many, with many remaining outside the one.

To think difference anew means thinking the difference of the different and not as difference within the unity. And difference does allow unities, while remaining different. Being is the ongoing production of differences, without giving them meaning, and thus nothing. The way into nothingness, however, is now no longer falling into an abyss, but becomes the way into multiplicity without one highest unity. All meaning is preliminary meaning. We have taken leave of ultimate meaning. Preliminary meaning is enough for us. Yet, it remains difficult to be modest at this point.

Is this modesty, this not being demanding when meaning is concerned, finally a weakness of thinking? asks Kimmerle (1985:75). Difference is and remains. Unities become and disappear. Before the unities, between them, around them, after them (those who were) is difference. Difference is the many without unity. But the many are also one,

many times one. To be one, a unit, does thus not necessarily mean to be a unity. And: the units must be well organised in the sea of multiplicity. Multiplicity does not equal chaos. We cannot return to the fertile mythological chaos of the beginning. But the between us, between individuals and communities, can become the space for a fertile chaos. This is the in-between Kimmerle is looking for, that has become the *inter* of intercultural philosophy. It is the precondition for *real tolerance*. Within the framework of identity-thinking tolerance remains a lie and an instrument and a form of repression. Thinking difference is the condition for the possibility of true tolerance. This allows the other to be other without granting her the position of being other from a standpoint of the majority. Kimmerle eventually drops the term "true tolerance" in favour of the concept "respect", and it must be kept in mind that the English word "respect" is a translation of the German "Achtung", which has the weight of Kant's philosophy of freedom and human worth behind it.

Kimmerle (1985:76) refers to Lyotard's concept of the "patchwork of minorities". This image allows both – difference and oneness(es). A quilt displays a great variety of colours and patterns, but also contains systematic set pieces. Its design is not the product of arbitrariness, nor of the conscious mind, but of fantasy, aesthetic sensitivity and judgment. The multiplicity is the encompassing space and relativising in-between of meaningful unities, which must be preserved as best as possible.

Kimmerle's (1997, 2000b) special interest is to continue thinking difference in an effort to overcome the ethnocentricity of philosophy since the Enlightenment. Enlightenment philosophy sees world history as a unitary development that finds a climax in the European culture of the eighteenth century. This way of seeing characterises philosophy as identity-thinking. It results in the myriad arguments by thinkers like Kant and Hegel as to why non-European cultures have not produced history or philosophy. This identity-thinking, in which difference is always thought of in terms of the original identity, must be countered with a concept of difference where difference of cultures expresses a difference that is not reducible to unity.

## The equality of cultures

On the basis of the new concept of difference Kimmerle emphatically presupposes the equality of cultures. He (1996:10) defines culture as the organisation of a human community that enables it to maintain and sustain itself in the midst of other cultures and of nature. The crux of his view of cultures is the equality of cultures. Kimmerle (1996:10) bases his conceptualisation of "different but equal" on the following statement: "all cultures that still exist today [are] equally old, while they have maintained

their existence... from the origins of humanity until today. That they are equally old then also means that they have each in its own way fulfilled the role or task of a culture and thus have equal rights."[1]

This means, as a formulation of adequate conditions for the transferability of Western concepts to non-Western regions: if the concept "multiverse of cultures" is taken seriously, one culture can take over something from another only if both agree to it on their own accord. "Equally old" implies equal validity and being of equal status.

The somewhat unusual grounding of equality in cultures being equally old might appear less unusual if one presupposes as background here Hegel's philosophy of history. For Hegel the true was the viable, and that meant that each historical period had to formulate its own truth. But there is progress in history, and new periods with their viable truth represents higher levels of the coming to self-consciousness of the world spirit. Hegel's own time he viewed as the culmination of this process of progressive self-consciousness, which the spirit finds in reflecting on the concrete expressions it generates in history. The fuller the coincidence of spirit and concrete expression (embodiment), the greater the self-consciousness, the recognition of the self in the other. The goal is the removal of otherness. The goal is identity. To say that all (surviving) cultures are equally old thus means that the idea of progress is dropped, while the idea of process is maintained. Applying this position in an intercultural philosophical context, Kimmerle (2000a:15) advocates "more emancipation which is not necessarily combined with modernization of the Western style."

### Shifts

What Kimmerle (1997:101) has in mind becomes clear in his preference for the concept "shifts" ("Verschiebungen") over "progress" to denote changes that occur in the evaluation of other cultures on the part of Europeans. To evaluate an earlier culture from a later point of view constitutes "shifts, in which a greater adequacy is reached with regard to the evaluation of other cultures in terms of the total world situation". Critique from an intercultural perspective of the most adequate of the previous positions also should not be seen as progress, but as a more adequate way of evaluating other cultures: "That means that an evaluation 'from an intercultural perspective' is seen as the most adequate with regard to the contemporary situation of the world." It does not mean intercultural philosophy is uncritical. Being adequate with regard to a specific situation simultaneously implies a critical evaluation of it. Philosophy and art, "with regard to the crux of their expressions, know ... no progress, but mere shifts, a becoming other, that is conditioned by their relation to the general situation of the world."

Kimmerle (1995:118) proposes an alternative to development thinking. To him Nietzsche's concept of the eternal return of the same is an attempt to think change without direction and without a goal. The concept of change is the more general concept underlying the concept of development. Change does not have to imply development. Nietzsche's concept, however, presupposes a self-affirmation of life that has left the question about meaning far behind. It might still be too difficult for us. It may be easier and currently more acceptable to conceptualise change without direction according to the model of a dynamic equilibrium. This model imposes an alternative view of nature, one that is directed towards sustainability. Dynamic equilibrium is the opposite of the development model of thinking. It is dynamic in that it adjusts itself continuously. Development goes hand in hand with forward planning and future possibilities of action. Dynamic equilibrium is an attitude that reckons with and reacts to nature and the laws of social processes.

## Globalisation and regionalisation; universalism and relativism

Kimmerle (2002a:19) finds it strange that the phenomenon of the double movement of globalisation and regionalisation is almost completely absent from the ongoing work of official western university philosophy. The tendency to limit "real" philosophy to Europe has been interrupted here and there, but by no means overcome. Even in the UNESCO-initiated *Encyclopédie Philosophique Universelle* the title "philosophy" (singular) is reserved for the Western world ("Philosophie Occidentale"). Eastern "philosophies" (plural) are characterised as "Pensées Asiatiques". The third category ("Conceptualisation des Sociétés Traditionelles") is even further away from philosophy proper. This "conceptualisation" looks back, and would seem to be done with the help of Western scholars (see Kimmerle 2002c:1-2). A reason for this state of affairs might be the realisation that serious attention to the thinking done in other cultures would entail a revision of the very concept of philosophy and its history.

The debate in cultural anthropology and ethnology about universalism or relativism might be seen as a way in which the issue of globalisation and regionalisation is being addressed in western academic discourse. Cultural relativism as conceived by Franz Boas wants each culture to be understood in terms of its own standards. This notion is opposed by those who insist that mutual understanding and comparison between different cultures presuppose cultural universals. Kimmerle (2002a:20) warns that the way universals are formulated often reveals their being determined by Western culture. His proposed solution to the dilemma of universalism versus relativism is to presuppose cultural universals and to anticipate them, while

acknowledging that they are not concretely formulated and thus not nameable (or specifiable).

The universally valid determinations *are not concretely at hand*. This is Kimmerle's point, based on a new concept of difference. That is why intercultural philosophical dialogues are his preferred medium for articulating the commonalities and differences of the philosophies of various cultures; and hence the importance of clarifying the conditions of intercultural philosophical dialogues.

Kimmerle's alternative to the cultural relativism/universalism debate first deserves further clarification. He argues that in order to grasp the equal status and enduring difference of cultures in clear concepts, the particular and universal determinations of being human must be contrasted with each other. He (2000b:203; 2002a:20) refers to the Ghanaian philosopher K. Wiredu who identifies three "supreme laws of thought and conduct" that are universal: The law of the excluded third; the principle of induction; and in ethics the categorical imperative ("Act in conformity with that maxim, and that maxim only, which you can at the same time will to be a universal law"). These universals are contrasted with the particulars of his specific culture (the Akan) in the areas of religion and morals, conceptual issues, and the interpretation of democracy and human rights. Such investigation often leads to the discovery that presumed universals were actually cultural specifics, especially with regard to European concepts of values that through colonialism have been accepted by Africans as universals. It is thus important to formulate the universal determinations adequately, as well as the mixture of both universals and particulars which makes intercultural philosophy possible.

Kimmerle (2000b) proceeds from the assumption that each formulation of universal determinations is done in a specific language, and is thus presented in a particular cultural colouring. For example, Wiredu's third "supreme law" is formulated in the language of Kant ("categorical imperative"). Kant bases this claim to universal validation on the assumption that the categorical imperative is a law of pure reason. As such, like the categories of time and space, it is a so-called transcendental. Transcendentals are general and necessary laws of reason *per se* that are not affected by linguistic and cultural particularities. They are thus the conditions for the possibilities of objective, scientific, valid knowledge. Kimmerle argues that this claim has become indefensible in this form, as a result of the conditions of contemporary thinking. Thinking has become conscious of its determination by language.

This insight gives Kimmerle (2002c) occasion to distance his concept of intercultural philosophical dialogues from Habermas and Apel's notion of communicative rationality. He argues that they still accept the presuppositions of transcendental philosophy. They agree that reason can

no longer claim general validity with regard to the substance or content of thought and conduct. Yet they insist on the necessary and general *procedural* validity of rationality. In communicative rationality rational argumentation/discourse remains the final validation for each and every truth claim. If someone begs to differ, s/he will just have to formulate his or her point as a rational argument, according to the Aristotelean dictum of the force of the better argument. According to Habermas' basic concepts the "equal respect for *everybody* … covers not only people of the same kind, but also the person of the other as other" (quoted in Kimmerle 2002c:11-12). Kimmerle (2002c:12) says this approach does not do justice to the structural or radical strangeness of the other: "It amounts to the fact that I prescribe [to] the other that he or she has to share with me my way of reasonable argumentation. This means obviously that the other cannot tell me anything, which I as a person of reasonable arguments could not have told me myself." Intercultural philosophy as conceived by Kimmerle insists on the radical or at least structural strangeness of the other. From a western point of view the most radical others are members of cultures without written forms of communication and tradition.

Kimmerle proposes an alternative to Habermas' approach, on the basis of the insight into the close link between thinking and the language in which it occurs. *This implies that universals or transcendentals cannot be formulated, nor articulated, discursively.* If procedural rationality no longer qualifies as a universal, says Kimmerle (2000b:207), only one option remains: "to presuppose universal determinations of being human that cannot be formulated nor in any other way articulated discursively." The question then arises: how does one think something that cannot be formulated? Kimmerle suggests one possible answer to this question by making use of Derrida's notion of the future. Justice, democracy, friendship, and genuine philosophy are not given anywhere and can thus not be described as phenomena. Yet, they are coming. Kimmerle insists: this quasi-messianic expectation of these universals is one possible way of dealing with them in thought, without articulating them.

He also refers to Jan Hoogland's concept of an "enigmatic" universalism (Kimmerle 2002a:20). Enigmatic universalism proceeds from universals that remain unknown and unnameable (the true, the good, the just) although they are contained in existing forms, and can be unlocked to a certain extent through a comparative approach. Kimmerle explains what this means by referring to the model of language. All human beings have language, but the languages of the various peoples are different. There is no universal language to which all languages can be related. It is nevertheless possible to learn other languages and to translate from one language into another, to enable the mutual understanding of all people.

The emphasis is then on the concretely different in which the formally general is to be expressed. The latter can and must be sought in the midst of the particular and different.

Another word for universal in German is "durchgängig". The universals would then be the result of continuous passages through ("Durchgänge"), continuously traversing the different and particular. These "going throughs" (crossings, negotiations, navigations, going overs) can happen as intercultural philosophical dialogues.

## Intercultural philosophical dialogues

Kimmerle (2000b:207) explicates the nature of dialogues as conceived from the point of view of intercultural philosophy. Intercultural philosophy is dialogical philosophy, or dialogue-philosophy. And it aims at the practice of dialogues between all cultures. This includes the conviction that all cultures have their specific type or style of philosophy - also those that have primarily oral forms of communication and tradition. (Kimmerle 2002b). Therefore, the criterion for whether a culture has a philosophy that deserves to be treated equally to the philosophy of other cultures is no longer the possession of a written history, as in the comparative philosophy of Ulrich Libbrecht (1995; 1999). In every culture will occur situations of an impasse, in which its members have to ponder the reasons for its existence and thus become self-reflexive.

In the Western philosophical tradition it was Socrates who introduced the dialogical way of doing philosophy. He is a philosopher who did not write. Dialogue-philosophy and oral communication seem to belong together. An analysis of Socratic conversations as described by Plato should reveal the characteristic aspects and constitutive elements of dialogues. For this Kimmerle relies heavily on the work of Gernot Böhme (1988).

1. In dialogue-philosophy truth has the character of an event, which occurs during the exchange of different thoughts. Written philosophy must remain committed to the event character of philosophical truth.
2. Philosophical knowledge is not the property of any one person. The competence of the leader of the dialogue lies in the ability to ask the appropriate questions. Kimmerle (2002c) differs from Böhme's interpretation according to which Socrates, on the basis of his superior philosophical experience, dominates the dialogues. The "Socratic inverse" rather means that Socrates, by assuming the position of not knowing, tries to create the maximum possible equality between him and his partners in dialogue.
3. The partners in dialogue create knowledge in an intersubjective encounter. Knowledge has a meaning that transcends the individual. It appears in dialogical conversation. Again Kimmerle deviates from the interpretation of Socrates as the pedagogue (see Jaspers 1960:17; Fortunoff 1998). The way he leads the conversation has more to do with a method of cooperation in finding answers to philosophical questions.

4. The aporia, and resultant embarrassment and confusion, is the decisive factor in the dialogue. It is caused by the rejection of presumed knowledge. It is not about giving fixed answers, but about exposing yourself to questioning. The kind of knowledge that matters is not knowledge of something, but a form of consciousness, a becoming conscious of oneself.

5. Dialogue as a way to knowledge has two elements, giving reasons and accepting reasons. The latter appears to be passive, but is actually the active element in that it constitutes a possible consensus through approval or agreement.

6. Dialogue is a kind of interaction that minimises existing unequal relations of power. Socrates, by virtue of having thought through the issues comprehensively, is more competent than his partners in dialogue. But he assumes the equal status of his partners. The equality exists in spite of the difference in level of competence. The equality is created through a radical reversion in the conversation that serves the common goal, the search for knowledge. Socrates does not merely tolerate his partners in dialogue. He respects them. Without their contribution and the role they play in the dialogue the common goal would not have been reached. The mixing of the equal status and the different roles (giving and accepting reasons) creates the characteristic tension of these dialogues.

7. A transformation occurs in these dialogues of a love relationship between Socrates and his young companions to love for truth and a common search for it. Respect implies a cool distance between those with equal status but different roles. The relation between the partners in dialogue is according to Kimmerle (2002b; 2002c) better expressed in the Kantian notion of "Achtung" than in respect. Acknowledging the dignity of the other expresses the feeling of this relationship better. The feeling in "Achtung" is in Kant the feeling that accompanies an attitude of reason. In Kant this feeling is directed exclusively to the moral law. As a rational emotion, "Achtung" is the only emotion or feeling that can and may motivate morally good actions. Kimmerle (2002b; 2002c) has the impression that in the course of a dialogue the relationship of love between Socrates and his partners is transformed into this kind of rational feeling towards each other.

On the basis of what is said about the theory and practice of intercultural philosophy as dialogue-philosophy and of these elements of the Socratic dialogues, Kimmerle identifies the following aspects of dialogue-philosophy:

1. Intercultural dialogues are guided by a methodology of listening. As method this implies more than just courtesy and respect. It means to understand provisionally, tentatively. It means not immediately to give what is heard a definite place within one's own horizon of understanding, and the preparedness to revise what one thought one understood.

2. The main aspect is the simultaneousness of equality and difference, without which dialogues would not be possible. Tolerance is not an adequate concept to work with here. Tolerance means that one decides not to make use of your higher position, to treat an inferior as an equal, although she is not. The partners in dialogue deal with each other on the basis of complete equality, informed by the equal status and value of all philosophies.

3. Openness with regard to the expected results of the dialogue is linked to a preliminary interest in the topic on the part of the participants. The topic is in-between the participants in the dialogue. Around it power relations come into play, which are

to be minimised. The result of the dialogue is not determined by the superior position of a particular participant. The result appears in and through the contributions of all partners in the dialogue. Furthermore, dialogues, as fundamentally open, can also fail. Even if a participant fails to understand the position of another, respect remains on the basis of trust. "Achtung" is limited only by the principle of "Achtung" itself. Only those deserve "Achtung" who show it to others. The partners in dialogue are open towards the possibility that their own position would be shown to be false or in need of modification. This openness is informed by the insight that no philosophy is absolutely true, and that all philosophies are subject to improvement or modification.

4. The partners in dialogue proceed from the assumption that the other(s) has/ve something to say to them that they would in no way have been able to say of their own accord. This assumption goes hand in hand with the refusal to acknowledge any authority external to the dialogue (e. g. procedural rationality) as a contributor to the result of the dialogue. The goal of intercultural philosophical dialogues is not to reach agreement in everything, but in each case to formulate the agreements and disagreements.

## Questions From a South African Perspective

One of the legacies of "separate development" is that cultural difference is a contested topos in the Southern African discourse. Many colleagues I have talked to find it incomprehensible that anybody would seriously use the words "cultural difference" and "equality", as in "different, but equal" in one breath. Of course I then try to explain that a new, liberating concept of difference is involved, only to be reminded of how new attempts at securing Afrikaner exclusivity also refer to just such a new concept of difference. At the same time cultural sameness is also suspect, because it is mostly imposed, and its propagators often do not critically reflect on the ethnocentricity of presumed universals, that white is actually also a colour and English a language.

Intercultural philosophy is a philosophy of the in-between, also in this case. It does not want to uncritically appropriate European definitions, and simultaneously does not want to shun the questions posed by the historicity of the African situation (see Higgs & Smith 2002:106-108). In the search for an appropriate description of the nature of the in-between where intercultural philosophy is situated, I rely on Bulhan (1985), who has described the psychology of oppression, with reference to the work of Franz Fanon.

### *Cultural In-Betweenity*

Bulhan (1985:9) addresses the problem of the "content of the assumed universals in human psychology, given a multiplicity of cultures and diversities of experiences." He says every person is in certain respects like all other persons, like some persons, and like no other person. It is just not clear "exactly what each of us shares in common with *everyone*, with *some*

people, and with *no one*". Even more serious from his perspective is the historic imposition of Eurocentric "reality" upon those whom Europeans and their descendants dominate, giving rise to what he calls "a scandal of global dimensions in which … the discipline of psychology remains enmeshed". Everyone familiar with discourses in the African context can attest to the experience that "[d]reams of equality and dignity have not come true and old wounds continue to fester". Bulhan (1985:211) refers to Fanon's early article "The North African syndrome" in which it is revealed how the medical profession misdiagnoses "the profound and elusive afflictions of the oppressed". The vague and confusing ailments of North Africa are neither imaginary nor insoluble. They are the afflictions of tormented, persecuted, and oppressed persons. The psycho-existential crises are a result of cultural dislocation, economic exploitation, and a web of dehumanising stereotypes.

