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Self-Cultivation: Ancient and Modern

Contents

Foreword	
BETHANY PARSONS and ANDRE OKAWARA	1
Epicurus Avenged?	
DANIEL CONWAY	3
What place discourse, what role rigorous argumentation? Against the standard image of Hadot's conception of ancient philosophy as a way of life	
MATT SHARPE	25
We Don't Need No Noumena? Freedom Through Rational Self-Cultivation in Kant	
LOUISE R. CHAPMAN	55
Anti-Stoic Lessons for the Concept of <i>Amor Fati</i> in <i>Gay Science</i> IV	
HEDWIG GAASTERLAND	70
Schopenhauer and the Stoics	
JONATHAN HEAD	90
Cultivating What Self? Philosophy as Therapy in the <i>Genealogy of Morals</i> and Hellenistic Ethics	
LISA HICKS	106
'The City of Sages' and the 'Life of Virtue': Foucault and the Politics of Self-Cultivation in the Spartan Ideal	
BURÇ KÖSTEM	126
The Political Aim of Self-Cultivation in Foucault	

IRENE DAL POZ	150
Towards a History of Philosophical Practices in Michel Foucault and Pierre Hadot	
FEDERICO TESTA	168
Matthew Sharpe's <i>Camus, Philosophe?</i>	
SHAUN STEVENSON	191

Foreword

BETHANY PARSONS and ANDRE OKAWARA

This special volume of *Pli: the Warwick Journal of Philosophy* considers both the modern reappearance of the ethical ideal of self-cultivation and its ancient antecedents. Most recently this ideal finds a place in contemporary virtue ethics, but a concern for cultivation of the self, character and individual well-being have featured in the ethical thought of a range of modern European thinkers, from Kant to Foucault. In turn, these thinkers have drawn on a long tradition of ethical thought in antiquity, especially from the Hellenistic period. The nine papers contained in this volume trace these lineages, from ancient to modern, in an attempt to investigate and expand the conceptual basis for an ethics of self-cultivation and to recast our understanding of European thinkers as important contributors to debates in contemporary ethics.

These papers emerged from two conferences, *Hellenistic Ethics from Nietzsche to Foucault* (Warwick, 2014) and *Modern Appraisals of the Hellenistic Legacy* (Monash, 2015), held at the University of Warwick and Monash University. These conferences were convened by graduate students at both universities as part of the *Prospects for an Ethics of Self-Cultivation* research project. Further information about the project, including access to resources such as video presentations and interviews with keynote speakers, are available on the project web pages.¹

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¹ See both warwick.ac.uk/selfcultivation
and artsonline.monash.edu.au/selfcultivation/

Professor Matthew Sharpe of Deakin University for their invited contributions to the journal.

Bethany Parsons and Andre Okawara
Editors

June 2016

Epicurus Avenged?

DANIEL CONWAY

[T]he 'after-death' no longer concerns us!—an unspeakable benefit, which would be felt as such far and wide if it were not so recent.—And Epicurus triumphs anew!
—*Daybreak*, Section 72¹

The will to *immortalize* also requires a dual interpretation. It can be prompted, first, by gratitude and love; art with this origin will always be an art of apotheoses, perhaps dithyrambic, ...spreading a Homeric light and glory over all things. But it can also be the tyrannical will of one who suffers deeply, who struggles, is tormented, and...revenge himself on all things by forcing his own image, the image of his torture, on them, branding them with it.
—*The Gay Science*, Section 370²

One pays dearly for immortality: one has to die several times while still alive.
—*Ecce Homo*, 'Good Books,' *Zarathustra* 5³

In the writings from his so-called 'middle' period, Nietzsche delivers consistently favourable reviews of Epicurus.⁴ In *Human, All Too*

1 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982). Henceforth abbreviated as *D*.

2 Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House/Vintage Books, 1974). Henceforth abbreviated as *GS*.

3 Friedrich Nietzsche, 'Thus Spoke Zarathustra', in *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. Walter Kaufmann, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Viking Penguin, 1954). Henceforth abbreviated as *Z*.

4 Here I follow Keith Ansell-Pearson, 'True to the Earth: Nietzsche's Epicurean Care of Self and World', in *Nietzsche's Therapeutic Teaching: For Individuals and*

Human,⁵ for example, he not only associates 'the name of Epicurus' with 'wisdom in bodily form',⁶ but also celebrates Epicurus as 'one of the greatest of men, the inventor of an heroic-idyllic mode of philosophizing'.⁷ In *Daybreak*, Nietzsche recounts the 'triumph' of Epicurus (via Lucretius) over the various 'secret cults' that prospered in the early years of the Roman Empire, while lamenting that this triumph 'came too early' to deflect the teachings of the apostle Paul.⁸ In *The Gay Science*, finally, Nietzsche commends Epicurus for allowing him 'to enjoy the happiness of the afternoon of antiquity', even as he acknowledges that 'such happiness could be invented only by a man who was suffering continually'.⁹ Keith Ansell-Pearson instructively summarizes Nietzsche's position as follows:

Epicurus is a figure who has liberated himself from the fear and anxiety of existence and is capable of spiritual joyfulness that consists, in part, in the serene contemplation of the beauty and sublimity of things and a cultivation of simple, modest pleasures...As Nietzsche astutely noted, never in the history of thought has such a voluptuous appreciation of existence been so modest.¹⁰

In the writings from the post-Zarathustran period of his career, however, Nietzsche offers a decidedly more skeptical appreciation of Epicurus.¹¹ In *Beyond Good and Evil*, for example, he identifies Epicureanism as 'one of the most refined disguises' available to those who wish to conceal the extent of their suffering.¹² In *On the Genealogy of Morality*, he associates Epicurus with those 'Oriental' nihilists who understand (and

Culture, eds. Horst Hutter and Eli Friedland. (Bloomsbury Academic: Reprint Edition, 2013), pp. 97-116. (pp. 101-09); and Keith Ansell-Pearson, 'Heroic-Idyllic Philosophizing: Nietzsche and the Epicurean Tradition', *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement*, 74, (2014), pp. 237-263 (pp. 253-59).

5 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986). Henceforth abbreviated as HH.

6 HH II 224

7 HH II/2, 295. See also Ansell-Pearson, *Heroic-Idyllic Philosophizing*, pp. 246-49.

8 D 72

9 GS 45

10 Ansell-Pearson, *True to the Earth*, p. 101.

11 As Ansell-Pearson suggests, Epicurus becomes 'a more ambivalent figure' in Nietzsche's writings from this period (*Heroic-Idyllic Philosophizing*, p. 259).

12 Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. Walter Kaufmann, (New York: Random House/Vintage Books, 1989), §270. Henceforth abbreviated as *BGE*.

promote) 'redemption' in strictly privative terms, i.e., as 'the absence of suffering', which 'sufferers and those profoundly depressed will count... as the highest good, as the value of values'.¹³ In *The Antichrist(ian)*,¹⁴ finally, Nietzsche offers his controversial diagnosis of Epicurus as a 'typical *décadent*,' whose 'fear of pain, even of infinitely minute pain... can end in no other way than in a *religion of love*'.¹⁵ Much like the Jesus whom Nietzsche also profiles in this book, though blessed with 'a generous admixture of Greek vitality and nervous energy',¹⁶ Epicurus encouraged his followers to adopt 'love as the only, as the *last* possible, way of life'.¹⁷

While passages such as these may suggest that Nietzsche has broken decisively with Epicurus, as he has with so many other figures of formative influence, his writings from 1888 suggest a more nuanced position. What we find in these writings, I offer, is an attempt on Nietzsche's part to avenge Epicurus and, in so doing, to reinvigorate the pursuit of philosophy as a way of life.¹⁸ Like Epicurus, in fact, Nietzsche promotes a way of life that delivers its adherents to a blessed state of tranquil self-enjoyment, free from the mental and spiritual perturbations incident to the fear of death.¹⁹ Unlike Epicurus, however, Nietzsche links the achieve-