Bulhan (1985:193) presents a theory of identity development that he claims is derived from Fanon. He calls it "cultural In-Betweenity". This theory must answer the twin questions:

- How does a Black person defend herself against assaults on her identity experienced from Whites?
- By what means are the "pieces" pulled together, or "another self" forged?

Bulhan makes use of a paper Fanon delivered in 1956 on the topic "Racism and Culture". Fanon ([1956]:1) sketched the "fragmented and bloody history" of the coloniser's shift from the denial of culture on the part of the colonised, to the recognition of a native culture in a hierarchy of cultures, and finally to the concept of cultural relativity.

The culture eventually recognised is "mummified": "we witness the setting up of archaic, inert institutions, functioning under the oppressor's supervision and patterned like a caricature of formerly fertile institutions" ([1956]:3). The result is the absence of cultural confrontation. Eventually, in accordance with changed needs of the system of production, the techniques of exploitation are refined and camouflaged. Cultural relativity, says Fanon, continues racism in the form of the verbal mystification of the culture of the other.

The leading idea here is that racism is a cultural element, part of the "behaviour patterns arising from the encounter of man with nature and with his fellow-man" (Fanon [1956]:2). Racism is thus part of a greater whole, "the systematized oppression of a people."

How do the members of the oppressed group respond to this process? Fanon distinguishes three stages that Bulhan (1985:193) has applied in his theory of identity formation:

Assimilation / Capitulation: The "inferior" race imitate the oppressor in an attempt at deracialisation, and thus at gaining the status of being regarded as fully human. Imitation means internalisation of the attitudes

and convictions of the "superior" group vis-à-vis the "inferior" group, and thus implies self-hate and self-denial. This is a desperate affair: "Having judged, condemned, abandoned his cultural forms, his language, his food habits, his sexual behaviour, his way of sitting down, of resting, of laughing, of enjoying himself, the oppressed flings himself upon the imposed culture with the desperation of a drowning man" (Fanon [1956]:6). But she soon discovers that she will never shape up, that racism will remain as long as there is exploitation. The alienation proves to have been futile.

Revitalisation: The second stage is the return to original positions, called "revitalisation" by Bulhan (1985:193). It implies a reactive repudiation of the dominant culture and an equally defensive romanticism of the indigenous culture. But the culture returned to, must be cultivated - it is dying. The remaining embers are kept alive by anonymous traditionalists. "To the anonymity of the traditionalist [the former émigré] opposes a vehement and aggressive exhibitionism" (Fanon [1956]:7). Her passion is informed by the craving for forgiveness. She experiences a state of grace. Her aggressiveness is the mechanism that must ward off the paradox between "intellectual development, technical appropriation, highly differentiated modes of thinking and of logic, on the one hand, and a 'simple pure' emotional basis on the other" … "This falling back on archaic positions having no relation to technical development is paradoxical. The institutions thus valorized no longer correspond to the elaborate methods of action already mastered". Revalorisation does not mean re-conception, being "grasped anew, dynamized from within. It is shouted". But even though paradoxical, the stage of revitalisation represents an intense struggle with the culture: "The logical end of this will to struggle is the total liberation of the national territory. In order to achieve this liberation, the inferiorized man brings all his resources into play, all his acquisitions, the old and the new, his own and those of the occupant" (Fanon [1956]:8). And the struggle for liberation differs from the struggle of conquest in being devoid of racism.

Radicalisation: Bulhan (1985:193) describes the third stage as a synthesis reached between the dominated and the dominant cultures and an unambiguous commitment toward radical change. Both dominated and dominant cultures are transformed as a new culture emerges, with unique aspects not found in either of the two other cultures. Fanon stresses the opening up of the previously rigid culture of the dominant group to the culture of people "who have really become brothers. The two cultures can affront each other, enrich each other." He concludes: "universality resides in this decision to recognise and accept the reciprocal relativism of different cultures, once the colonial status is irreversibly excluded" (Fanon [1956]:9).

The "cultural In-Between", says Bulhan, is the region of cultural contact, confrontation and mutual influence. The dominated and dominant

cultures coalesce with considerable regularity and intensity. In the process the one modifies the other and each in consequence loses its original character. The inhabitants of the zone of cultural In-Betweenity can at any time go in any of the three original directions, with one or another being dominant at any given time.

I have brought Fanon and Bulhan into the picture on account of their use of the concept culture in connection with the historical, socio-economic and political reality of domination and with the experience of being dominated. As I have shown above, Kimmerle knows that intercultural philosophy must always take this into account. When he speaks of the equal status of all cultures and thus of their philosophies it implies a protest and a counter to this "scandal". And yet, the problem of domination and unequal economic and social conditions remains. It affects the culture of the dominated, so that one cannot really speak of "African culture" without keeping in mind that this is a culture of the dominated. I refer to Fanon's emphasis on transformation in the zone of cultural In-Betweenity in order to explicate Kimmerle's insistence that intercultural dialogues are not about making the differences disappear, but about creating a new, third position that is different from both starting positions. There is nothing neutral about the culture of the oppressed, nor about the culture of the oppressor. Both must be changed into something new.

## The definition of culture

On the European philosophical scene, at least the small corner of it known to me, Heinz Kimmerle represents a fresh breeze on account of his acceptance of the lack of validity of the old universals. But I want to add: the ongoing reference to universals, which we expect from the future will not entail false universality. It is practised as concrete "Durchgänge" or crossings, and must listen especially to those who have been silenced even within their own "cultures" (see Hofmeyr 1996). Kimmerle conceives intercultural philosophy as critical theory. Dialogues are aimed at mutual understanding and learning from each other, but also, and through the former, at transformation. As Deleuze and Guattari (1994:108) formulate: "We do not lack communication. On the contrary, we have too much of it. We lack creation. *We lack resistance to the present.*" The "counter-cultural" dimension of the intercultural must be emphasised. The reserves for resistance within a culture, or within sub-cultures of a culture, must be sought and strengthened.

I agree with Fornet-Betancourt (2000:13) that cultures are not ends in themselves. They are "reserves of humanity" and as such merit respect and recognition unconditionally. This is an ethical imperative. They only have value in so far as they allow the subjects to be subjects, or, in Kimmerle's

terminology, to survive, and I am sure he does not mean mere, crude survival. Fornet-Betancourt (2000:13) says: "the ultimate meaning of this ethical requirement is not rooted in assuring the preservation or conservation of cultures as static entities transmitting absolute ontological values; rather, it is the guarantee of the personal, free realisation of those subjects acting in them."

Culture is thus the reserves of a tradition of origin that can be appropriated as a point of support for identity-formation. Identity is "understood as a permanent process of liberation that requires a task of constant discernment in the interior of the cultural universe with which each person identifies" (Fornet-Betancourt 2000:14; see also Fornet-Betancourt 2002). Cultures are not already in themselves the solution to the problem of an alternative to neo-liberal globalisation (= homogenisation). Yet, without taking cultures seriously in their respective visions of the world, an effective alternative will evade us. Cultures are not the solution, but the path to a solution, by presenting various perspectives of the world that concern everyone. To this I want to add that the only concern is not enrichment. Equally valid is allowing people a sense of belonging.

Is there thus such a "thing" as (a) culture? Please note that I am not asking: do cultures exist? (see Van Binsbergen 1999). I agree with Shepperson and Tomaselli (2001:45) that there rather is "a set of related forms of behaviour, conduct and action which constitute the *project of culture.*" They follow Peirce's speech act theory in looking for the verb in the noun culture. They also make another valid and related point: the concept of culture originated in the environment of specifically European problems that were the result of the emergence of modernity. It has been exported, as has been the concepts democracy and imperialism, among others – a mixed bag. Thus, "every claim to cultural independence, the democratisation of culture and similar issues, is derived from the export of a very specifically modern context of meaning."

Heinz Kimmerle addresses the manner of this export. Its histories were often violent and destructive. Intercultural philosophy is aimed at curtailing the suffering. Please note: it is the spread of modernity that makes possible the dialogue in the first place. But that does not necessarily imply that the dialogue is taking place. With regard to African participants, the view is still strong that they are now where Europeans were long ago, that they are looked at as others who are behind in time, belonging to "developing" nations, still to reach fully "developed" status. Therefore Kimmerle's insistence on the equality of cultures.

### The equality of cultures

Charles Taylor (1994) has illuminated the tricky issue of the equality of

cultures. He traces the origin of the ideal of being true to myself, of authenticity, back to Rousseau and Herder. According to the latter each of us has an original way of being human, each person has her own "measure". This view eventually shifted into a moral position – in order to be truly human, I have to do it my way. Herder also applied this notion to the culture-bearing entity of a "volk", or a people. Taylor (1994:79) sees this as an offshoot of the decline of hierarchical society, in which we receive our identities from our social positions. The ideal of authenticity undermines socially derived identification.

Taylor argues that this ideal of generating one's original way of being from within is a misconception generated by the monological tendency of mainstream modern philosophy. The dialogical character of human life, discernible in the fact that language acquisition goes hand in hand with identity formation, has become invisible in the process. This process of identity formation is closely linked to the recognition given or withheld by others. On a social plane withholding recognition is widely seen as a form of oppression: "The projection of an inferior or demeaning image on another can actually distort and oppress, to the extent that the image is internalized" (Taylor 1994:81).

Against this background Taylor distinguishes between two types of politics: a politics of dignity and a politics of difference. Both are politics of recognition. The politics of dignity, replacing the politics of honour of the pre-modern era, is a politics of universalism, emphasising the equal dignity of all citizens, and thus their equal rights. The politics of difference recognises everyone for her unique identity. But recognition does not mean the same in each case:

> With the politics of equal dignity, what is established is meant to be universally the same, an identical basket of rights and immunities; with the politics of difference, what we are asked to recognize is the unique identity of this individual or group, their distinctness from everyone else. The idea is that it is precisely this distinctness that has been ignored, glossed over, assimilated to a dominant or majority identity. And this assimilation is the cardinal sin against the ideal of authenticity.
>
> (Taylor 1994:82)

The politics of difference, as one variation of the politics of recognition, in conflict with the other, the politics of dignity, operates on the basis of the premise that all cultures deserve equal respect. Taylor (1994:98), in a formulation that reminds of Kimmerle's argument for the equality of cultures (all existing cultures are equally old), finds something valid in the presumption of the equal worth of all cultures. The claim of the presumption is that all human cultures that have animated whole societies over some considerable stretch of time have something important to say to all human beings. But the

presumption is merely a starting position, a kind of hypothesis, which must now be verified through the study of all cultures. This study implies that the degree of difference must move away from being absolute, so that it enters my range of appreciation. Taylor uses Gadamer's term of the fusion of horizons to denote a process that allows for the development of new categories of comparison and for a transformed set of standards, enabling me to recognise worth where formerly I have seen none.

The demand for recognition of difference, however, is more radical than that, and this claim Taylor finds problematical. What is demanded is that cultures must be recognised as of equal worth in principle, before any investigation has been done. Taylor (1994:99) objects that if the judgement of value is to register something independent of our own wills and desires, it cannot be dictated by a principle of ethics. Taylor (1994:100) finds it patronising, and says other cultures want respect, not condescension: "A favorable judgment made prematurely would be not only condescending but ethnocentric. It would praise the other for being like us."

Is this critique applicable to Kimmerle's insistence on the equal status of cultures and their philosophies? The first issue to settle is whether Kimmerle in fact does make the further, more radical claim, if we grant that the first claim, or presumption, has merit. Does Kimmerle claim the equal status of all cultures as a matter of principle, as a statement that does not have the status of a hypothesis and thus is not in need of verification or falsification? I propose that there is something more radical in Kimmerle's position than a mere "presumption" of equality, as a point of departure for an investigation. The "Achtung" in intercultural philosophical dialogues has to be practised with regard to every partner with the only, but strict exception that this partner has himself "Achtung" for others.

Kimmerle's conceptualisation of the equality or equal status of cultures is based in his definition of difference. This, he claims, allows him to move beyond the binary oppositions of universalism versus particularism. Universal determinations cannot be articulated discursively. This means that the continuous passages through the different and particular must first take place before determinations adequate for the contemporary world context can be formulated. Kimmerle's proposal for the method of these passages is intercultural philosophical dialogues. The participants in these dialogues are recognised as representing cultures that are of equal status. This does not mean that African culture(s), for instance, is/are equal to Western-European culture(s) in all aspects (and vice versa). Kimmerle (2002a:22) does not rule out progress and highpoints of development. But these must be determined concretely in their particular areas, and with regard to both their positive and negative aspects. Scientific-technological progress does not of necessity imply progress or superiority in the area of the specifically human questions.

The equality hypothesis does say that a particular philosopher, if she is worthy of that name, offers an adequate appraisal of the thoughts and feelings of her time and place and proposes adequate alternatives. The place and time is not really compared to any other in terms of worth. Is it a better place and time, or worse than another? What indeed would be the criteria to decide that? The place and time is not judged, but taken seriously as a valid instance of the human condition, and in that sense it is of equal status with all other time-places all over the globe, and throughout history. And because all time-places are linked in some way or another, and progressively so as the result of the information technology revolution, it belongs to adequately conceptualising the thoughts and feelings of a specific time-place that the dimension of the inter, and the impossibility of articulating universals, and the need for dialogue, should be reflected. If a particular philosophy should negate these shifts in reality, it would be disqualified as inadequate. The fact that it seeks dialogue is indicative of the experience of an aporia. I would then suggest that the formulation "equal validity of cultures" could with good effect replace the contested equal status hypothesis.

Kimmerle (2002a:66) refers to Heidegger's realisation of the veiled nature of truth, and the resulting humility of his thinking, that is related to the self-limitation of intercultural philosophy: none of the philosophies, all determined by culture, has a monopoly on absolute truth. A new concept of philosophy would entail the view that philosophy stands in a fundamental relationship with being human and with human culture as such. The extension of European philosophy over all of humanity requires regionalisation as a counter movement to globalisation. Kimmerle (2002a:67) refers to Senghaas' observation that all cultures in the process develop internal conflicts which lead to self-reflexivity. Becoming self-reflexive in conflict and emergency situations of a culture is the birth hour of philosophy in the history of that culture. According to Hegel (quoted in Kimmerle 2002a:67) such crises are caused by contradictions between what members of a culture desire from life and what they are offered by the institutions and structures of their society. Such situations occur in the history of all communities. A cultural community that exists in conflict with itself has to think again about the foundations of its existence and future in the midst of other cultures and nature. Philosophy originates in such a culture when these questions are pondered with the tools of thinking. When this happens, this philosophy will be knowable for philosophers from other cultures. There are no differences of rank between philosophies of different cultures. The equality of philosophies is determined by the fact that a philosophy worthy of that name reflects the questionability of its situation and investigates solutions with the characteristic means of reason.

The knowability of philosophies from a culture to philosophers from other cultures must be considered along with Kimmerle's (1994:158) earlier statement that African Philosophy cannot yet be adequately grasped in its specificities – especially not by a non-African. Does this imply that Africans are in principle not knowable to Europeans and vice versa, and that my "position" is thus immune to critique by the "other"? It is important to consider the context of Kimmerle's remark. Posing the question what philosophy can contribute to the struggle against neo-Colonialism, Kimmerle (1994:156-157) draws attention to the fact that this field is controlled by politicians and businesspeople, and philosophy should not pretend to be better at politics and business than their practitioners (as neo-Marxist philosophers would have it). Philosophers should do their own thing, and that is to critically analyse the ways of thinking of their time, as presupposed also by politicians and businesspeople, and to suggest alternative ways of thinking. Kimmerle differs from Marx's view that philosophy is not politically effective on account of being part of the superstructure. He cites as an example of a possible influence of philosophy on politics, business, science and technology, with their focus on optimal development, the insight that philosophy knows no development. Neither does art. It is of the same value at any time. Philosophers from Africa and the Western world could therefore cooperate on the basis of complete equality. Kimmerle's (1994:158) own contribution to this cooperation is aimed at no more than freeing the way to and the perspective on African Philosophy for a Western-European audience.

Another example is given in the context of intercultural philosophical dialogues. They challenge politicians and businessmen to make their interaction with partners from other cultures more dialogical, however in the framework of existing differences of power. Against this historical background he insists that African Philosophy cannot yet be adequately grasped in its specificities, not by Africans, and especially not by non-Africans.

In order to stress the importance for intercultural philosophy of the effects of the history of colonialism and domination, I refer to Kimmerle's (1996:19) positive use of the work of FM Wimmer (1990) who wants to reflect on the forms of thinking of the Western-European tradition as they were developed *before* the colonial phase of their history, in order to reveal the deformation of the way of seeing that has contributed to the European superiority complex. Wimmer ascribes all differences between people living in different regions of the world to culture, and the fact that even philosophers have participated in looking for the cause of differences in race, leads to his insistence that the Eurocentric approach to philosophy be regarded within the context of racism. The assessment of the other as savage, exotic or heathen that characterises European-Western thinking

from the start until the nineteenth century, is devoid of the fundamental respect for the other that must be presupposed for intercultural philosophy. This has gone from bad to worse in the colonial period, before the process of the global convergence of cultures in the post-colonial period has placed the concept of an intercultural philosophy as something new on the agenda of philosophical discussion. Intercultural philosophy as conceptualised by Kimmerle, Wimmer and others thus addresses the problem of on the one hand a tradition of domination and oppression based in "othering" and exclusivist discourses on difference, and on the other hand the domination implied in a presumed sameness when the criteria of sameness are defined from the point of view of the powerful culture, the one that drives the processes of globalisation.

Kimmerle (2002a:68) applies the early Hegel's "historical view of philosophical systems" to the cultural differences between philosophies. He says the cultural differences do not concern the specifically philosophical. The specifically philosophical is the same in the most diverse cultural frameworks. That is why it is knowable by philosophers from other cultures. This argument, oriented to the aporia in each culture as the starting point of philosophy, reminds of a recent speech of the American sociologist Daniel Bell in which he says with regard to the great religions and their corresponding cultures:

> The second [dimension of culture] is the set of meanings that arise when individuals face the existential dilemmas that ineluctably confront all human beings and groups; the fact of death, the responses of grief, the nature of tragedy, the definition of courage, the character of obligation. The answers vary, because that is the *history* of human cultures, those that arise from the different experiences that shape life – work on the soil or in the forests, in the mines or the seas, or with machines or the mind. The answers vary, but the foundational *questions* are invariably the same. And that is why human groups and cultures can talk to one another across space and time.
>
> (Bell 2001/2:7-8)

The sought universal is thus the human, if we accept the existentialist interpretation that nothingness belongs essentially to being human. The universal is lack, and thus open. We must just always accompany all talk of the questionability of being with the warning as expressed by the French rock group "Troublemakers", in a song that goes more or less as follows: "Everybody says they do not know what is going on, because nobody wants to know what is going on. They all fear the revolution. As for us, we want the revolution." We must beware of the mystification of lack, especially when we undertake dialogues with and on a continent where lack is first and foremost lack of food, lack of security, lack of opportunities, not as something natural, but as historically produced.