13 Friedrich Nietzsche, 'On the Genealogy of Morals', in *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, ed. Walter Kaufmann, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Random House/Vintage Books, 1989), III:17. Henceforth abbreviated as GM. See Raphael Woolf, 'Pleasure and Desire,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Epicurus*, ed. James Warren. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) pp. 158-78. (pp. 172-78.) For a defence of Epicurus against this general line of (Ciceronian) criticism, see Susan Sauvé Meyer, *Ancient Ethics: A Critical Introduction*. (London: Routledge, 2008), pp. 97-102; and John Cooper (2012). *Pursuits of Wisdom: Six Ways of Life in Ancient Philosophy from Socrates to Plotinus*. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012), pp. 229-46.

14 Friedrich Nietzsche, 'The Antichrist', in *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. Walter Kaufmann, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Viking Penguin, 1954). Henceforth abbreviated as *A*.

15 A 30. See, for example, Ansell-Pearson, *Heroic-Idyllic Philosophizing*, pp. 259-63.

16 A 30

17 A 30

18 Here I follow Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, ed. and intro. Arnold I Davidson, trans. Michael Chase. (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 1995), pp. 271-75. See also Ansell-Pearson, *True to the Earth*, pp. 101-09.

19 Friedrich Nietzsche, 'Ecce Homo', in *On the Genealogy of Morals and Ecce Homo*, ed. Walter Kaufmann, trans. Walter Kaufmann and R. J. Hollingdale (New York: Random House/Vintage Books, 1989), *Clever* 9. Henceforth abbreviated to EH.

ment of this blessed state to the affirmation of one's *immortal* existence—not as an indestructible soul, as the apostle Paul insisted, but as an eternally recurring participant in the ceaseless Dionysian flux of Life itself.

Section I: Epicurus and Paul

In order to appreciate why Nietzsche believes that he is advantageously positioned to avenge Epicurus, let us consider his account of the role of Epicurean philosophy in the early years of the Roman Empire, prior to the appearance on the scene of Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles.

As Nietzsche approaches the summary judgment with which he concludes *The Antichrist(ian)*, at which point he proudly pronounces 'the eternal indictment of Christianity',²⁰ he pauses to reckon the costs to us of the triumph of Christianity:

Christianity was the vampire of the *imperium Romanum*: overnight it undid the tremendous deed of the Romans—who had won the ground for a great culture *that would have had time*...This organization was firm enough to withstand bad emperors...But it was not firm enough against the most *corrupt* kind of corruption, against the *Christians*.²¹

Here Nietzsche rehearses an argument that he originally outlined in *Human, All Too Human* and later developed in *Daybreak* and *On the Genealogy of Morality*. In the last of these predecessor books, we know, he offers a similar account of the downfall of the noble morality.

Not unlike the doomed caste of knightly nobles, apparently, the Empire was vulnerable to an enemy whose 'corruption' it could not fathom, against which it was powerless to defend itself. Unfamiliar with the potency of accumulated *ressentiment*, the knightly nobles underestimated the tenacity with which the lowest orders, under the tutelage of the vengeful priests, would cling to their earthly misery.²² Like the knightly caste of nobles, that is, the early Empire was simultaneously stronger *and* weaker than its most dangerous enemies. Lavish enough to indulge and 'withstand' the carnality of 'bad emperors', the Empire failed to recognize

20 A 62

21 A 58

22 GM I 10

the threat gathering within its lowest strata. In particular, as we shall see, the Empire failed to acknowledge the threat posed by the teachings of Paul.

As Nietzsche goes on to explain, the threat presented by the Christians within the Empire was escalated by the *priests*, those haters *par excellence*, who weaponised the lowest orders of society and loosed them against their noble overlords:

The sneakiness of prigs, the conventicle secrecy, gloomy concepts like hell, like sacrifice of the guiltless, like *unio mystica* in drinking blood; above all the slowly fanned fire of revenge, of chandala revenge—all that is what became master over Rome, the same kind of religion against which, in its pre-existent form, Epicurus already had waged war. One should read Lucretius to comprehend what Epicurus fought: *not* paganism, but 'Christianity,' by which I mean the corruption of souls by the concepts of guilt, punishment, and immortality. He fought the *subterranean* cults which were exactly like a latent form of Christianity: to deny immortality [*Unsterblichkeit*] was then nothing less than real *salvation* [*Erlösung*].²³

Here Nietzsche helps himself to a useful bit of revisionist history: Despite predating the founding of Christianity by several centuries, Epicurus in fact 'waged war' against Christianity, albeit in its 'latent', 'pre-existent form'. He did so, Nietzsche explains, inasmuch as the 'subterranean cults' he battled promoted a doctrine of immortality that anticipated in important respects the teaching that Paul later disseminated.²⁴ Inasmuch as these cults 'were exactly like a latent form of Christianity', moreover, we apparently are meant to understand that they affirmed the afterlife only at the expense of *this* life, which they valued only as a trial or test, i.e., as a lamentable means to a glorious end. (Although the Epicureans famously developed a 'fourfold remedy',²⁵ Nietzsche is concerned here only with

23 A 58; see Martha Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire*. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994) pp. 192-217.

24 See Henry Staten, *Nietzsche's Voice*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 145-50.

25 See Meyer, *Ancient Ethics*, pp. 102-08; and Jacques Brunschwig and David Sedley, 'Hellenistic Philosophy,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Greek and Roman Philosophy*, ed. David Sedley. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), pp. 151-83 (pp. 155-63). See also Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire*, pp. 232-38.

the success of their remedy for mental disturbances arising from the fear of death.)

Appealing to the authority of Lucretius (99 – 55 BCE), Nietzsche locates 'the concepts of guilt, punishment, and immortality' at the centre of the 'war' that was waged by Epicurus and his followers against the proto-Christian 'subterranean cults'.²⁶ According to Nietzsche, Epicurus and his followers correctly identified this set of concepts as a threat to the souls whom they laboured to 'save' from the fear of death. Under the sage guidance of the Epicureans, that is, a kind of 'salvation' was both promised *and* attained, i.e., as an earthly, this-worldly achievement, in the early years of the Empire. The Epicureans prevailed by designing therapies and spiritual exercises that provided their clients with a preferable alternative to the immortality promoted by these 'subterranean cults'. Liberated from the fear of the death, and positively attached to life itself, the architects and champions of Empire bravely looked to the future.²⁷

According to Nietzsche, moreover, the Epicureans had this 'war' well in hand. So long as they continued to battle these proto-Christian 'cults' separately, they were likely not only to prevail, but also to infuse the Empire with a religious-moral sensibility that would further its designs on structural permanence and expansionary conquest.²⁸ In part, Nietzsche thus suggests, the Empire grew (and would have continued to grow) on the strength of its Epicurean attunement to the mortality, i.e., the 'definitive death',²⁹ of all human beings.³⁰

The Epicureans suffered a reversal of fortune, however, when Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, appeared on the scene:

26 See Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire*, pp. 251-59.

27 On the influence of Epicureanism in the early Empire, see Michael Erler, 'Epicureanism in the Roman Empire,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Epicurus*, ed. James Warren. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) pp. 46-64. (pp. 48-59.)

28 For a positive account of the political influence of Epicureanism on the early Empire, see Jeffrey Fish, 'Not All Politicians are Sisyphus: What Roman Epicureans Were Taught About Politics,' in *Epicurus and the Epicurean Tradition*, eds. Jeffrey Fish and Kirk R. Sanders. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011) pp. 72-104. (pp. 96-104)

29 D 72

30 See James Warren, 'Removing Fear,' in *The Cambridge Companion to Epicurus*, ed. James Warren. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009) pp. 234-48 (pp. 242-48)

And Epicurus would have won; every respectable spirit in the Roman Empire was an Epicurean. Then Paul appeared—Paul, the *chandala* hatred against Rome, against 'the world,' become flesh, become genius, the Jew, *the eternal* Wandering Jew par excellence. What he guessed was how one could use the little sectarian Christian movement apart from Judaism to kindle a 'world fire'...Christianity as a formula with which to outbid the subterranean cults of all kinds, those of Osiris, of the Great Mother, of Mithras, for example—and to unite them: in this insight lies the genius of Paul.³¹

Prior to the appearance of Paul, Nietzsche asserts, an Epicurean attunement to mortality prevailed, as did, presumably, an appreciation for those Epicurean therapies and exercises that were understood to liberate mortals from the vexatious fear of death.