## Contextual philosophy?

I have above used the term time-place instead of culture. In the South African context still, and probably for the foreseeable future, the terminology of intercultural philosophy generates misunderstandings that are not to the point. Intercultural philosophy as conceived by Heinz Kimmerle is something different altogether from what people hear when the term is used. I therefore propose to continue with what Kimmerle calls intercultural philosophy, but under the name of contextual philosophy.

This term resonates with contextual theology. In the Final Declaration of the First Assembly of the Ecumenical Association of Third World Theologians (EATWOT) that took place in Dar-es-Salaam, Tanzania in 1976, theologians from Asia, Africa and Latin America stated as follows:

> The theologies from Europe and North America are dominant today in our churches and represent one form of cultural domination. They must be understood to have arisen out of situations related to those countries, and therefore must not be uncritically adopted without our raising the question of their relevance in the context of our countries. Indeed we must … reflect on the realities of our own situations and interpret the Word of God in relation to those realities. We reject as irrelevant an academic type of theology that is divorced from action. We are prepared for a radical break in epistemology which makes commitment the first act of theology and engages in critical reflection on the praxis of the reality of the Third World…
>
> Theology is not neutral. In a sense all theology is committed, conditioned notably by the socio-cultural context in which it is developed. The Christian theological task in our countries is to be self-critical of the theologians' conditioning by the value system of their environment.
>
> (quoted in Witvliet 1984:27)

Witvliet (1984) interprets the reference and objection to an "academic type of theology" in terms of Western theology's rootedness in an idealistic and rationalistic scientific way of thinking which carries the pretension of universal validity. In reality this amounts to absolutising a particular context that goes hand in hand with marginalising and despising the experience of others. Contextual theology challenges this way of thinking, as well as the dualism of theory and practice in Western theology. "Contextuality is focussed on the whole: it is that form of theology which sees the otherness of the other (the Other), and in so doing at the same time recognizes its own social and cultural limitations. It represents a way of doing theology which is not afraid of the tension between particularity and universality, between history and eschatology" (Witvliet 1984:28).

Contextual philosophy also proceeds from the assumption that all philosophy is contextual. Western philosophy from Plato to Hegel has not

realised this. Hence its ethnocentrism. Secondly, contextual philosophy takes the whole of its context into account, including culture. Culture may be a more or less important factor in a particular context, compared to another. But socio-economic factors as they relate to culture, and vice versa, are also explicitly taken into account. Kimmerle's argument for dropping the word "progress" in favour of "shift" is exactly the argument contextual theologians have been making for some time now. Whether a particular philosophy is a "good" one, or a better one than another, is not decided in terms of where it finds itself on the scale of progress (the criteria of which are being dictated by Western science – by the powerful), but in terms of the adequacy and relevance of that philosophy with regard to its particular context - which always remains embedded in the general world situation.

Contextual philosophy has its roots squarely in critical theory. Kimmerle also conceives intercultural philosophy as critical theory, in that it wants to contribute to reducing suffering and terror. Contextual philosophy would see culture critically as sometimes (often) contributing to suffering and terror, especially in cases where a culture enforced by tradition and its agents is not adequate to the demands of a particular context. Contextual philosophy would strengthen the emergence of a new culture, not discarding the old, but treating it as a resource, transforming it in the process (see Fornet-Betancourt 2000).

Contextual theology sees the "epistemological break" with traditional Western theology in its being a theology "from below". Its interlocutors are the poor and the marginalised. By proposing the name contextual philosophy I want to explicate the dimension of an alternative way of knowing determined by context. I want to link on to what Kimmerle says about universals, that they are (yet) unnameable. In his critique of Horkheimer and Adorno's *Dialectics of Enlightenment* Habermas (1983:522) describes his predecessors' dilemma in terms of the inability of instrumental reason to formulate concepts that would express the perspective of the object of knowledge – manipulated, violated, deformed nature. He proposes substituting the paradigm of the philosophy of consciousness with that of the philosophy of language that implies inter-subjective communication aimed at reaching consensus under the ideal circumstances for dialogue. This dilemma is one of epistemology. Contextual philosophical dialogues are not only important on account of a greater potential for solving the problems faced today on a planetary scale, but our very ability to know adequately is at stake. In a recent book the Polish journalist Ryszard Kapuscinski (2001:321-323) says Africa has from the start been visited by the worst human types: robbers, fortune seekers, slave traders, mercenaries. Colonial control has merely given this situation a different face. One of the consequences is that European colonial languages have never developed an adequate language to describe Africa:

> Naturally, respect for other cultures, the desire to learn about them, to find a common language, were the furthest things from the minds of such folk …. As a result … the world's cultures – instead of becoming versed in one another's ways, drawing closer, permeating one another – became mutually hostile or, at best, indifferent.
>
> …
>
> The cultural monopoly of crude know-nothings had a further consequence: European languages did not develop vocabularies adequate to describe non-European worlds. Entire areas of African life remain unfathomed, untouched even, because of a certain European linguistic poverty. … The richness of every European language is a richness in ability to describe its own culture, represent its own world. When it ventures to do the same for another culture, however, it betrays its limitations, underdevelopment, semantic weakness.

In the quoted passage finding a common language and the development of vocabularies adequate to describing the African experience are two sides of the same coin. In South Africa such vocabularies do exist – in the form of the other official languages. One of the major tasks of the philosophy of the inter, whether as intercultural or as contextual philosophy, is to promote article 6 of the South African constitution.

My proposal regarding the name of the kind of philosophy I have in mind is tentative. One objection might be that the dimension of the inter, of in-betweenity, and the emphasis on dialogue is lost in the name contextual philosophy. I want to remind of the original meaning of contextual. The dictionary meanings of *context* are:

- The part of a text or statement that surrounds a particular word or passage and determines its meaning.
- The circumstances in which an event occurs; a setting.
- The discourse that surrounds a language unit and helps to determine its interpretation.
- The set of facts or circumstances that surround a situation or event; as in "the historical context".
- That which surrounds, and gives meaning to, something else.

These meanings, all relevant for the meaning of "contextual philosophy", are derived from the Latin *contextus*, the past participle of *contexere*, which means to join together (com- + texere), or to weave (American Heritage Dictionary). "To weave" has convinced me that contextual philosophy is an appropriate term. It immediately reminds of Kimmerle's (1985:76) use of Lyotard's "patchwork of minorities". This image, he says, allows both – difference and oneness(es). The design of a quilt is not the product of arbitrariness, nor of the conscious mind, but of fantasy, aesthetic sensitivity and judgment. The multiplicity is the encompassing space and relativising in-between of meaningful unities, which must be preserved as best as possible.

## Conclusion

In this paper I have sketched the main elements of Heinz Kimmerle's conceptualization of intercultural philosophy: a new concept of difference that makes possible a new take on "different and equal", which is the foundation for real dialogue. I have interrogated the concept of culture in intercultural philosophy, and have argued that for the South African context sufficient emphasis must be placed on power relations as they impact on cultures and the legacy of a history of cultural domination. I have tried to show that Kimmerle's notion of the equality of cultures implies in the first instance that a particular context is not judged in terms of criteria foreign to it, but taken seriously as a valid instance of the human condition, and in that sense it is of equal status with all other situations all over the globe, and throughout history. And because all "localities" are linked in some way or another, and progressively so as the result of the information technology revolution, it belongs to adequately conceptualising the thoughts and feelings of a specific locality that the dimension of the inter, and the impossibility of articulating universals, and the need for dialogue, should be reflected. If a particular philosophy should negate these shifts in reality, it would be disqualified as inadequate. The fact that it seeks dialogue is indicative of the experience of an aporia. It is lack, incompleteness, that is universal.

In conclusion I tentatively propose "contextual philosophy" as a more appropriate name for intercultural philosophy, in the light of the heavy baggage carried by the concept "culture" in South African. This term not only resonates with contextual theology in taking into account the socio-economic situatedness of all thinking (to which culture belongs), and shares the commitment to liberation, and the struggle against racism, but also carries with it the original meaning of context – to weave, or join together, from different and equal units, an in-betweenity, or inter.

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**Endnotes**

1.  All translations are mine.

# Revisiting the Virtue of Courage in Aristotle

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## Abstract

*Aristotle views the courageous man as someone who endures and fears the right things, for the right motive, in the right manner, and at the right time, given that a courageous man feels and acts according to the merits of each case and as reason directs him. Aristotle is guided to some degree by distinctions inherent in ordinary terms but his methodology allows him to recognize states of courage for which no names exist. This paper also deals with Aristotle's unique emphasis on courage as linked to the battlefield for he considers the concept of courage as one of those many terms that are ambiguous. His insistence that the mean is a "relative mean" and not an objectively calculated mathematical mean, indicates his inclination towards practicality and empiricism. Developing the virtue, courage, in his view remains the shared responsibility of all citizens.*

Aristotle defines virtues (*aretai*) in terms of the passions which they involve and the kind of context and conduct in which they are displayed. Man is a rational being, and hence his purpose will be the attainment of wisdom. The actions which bring one to the realization of this perfection of living according to reason are called virtues. Virtue, for Aristotle, is not the end, but the means to attain perfection, and consists in a conscious action fulfilled according to reason. He breaks down virtue into four aspects which are: a state that decides in mean, consisting in a mean, the mean relative to us, which is defined by reference to reason (Nicomachean Ethics 1107a in Aristotle, 1987). He also states that there are two kinds of virtue: one of thought or intellect (*dianoitike*) and one of character or actions (*ethike*) and that virtue is mainly a state of character and is achieved by habit.

According to Aristotle, the intellectual virtues include: scientific knowledge (*episteme*), artistic or technical knowledge (*techne*), intuitive reason (*nous*), practical wisdom (*phronesis*), and philosophic wisdom (*sophia*). Scientific knowledge is a knowledge of what is necessary and universal. Artistic or technical knowledge is a knowledge of how to make things, or of how to develop a craft. Intuitive reason is the process that

establishes the first principles of knowledge. Practical wisdom is the capacity to act in accordance with the good of humanity while philosophic wisdom is the combination of intuitive reason and scientific knowledge.

In Aristotle's view the moral virtues, on the one side, include: courage, temperance, self-discipline, moderation, modesty, humility, generosity, friendliness, truthfulness, honesty, justice. The moral vices, on the other side, include: cowardice, self-indulgence, recklessness, wastefulness, greed, vanity, untruthfulness, dishonesty, injustice. Acts of virtue bring honour to an individual, acts of vice bring dishonour to an individual. In the determination of ethical virtues, Aristotle is in compliance with the whole of Greek Socratic-Platonic thought in which science or knowledge is virtue. But Aristotle recognizes the fact that man is not pure reason, that he also has passions; that he is a rational being. In this, Aristotle goes far beyond the simple Greek intellectualism of other philosophers.

# I

Before I venture into Aristotle's ideas about courage a more specific exposition of his doctrine of the mean is essential. He states: *"If then, as we say, good craftsmen look to the mean as they work, and if virtue, like nature, is more accurate and better than any form of art, it will follow that virtue has the quality of hitting the mean. I refer to moral virtue, for this is concerned with emotions and actions, in which one can have excess or deficiency or a due mean. For example, one can be frightened or bold, feel desire or anger or pity, and experience pleasure and pain in general, either too much or too little, and in both cases wrongly; whereas to feel these feelings at the right time, on the right occasion, towards the right people, for the right purpose and in the right manner, is to feel the best amount of them, which is the mean amount – and the best amount is of course the mark of virtue. And similarly there can be excess, deficiency, and the due mean in actions. Now feelings and actions are the objects with which virtue is concerned; and in feelings and actions excess and deficiencies are errors, while the mean amount is praised, and constitutes success; and to be praised and to be successful are both marks of virtue. Virtue, therefore, is a mean state in the sense that it is able to hit the mean."* (Nicomachean Ethics 1106b14-b28 in Aristotle, 1973, 1975, 1984, 1987). Therefore, every ethical virtue is a condition intermediate between two other states, one involving excess, and the other deficiency. In this respect, Aristotle says, the virtues are no different from technical skills: every skilled worker knows how to avoid excess and deficiency, and is in a condition intermediate between two extremes. The courageous person, for example, judges that some dangers are worth facing and others not, and experiences fear to a degree

that is appropriate to his circumstances. He lies between the coward, who flees every danger and experiences excessive fear, and the rash person, who judges every danger worth facing and experiences little or no fear. Aristotle holds that this same topography applies to every ethical virtue: all are located on a map that places the virtues between states of excess and deficiency. He is careful to add, however, that the mean is to be determined in a way that takes into account the particular circumstances of the individual.

According to Sparshott (1994:150) the most noted characteristic of Aristotle's definition of courage is its intricacy. This intricacy arises from the subtlety of the relations between courage on the battlefield and other manifestations of endurance, on the one hand, and alternative sources of military success – such as desperation – on the other. As to the unique emphasis of courage linked to the battlefield one needs to accept that Aristotle treats the word and concept of courage as one of those many terms that are ambiguous, but of which all the related applications should be explained by one paradigm case, much in the same way that substance is the paradigm of "being". In this respect the logical deduction is that military courage is the paradigm of courage in general. Moreover Sparshott (1994) is of the opinion that the anomalous relation of courage to pleasure and the two concomitant feelings of aggressiveness and endurance should not be a cause of confusion to philosophers. In the first place, virtues are defined by the situations that call for them: in the case of courage, those that inspire fear - in a word, dangers. But handling fear really does involve two quite different modes of appropriate response namely handling the fear itself, and doing something about what inspires it. And in the military realm that involves knowing when to advance and when to retreat - and being able to do either positively. Sparshott (1994:150-151) relates the double nature of courage to the specific military method of upper-class Greeks, the hoplite phalanx. It was a method that called for the utmost discipline – a quality with which the Greek and Greek-trained armies of Alexander the Great overran the neighbouring empires. In the phalanx, the heavily armoured Greek soldier was almost invulnerable: his left side was guarded by his shield, his right side by the shield on the left arm of his neighbour. But this worked only so long as the line was intact. As soon as someone ran away, there was a gap in the line through which inroads could be made. The same was true if someone lost his cool and ran towards the enemy. But, although this fact must have made Aristotle's point graphically clear to his upper-class audience, as only those who could afford the expensive equipment could join the phalanx, the point seems clear enough without that.

The Greek word for courage is "andreia" which literally means manly courage or bravery. Morever it refers to the state or quality of mind or spirit

that enables one to face danger, fear or vicissitudes with self-possession and resolution. It is a mental or moral strength to face danger with fear and reflects to the quality of mind or spirit that enables one to face difficulty, danger, pain and any adverse circumstances. According to Leighton (1987: 79) since virtue and with that courage is developed through habituation in regard to the relevant actions and passions, the acquisition of the virtue courage would seem to involve learning to act and to feel certain passions in the right way, at the right time. Aristotle's explanation of courage is thus also contained under his doctrine of the mean. For him, courage is a mean with respect to things that inspire confidence or fear. By "things that inspire confidence or fear" Aristotle simply means the formal objects of confidence and fear, where confidence is apparently meant as the opposite of fear. A more pointed formulation of the same thesis may therefore be this: Courage is the mean between fearfulness and fearlessness. Excess of fearfulness is cowardice, says Aristotle, whereas excess of fearlessness is an unnamed vice. The virtue to be found in-between is courage.

For Aristotle any account of the virtues requires that virtues be exemplified in concrete lives. Humans become virtuous by tending to copy the lives of virtuous people. Hereby is meant that "to copy" is not some mechanical imitation, though that may not be a bad place to start, but rather it involves having the same feelings, emotions, desires that the virtuous person has when he acts (Hauerwas, 1993:251). Aristotle observes that it is a hard task to be good: *"Hence also it is no easy task to find the middle, e.g. to find the middle of a circle is not for every one but for him who knows; so too, any one can get angry – that is easy – or give or spend money; but to do this to the right person, to the right extent, at the right time, with the right motive, and in the right way, that is not for every one, nor is it easy; wherefore goodness is both rare and laudable and noble"* (Nicomachean Ethics, 1109a 24-29 in Aristotle, 1987). The virtues, for Aristotle, do not only require disposition for pertinent action, but also an attitude that personifies the appropriate emotions and desires. In order to become virtuous one needs to be educated through the gradual buildup of the required qualities. Aristotle notes that: *"we are masters of our actions from the beginning right to the end, if we know the particular facts, but though we control the beginning of our states of character the gradual progress is not obvious, any more than it is in illnesses; because it was in our power, however, to act in this way or not in this way, therefore the states are voluntary".* (Nicomachean Ethics, 1114b 31-33 in Aristotle, 1984, 1987). Courage is crucial to all the virtues becoming "voluntary" in Aristotle because as already discussed courage is the mean between fear and confidence. Aristotle thought courage and temperance particularly important in order to acquire any virtue since courage and temperance are the virtues

that form what he assumed were the most basic human desires namely fear and pleasure. The purpose of the virtues for Aristotle is not to repress such desires but to form human desire to fear rightly. Reckless people cannot be people of courage because they lack fear. They may do what courageous people do but they are not courageous as they lack the proper feeling. Aristotle thus assumes that the descriptions of actions are inseparable from the character of the agent. That certain actions are always wrong is but a way of saying that no virtuous person could ever foresee performing such an action. Accounts of the virtues do not exclude rules or actions that are prohibited, but rather insist that rules and such actions affect negatively the practices of the community necessary for sustaining virtuous people.