Had the conditions of this 'war' persisted, Nietzsche insists, 'Epicurus would have won', which means, among other things, that Europe would have reaped the bountiful 'harvest' the early Empire was poised to deliver.³² Here Nietzsche suggests that the Epicureans were successful in the early years of the Empire not only because they were effective in allaying the fear of death, but also because the 'subterranean cults' they battled remained relatively insignificant in both size and influence. As the Empire prospered and expanded, however, its leaders (and the nobility more generally) became ever more prominent targets for the hatred and resentment accumulating throughout its lowest orders.³³

According to Nietzsche, the 'subterranean cults' over which the Epicureans had prevailed were 'outbid' by the apostle Paul, who offered their adherents an alternative doctrine of immortality. By means of this ingenious doctrine, which promised immortality to *everyone*, Paul was able to unite the various enemies and victims of the Empire:

That everyone as an 'immortal soul' has equal rank with everyone else, that in the totality of living beings the 'salvation' of every single individual may claim eternal significance, that

31 A 58

32 A 58

33 A 51

little prigs and three-quarter-madmen have the conceit that the laws of nature are broken for their sakes—such an intensification of every kind of selfishness into the infinite, into the *impertinent*, cannot be branded with too much contempt.³⁴

As we know from Nietzsche's argument in GM, the key to Paul's triumph lay in his canny ability to redirect and enflame the resentment of the lowest orders.³⁵ The immortality of the soul became widely attractive (and politically potent) when Paul attached it to his ominous teaching of the 'judgment',³⁶ on the strength of which the irenic Jesus of Nazareth improbably assumed the form of the 'The Crucified One.' By virtue of this 'judgment,' Paul insisted, the favoured in *this* life—viz., the noble, well-born, successful, virtuous, and powerful—would endure an eternal after-life in which the tables would forever be turned on them. This means, of course, that the afterlife advertised by Paul would be ruled and enjoyed by those who were (and are) disfavoured in this life, i.e., those who either were or imagined themselves to be the victims of the Empire. In response to this particular promise of immortality, which they had neither anticipated nor imagined, the Epicureans had nothing new to offer. Dedicated to the reduction of pain and the elimination of discord, they did not think to develop arguments against, much less devise therapies for, a doctrine of immortality that would enjoin sufferers to embrace and compound their earthly misery.

By enflaming the resentment of the miserable and dispossessed, Paul succeeded where the proto-Christian 'subterranean cults' had separately failed. He did so, moreover, by outbidding each of these 'cults' and uniting them under a single banner and a single, encompassing doctrine of immortality. Owing to Paul's intervention, the doctrine of immortality acquired the universal (or democratic) formulation that Nietzsche identifies as a primary index of *ressentiment*:

The poison of the doctrine of 'equal rights for all'—it was Christianity that spread it most fundamentally...out of the *ressentiment* of the masses it forged its great weapons against

34 A 43

35 GM III:21. See Daniel Conway. *Nietzsche's Dangerous Game: Philosophy in the Twilight of the Idols*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), pp. 194-206; and Daniel Conway, *Nietzsche's On the Genealogy of Morals*. (London: Continuum Books, 2008), pp. 128-34.

36 A 42

us, against all that is noble, gay, high-minded on earth, against our happiness on earth. 'Immortality' conceded to every Peter and Paul has so far been the greatest, the most malignant, attempt to assassinate *noble* humanity.³⁷

Whereas immortality previously had been reserved for individuals of exceedingly rare distinction—e.g., sages, saints, heroes, and kings—Paul's teaching awarded immortality to *every* soul, irrespective of birth, valour, character, possessions, or virtue. That this teaching was utterly ludicrous on its face, pandering to the delusional fantasies of those hopeless souls who occupied the lowest strata of society, spoke not only to the depths of Paul's cynicism, but also to the heights of his psychological genius, of which Nietzsche often (if not happily) took note. In short, Paul dared to assert precisely what the lowest orders wished to hear, regardless of its truth or credibility, in order to secure his larger objective:

His need was for power; in Paul the priest wanted power once again—he could use only concepts, doctrines, symbols with which one tyrannizes masses and forms herds.³⁸

In adopting this goal and implementing the strategies that would ensure its attainment, Paul thus developed what amounted to a *political* doctrine of immortality. So great was his need for power, in fact, that he promulgated this doctrine with no concern for the collateral damage it would cause:

The great lie of personal immortality destroys all reason, everything natural in the instincts—whatever in the instincts is beneficent and life-promoting or guarantees a future now arouses mistrust.³⁹

Much like the knightly caste of nobles described in Essay I of GM, the Empire failed to anticipate, much less counter, the unified political opposition mustered by its seemingly harmless enemies and victims. As in the case of the knightly caste of nobles, moreover, the Empire fell because its leaders failed to identify the deadly enemy in their midst—namely, the priestly element or caste, which surreptitiously weaponised the *ressenti-*

37 A 43

38 A 42

39 A 43

ment that it stirred up within the lowest orders of society.⁴⁰ In light of this more general failure, we should not be surprised to learn that the Epicureans were no match for the doctrine of immortality that was disseminated by Paul and his followers. Notwithstanding their success in contesting the appeal of the proto-Christian 'subterranean cults', the Epicureans were powerless to deflect the unifying teachings of Paul.

Section II: Nietzsche and Paul

The rest, as they say, is history. The pagan Empire became thoroughly and officially Christianised,⁴¹ and Europe was obliged to forego the cultural 'harvest' the early Empire was poised (but not destined) to deliver. As Christian morality became increasingly universal and monocultural in its dominion, the few remaining 'blonde beasts' who roamed the Empire were 'hunted down', sickened, and domesticated.⁴² Widespread cultural decay set in, and the spectre of European nihilism appeared on the horizon. News of the 'death of God' began to spread, and doomsayers warned of a similar fate for humankind.⁴³

All was lost, or so it seemed, until Nietzsche himself appeared on the scene in his final and most potent incarnation. Prepared to do battle with Paul for the soul and future of European civilization, Nietzsche presents himself as the author and instigator of the terrible and hopeful 'revaluation of all values'.⁴⁴ In the person of Nietzsche, or so we apparently are meant to understand, Christian morality has inadvertently produced its *other*, viz., the 'first immoralist',⁴⁵ in whom Christian morality has vested the authority to legislate its destruction.⁴⁶ As it turns out, in fact, Paul effectively sowed the seeds of his eventual undoing.⁴⁷ In

40 GM I: 10-11

41 GM I: 8

42 Friedrich Nietzsche, 'Twilight of the Idols', in *The Portable Nietzsche*, ed. Walter Kaufmann, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Viking Penguin, 1954), *Improvers* 2. Henceforth abbreviated as TI.

43 GS 125

44 EH, *Preface* 1

45 EH, *Destiny* 3

46 See Daniel Conway, 'Nietzsche's Immoralism and the Advent of 'Great Politics', in *Nietzsche and Political Thought*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson. (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014) pp. 197-217. (pp. 202-09)

47 I am indebted here to Christa Davis Acampora, *Contesting Nietzsche*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2013) pp. 112-22.

brokering the decisive triumph of 'Christian instincts',⁴⁸ Paul inadvertently set in motion the chain of events that produced Nietzsche in his final (and supposedly lethal) incarnation. Nor should we be surprised by this seemingly improbable reversal of fortune: Thus decrees the 'law of life', which Nietzsche identifies as 'the law of the necessity of 'self-overcoming' [„Selbstüberwindung'] in the nature of life'.⁴⁹