## II

Aristotle in a synergetic way distinguishes between moral courage or true courage and "five kinds of courage inappropriately so-called":

a) There is political courage which is the type that looks mostly like true courage. The "citizen-soldier" who has this kind of courage stands resolute against great danger due to a sense of shame. The person of political courage stands steadfast against great peril with the aim of avoiding reproaches and legal penalties and of winning honour but not for the sake of the noble. Hence the bravest people seem to be those among whom cowards are held in dishonour and courageous men in honour (Nicomachean Ethics 1116 a 15-35 in Aristotle, 1962, 1970, 1973, 1975, 1984, 1987).

b) The next one is the courage of experience and expertise such as shown by professional soldiers. A professional soldier may appear brave to those inexperienced with war because the latter tend to overestimate dangers, whereas the former knows there are many false alarms. Professional soldiers, however, may become cowards whenever the danger subjects them to too severe a strain and they are inferior in numbers and equipment. For citizen-troops look upon flight as a disgrace, while professional soldiers go into action assuming their own superiority, but when they find themselves outclassed they flee, fearing death more than dishonour. Aristotle is of the opinion that the courageous man is not that kind of fellow.

c) The third kind of courage is the courage of passion. A person manifesting this passion stands firm against great danger due to irrational feelings such as love or anger. In Aristotle's words: *"the form of courage inspired by passion seems to be the most natural, and develops into true courage if choice and the right motive be added. Men then as well as beasts*

*experience pain when they are angry and pleasure when they take their revenge. Those, however, who fight on this account, though valiant fighters, are not courageous; for they do not act for honour's sake ("kalon"), nor as the rule ("logos") directs but it springs from feeling ("pathos"). However they have something akin ("paraplesion") to true courage".* (Nicomachean Ethics 1117a3-9 in Aristotle, 1975). Thus someone may act bravely in the grips of a passion but a genuinely courageous person acts deliberately and withstands danger when that is justified, for its own sake.

d) The fourth kind is the courage of good hope "*euelpis*". Sanguine people may appear brave, but only because they are unwarrantedly confident. Aristotle maintains that when drunken men also behave in this way they become sanguine. Persons who possess this kind of courage stand firm against great danger due to the fact that they think they are not in danger and nothing really bad can happen to them. But when things do not turn out as they expect, they flee.

e) The fifth kind is the courage of ignorance. Such persons may appear brave simply because they do not know of the presence of danger and though these persons closely resemble those of sanguine temperament, they are on a lower level inasmuch as they possess none of that self-reliance which the sanguine have. When they realise that they are in danger, they will run away from danger.

In all the above-mentioned categories the agent is not really courageous either because he does not act from noble motive or he has no appropriate sense of fear or confidence. As already discussed the term courageous is applied to those who resolutely face up to what is painful. Courage therefore, implies the presence of positive pain, and is rightly praised because it is harder to confront what is painful than to abstain from what is pleasant. By quoting the example of boxers and the hammering they receive before any honours are bestowed on them Aristotle states that the end which courage has in view is recognised as pleasant but it is none the less overshadowed or obscured by the accompanying circumstances.

Aristotelian courage (*andreia*) is concerned with the passions of fear (*phobos*) and confidence (*tharsos*). It is thus exhibited in the face of what is fearful and dangerous. Strictly speaking, it is concerned only with the greatest kind of harm – with death, more specifically with death in battle, though we may by analogical extension, talk of courage in other contexts. Bearing in mind that virtue typically comprises both passion and action, one needs a context in which the courageous person can be active, not merely suffering an inevitable death from disease or shipwreck and this involves nobility. According to Duff (1987:5) the courageous person feels both fear

(*phobos*) and confidence (*tharsos*) as, when, and as much as he should. Courage is thus the mean with regard to feelings of fear and confidence and these are distinct feelings. Humans are subject to fear and also to lack of confidence. The former is the natural felt response to present danger; the latter is the emotion that corresponds to a belief that we will be unable adequately to cope with our fear and with the danger. Both feelings admit of excessive response in two directions. A person may fear too much or too little. It is right to fear some things: *"for to fear some things is even right and noble, and it is base not to fear them e.g. disgrace".* (Nicomachean Ethics, 1115a 13 in Aristotle, 1973). But other fears are inappropriate, e.g. fear of a noble death, or disease, or poverty. If a person fears too much, he is a coward; if he fears too little, or not at all, he would be a sort of madman or insensitive to pain. The courageous person is the person who fears the right things and from the right motive, in the right way and at the right time. Likewise, confidence admits of extremes in two directions. One may have more confidence than is warranted and in this instance the particular person is rash. Or one may have less confidence than is warranted and as such he may be too easily discouraged or despairing. Both these are failings of character. The excellent or virtuous character in relation to fear and confidence is courage, the mean between these excesses. If these are distinct emotions, there should then in principle be four ways of going wrong in that a person's fear or confidence might be either excessive or deficient. In the Eudemian Ethics fear and confidence are apparently inversely correlated so that there are just two vices: a coward feels more fear and less confidence while a reckless person feels less fear and more confidence, than is proper. This may suggest that fear and confidence are not distinct emotions, but opposed poles of the same emotional range.

Aristotle's concept of courage is more constricted than the contemporary one, since it accentuates the military meaning of courage. He states it as follows: *"Now we fear all evils, e.g. disgrace, poverty, disease, friendlessness, death, but the brave man is not thought to be concerned with all; for to fear some things is even right and noble, and it is base not to fear them - e.g. disgrace; he who fears this is good and modest, and he who does not is shameless. He is, however, by some people called brave, by a transference of the word to a new meaning; for he has in him which is like the brave man, since the brave man also is a fearless person. Poverty and disease we perhaps ought not to fear, nor in general the things that do not proceed from vice and are not due to a man himself. But not even the man who is fearless of these is brave. ... With what sort of fearful things, then, is the brave man concerned? Surely with the greatest; for no one is more likely than he to stand his ground against what is awe-inspiring. Now death is the most fearful of all things; for it is the end, and nothing is thought to be any*

*longer either good or bad for the dead. But the brave man would not seem to be concerned even with death in all circumstances, e.g. at sea or in disease. In what circumstances, then? Surely in the noblest. Now such deaths are those in battle; for these take place in the greatest and noblest danger. And these are correspondingly honoured in city-states and at the courts of monarchs. Properly, then, he will be called brave who is fearless in face of a noble death, and of all emergencies that involve death; and the emergencies of war are in the highest degree of this kind".* (Nichomachean Ethics, 1115a10-30 in Aristotle, 1975). Aristotle's idea of courage here conflicts with the concept of courage held by Socrates who believed that it was possible that one could be courageous facing disease and the other struggles of everyday life. Socrates also believed that the virtue courage was a form of knowledge that could be taught while Aristotle believed that courage was more of a disposition that each individual possessed and cultivated. According to Brafford (2003) Socrates expanded the possibilities for courage so broadly that it would be very difficult for anyone to formulate a definition of courage that would apply to all of these situations. It seems that Aristotle starts constricting Socrates' definition of courage by taking his broad deliberations of courageous action and replacing them with a drastically narrower consideration of courage. Aristotle proposes his narrow definition of courage as follows: *"Properly, then, he will be called brave who is fearless in face of a noble death, and of all emergencies that involve death; and the emergencies of war are in the highest degree of this kind... At the same time, we show courage in situations where there is the opportunity of showing prowess or where death is noble; but in these forms of death neither of these conditions is fulfilled".* (Nicomachean Ethics, 1115a32 - 1115b5 in Aristotle, 1975). It is thus evident that the befitting Aristotelian courage is the courage of a citizen who runs the risk of dying on the battlefield in pursuit of victory for his city. The point may be raised as to what is actually about the battlefield that earmarks it as the appropriate stage for the display of courage. It is only upon the battlefield that a man faces and fears the terrible danger of having his own life taken from him by another man in mortal combat. The soldier runs the risk of losing his own life, and yet he still is able to overcome his fear somehow and do the right thing at any rate. By limiting the possibility of courageous action to the battlefield Aristotle narrows the widened definition of courage that not only asserted itself during the times of Plato but is also common across the world today. Furthermore Aristotle recognises that virtuous action at times requires from a person to do what is painful or extremely unpleasant. For instance he says of the courageous man in battle: *"And so, if the case of courage is similar, death and wounds will be painful to the brave man and against his will, but he will face them because it is noble to do so or because it is base*

*not to do so. And the more he is possessed of virtue in its entirety and the happier he is, the more he will be pained at the thought of death; for life is best worth living for such a man, and he is knowingly losing the greatest goods, and this is painful. But he is none the brave, and perhaps all the more so, because he chooses noble deeds of war at that cost. It is not the case, then, with all the virtues that the exercise of them is pleasant, except in so far as it attains its end"* (1117 b 9-16 in Aristotle, 1975). Aristotle does not imply that the war hero surrenders to wounds and death without being reluctant but instead he affirms that the exercise of virtue is pleasant. It is not pleasant to the extent that the particular action in which it consists is painful, but it is pleasant as far as the person attains his goal and thus manages to do and get himself to do what he knows is noble. Roberts (1989: 298) also accepts the view that courage is a tendency to fear appropriately and to feel confidence appropriately in the presence of dangers. He redefines the virtue of courage as "rational affect regarding dangers" and avers that the shape of this virtue will vary from one morality to another, depending on what is considered, in that particular context, to be truly dangerous. He quotes the example of Socrates who was convinced that nothing is so appalling as the prospect of losing one's integrity. Even death by execution pales into insignificance when compared with this danger. Socrates seems to have had no fear of death but instead a surpassing fear of losing his integrity. In doing so he conforms to Aristotle's description of the brave man as one who is composed in the face of things that inspire fear in others. Roberts (1989: 299) expresses the view that Socrates due to the near perfect way he had brought his fears into line with his moral convictions, had outgrown the need for courage. He continues by explaining that courage is not a matter of fearing just those things that are worthy of fear, in just the degree that dangers warrant, along with other aspects of the situations in which they are faced. It is, instead, the ability to manage whatever fears one has, rational or irrational, in such a way as to avoid being disturbed by them. Therefore courage is not so much a disposition to proper passion, but a capacity of self-management. And it does not necessarily go with moral perfection, but more often is a corrective action that enables those who are imperfect and thus lack the virtue of "affect with respect to dangers" to cope morally.

## III

Since the courage of the citizen soldier is the most similar to courage it deserves a broad examination so that we may see what about it is courageous and what is not. The story in Herodotus' "Histories" concerning Aristodemus and the Spartan Three Hundred at the Battle of Thermopylae is of relevance here. Before the battle began Leonidas the Spartan king and

military leader released two men namely Aristodemus and Eurytus both of whom were members of the Three Hundred, from the responsibility of taking up arms in the upcoming battle. Both soldiers were suffering from severe pains in their eyes and were experiencing trouble seeing, so they were given the opportunity to recuperate in the nearby Locrian town of Alpeni. Once they arrived at their destination they were informed that the Spartans and Persians were engaged in heavy fighting. Although he could hardly see, Eurytus, knowing the shame Spartan society would put upon him if he did not fight, asked his slave to hand him his sword and lead him back to the battlefield. Upon returning to the battlefield the slave assisted Eurytus to rejoin his comrades where he thrust himself into the press of the battle. However, as can be imagined for a blind man upon the battlefield he was rapidly and easily killed when he ventured into battle. During the intervening time, Aristodemus due to his sick condition elected to remain behind, and when the Three Hundred fought and died valiantly on the battlefield, owing to his exceeding fortune or misfortune he was the only surviving member of the Three Hundred. Having survived the battle Aristodemus decided to return home to Sparta and as expected upon arrival he was met with an immense amount of insult and rejection. The people were furious and heaped shame upon him that would last for the rest of his life and even after his death. They even gave him a nickname that he was to be called from that time on, "Aristodemus the Coward". The members of the Three Hundred had what would appear to be Aristotle's idea of the courage of the citizen soldier. There was a profound sense of honour and shame attached to courage and cowardice. It seems that Spartan society had a pretty strict maxim that was unwritten but known by all that one should come home victorious or not come home at all. The Spartans were fighting the battle for the glory of Sparta, and they could not return home unless they had achieved victory. Even though Eurytus and Aristodemus had legitimate medical excuses, which should have excused them from any shameful punishment, Eurytus was not willing to take that chance and he ran into battle even though he could not see. Despite the fact that Aristodemus most likely understood the future result of his decision he still made the choice to stay away from the battle and he suffered life-long consequences.

Naturally one is faced with the question as to who of the two soldiers appeared to be the most courageous. If one is using the Aristotelian definition of courage then Aristodemus the coward would seem to be more of an example, although an imperfect one, of this type of courageous man. Reason guided Aristodemus and so he lived to fight and die courageously in the battle of Plataea later on. Aristodemus sensibly made the rational choice not to fight at Thermopylae because he was blinded by an eye infection. Eurytus would seem to have been reckless instead of truly courageous when

he charged into the battle blindly. The citizen soldier is like Eurytus who chose to fight even though he would certainly die rather than endure the shame of returning to Sparta as a surviving member of a defeated army. Aristotle when discussing the courage of the citizen soldier noted that, courageous action ought to be motivated not by compulsion, but by the fact that it is noble. In his recklessness to overcome possible shame that would be heaped upon him, Eurytus actively looked for his own death. For it cannot be said that a blind man running into battle was performing as reason directed for the sake of acting nobly. For a blind man it certainly is not reasonable to fight in battle. Aristotle believed that nothing was more terrifying than the thought of dying in battle, but for Eurytus the anticipated disgrace by the community goaded him to action because in his mind it was even more terrifying than death. But Aristodemus, who chose to stay behind despite the threat of punishment, survived and lived to fight another day at the battle of Plataea after he was cured of the infection. Herodotus (1987) readily envisaged Aristodemus returning to Sparta without disgrace, if only he had not had the fortune/misfortune of being a companion to Eurytus. Unfortunately by being the sole survivor raised suspicions about his courage, envy for his good fortune, and persistent uncertainty that his survival is in some inexplicable way the cause of his companions' death. Miller (2000: 19) propounds a theory, which differentiates between a semblance of courage that is "mad fury" and of a more deliberate and genuine courage of a person who fights with a full realisation that he has something to lose, which he would rather keep if that could be attained without weakening his desire to act bravely. Thus a distinction is drawn between a willingness to risk death in battle and a desire to seek death in battle. According to Brafford (2003) when the appropriate time at Plataea arrived Aristodemus evidently realised that the interests of the polis required him to take to the field in defence of it. Since the Spartans taught their children to be courageous following the model of the courage of the citizen soldier, if Aristodemus was truly courageous then it seems that he in some way had actualized the "element of nobility" in his actions. It is thus fair to say that in accordance with Aristotelian courage the bravest of the Spartans perhaps was Aristodemus, who having being the lonesome survivor of the Three Hundred at Thermopylae, nevertheless had been discredited and dishonoured. One could deduce from this story the view that to the Spartans, courage was not just an issue of thoughtless fearlessness, but either a proper overcoming of fear properly felt, or acting bravely in the presence of a proper awareness of the risks, which awareness could be experienced as fear. History would have in all probability forgotten Aristodemus if he had simply been a coward or if he had done his duty in heroic fashion by sacrificing his life at Thermopylae. The case of

Aristodemus is *"interesting because he was neither shameless, not a constitutional coward nor constitutionally courageous, but equally capable of cowardice and sublime heroism, swinging wildly between extremes"* (Miller, 2000: 27).

## IV

Some of the bafflement that readers experience when they read Aristotle's text on courage is to be explained by the inadequacy of translation as words translated from one language to another do not cover in most cases identical semantic fields. Both English words "courage" and "bravery" are wider and more inclusive than the Greek word "andreia". Thus, as already noted Aristotle states that standard cases of courage are displayed only in warfare and in the face of death and to utilise the concept in another context is to extend it. Accordingly Urmson believes that the term "valour" is a more appropriate translation than "courage" or "bravery". Moreover Urmson contends that there are two kinds of fear, the one is the opposite of confidence but another is essentially not associated with confidence. When fear is defined as expectation of what is bad or evil, less fear is equal to more confidence, so fear and confidence are inversely related. This kind of fear is not concerned with courage. He also holds the view that Aristotle has made two errors. Firstly he has failed to distinguish two kinds of fear and secondly he did not differentiate the triad concerned with fear of the dangerous – cowardice, bravery and foolhardiness – from another triad the members of which might be called overconfidence, caution and overcautiousness (Urmson, 1988: 65). If Urmson is right, the feeling with which courage is essentially concerned is the fear of death. Confidence is not completely irrelevant to courage, but it has no essential connection with courage. It appears that Urmson is correct in emphasizing that fear and confidence are not equally related to courage, but he does not note that confidence, when it is understood as expectation of safety, is clearly inversely related to the fear of danger. For Aristotle, thus, courage is concerned with both fear and confidence although it is not equally concerned with them (Jiang, 1994: 28). Since Aristotle believes that the fear which the courageous person has is medial fear, the understanding of Aristotelian medial fear is the key to the understanding of the nature of fear which an Aristotelian courageous person has. Feelings can be excessive or defective. To achieve the mean in feelings is to have the right degree of a certain kind of appropriate feeling at the right time, on the right occasion with the right aim (Nicomachean Ethics 1106b14-22 in Aristotle, 1975, 1987). So, medial fear is the appropriate amount of fear displayed at the right place, right time, for the right purpose. It seems to Aristotle that the criterion of the right

amount of fear is totally determined by circumstances. Therefore a certain amount of fear is medial or right on one occasion but may not be medial or right on another occasion. In this case medial fear is always the fear which is not much nor too little under a certain circumstance and there is no uniform criterion of medial fear for all circumstances.

Several scholars are of the opinion that when Aristotle says that a courageous man is fearless, he does not mean that the courageous man has no fear at all since he will have nothing to face if he has no fear and there will be no courage if there is no fear. In Pears's view (1980: 178) Aristotle means that the courageous person is emotionally unperturbed although he has fear in the face of the greatest danger such as death and that the courageous person behaves fearlessly. Pears accentuates the significant distinction between two uses of the words "fearless" and "fearlessly" and that this distinction runs through the whole of Aristotle's teaching that people should fear medially. Therefore a man may behave fearlessly because he lacks the appropriate fear or despite of having it, he behaves like a man who lacks it. The account given by Jiang (1994:32)in this regard is noteworthy. In her view when Aristotle says that the courageous person is fearless, he means that a courageous person may feel no fear at the moment he/she faces danger and this indicates the courageous person has the fear as an emotion to an appropriate degree. Consequently the courageous person could have medial fear and feel no fear at the same time.

A self-controlled person is emotionally disturbed by his fear and therefore his fear needs to be controlled as in this respect, his fear is excessive. A courageous person has fear, but his fear does not disturb him and as such requires no control. Thus his fear is medial or appropriate. It is evident that if fear does not entail the desire to flee, it is possible that a truly courageous person calmly faces noble death, though he/she has a certain amount of fear, without struggling against the desire to avoid death. Therefore by establishing that there is no necessary connection between the fear and the desire to flee, we can demonstrate that Aristotelian medial fear can exist and Aristotelian courageous persons are different from self-controlled persons.

Some philosophers reason out that the medial confidence which the courageous person possesses, enables the courageous person to enjoy the courageous action. In order to determine whether medial confidence refers to a positive feeling motivating the courageous person to act courageously one needs to understand what Aristotle means by confidence (tharsos) within the context of courage. In his "Rhetoric" Aristotle (1960) states that fear involves pain and disturbance aroused by the expectation of impending evil, and is naturally expressed in flight. Confidence (tharsos) involves a hopeful

confidence aroused by the expectation that safety is close at hand or danger significantly far, and is naturally expressed in perseverance. Pears contends that the "tharsos" involved in courage is a matter of estimating the odds. Confidence of this nature must be based not on certainty but on an assessment of the odds (Pears, 1980: 184). A person whose confidence is appropriate to his situation correctly judges the chances of death and of success as he/she neither overestimates nor underestimates the risk which he faces. A courageous person, thus, assesses accurately the chances of death and of safety. It was also revealed by Pears that such an interpretation of the confidence associated with courage can make sense in relatively frequent cases of courage but not in the case of desperate courage. By "desperate courage" he refers to the case in which the brave man knows for sure that he has no chance to survive if he acts courageously for what he believes is noble. A relevant example here is the above-mentioned case of the Spartans at Thermopylae who were confident in the nobility of their sacrifice, and died gladly to save their friends. A courageous man might also persevere to his post when facing certain death even when no military advantage is to be gained, believing that retreat or surrender would in that context be disgraceful. The Spartans had appropriate confidence because they believed that their self-sacrifice would delay the Persian advance and contribute to the eventual victory of their nation.

If the confidence with which courage is concerned is the confidence in the worthiness of one's action, many other moral virtues would also be linked to confidence. But Aristotle does not state that virtues other than courage are concerned with confidence. In Aristotle's view the confidence with reference to courage is not a feeling shared by many virtues but a feeling uniquely related to courage. Hence "tharsos" of this nature cannot be the confidence in the worthiness of one's action. According to Jiang (1994: 62-63) demonstrating that the Aristotelian courage is not a form of self-control cannot be considered as proof that such courage is a unity of action and passion, since the latter requires passion's positive role in motivating the courageous agent. She concludes that courage in Aristotle cannot be regarded as a typical Aristotelian virtue which embodies the harmony between action and passion and whose psychological state is positioned between Stoic apathy and a typical Aristotelian virtue.

## V

Courage as a virtue is a feature of persons who are courageous to the extent that they engage in courageous actions. A courageous action is one in which, based on the good intentions of the agent in attempting to realise a worthy goal, he or she overcomes great danger or difficulty – whether afraid or not

(Walton, 1986: 14). Actions are thus courageous when persons have good reasons for believing the actions are substantially dangerous and also the means to achieving a significantly valuable goal. As with most important concepts, it is impossible to state precise, necessary, and sufficient conditions for courage. Courage seems the most public of virtues, the subject of social admiration and awards. It is also a personal virtue whose requirements depend on individual ideals and commitments within intimate relationships.

Clearly in Aristotle, the military is a standard bearer for the virtue of courage and this virtue requires a special kind of education. Aristotle does not emphasize the difference between military and society as did Plato. But we still find that at least for courage, a special kind of disposition is required, and it is a higher standard that the citizen may not often meet, nor does a mere professional who excels only in equipment and training. Aristotle's treatment of moral virtues is useful in analysing virtues. Courage defined as a mean allows one to distinguish it, through analysis from pseudo-courageous acts. Also, his insistence that the mean is a "relative mean" and that it cannot be objectively calculated mathematically shows his bent towards practicality and empiricism. Courage is for example, neither boldness, nor cool foresight. It is a synthesis of the two, and it is this synthesis which prevents the virtue of courage from lapsing into unrestrained boldness or cowardice. This is not only discerning, but it also attests to the influence wielded by the Greek aesthetic.

Aristotle also sees the ways in which specific virtues are responses to particular challenges in life. Courage, for example, is the strength of character needed to face danger and the possibility of death. Similarly, the question can be posed as to what strengths of character are required to prosper in life. As Aristotle puts it: *"For we aim not to know what courage is but to be courageous, not to know what justice is but to be just, just as we aim to be healthy rather than to know what health is, and to be in a good condition rather than to know what good condition is"*. Eudemian Ethics (1216b22-25 in Aristotle, 1970). Aristotle can indeed maintain that a fulfilled life is noble, in many ways satisfying, enjoyable and pleasant. But it is not always so. Plainly in the case of courage and I suggest, in other cases as well, the most he can argue, is that the good person will willingly choose what is noble, however painful or costly or difficult it might be. But there is an enormous difference between acting willingly and enjoying what one is doing. Ultimately Aristotle wishes to say both that the key element in living a fulfilled life is the performance of virtuous actions, and that true fulfilment is to some extent at the mercy of chance events beyond human control. To some extent, then, living well requires good fortune as coincidence can rob even the most excellent human beings of happiness. Nonetheless, Aristotle insists, the highest good, virtuous activity, is not something that comes to us

by chance. In the context of courage although we must be fortunate enough to have parents and fellow citizens who help us get hold of "andreia", we ourselves share much of the responsibility for acquiring this virtue.

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# Difference And Participation
# In Plato's *Parmenides*

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## Abstract

*In this paper we are examining two crucial conceptions, and therefore also problems, of the Platonic corpus; conceptions of* difference *and* participation *that establish, constitute and structure his entire thought (regardless of relative differences between particular phases of its historical development). These conceptions are examined in their intertwinement starting from the* Parmenides *as the primary evidence of their status and relationship in Plato. In the course of our examination, that is through the analysis of the concept of the* Sudden *or the* Instant, *a third extremely important conception emerges and acquires shape: the Platonic conception of time, which we take to be representative of the overall Greek notion and understanding of temporality. Finally, from within such conceptual framework one recognizes and acknowledges the totality of Platonic philosophy as above all the thought of* liberty.

From the very beginning of the dialogue, already in the first statement of the theory of ideas by the young Socrates and in the Parmenides' criticism of that statement, it is made clear that things partake in different ideas, but ideas do not and cannot change into each other, nor do they become other (their other or their exact opposite).[1] Further on (130b), the existence of ideas is established not to be doubted afterwards throughout the whole dialogue. However, immediately after that, Parmenides poses the key question about ideas: do all things have ideas, is there an idea for everything, are there as many ideas as there are things (130c)? This question is, of course, none other than the *question of participation* itself.

Then follows the investigation of the relationship between things and ideas, and most notably of the notion and relationship of *participation* (μέθεξις).[2] First, participation is viewed from the point of view of ideas: How are they present in things? Is an idea in each thing or is just a part, a piece of it present in things?[3] This may well be understood as the problem of the in/divisibility of ideas: ideas are *not* divided in/into things, but how are they then present in things? That is, the problem is how things can participate in ideas if they cannot be either their part or their whole (of ideas, that is).[4] So,

secondly, the question of participation turns, changes perspective, and takes the point of view of things. The two perspectives are, therefore, interchangeable or overlapping, and the same thing should follow from both, just as the same problem appears in both (132a). If ideas are understood as general *characters* that (some) things possess, then it follows that in participation single and unique ideas get divided or multiplied, they become many. That is, every idea turns from *one* into *many* by virtue of participation. But, this is because ideas are in this case understood as things, and that doesn't have to be the only level or mode of existence of ideas. There is another unity, i.e. another meaning of "*εἶδος*" that does not multiply or dissolve into things. This is a "second form" of the idea, which however, doesn't mean the end of multiplying of ideas (132b). For this form is "over and above" both the idea in question and the things that participate in it. It, therefore, becomes the *third* thing, which again needs something over it to be united with the previous two, and so on, ad infinitum. Because of this, one would do well to consider the possibility of *ideas being thoughts*, i.e. forms of thinking or of the mind (132c-d). But that doesn't work either, for thoughts again appear to be multiple instead of unique. So Socrates tries the possibility of ideas being not thoughts but "patterns fixed in the nature of things [παραδείγματα ἑστάναι ἐν τῇ φύσει]," in whose image things are made. Still, Parmenides shows that there is no pattern or image to which things are like, without it itself being like (similar) to the things that are like (similar) to it. Likeness has to work both ways. This seems to be the reason for the previous position in the argument, namely for taking ideas to be thing-like or even things and treating them as if they belong to the same class of object with/as things.[5] Ideas have to be some kind of things if they are to be connected or related to things and things to them. Thus, we have the first version/meaning of *participation* as *the likeness between ideas and things*.[6]

As it is immediately shown (133a), this is not possible unless we accept infinite progress. So participation has to be conceived differently, i.e. not as likeness between ideas and things. The mimetic solution is not the right one. At the same time, it has to be conceived in a manner that avoids *agnosticism*. Because, if ideas and things are fundamentally separated, one may conclude that ideas are essentially "unknowable [ἄγνωστα]" (133c1). In other words, the difficulties of asserting ideas "just by themselves [αὐτὰ καθ᾽ αὐτὰ]" are so great that the problem is unsolvable; and, to that extent at least, ideas depend on things in their existence and knowability (133a).

But, the task here is exactly to think ideas in themselves, in their purity, without reference to the world of existence. And that has to be demonstrated first.[7] Therefore, Parmenides starts by establishing a separation between the two realms and the *self-referentiality* of each realm,[8] like in the master-slave

relation (133d-134a) which works on two different levels, so that consequently there are two types of *knowledge* as well.

Yet, this cannot hold either, because it exactly ends in agnosticism, so we have to establish some connection between the two worlds in order to refute the possibility of denying either the existence/being of ideas or the knowability of that existence (134b-135a).

That is why every one thing (single/unique or plural/many) has to be considered with reference and in relation to everything else as well as to itself. And Parmenides makes this statement in such a manner as to include everything in this rule, i.e. both things and ideas:

χρὴ δὲ καὶ τόδε ἔτι πρὸς τούτῳ ποιεῖν μὴ μόνον εἰ ἔστιν ἕκαστον ὑποτιθέμενον σκοπεῖν τὰ συμβαίνοντα ἐκ τῆς ὑποθέσεως ἀλλὰ καὶ εἰ μὴ ἔστι τὸ αὐτὸ τοῦτο ὑποτίθεσθαι (135e8-136a2)
καὶ περὶ ἀνομοίου ὁ αὐτὸς λόγος καὶ περὶ κινήσεως καὶ περὶ στάσεως καὶ περὶ γενέσεως καὶ φθορᾶς καὶ περὶ αὐτοῦ τοῦ εἶναι καὶ τοῦ μὴ εἶναι· καὶ ἑνὶ λόγῳ περὶ ὅτου ἂν ἀεὶ ὑποθῇ ὡς ὄντος καὶ ὡς οὐκ ὄντος καὶ ὁτιοῦν ἄλλο πάθος πάσχοντος δεῖ σκοπεῖν τὰ συμβαίνοντα πρὸς αὐτὸ καὶ πρὸς ἓν ἕκαστον τῶν ἄλλων ὅτι ἂν προέλῃ καὶ πρὸς πλείω καὶ πρὸς σύμπαντα ὡσαύτως· καὶ τἆλλα αὖ πρὸς αὐτά τε καὶ πρὸς ἄλλο ὅτι ἂν προαιρῇ ἀεί ἐάντε ὡς ὂν ὑποθῇ ὃ ὑπετίθεσο ἄντε ὡς μὴ ὂν εἰ μέλλεις τελέως γυμνασάμενος κυρίως διόψεσθαι τὸ ἀληθές. (136b4-c5)

It is not yet clear at this point whether this method includes also the crossing over from one realm to another, but it becomes clear by the end of the dialogue that this is the case, and thus the significance, essentiality and fundamentality of participation is retained and emphasized. But also, already here, all the concepts whose investigation follows are listed: many–not-many (or one–many),[9] likeness–unlikeness, motion–rest, becoming–perishing, being–not-being, etc. Apart from that, here the thing that leads to conclusion that both realms should be taken into consideration is exactly the basic methodological supposition, namely that in each case and about each thing one should examine *both possibilities*: that it *is* and that it *is not*; which can be understood as examination of the same thing from the point of view of both worlds. For the same thing will always look as though it does not exist (is not) from the perspective of the realm to which it doesn't belong – ideas do not exist from the exclusively empirical point of view (that of the world of sensible things), and conversely, for the isolated ideal world directed in and to itself things do not exist. However, as both ideas and sensible things force us to realize, and as the dialectical inquiry will show after its completion, neither of these two exclusive perspectives is tenable or viable.

Parmenides demonstrates the dialectical method on the example of his own notion of *One*. In that demonstration, he is going through the previously listed conceptual pairs (which represent particular ideas) and showing how the pure notion of One behaves in relation and with respect to

them. And, he does that with respect to both perspectives that have been mentioned. These two perspectives are exposed consecutively in the dialogue, like two iterations/reiterations of the same topic, and they differ according to the character the hypothesis about the One acquires in each of them.[10] They are: **[I]** *Negative* (137c-142a) and **[II]** *Positive* (142b-155e). However, one must bear in mind that these two perspectives are not simply parallel or symmetrical, like two different sides of the same thing which (may or may not) fall at the same time. Rather, they themselves are connected to each other, they induce each other and issue from one another, i.e. from each one's own essence and being. This is clear from the very beginning, i.e. from the initial investigation about the being of One, which in fact starts from its opposition to the Many (plurality) – that is, "*One is not many*" is the first real definition of One, and not "*One is*" (this latter point is passed over without dwelling on it, Parmenides does not analyze it, not until the beginning of the second investigation, i.e. not until the beginning of the positive stage) – so that the problem of the being of One issues from the initial investigation, and not vice versa. The results of the first investigation are the ones that induce the second iteration as it is, they produce the question of *One and being* (and their relation and connection) or of *the being of One*. The first, Negative perspective thematizes the Positive one, it establishes the latter's necessity and is the condition of its appearance and possibility. Only through the Negative part can we come to even pose a question about the being of One. That part prepares and brings about the Positive one as a theme, question, problem and a valid object of inquiry. So, both are parts of one unique, common path and method, which is the method of/to truth.[11]

Then, there comes a very important digression about One's touching, i.e. being in touch with itself and the others, that is, the question of the *contact between One and things* and of the *contact of One with itself*. This question, in fact these two questions, directly concern the problem and notion of participation; for the possibility and the existence of *contact between ideas* (One, being, etc.) *and things*, as well as of the *contact between ideas*, or of the *contact of ideas with/between themselves* (both contained in One's contact with itself), is crucial for the possibility of even conceiving participation. The statement that "*one will have contact both with itself and with the others* [ἅπτοιτο ἂν τὸ ἓν αὑτοῦ τε καὶ τῶν ἄλλων]" (148e3-4) is the *statement of participation*, and the *argument* that precedes and follows it, the argument or *proof* of this contact, is the argument and proof *for participation*. It is elaborated at 148c4-149d6, and goes as follows:

Ἧι ταὐτὸν πέπονθε μὴ ἀλλοῖον πεπονθέναι μὴ ἀλλοῖον δὲ πεπονθὸς μὴ ἀνόμοιον μὴ ἀνόμοιον δὲ ὅμοιον εἶναι· ἧ δ' ἄλλο πέπονθεν ἀλλοῖον ἀλλοῖον

δὲ ὂν ἀνόμοιον εἶναι. - Ἀληθῆ λέγεις. - Ταὐτόν τε ἄρα ὂν τὸ ἓν τοῖς ἄλλοις καὶ ὅτι ἕτερόν ἐστι κατ᾽ ἀμφότερα καὶ κατὰ ἑκάτερον ὅμοιόν τε ἂν εἴη καὶ ἀνόμοιον τοῖς ἄλλοις. - Πάνυ γε. - Οὐκοῦν καὶ ἑαυτῷ ὡσαύτως ἐπείπερ ἕτερόν τε ἑαυτοῦ καὶ ταὐτὸν ἑαυτῷ ἐφάνη κατ᾽ ἀμφότερα καὶ κατὰ ἑκάτερον ὅμοιόν τε καὶ ἀνόμοιον φανήσεται; - Ἀνάγκη.
Τί δὲ δή; περὶ τοῦ ἅπτεσθαι τὸ ἓν αὑτοῦ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων καὶ τοῦ μὴ ἅπτεσθαι πέρι πῶς ἔχει σκόπει. - Σκοπῶ. - Αὐτὸ γάρ που ἐν ἑαυτῷ ὅλῳ τὸ ἓν ἐφάνη ὄν. - Ὀρθῶς. - Οὐκοῦν καὶ ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις τὸ ἕν; - Ναί. - Ἧι μὲν ἄρα ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις τῶν ἄλλων ἅπτοιτο ἄν· ᾗ δὲ αὐτὸ ἐν ἑαυτῷ τῶν μὲν ἄλλων ἀπείργοιτο ἅπτεσθαι αὐτὸ δὲ αὑτοῦ ἅπτοιτο ἂν ἐν ἑαυτῷ ὄν. - Φαίνεται. - Οὕτω μὲν δὴ ἅπτοιτο ἂν τὸ ἓν αὑτοῦ τε καὶ τῶν ἄλλων. - Ἅπτοιτο. - Τί δὲ τῇδε; ἆρ᾽ οὐ πᾶν τὸ μέλλον ἅψεσθαί τινος ἐφεξῆς δεῖ κεῖσθαι ἐκείνῳ οὗ μέλλει ἅπτεσθαι ταύτην τὴν ἕδραν κατέχον ἢ ἂν μετ᾽ ἐκείνην ᾗ [ἕδρα] ᾗ ἂν κέηται ἅπτεται; - Ἀνάγκη. - Καὶ τὸ ἓν ἄρα εἰ μέλλει αὐτὸ αὑτοῦ ἅψεσθαι ἐφεξῆς δεῖ εὐθὺς μετὰ ἑαυτὸ κεῖσθαι τὴν ἐχομένην χώραν κατέχον ἐκείνης ἐν ᾗ αὐτό ἐστιν. - Δεῖ γὰρ οὖν. - Οὐκοῦν δύο μὲν ὂν τὸ ἓν ποιήσειεν ἂν ταῦτα καὶ ἐν δυοῖν χώραιν ἅμα γένοιτο· ἕως δ᾽ ἂν ᾖ ἕν οὐκ ἐθελήσει; - Οὐ γὰρ οὖν. - Ἡ αὐτὴ ἄρα ἀνάγκη τῷ ἑνὶ μήτε δύο εἶναι μήτε ἅπτεσθαι αὐτῷ αὑτοῦ. - Ἡ αὐτή. - Ἀλλ᾽ οὐδὲ μὴν τῶν ἄλλων ἅψεται. - Τί δή; - Ὅτι φαμέν τὸ μέλλον ἅψεσθαι χωρὶς ὂν ἐφεξῆς δεῖ ἐκείνῳ εἶναι οὗ μέλλει ἅψεσθαι τρίτον δὲ αὐτῶν ἐν μέσῳ μηδὲν εἶναι. - Ἀληθῆ. - Δύο ἄρα δεῖ τὸ ὀλίγιστον εἶναι εἰ μέλλει ἅψις εἶναι. - Δεῖ.
[…][12]
Εἰ δέ γε ἓν μόνον ἐστίν δυὰς δὲ μὴ ἔστιν ἅψις οὐκ ἂν εἴη. - Πῶς γάρ; - Οὔκουν φαμέν τὰ ἄλλα τοῦ ἑνὸς οὔτε ἕν ἐστιν οὔτε μετέχει αὐτοῦ εἴπερ ἄλλα ἐστίν. - Οὐ γάρ. - Οὐκ ἄρα ἔνεστιν ἀριθμὸς ἐν τοῖς ἄλλοις ἑνὸς μὴ ἐνόντος ἐν αὐτοῖς. - Πῶς γάρ; - Οὔτ᾽ ἄρα ἕν ἐστι τὰ ἄλλα οὔτε δύο οὔτε ἄλλου ἀριθμοῦ ἔχοντα ὄνομα οὐδέν. - Οὔ. - Τὸ ἓν ἄρα μόνον ἐστὶν ἕν καὶ δυὰς οὐκ ἂν εἴη. - Οὐ φαίνεται. - Ἅψις ἄρα οὐκ ἔστιν δυοῖν μὴ ὄντοιν. - Οὐκ ἔστιν. - Οὔτ᾽ ἄρα τὸ ἓν τῶν ἄλλων ἅπτεται οὔτε τὰ ἄλλα τοῦ ἑνός ἐπείπερ ἅψις οὐκ ἔστιν. - Οὐ γὰρ οὖν. - Οὕτω δὴ κατὰ πάντα ταῦτα τὸ ἓν τῶν τε ἄλλων καὶ ἑαυτοῦ ἅπτεταί τε καὶ οὐχ ἅπτεται.