How might this newborn Nietzsche propose to 'outbid' Paul? First of all, a mere teaching or doctrine will not do. Paul's most successful teachings have become second nature to us, and they have either generated or reinforced some of the most enduring of our moral prejudices. If Nietzsche is to help his readers to unlearn what Paul has so successfully taught, he must provide them with an actual, concrete alternative, and not simply a wishful ideal. That is, he must acquaint them with what he earlier called an *example*, i.e., a philosopher whose 'outward life' bears witness to a demonstrably superior orientation to existence.⁵⁰ If the proof of truth is *incorporation*, as Nietzsche occasionally suggests, he will succeed in promulgating his 'terrible' new truth⁵¹ only in the event that he initiates his best readers into a newly established practice and a novel mode of embodiment.⁵² In short, he must inaugurate a viable new way of life, a 'visible philosophical life',⁵³ which, as Ansell-Pearson reminds us, is a point of common emphasis for Epicurus and Nietzsche.⁵⁴

The irony here is that Nietzsche will 'outbid' Paul only if he is able

48 A 51

49 GM III: 27

50 Friedrich Nietzsche, 'Schopenhauer as Educator', in *Untimely Meditations*, trans. R. J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1983), 3. Henceforth abbreviated as *SE*. Here I follow Robert Solomon, *Living with Nietzsche: What the Great 'Immoralist' Has to Teach Us*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003) pp. 140-44.

51 EH, *Destiny* 1

52 I am indebted here to Alexander Nehamas, *Nietzsche: Life as Literature*. (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1985), pp. 230-34; Gary Shapiro, *Nietzschean Narratives*. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1989), pp. 160-65; and Robert Gooding-Williams, *Zarathustra's Dionysian Modernism*. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2001), pp. 117-31.

53 SE 3

54 Ansell-Pearson, *Heroic-Idyllic Philosophising*, pp. 253-59. See also Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, pp. 82-89; and Michael Ure, 'Nietzsche's Political Therapy,' in *Nietzsche and Political Thought*, ed. Keith Ansell-Pearson. (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2014) pp. 161-78 (pp. 161-66)

to reproduce the achievement he attributes to Jesus, who, he insists, bodied forth 'a new way of life, *not* a new faith'.⁵⁵ *His* Jesus, *pace* Paul, cared not a whit for the postulated afterlife into which Paul's doctrine of immortality was meant, in the name of The Crucified One, to catapult all those who suffer in (and from) this life. *His* Jesus 'died as he had lived, as he had taught—*not* to 'redeem men,' but to show how one must live'.⁵⁶ The further irony, of course, is that Nietzsche forwards a similar interpretation of Epicurus, who, despite being a '*typical décadent*',⁵⁷ also offered his followers a 'way of life' in which a kind of 'redemption' was not simply promised, but attained.

To be sure, however, Nietzsche's point here is not to recommend the precise example set by Jesus, whom he diagnosed as an '*idiot*',⁵⁸ i.e., as suffering from an '*instinctive hatred of reality*'.⁵⁹ Whereas Jesus instinctively eschewed opposition and resistance in all of its forms,⁶⁰ Nietzsche claims to have 'become what he is' by actively opposing and resisting his share in *décadence*.⁶¹ As he explains, in fact, his engagement in sustained, self-directed opposition has endowed him with the stereoscopic perspective that accounts for his copious wisdom and uniquely positions him to undertake a 'revaluation of values'.⁶² Still, Nietzsche nevertheless wishes to reproduce the particular emphasis that Jesus and Epicurus placed on the importance of preaching what one actually practices, of promising a salvation that one already has attained. In other words, he intends to join them in recommending philosophy as a way of life, and he means to do so, again like them, by presenting his readers with a concrete example of the particular way of life he extols.

In recommending his profile of the historical Jesus, in fact, Nietzsche also means to recommend *himself*, as the bold, unconventional author of this interpretation. Indeed, he offers this profile not simply as a rival interpretation, but also as an index of his freedom from the falsify-

55 A 33. 'Such a faith', Nietzsche explains, 'at every moment...is its own miracle, its own reward, its own proof, its own 'kingdom of God.' Nor does this faith formulate itself: it *lives*, it resists all formulas' (A 32).