The beauty of all this is that it works either way. Namely, whether or not ideas are same as, or at least like things; and whether or not things are same as, or like ideas, participation is established. What is more, one can easily conclude that participation is brought about by this ambivalence or duplicity, that the highest proof of its necessity and existence is the fact that ideas and things (one and many) are at once similar and dissimilar, same and different, like and unlike, and participation is indeed the very idea of this ambivalence and duplicity.[13]

In general, this second set of hypotheses and arguments (II *Positive*) is a refutation of agnosticism which was still vividly present in the first set (I *Negative*). In order to underline and emphasize such a character of this argumentation (II), Parmenides points at exactly that, namely at the knowability and speakability (nameability) of the One. However, as one suspects already now, the insight in the real being and nature of the One is obtainable only through the combination of I and II, for the One itself is such: it is the *knowable unknowable*, which can only mediately be spoken

and thought about; it can only be circumscribed and never directly described or denoted. In other words, One is dialectical through and through, it is dialectics itself, because it is knowable and speakable (nameable) only as and through a dialectical process (i.e. through a process of *διαλέγειν*, or through dialogue and argumentative thinking). Dialectic is the only appropriate method and approach to One because it makes one see and understand the invisible, the unintelligible, the unnamable and ungraspable, through its *λόγος*; that is, through its language and reasoning. It is the only manner of reasoning that can grasp and present (represent) that which is beyond our understanding, which is beyond our grasp (intellectual or any other – not to mention perceptive or sensual grasp). And that exactly because, as Parmenides says in the dialogue, it presupposes the One to both be and not to be (cf. 136a).

Of course, the investigation of the *Parmenides* is far from finished. The two sets by no means exhaust the problem, nor is the nature, essence and being of One exhausted in/by its positive and negative side. The argument is (and has to be) taken "yet a third time" (155e3).[14] And now, we read clearly the two "moments" of dialectics, or its two stages, which in terms of discourse and discursive strategies and procedures appear as unification (ὁμόνοια and ἕνωσις) and differentiation (διαφοροποίησις, ἑτεροποίησις, διαίρεσις). In the same vein, this shifting from one mode to another acquires clear shapes and meanings in all the above mentioned conceptual pairs, or better, acquires them (shapes, meanings) in accordance with these.[15] But, as if not wanting to leave anything only on just one side of the fence (for the change of the mode of being means still remaining in the realm of being and on the other side of not-being), Parmenides immediately notices the trace of the other, of not-being within (in the very center of) the succession and temporality as such. This trace is the *moment of transition*, that moment in which – according to the adopted logic – they are not both possible, in fact, the moment when/where either of the two sides (motion and rest) is impossible. And they are impossible exactly because otherwise there would be no transition whatsoever. That particular moment in/of time is "that queer thing, the instant [τὸ ἐξαίφνης.]" (156d3). It is the moment when both (motion and rest) are absent, the moment when one is not any more and the other is not yet. And, exactly at such a moment, the instant "occupies no time at all [ἐν χρόνῳ οὐδενὶ οὖσα]" (156e1). It is in the very center of time, it enables the time (by enabling the transition from one state to another), but it has no time, it is not temporal. It is not a temporal instant (for to be that, Parmenides seems to think, it has to have some kind of being, motion or rest), but nevertheless it organizes and establishes time, because the transition (which is actually the approximation of time, a conceptual expression of the notion of time) from movement to rest and back takes

place to and from the *instant* ("εἰς ταύτην δὴ καὶ ἐκ ταύτης τό τε κινούμενον μεταβάλλει ἐπὶ τὸ ἑστάναι καὶ τὸ ἑστὸς ἐπὶ τὸ κινεῖσθαι." – 156e1-3). As a consequence, the *transition happens instantly, in no time* (156c-e). In this sense, then, we can rightfully say that this is *the moment of One's not being*: "at that moment it cannot be either in motion or at rest [ἐν οὐδενὶ χρόνῳ ἂν εἴη οὐδὲ κινοῖτ᾽ ἂν τότε οὐδ᾽ ἂν σταίη]" (156e6-7), which is to say: it cannot be at all. For, from this perspective, if something is neither of the two – motion or rest – then it is not, or it is nothing; and this goes for all the perspectives, stages and modalities of the One or, as Parmenides says here, "its other transitions [τὰς ἄλλας μεταβολὰς]" (156e8).[16]

The term and concept of the instant (τὸ ἐξαίφνης), or of the irreducible moment of/in time – and especially of the suddenness implied in it – contains and reveals at the same time the Platonic (and not only Platonic, but the general classical Greek) concept and conception of *intensive* time as opposed to other extensive notions of time (such as the linear or the cyclic one). That it is an intensive conception of time means that there is no (real or illusory) development of time through some dimensions, stages, states – that is, not a succession of past, present and future – but an intense and intensive concentration of these dimensions in one non-dimensional point or moment, in one unique *instant* and on one and the same *instance* of time. It is as if the whole time (understood as duration and change, or as transition) is being inverted into and turned onto itself, as if imploding in/into itself. According to this notion and the image related to it, past and future meet and congeal in the present, thereby both becoming fully present in the "here and now." The instant, τὸ ἐξαίφνης, is then the simultaneous presence of past and future, i.e. of the totality of time – which is the sheer definition of time as such, as well as of eternity, and there is never any distance or difference between the absolute, complete time, on one hand, and eternity, on the other. Thus, in this instant time congeals, concentrates, intensifies, and becomes what it is.

Since the transition(s) is (are) the very being of the One – which means that time, temporality itself, is that being of the One – "the instant" designates an important input/import in Plato's whole thought. Namely, with the instant there enters the other, the opposite, the different of the One/being, and enters and resides at the very center of One/being. Thus, insofar as philosophy is the science (knowledge) of One/Being, it is immediately and at once determined as the *science of difference*. For if (as Parmenides says) "all these changes [i.e. transitions] may happen to the one, if it exists [ταῦτα δὴ τὰ παθήματα πάντ᾽ ἂν πάσχοι τὸ ἕν εἰ ἔστιν]" (157b3-4); and if therefore, on one hand, the existence/being of One is the condition and foundation of transformations, while on the other hand

transitions do make that existence, prove that it exists and determine (or simply define, show) the modes of existence of the One[17]; if that is so, then One really exists and *is* only in difference and as difference. As we have just seen, everything about the One and its being is organized around and directed towards this *instant* which is *difference*: the *moment of differentiation/alteration*, as well as *something different/other/alternative* to the One and its being; that is, both the *moment, instant of change and differing* and *the Other of the One* – and, of course, it cannot be the former without at once being the latter. So, once again, philosophy as the science of the One and its being has to be the science of difference, e.g. dialectic, because its very subject (the One and its being) is difference and differentiation.

Significantly enough, we find an almost identical delineation and description of time in another late dialogue, in the *Timaeus*.[18] There too, time concentrates, orders, defines and posits itself in and around the instant, the indeterminable and fleeting "now" (νῦν) of time. Given its thematic and its status in the whole Platonic work, the *Timaeus* points even more clearly than the *Parmenides* at the significance of this conception of time on yet another level. Namely, being *the* cosmological dialogue, it emphasizes the fact that time, and more precisely the flow of time (which includes the historical, physical and individual time as well), implies the mutual interdependence between the ideal and the phenomenal and demonstrates their indissoluble bond(s).

Ὡς δὲ κινηθὲν αὐτὸ καὶ ζῶν ἐνόησεν τῶν ἀιδίων θεῶν γεγονὸς ἄγαλμα ὁ γεννήσας πατήρ ἠγάσθη τε καὶ εὐφρανθεὶς ἔτι δὴ μᾶλλον ὅμοιον πρὸς τὸ παράδειγμα ἐπενόησεν ἀπεργάσασθαι. καθάπερ οὖν αὐτὸ τυγχάνει ζῷον ἀΐδιον ὄν καὶ τόδε τὸ πᾶν οὕτως εἰς δύναμιν ἐπεχείρησε τοιοῦτον ἀποτελεῖν. ἡ μὲν οὖν τοῦ ζῴου φύσις ἐτύγχανεν οὖσα αἰώνιος καὶ τοῦτο μὲν δὴ τῷ γεννητῷ παντελῶς προσάπτειν οὐκ ἦν δυνατόν· εἰκὼ δ' ἐπενόει κινητόν τινα αἰῶνος ποιῆσαι καὶ διακοσμῶν ἅμα οὐρανὸν ποιεῖ μένοντος αἰῶνος ἐν ἑνὶ κατ' ἀριθμὸν ἰοῦσαν αἰώνιον εἰκόνα τοῦτον ὃν δὴ χρόνον ὠνομάκαμεν. ἡμέρας γὰρ καὶ νύκτας καὶ μῆνας καὶ ἐνιαυτούς οὐκ ὄντας πρὶν οὐρανὸν γενέσθαι τότε ἅμα ἐκείνῳ συνισταμένῳ τὴν γένεσιν αὐτῶν μηχανᾶται· ταῦτα δὲ πάντα μέρη χρόνου καὶ τό τ' ἦν τό τ' ἔσται χρόνου γεγονότα εἴδη ἃ δὴ φέροντες λανθάνομεν ἐπὶ τὴν ἀΐδιον οὐσίαν οὐκ ὀρθῶς. λέγομεν γὰρ δὴ ὡς ἦν ἔστιν τε καὶ ἔσται τῇ δὲ τὸ ἔστιν μόνον κατὰ τὸν ἀληθῆ λόγον προσήκει τὸ δὲ ἦν τό τ' ἔσται περὶ τὴν ἐν χρόνῳ γένεσιν ἰοῦσαν πρέπει λέγεσθαι κινήσεις γάρ ἐστον τὸ δὲ ἀεὶ κατὰ ταὐτὰ ἔχον ἀκινήτως οὔτε πρεσβύτερον οὔτε νεώτερον προσήκει γίγνεσθαι διὰ χρόνου οὐδὲ γενέσθαι ποτὲ οὐδὲ γεγονέναι νῦν οὐδ' εἰς αὖθις ἔσεσθαι τὸ παράπαν τε οὐδὲν ὅσα γένεσις τοῖς ἐν αἰσθήσει φερομένοις προσῆψεν ἀλλὰ χρόνου ταῦτα αἰῶνα μιμουμένου καὶ κατ' ἀριθμὸν κυκλουμένου γέγονεν εἴδη καὶ πρὸς τούτοις ἔτι τὰ τοιάδε τό τε γεγονὸς εἶναι γεγονὸς καὶ τὸ γιγνόμενον εἶναι γιγνόμενον ἔτι τε τὸ γενησόμενον εἶναι γενησόμενον καὶ τὸ μὴ ὂν μὴ ὂν εἶναι ὧν οὐδὲν ἀκριβὲς λέγομεν. περὶ μὲν οὖν τούτων τάχ' ἂν οὐκ εἴη καιρὸς πρέπων ἐν τῷ παρόντι διακριβολογεῖσθαι.[19]

Thus, through time and its own internal relationships and organization, the ideal brings order into the chaotic phenomenality, it establishes the order of the chaos. Furthermore, only this ideal constellation enables us to *recognize* the order in the chaos, for only after one has recognized and understood the order can one understand the chaos (and thus bring it to order). Finally, and contrary to the usual opinion, when it comes to time the chaos is not the change, not alteration, but rather the very continuity and stillness. Therefore, once one has understood that the cyclic and the linear are but two sides of one and the same thing, namely of the στάσις or the *a-temporal*, only then is one ready to go back *to* time, *in* time and *into* time; and, when that is done, the phenomenal sides of time are seen and understood as what they really are: *the instances of the instant*, or ἐκφάνσεις of the unity and identity of past, present and future.

This suggests that the notion of time implied in the conception of the instant remains vividly and decisively present in Plato's whole dialectic. Indeed, this notion seems to provide the metaphysical as well as physical foundations for dialectical logic and thought in general. Among other things, this notion makes Platonic dialectic static and cyclic. Furthermore, the very conception and understanding of ideas, their circumscription and definition, seem to either start or end in this same instant, thus uniting and identifying the ideal (ideas and ideality as such) with time, or at least making one the focal point of the other. Therefore, one could say that Idea is the Time itself, and vice versa, the Time itself is (an) Idea. Differently put, the idea of time is this instant where time focuses onto and into itself, thus positing all its instances in the same spaceless, timeless, non-dimensional moment/instant. This multi-dimensional and yet non-dimensional instant holds past and future in itself and as itself, i.e. as present (as both being there and being now), it identifies them *as* and *in* the "now" (νῦν). The present is (becomes, transforms into) past and future.

This, then, has important consequences for the fundamental structure of time itself. The most important one concerns the flow of time, that is, the (principles of) organization of its constellations, and posits this organization as radically different from what we usually imagine and perceive. Namely, contrary to how it seems to us, time is neither linear nor simply progressive. Time holds neither unlimited and one-dimensional progress, nor an ever-repeating circle (of events, moments, etc.). Time explodes in all possible directions, at different rates, rhythms and speeds. It has neither beginning nor an end in the usual sense. It is constantly interrupted, disrupted and re-commenced. Time launches and scatters itself in different directions. It is indeed a fluctuating constellation of moments, instants, and its combinations and settings are constantly and radically changing. That is why time (temporality and its developments) has no definite sense or meaning either.

It is fundamentally instable, constantly scattering and gathering itself. It incessantly dissolves, recuperates, disorganizes and reorganizes itself, and yet, in all this ceaseless dissolution, de-structuring, de-composition, reconstruction, re-establishing etc., it remains essentially static: time always remains what it is. Through all the ex-staseis and stillness time preserves itself intact. Therein lies the most amazing and bewildering feature of time: its static and cyclic character that stems from its multifacetedness, the standstill of time itself that issues from its multidirectional dynamic, the unity and identity produced (created) by and through internal difference, differentiation, multiplicity and diversity.

However, this does not only apply to time in this sense of intensive concentration and congealing of past and future in the present. On another level, on the level of unfolding of time and of the unfolded time (what is usually called physical time, but also in the historical time, lifetime, biographical time, etc.), the present is also past and future, and this is brought about by that *instant* of the absolute time as well. Namely, the fact that in the unfolding of time every moment is or becomes past, future and present, this fact is founded in that absolute instant of time or in the idea of time, which holds all three dimensions (states) of time together and as one. Only thanks to that idea (notion, conception) can every moment of unfolded time be and become a past, present and future moment.

Thus, the widely accepted fact that the same moment of time once exists as present, while before that it exists (existed) as future and after that it exists (will exist) as past; this fact springs from and is established by/through the *absolute idea* of time, or the idea of *absolute time*. This is completely in accordance with and supports the conclusion that One is not, that it has no being; for past and future turn out to be marks of the absence of One (of any one, even of time and temporal moments/instants, since the temporal moment *par excellence*, the instant, is not there, not yet or not any more), whereas the instant itself, the present moment, is by definition evasive and fleeting (One is totally absent from it and lacks itself in it, it is not time and has neither motion nor rest [ἐν οὐδενὶ χρόνῳ ἂν εἴη οὐδὲ κινοῖτ᾽ ἂν τότε οὐδ᾽ ἂν σταίη]).

So, the common appearance and conception of time, the worldly-historical unfolding of transition and change, rests upon the idea of time, i.e. upon the fundamental notion of time, which however denies and abolishes temporal existence and time in general. On the other hand, though, this very notion exists in and as that same unfolding of time; it is present in it, indeed in every moment of this unfolding. These two times are inseparable and their bond is unbreakable, for otherwise the time itself (in any of its forms and appearances) would cease to exist, it would simply disintegrate. In order for the time to continue there has to exist a relationship

between these two times, a relationship analogous with that between the ideas and the world (the phenomenal cosmos). In fact, at least as Plato is concerned, the status and the meaning of the ideal (that is, of ideas and their constellations), as well as its relationship with the phenomenal, visible world, is built *upon* this twofold notion of time and built *after* it. The key in both cases is again *participation* (μέθεξις) and its *dialectic*.

In the first place, it is in this absolute instant that the fundamental configuration of everything lies. While it cannot determine the course of transition, change and re-groupings that take place in the unfolding of physical, historical or individual (biographical) time, it is still present in each and every moment of their movement as well as in its totality. This absolute time is the absolute *constellation of temporality*, it is temporality as such, in and by itself. According to the same logic of its presence – which is identical with the logic of the presence of ideas and the ideal, i.e. of ideality, in the phenomenal – this pure, sheer temporality is *omnipresent* (πανταχοῦ παροῦσα) in the sense that it survives and is confirmed in every possible expression or appearance of itself. In other words, it is the presence in the form of participation, and indeed of mutual participation of the absolute and the particular. The two times mentioned above participate in each other and depend upon each other just as ideas and phenomena do.

The notion and the image of absolute time is, therefore, exemplary and essential insofar as it is the focal point of ontology, cosmology, psychology and politics (political philosophy); it is the "instant" in and through which different realities and conceptions are identified and kept together. The ideal (ideality as such and ideas as such) and the phenomenal (the visible material world), on one hand, and the ontological, cosmic (cosmological), psychological and political dimensions and realities, on the other, all concentrate in this one instant of (dialectical, i.e. both static and cyclic) *identity of the different*.

Now, because the whole situation with One and its being (and, to be sure, with its knowledge as well) is like this, the same has to be true for things, for multiplicity, i.e. for the Many in its totality. So, what follows (157b-160b) is the discussion of "what will be true of the others, if there is a one." Also, for all the reasons mentioned above, and most of all because of the last point (regarding the instant and the difference), the same kind of ambivalence or duplicity has to be present in things ("others"). In addition, the same concept (conception) is applied and working here: the concept of *participation*. This concept, which holds and keeps the ambivalence in itself, is therefore invoked as the reason and foundation of their (the others') relationship with One, i.e. as the basis and condition of the possibility of a relation/connection between the two worlds/realms. Thus, "the others are not wholly destitute of the one [unity], but partake [participate] of it in a way [Οὐδὲ μὴν στέρεταί γε

παντάπασι τοῦ ἑνὸς τἆλλα ἀλλὰ μετέχει πῃ.]" (157c1-2). Therefore, they also possess both whole and part, are both one and many (157c-158d) and that means also that they are at the same time limited and unlimited (158d). In the same vein, they are at once like and unlike themselves and one another (158e-159a); the same as and different from themselves and each other, just as they are "both in motion and at rest, and have all the contrary characters [καὶ κινούμενα καὶ ἑστῶτα καὶ πάντα τὰ ἐναντία πάθη]" (159a). Here, in the realm of particulars, or "others," Parmenides reiterates the same ground and the same post he went over when he spoke about the One (i.e. when he spoke from the perspective, the point of view of the One), only in the opposite direction. Thus, here he starts from the II, the Positive stage or segment, in order to continue with what was I, the Negative stage in the discussion of the One.[20] And the conclusion from this perspective is: "if there is a one, the one is both all things and nothing whatsoever, alike with reference to itself and to the others [ἓν εἰ ἔστιν πάντα τέ ἐστι τὸ ἓν καὶ οὐδὲ ἕν ἐστι καὶ πρὸς ἑαυτὸ καὶ πρὸς τὰ ἄλλα ὡσαύτως]."[21]

For the end, Parmenides restates the *Negative* stage and case (I), first with regard to One and then with regard to the consequences that its non-existence might have for the particulars.[22] The *Difference* we saw in "*the instant*" is appearing again as an essential moment (160d-e). It is in a way endowed with being and is endowing the being with both (one and others), and thanks to it they can now co-exist and relate – and eventually also unite. Here now, difference is definitely inscribed in the One and from there spreads out into the whole world and all things ("all" – that means those that are and those that are not). And, as perhaps another argument against agnosticism, the difference is the guarantee of One's *knowability*. What's more, this knowability now seems clearly dependent on the others, and that through One's difference from them. That is, the knowability of One depends on the existence/non-existence of others, of particulars, and is intertwined with difference as the ontological definition and mode of that existence/non-existence. The difference between One and others is what connects them and puts and holds them together, forces them to relate to each other; and this necessary relation(ship) enables the knowledge of them both, so it is the foundation and the condition of their knowability (knowability of both: One and others). To that extent one could even say that the *difference is (the foundation, being, essence of) knowability*, or that at least it implies knowability of One and others.

Also, just as it was the case with regard to "the instant," the presence of difference in the very center of the One dialectically leads to the recognition of the absolute knowability of the One, because (after the dialectical journey) it turns out that One is knowable in any case. Namely, whether we start from the hypothesis of its existence/being or from the

hypothesis of its non-existence/non-being, the One is knowable (conceivable, graspable). Only, to say that again, it is not knowable immediately and directly, but only by and through this detouring dialectical path. And, of course, this knowability – being dependent on the difference – necessarily includes the others, for the very character of the One taken in itself already comprises the others and the knowledge of the One is always also the knowledge of its relation (it is, of course, a relation of difference and otherness) with/toward the others. Thus, the One is knowable only with respect to the others, regardless of whether these are taken to exist and regardless of whether the One itself exists or not. The point here is very clear and unambiguous: *the idea of the One, the notion/concept/thought of the One includes the other in any case*, because the *One is unthinkable without difference*. And, whether One is or is-not, it is always related to the other because, whether it is or is not, it is in itself and by itself marked by, organized around and founded upon the difference seated deeply in its very center. Furthermore, for all the known reasons we cannot always speak about One as existent, but we always can and we always do speak and think of it as a notion, i.e. we always think and speak of the notion of it, and of it as an idea. *What goes for One goes for idea (or ideas) as well, for One is the purest idea, idea in and by itself*. And, because the One is the ideal, it is also identical with the Good. It is not just the essence of the Good, it is the Good itself; and therefore the idea of anything, as its ultimate *good*, is the One, its *unity*.[23]

Everything being determined in this way, the question arises as to what happens to the others in the case when one is not). This is an especially logical and important problem since we have seen how connected and interdependent One and others are. We have seen to what large extent this applies to the One, so one can only imagine how completely and utterly this relationship (or better: relatedness) affects the others/particulars.

The general conclusion is, of course, that there can be no others without One: "*If there is no one, there is nothing at all* [οὔτε τι ἔστιν οὔτε φαίνεται τἆλλα ἓν εἰ μὴ ἔστιν]" (166b6-7). For as Parmenides shows,[24] all the characteristics disappear. At first, all the attributes, i.e. all the conceptual pairs through which the whole investigation has been moving and with regard to which the hypotheses about One and others have been tested; all these posts are once again positively reiterated, and it turns out that the others can be all those things without the One. That is, they can be like and unlike, same and different, one and many, limited and unlimited, equal and unequal (164b-165d), or at least they will appear as such (165c4-6). However, in the last reiteration of the hypothesis of non-being of One and of its consequences for the status of others, Parmenides shows the last conclusions to be false, or at least equally valid as their exact opposites. Thus, point by point, he states

that none of these attributes can apply to others if there is no One (165e-166b). More precisely, the others are none of those attributes; none of them can be attached to those if there is no One. And this is only a logical conclusion, particularly from the central point of view, namely from the point of view of the difference innate in the One, the difference which establishes, demands and determines the necessity of the relationship between One and the others, and (consequently) indeed of the being/existence of them both. Thus, to repeat it again, "If there is no one, there is nothing at all" (166b6-7). Furthermore, the general conclusion related to this and regarding all the hypotheses investigated in the dialogue, is that (sic!) they all turn out (or at least appear) to be true if there is One. So, "it seems that, whether there is or is not a one, both that one and the others alike are and are not, and appear and do not appear to be, all manner of things in all manner of ways, with respect to themselves and to one another [ὡς ἔοικεν ἓν εἴτ᾽ ἔστιν εἴτε μὴ ἔστιν αὐτό τε καὶ τἆλλα καὶ πρὸς αὑτὰ καὶ πρὸς ἄλληλα πάντα πάντως ἐστί τε καὶ οὐκ ἔστι καὶ φαίνεταί τε καὶ οὐ φαίνεται.]" (166c3-5).

What Plato's dialectic of the one and many in the *Parmenides* tells us is the basic hypothesis (or supposition and conclusion at the same time) of all dialectic: One contains the Many, or the Other, in itself by precisely being one, i.e. One as such contains otherness and multiplicity in itself. And, it does this in both the positive and the negative manner and sense, that is, either by positively supposing multiplicity and the other as ontologically real beings (which means: as parts of its own being, or as moments of itself, or as its complements and supplements, or in any other way and as anything else) or by negatively determining it through exclusion, difference or some other way and relation to itself. This twofold relationship is exactly what dialectic discovers, explains, confirms and teaches, so that this relationship is always finally recognized as the major law of being and existence.

## Appendix: The Time of Liberty

The most important consequence of the notion of time enclosed in the idea of the "instant" concerns liberty. Namely, this idea stands very close to and indeed overlaps with the idea of liberty. First of all, the "instant" is exactly *the time of liberty*, or *the free time*, which is identical with liberty itself. For, liberty is exactly this possibility and existence of exploding, rearranging, concentrating, transforming, re-establishing, imploding, scattering, gathering, intensifying, etc., the time itself. At least since Plato (but, to be sure, before him as well, i.e. in the whole Greek antiquity) the idea (notion, conception) of liberty is conceived as the idea of exploding the given constellation of facts, events, developments, and most of all of time an temporality; or at least the idea of the potential to perform and realize this

explosion. It is thanks to liberty, therefore, that people have the possibility/power to change the order of things and the state of affairs. In fact, this possibility/power *is* liberty. And, of course, there is nothing more fundamental than the time and its dimensions, so of course there cannot be any real (let alone fundamental) liberty without this *free handling and dealing with time*. Therefore, the fundamental and simultaneously highest (ultimate) liberty is the *liberty to affect* (change, transform, explode, implode, rearrange etc.) *the course of time*, i.e. to *intervene in time* and its given structure.

On the other hand, from the point of view of time, especially of the instant, the time of liberty – whether one understands it as *a period of living and practicing liberty* or as the *moment(s) of liberation* – liberty always happens as a break in/of time, even as a break of time and temporality. Freedom (liberty) happens as an interruption of time, which however cannot be defined temporally. The moment of liberty is in this respect identical (same) as/with the "instant." For, it affects, changes and intervenes in time without being temporal itself. And liberty behaves like this in other spheres and dimensions as well.[25]

The moment of liberty, therefore, stands outside and beyond time, but is all the time present *for* it. This means that liberty, as the power to re-structure time, has the ultimate power over it but does not enter it, at least not temporally. Liberty affects time but is never temporal.

This may seem paradoxical but, in fact, the opposite would be and is really paradoxical. For, that a power over something should not and cannot reside in that same thing seems quite normal to common sense. What is inconceivable for this common sense is that this power could and should reside in/within that over which it rules. In other words, the well-known paradox of the class of all classes which is (also/still) a member of its own class emerges here once again. In case of *liberty* – just like in the case of the *instant* and of the *idea of all ideas* – it always turns out that the power (the class of all classes) must belong to its own domain, realm, class. Therefore, it is actually not at all paradoxical to claim that, for instance, liberty has to be present in that same *time* over which it has and exerts power. That is, not any more paradoxical than the situation of ideas, which both structure the visible/phenomenal world and are present in it (through participation, of course). The difference between the two is on another level, namely on the level of intervention. Thus, while ideas do not and cannot intervene effectively in the phenomenal in some particular respect, liberty is supposed to do exactly that.

However, this would still be a confusion of levels. The *idea of liberty*, which is certainly different from the "fact" of liberty, has all the same attributes (and therefore also abilities and authority) as any other idea –

which is to say: as the ideal in general. Again, it is not the idea that intervenes but rather an existing (phenomenal etc.) liberty, which liberty is undoubtedly nothing else than the *soul* proper only and exclusively to a free human being. More precisely, it is only the free individual and the free collective that can and do intervene in time. Still, as with everything else, the possibility of this intervention is prescribed, inscribed and circumscribed in and with the idea of liberty, most notably in the identity of this idea with the "instant" and the whole intensive-explosive notion of time founded upon it (upon the instant).

If liberty is the power to intervene in (interrupt, transform, confirm, etc.) the time, and if this power gets realized in the Instant, which, for its part, intensifies and inverts the totality of time into itself[26]; then that Instant is indeed the instant of liberty, or the moment of liberty. The instant is thus that moment when and where time actually appropriates both itself and its opposite, or a moment of *self-appropriation of time and timelessness*; the moment when time and timelessness become one, identical, and therefore the moment when and where *time appropriates timelessness*, and vice versa: the moment of *time's becoming eternal/eternity*. Differently put, the Instant is the revealing moment, an *instant of revelation*, for therein resides and happens the recognition of the eternity of time, the realization that the only eternal thing in the universe is time, that it is indeed the eternity itself.

In the same vein, since (if) the Instant is the moment of liberty, this whole construction is simultaneously the structure of liberty as such. Namely, by way of this Instant, liberty turns out to be the moment (moments) when and where time and eternity identify and become one, and this oneness, this unity and identity, is exactly liberty. Therefore, the moment of liberty is the moment, instant, where the time both stops and is being moved, pushed on. It is the instant where time is brought to a standstill, a standstill which issues in its acceleration, and *the standstill of time* (that is, *eternity*) is nothing but its *movement*, *continuation* and *acceleration*.

Here, we once again encounter the same paradox as above. Both as far as liberty and time/eternity are concerned, we have the same paradox that was characteristic of (in fact, established and set in) the theory and the status of ideas. Liberty and time are marked by the *paradox of the ideal itself*, or of Ideality, since they both simultaneously *do* and *do not* belong to themselves and the world, that is, since they both appropriate and determine themselves and are appropriated and determined.

This leads to one conclusion: both liberty and time/eternity are ideas and ideal, and therefore the theory of ideas is also the *theory of liberty and of time/eternity*. And, together with this conclusion, one is again faced with the same question: How does liberty *exist* in the world, if it exists at all?

The answer (thoroughly Platonic, to be sure)[27] has been hinted at a number of times already, and every time it was the same one: liberty exists only in and through human beings, the only soulful beings in nature, i.e. the only bodies in this world that are endowed with the ideal. It is this distinctive trait of his/her existence that makes *man the agent of liberty*. At the same time, however, it is through this difference that he/she re-connects and re-unites with nature and the world. More precisely, it is in his/her liberty, in the instant of liberty, that man – as the soul, the spirit, the ideal and ideality – rediscovers and regains naturality, becomes one with nature and the world.[28]

Conversely, the ultimate answer[29] to the question of human nature has to be: Liberty. For liberty is *both* the appropriation of man's own self, a self-appropriation of man, *and* the appropriation of nature, of κόσμος or universe. In other words, *liberty* is *self-articulation* (self-definition, self-determination, self-positioning, self-confirmation) and *self-appropriation* of the soul, mind, idea, universe and time (which always also includes the opposite), their *differential self-identification*. Therefore, regarding the relationship between man and the world (κόσμος, nature, universe) one should say that it is man's liberty that differentiates and identifies him/her in relation to nature and the world, that liberty makes man be one with the κόσμος and, in the last instance, means *man's being-in-the-world*.

This at the same time means and shows that *liberty precedes man*, that man (humankind in general) as a free being is born out of and born into liberty. Thus liberty at once surpasses him/her and belongs to him/her. For, to get back to the author of this whole conception, i.e. to Plato, the birth of time ("χρόνου γένεσις"[30]) is simultaneously the birth of liberty.[31] In other words, the relationship between man and liberty is one of appropriation. Man is at the same time appropriated by liberty and appropriates it, so once again liberty turns out to be self-appropriation.

Because this dialectic of appropriation is essential, crucial characteristic of liberty, we see how and why *liberty* came to be the *question of property* and eventually the very *idea of property*. Ever since the ancient times (first implicitly and then, from Plato on, quite explicitly) liberty has been related to and defined through property. Ever since then, *liberty means the possibility of property*, to be free means to own something (or somebody), to *own goods* – and that in both possible senses: as *things* and as *qualities* or *values*. I am free if and when I can own, when I have property, when something belongs to me.

This introduces a whole range of *relations of belonging and ownership*. For, at the same moment in which things, qualities, values *belong to me*, in and through this same situation, I pose and establish myself as *belonging somewhere*, as belonging *to something*. If and when I

am free I belong somewhere. Only as a free being, or as being a free existence, entity, individual, only as being free I can belong to anything and belong anywhere. It is the *paradox of liberty*, the paradox of being free, that the same property that marks my *liberation* (from other things and relations with others) necessarily makes me *belong*, it *appropriates* me. Freedom as property and appropriation turns me into a property as well, for it posits (establishes, defines) me as belonging; in a word, it appropriates me. And thus, as belonging somewhere, as being appropriated, or as a property, I am free.

This dialectic of belonging most explicitly takes place on the social level. As a free being I necessarily belong to a community. And I belong to community because I am the proprietor. I belong *as* the proprietor — of freedom, of goods, etc. If I do not own anything I cannot be a member of community. I must have some property in order to qualify for the membership in a community, which membership for its part establishes me as a free being, entity, individual. Only as being-in-a-community can my existence be a free existence. Thus, liberty itself means belonging, means being appropriated. Therefore, I have to own (others, other things, etc.) in order to belong somewhere, and only this multiple and multifaceted property constitutes my freedom. I am free to own and to be owned, my liberty is the simultaneous appropriation on and from all sides.

On the other hand, one could also say the reverse, namely that my belonging qualifies me to be/become the one to whom things/goods belong. By belonging (to the community) I define and articulate myself as a free being, which means: as the being to which something belongs, or as the being that owns things, as the being that has/owns property.

Any which way one looks at it, on many levels liberty is identified with property and this identification is circular, thus circumscribing the circular structure of liberty. For, property qualifies me as a free being, and this being free qualifies me to belong to the community as such (as a communal thing, as unity and relatedness, as a form of being-together, as a collective being), which belonging to the community then posits me as a free being. The whole dialectic here is circular, reversed and reversible. There seems to be no primacy of one over the other. However, being established in this way, this circularity and reversibility actually concentrates the whole complex of relationships, it concentrates and congeals itself in one and the same moment. *Circularity* inevitably and necessarily, immediately, turns into *instantaneousness*. The circle inverts into an instant thanks to the simultaneous presence of its elements (relations). Since there is no logical or temporal precedence of (any) one over (any) other, since *ownership and belonging fall together and at once*, the whole system of property and appropriation is (happens in/as) one and the same instant; the whole system

falls into, belongs and is, one and the same instant, moment, point. And this is only appropriate, since one is here dealing with liberty. This *concentration*, *inversion*, or rather *introversion of property and appropriation* is totally appropriate to liberty, that is, to the structure and modality of freedom, which is in itself *a-temporal* or *de-temporalized* so as to be able to apply to (to appropriate) the whole of time and history in such a way and to such an extent that it establishes time and history.

Thus, the instant (τὸ ἐξαίφνης) of liberty unfolds itself into time, and the other side of this unfolding is the introversion of time, the concentration and congealment of time (history, temporality) into the instant. Liberty is, once again, an instant; only here it is the *instant of appropriation and self-appropriation*, the *instant of property*.

From yet another perspective, this issues in the conception of liberty as property in the sense of a *piece of property*, as something one can obtain (produce, purchase, gain, earn, etc.) and part with (lease, sell, give away to others). In this way, liberty is not just a property of the individual, a quality of his/her life and behavior and of his/her position in the community to which he/she belongs, but also a thing over which this individual has the power to keep or exchange it. Such *reification of liberty* is innate in it. More precisely, it is innate and implanted, rooted, in the very conception/concept of liberty that we have had since Plato. Therefore, the Platonic notion/conception of liberty is not only the prevailing notion of liberty[32] but it also entails quite specific conclusions and consequences (situations, states, developments, etc.) which all lead to reification of liberty.

Through all this – namely through its hegemony in human history as well as through the specific direction of its development, i.e. through its progression towards abstractness, exchangeability and reification – the Platonic idea (notion/conception) of liberty reveals its innermost *contradiction* and *paradox*. For this idea has been based on the assumption that it is impossible to pin down liberty, that being free cannot be reduced to any particular sphere, dimension or being/entity. Presumably, this idea cannot be defined in any particular terms. Rather, according to its self-understanding and self-perception, it is the very idea of totality, a holistic notion, which means that it can only be thought in terms of the totality of beings (or of the Being), as a more or less rational and therefore humanly conceivable system of everything. Liberty has/possesses generalization and totalization as its fundamental, intrinsic quality and character; and the rationality and institutional nature of liberty, in whatever degree these may exist or be possible, ensue from its generality and totality. In other words, liberty as an idea is always the most general, total and totalizing idea of the world and Being. Which is to say that liberty cannot exist in or as any particular/individual thing, entity, existence. Rather, liberty remains present

in everything and nothing, it penetrates, underlies, impregnates the whole world but cannot be reduced to any part of this world. It exists as the whole world and can be recognized and acknowledged only in the totality of a free world. Differently put, liberty transcends existence by being transcendental to it. Liberty is always larger than life, larger than anything (existent or possible), it is even larger than itself. By definition, it always eludes and escapes us in the same way the absolute, or the totality, elude and escape us. Consequently, liberty should not be something tangible or determinable.[33]

In a word, the *Instant* – and the conception of time founded upon it and structured around it – is exactly the *instant of liberty*. For, one cannot imagine higher and more complete, total and fundamental *idea of liberty* than this notion of *stepping out of time* exactly at the very core and center of time. This idea emerges as the idea of complete and total appropriation of time by and through the interruption, transformation, explosion and implosion of temporality itself.

The Instant establishes liberty and establishes itself as liberty. It functions as liberty itself on a number of levels. First, it fulfills the demand and the need for the ability to *affect* (i.e. to guide, rule and structure) something, some realm, some dimension, while belonging to (standing within) that same thing. Second, it establishes liberty as the force of both interruption and continuation, or as the *power of transformation* (explosion, implosion, dissemination, re-ordering, unification, fathering, dispersion, conversion, intensification, extension, etc.) *in/of time* which itself is *not temporal*. Then, it establishes liberty as constantly *both inside and outside the world*. Finally, it establishes *liberty as a matter of participation*.[34]

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1.   Plato, Parmenides 129d-e.

2.   Cf. 131a sq.

3.   That is, in the thing we call after the idea, the thing that has a certain quality, which is ideal/idea itself, and therefore has certain character taken from the idea (see 131b-c).

4.   See 131e.

5.   Cf. the beginning of this argument in 131e.

6.   This especially in 132d1-4.

7.   This is clearly demanded and emphasised in 133c.

8.   For, in fact, "Οὐκοῦν καὶ ὅσαι τῶν ἰδεῶν πρὸς ἀλλήλας εἰσὶν αἵ εἰσιν αὐταὶ πρὸς αὑτὰς τὴν οὐσίαν ἔχουσιν ἀλλ᾽ οὐ πρὸς τὰ παρ᾽ ἡμῖν εἴτε ὁμοιώματα εἴτε ὅπη δή τις αὐτὰ τίθεται ὧν ἡμεῖς μετέχοντες εἶναι ἕκαστα ἐπονομαζόμεθα· τὰ δὲ παρ᾽ ἡμῖν ταῦτα ὁμώνυμα ὄντα ἐκείνοις αὐτὰ αὖ πρὸς αὑτά ἐστιν ἀλλ᾽ οὐ πρὸς τὰ εἴδη καὶ ἑαυτῶν ἀλλ᾽ οὐκ ἐκείνων ὅσα αὖ ὀνομάζεται οὕτως" (133c8-d5).

9.   For these, see the preceding passage (136a5-b4).

10.   In what follows, I am somewhat departing from the usual division of the hypotheses of the second part of the dialogue. (For the standard and widely accepted division see F.M. Cornford, *PlatoError! Bookmark not defined. and Parmenides*, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1964[5].) This departure is by no means decisive or essential, and should not be understood as a reproach to that division. As it will soon become clear, no substantial changes have been made in my exposition of the *Parmenides*. It is just that the purpose here is somewhat different, due to the fact that we are looking for the traces of the concept of participation, and are concentrating on its effects throughout the dialogue.

11.   Let us here briefly reiterate the two paths. **[I]** (1) One is neither a *whole* nor has *parts* (137c-d); (2) it also *has not* and cannot have *shape* (137e); (3) it has *no place*, it cannot be anywhere, not in another and not in itself (138a-b); (4) it also has *no motion* and *no rest* (138c-139a), it does *not move*, it is *not at rest*, and it cannot become, transform, change, etc.; (5) furthermore, it is *neither same nor different* with/from anything else or itself (139b-e); (6) and therefore it is *neither like nor unlike* anything else or itself (139e-140b); (7) just as, because of all that, it is *neither equal nor unequal* to itself or another (140b-d); (8) and, finally, it has nothing to do with time: "οὐδὲ ἄρα χρόνου αὐτῷ μέτεστιν οὐδ᾽ ἔστιν ἔν τινι χρόνῳ" (141d4-5; see also 140e-d). It follows that One cannot have being and that it in no sense is: "τὸ ἓν οὔτε ἕν ἐστιν οὔτε ἔστιν" (141e12), or that One is nothing, that it is not (141e-142a), which is contrary to the starting presupposition and thus automatically brings us back to it. So, the starting point has to be re-examined. Or, as Parmenides calls it, the "ὑπόθεσις" (142b1) has now to be reconsidered from the Positive perspective. **[II]** The second demonstration of dialectical method starts now from the hypothesis that "a one is [ἓν εἰ ἔστιν]" (142c7), which here means that it "has being [ἓν ἔστιν]" (142c7) Of course, in advance, we somehow sense that the results of this part of the method will be the exact opposite of the results of the previous segment and that the answers to the same questions/themes will be opposite to the answers there. So, first, One is supposed to be different from being (142c5). The whole thing is now interpreted from the perspective, i.e. from the point of view of the relationship between One and being, or better from their difference. Thus: (1) One *is* both a *whole* and has *parts* (142d) and also, as one and as being, it has to be *many* ("unlimited in multitude [ἄπειρον ἂν τὸ πλῆθος]"). So, in contrast to 137c, the conclusion is that it is a plurality (142e). It is important to note that this result will remain the lasting acquisition/achievement of the dialogue. The One as the unity of identity and difference is not disputed afterwards, but only further developed and articulated. Thus, the presence of difference within ideas remains decisive and fortified. And from this conclusion further follows that (1a) One (and being as well) has *difference*, that it is "different or other [τῷ ἑτέρῳ τε καὶ ἄλλῳ ἕτερα ἀλλήλων]" (but not the difference itself) and therefore non-identical (143a-b); which again issues in (1b) the fact that One implies and generates the *number* in the sense of plurality (143c-144a); which then points to the fact that being is divided and equally distributed among things (144b), which again tells us that unity is indeed "parceled out by being [κεκερματισμένον ὑπὸ τῆς οὐσίας]," i.e. that One is made to be many by the fact that it is, and that it is indeed an *infinite plurality* (144c-e) in both senses: in the sense that each part is a unity in itself, and that the very notion of unity (the idea) *is* its opposite (that is, it is "necessarily many"). Or, as Parmenides says, "a 'one which is' is both one and many, whole and parts, limited as well as indefinitely numerous [Τὸ ἓν ἄρα ὂν ἕν τέ ἐστί που καὶ πολλὰ καὶ ὅλον καὶ μόρια καὶ πεπερασμένον καὶ ἄπειρον πλήθει.]" (145a2-3). (2) Secondly, One as it appears now also *has shape* (145a-b); just as (3) it *has place*, it is placed both in itself and in another (145b-e); and (4) *both*

in *rest* and in *motion* (145e-146a). Furthermore, (5) One is both the *same and different* from itself and another (146b-147b). It is important to note that this result will remain the lasting acquisition/achievement of the dialogue. The One as the unity of identity and difference is not disputed afterwards, but only further developed and articulated. Thus, the presence of difference within ideas remains decisive and fortified. This, as Parmenides himself notes, follows from the first step (1a), where the difference was established within the discussion of One as whole and parts, i.e. followed from its being both whole and part (parts), and emerged as an attribute of the One and of being. Finally (6), One is consequently *both like and unlike* itself and others (147c-148d). This last point is also based on the previous proof about sameness and difference of the One with itself and others, because their sameness springs from their difference. Difference is that which makes them be same (147d-148a), while the sameness produces the difference (148b).

12.  I am here omitting the passage about numbers (149a8-c2) since it seems to be just an illustration of the main point, and is therefore not decisive for the present discussion.

13.  Continuing after this crucial digression, Parmenides further concludes that (7) it follows that the *One is both equal and unequal* to itself and others (149d-151e). Here, though, there is another interesting digression-explanation, which deals with *greatness and smallness*. What is important here is that, at one point, Parmenides sets the two *as ideas*. He talks at one point that only in relation to each other as ideas they have meaning and being (150c5-7), which is an important reference back to the beginning of the dialogue, where he stated that ideas relate and refer to themselves (i.e. to each other) rather than to things (in the passage about the two-worlds argument, when the problem of agnosticism was posed: 133a-b), only now it is not such a lethal problem any more, but rather a simple neutral logical conclusion; which change also points to the progress in investigation, namely to the fact that we are well on our way to surpass and refute agnosticism and its critique. Parmenides, furthermore, gives us to understand here that only ideas relate and refer to ideas, i.e. that they have meaning and being only (or at least primarily) for each other and only in relation to each other, and not to things (cf. 150c5-7 passim). Finally, (8) the question of the temporality of the One is addressed with the, now entirely expected, conclusion that it *exists in time* and that it *both is and becomes* older and younger than itself *and does not* become older or younger and never is older or younger than itself (151e-152e). In addition, One is said to have the same relationship with others, which are necessarily its parts, and since One as having parts has difference within it/itself, it again both *is* and *becomes* older and younger than its parts (which parts are nothing but these others) and also *is not* and *does not become* older or younger than they are (153a-155b).

14.  156e-160b. – **[III]** This whole stage appears as a re-iteration of the previous two stages/paths. In fact, the beginning of this argument clearly points at that. (The whole first part of the argument is developed in 156e-157b.) For in the very beginning the sequence of investigation, the fact that there is a succession of stages and that it is somehow temporal (and necessarily so), is not only respected and taken into consideration, but also immediately taken, interiorized and assimilated, into the One as another hypothesis about its being and essence/character. Thus, the two previous hypotheses – that One is and that One is not – are both included in the One so that the One itself is understood as a succession of its being and not-being. Therefore, it is *successively One and many*, i.e. existent and non-existent, becoming and perishing, "coming into existence [γίγνεσθαι]" and "ceasing to exist [ἀπόλλυσθαι]" (156a5-6), or

rather it actually changes the mode of its being and is once One and then Many, once combined and then separated (156b).

15. This succession of one and many, or being and not-being, then becomes: with respect to like-unlike (I6, II6) assimilation and dissimilation (156b); with respect to equality-inequality (I7, II7) it becomes increased, diminished or equalized (156b); and with respect to motion and rest (I4, II4) it either "comes to stand [ἵστηται]" or "changes to being in motion [ἐπὶ τὸ κινεῖσθαι μεταβάλλῃ]" (156c1-2).

16. See also the whole surrounding passage 157a-b. This immensely important concept has seldom received due attention and even less proper interpretation. Its importance for Plato's philosophy on the whole, and particularly for his dialectic, has been acknowledged relatively recently. One such attempt is M.M. McCabe's analysis in *Plato's Individuals* (Princeton: Princeton Univ. Press, 1999), pp. 121-24. This analysis has one important conclusion, which brings us closer to understanding the concept of the instant (or "suddenly," as McCabe literally translates *τὸ ἐξαίφνης*), namely that this moment is itself beyond being (nothing really, not one nor many) and thus the moment of not-being/nothingness within being/existence, which enables that very being/existence as such (as one, many, change and durability). However, due to her general approach, which is based on the strict analytical distinction and division between "complex (generous) particulars and simple (austere) forms" (p.52), McCabe stops half-way and treats the whole conception of the instant as another example of the paradox that puts unsurpassable obstacles to Plato's theory, such as the lack of a clear concept of individuality and individuation and the like (cf. pp. 99-113). Because of that, her otherwise thorough and learned treatment of the *Parmenides* remains insufficient.

17. For it cannot exist in some other way than as it happens in transitions. Differently put, if it doesn't exist in the way these transitions prescribe and realize, then it doesn't exist at all, it is not – not as one and not in any way.

18. See *Timaeus* 36d8-40d5.

19. *Timaeus* 37c6-38b5.

20. Cf. 159b-160b. Of course, here it is the negative side of the particulars, i.e. the case of them being destitute of unity and of the one being thoroughly separated from the others. This is just a part of the large set [I], the Negative, which continues.

21. 160b2-3. – The analysis of the Negative set [I] of dialectics continues, now with reference to particulars and to the One as well. But, here, the One seems to be understood as one among many, or as one (particular) thing. Or at least it seems that Parmenides is discussing the fate of others (of particulars) in case "the one is not" (160b5). Also, it seems to be taken in this sense since Parmenides immediately draws the difference and contrast between "a one does not exist" and "a not-one does not exist" (160c). Of course, this last difference could lead to the opposite conclusion, as if the former refers to the One, whereas the latter refers to plurality and to many (i.e. to things that make the plurality, many things). Be it as it may, the following argumentation seems to confirm our first conclusion, since it repeatedly returns to the meaning according to which it is a particular thing (particular things) that is in question. (See, for example, 160c5-6, where it says: "if a man says 'if a one [one thing] does not exist,' it is plain that the thing he is saying does not exist in something different from other things [δηλοῖ ὅτι ἕτερον λέγει τῶν ἄλλων τὸ μὴ ὄν ὅταν εἴπῃ <ἓν εἰ μὴ ἔστι>].") Still, one should not make

any conclusions yet, but rather wait until the discussion that follows these passages is completed and see what its results will be.

22. That is [IV] the *closing argument* of the *Parmenides* (160c-166b). [IV.1] In the first part of his closing argument (160c-164b) Parmenides is re-examining the negative hypothesis about the One. Only now the case is different than before (and that due to the dialectical path that leads here), and there is now a clear difference and contrast, even opposition, between saying (as previously) that "a one does not exist" and saying (as one obviously should now) that "a not-one [no-thing] does not exist" (160c1). The second part of the closing argument ([IV.2] 164b-166b) rather refers to the plurality of one, to the side of many in it, and maybe even tends to posit one as something comparable to others. For, Parmenides does say: "if a man says 'if a one does not exist,' it is plain that the thing he is saying does not exist is something different from other things … So in speaking of a 'one' he is speaking, in the first place, of something knowable, and in the second of something different from other things [δηλοῖ ὅτι ἕτερον λέγει τῶν ἄλλων τὸ μὴ ὂν ὅταν εἴπῃ <ἓν εἰ μὴ ἔστι> — Πρῶτον μὲν ἄρα γνωστόν τι λέγει ἔπειτα ἕτερον τῶν ἄλλων]" (160c5-8). It seems that One is now posited in relation to others and thereby the existence of others is acknowledged, or at least the non-existence of one is not automatically taken to be a denial of the existence of others.

23. What follows in the rest of this argument, this reiteration of the hypothesis that One is not (does not exist) from the newly gained vantage point (i.e. from the vantage point gained by the previous dialectical development of the hypotheses about One), are the conclusions appropriate to this hypothesis and to the stage in which we are now. Thus, with regard to previous themes and issues, the conclusions are that One, in addition to being necessarily *knowable and different* (5 – 160d-e) is also *unlike others* and *like itself* (6 – 161a-b), and is *not equal to others* but nevertheless (or, in fact, exactly because of that) has equality in itself. That is, it has equality, greatness and smallness, which means that it is *both equal and unequal to itself* (7 – 161c-e). Furthermore, even though non-existent, it still *has being* in some sense. (Such a qualification here, in this context, should be understood as the inversion of the difference between "having" and "possessing" knowledge from *Theatetus* 197a-c. "Having" here is more akin to "possessing" there. In any case, it is obviously an ideal possession, the one I was calling upon above when I was talking about the notion of One persisting regardless of whether One really existed or not.) And this is 'proved' by an obscure passage about the kinds of being implied in existence and non-existence (162a-b), only to conclude that One both has and does not have being (162b4-7). From such determination of the being of One follows that One has transition, or even that it *is* in the 'state' of transition (162c1-3), and therefore has motion as well. But this is again only one side of the matter, for it immediately turns out that it is also at rest; so the One that does not exist is *both at rest and in motion* (4 – 162c-e). Then again, since it follows that this One is in fact *both* becoming and ceasing to be, on one hand, *and* not becoming or ceasing to be, on the other (163a-d); and since, on account of that, it does not change in character (163e1-3), it also follows that it is *neither at rest nor in motion* (4 – 163e). At this point, the opposite conclusions begin to be drawn. Thus, in contrast to the previous set of conclusions, it now turns out (and it seems to be all on account of the conclusion that One, which does not exist, cannot change in character) that it *cannot* have equality or inequality (7 – 163c-164a), nor can it be like or unlike (6 – 164a), the same or different (5), nor can it have any being and therefore also any name or notion, it cannot even be the subject of discourse: "Οὔτε ἄρα ὅμοια οὔτε ἀνόμοια οὔτε ταὐτὰ οὔθ᾽ ἕτερά ἐστιν ἢ τὸ τὶ ἢ τὸ τοῦτο ἢ τὸ τούτου ἢ ἄλλου

ἢ ἄλλῳ ἢ ποτὲ ἢ ἔπειτα ἢ νῦν ἢ ἐπιστήμη ἢ δόξα ἢ αἴσθησις ἢ λόγος ἢ ὄνομα ἢ ἄλλο ὁτιοῦν τῶν ὄντων περὶ τὸ μὴ ὂν ἔσται;" (164a6-b2).

24.  Cf. 164b-166b.

25.  One only has to remember the problem with which we started this whole investigation, namely the problem of rationality/irrationality of liberty. There too, it turned out that liberty was, is and always will be the irrational core and foundation of rationality; that it was the ultimate argument about which it is impossible to argue; that liberty was the central point of any possible structure, which point is however beyond any particular structure and generally beyond any structuration.

26.  "Itself" here meaning both the Instant and the whole of Time.

27.  One might not like this but it remains a fact that, up to this day, it has been the only real answer available; or at least the only one accepted and agreed upon widely enough to be relevant.

28.  Speaking in terms of Platonic dialogues, one could here speak of the merger between the *Parmenides* and the *Timaeus*.

29.  Just as emphatically Platonic as the previous one.

30.  *Timaeus* 39e3.

31.  Which is, indeed, almost a tautological statement, for nothing can come to being, in any mode or form, before time. Cf. again *Timaeus* 37e5-38b5.

32.  In fact, as it has been remarked, the only viable and relevant one we have ever had.

33.  Yet, throughout history, it has always been particularized, reduced, articulated in terms of properties. And even though this development that wants liberty to be something exchangeable and, most of all, something institutionalizable, something that fits in (the framework of) institutions, is quite paradoxical; our whole history has been the story of the institutionalization of liberty. Now, since institutionalization is genuinely a limitation, confinement and enclosure of (some) reality, this history emerges as the story of the limitation of the unlimited, of the enclosure of the infinite, as the confinement of liberty. No wonder then that one of the most often and most popular conceptions of history remains the Romantic one, and no wonder that it was Romanticism that inaugurated history as the highest human science, or as the model and the paradigm of scientific approach and research in the humanities. For, after all, it was Romanticism that made this contradiction and paradox its fundamental principle and sought to find and expose the uncanny, to express the inexpressible, articulate the inarticulate, define the indefinable, limit the unlimited, etc. Be it as it may, to the extent in which our history is the history of liberty (of course, not necessarily in the Hegelian sense of "the progress in the consciousness of liberty," and most likely not at all in the sense of progression or regression), it is also this story/history of the paradox of liberty: the paradox of the limitation of the unlimited, of the specification and particularization of the total, the general and the absolute.

34.  These are just some of the most prominent functions and consequences of the Instant as the epitome of liberty. Of course, it does not end here. The complete list is very long, almost inexhaustible.