56 A 35

57 A 30

58 A 29

59 A 30

60 A 30

61 EH, *Wise* 2. Reference for *The Case of Wagner* P. Henceforth abbreviated as *CW*.

62 EH, *Wise* 1.

ing influence of Pauline Christianity. This is why he so proudly announces that he (and he alone) understands

something that nineteen centuries have misunderstood: that integrity which, having become instinct and passion, wages war against the 'holy lie' even more than against any other lie.⁶³

That Nietzsche is able to recover the historical Jesus as a representative of the 'redeemer type', i.e., as a *décadent*, hypersensitive prince of peace, *means* that he has gained an unprecedented measure of independence from the Pauline orthodoxy. In other words, he is sufficiently healthy and strong that he may refuse the civilisation-shaping influence of Paul's teachings and, as a result, approach Jesus in the context in which he actually lived and taught. Owing to his renewed standing, moreover, Nietzsche is now prepared to challenge Paul on an equal footing, and to do so as an unexpected outgrowth of Pauline Christianity itself. In short, Nietzsche has *become* the exemplary philosopher whom he formerly admired from afar.

Hence the distinctly Epicurean resonance of the title he affixes to his bristling autobiography: *Ecce homo*, he writes, exhorting his readers to behold the man who, *finally*, has managed to behold the man whom Pilate urged the crowd to behold as *just* a man, in whom no crime was (or is) to be found. In retrieving the historical Jesus, Nietzsche thus confirms (and displays) his access to a pre-Pauline imperial milieu in which, he insists, 'every respectable spirit...was an Epicurean'.⁶⁴ If Nietzsche means for this claim to apply to the Roman province of Judea, moreover, then he also may mean to suggest that the milieu in which the words *ecce homo* were originally uttered was an *Epicurean* milieu. In that event, the imperial governor might have expected the 'respectable spirits' among his auditors to be amenable to his judgment,⁶⁵ which, according to Nietzsche's interpretation, may have been replete with Epicurean resonance. For example, Pilate's mockery of the prisoner may have been intended, at least in part, to administer an admittedly severe application of Epicurean therapy. In his efforts to humiliate the prisoner before the assembled mob,

63 A 36. See Conway, *Nietzsche's Dangerous Game*, pp. 223-25.

64 A 58

65 Speaking of Pilate, Nietzsche observes, 'The noble scorn of a Roman, confronted with an impudent abuse of the word 'truth,' has enriched the New Testament with the only saying *that has value*—one which is its criticism, even its *annihilation*: 'What is truth?'" (A 46).

exposing his boasts and taunts as baseless, Pilate may have meant to rid the prisoner of his fear of death and/or the gods.

Nietzsche's appreciation of the need to acquaint his readers with an alternative way of life, and to do so by guiding their initiation into a fresh configuration of worldly practices, may explain his unusual approach to the project of self-introduction that occupies him in *Ecce Homo*. As we know, Nietzsche describes Paul as 'the *chandala* hatred against Rome, against 'the world,' *become flesh, become genius*'.⁶⁶ Prior to Paul's intervention, apparently, '*chandala* hatred' of the Empire was too widely dispersed and too loosely aggregated to pose a genuine threat to the nobility. In order for the ambient hatred of the Empire to become fully potentiated, it needed to 'become flesh, become genius'. It did so, Nietzsche allows, in the person of Paul:

On the very heels of the 'glad tidings' came the very *worst*: those of Paul. In Paul was embodied the opposite type to that of the 'bringer of glad tidings': the genius in hatred, in the vision of hatred, in the inexorable logic of hatred.⁶⁷

By dint of this unprecedented embodiment of hatred, Paul managed to enflame the fantasies of all those in whom hatred had only ever been inert, impotent, and self-destructive. Much as the Redeemer exemplified for his followers an alternative, irenic way of life, in which salvation was not merely promised but attained, so Paul founded an alternative way of life in which hatred is not merely a transient mood or affect, but the permanent, volcanic core (and justification) of one's existence. Here, too, we may borrow productively from Nietzsche's profile of the ascetic priest, who both redirected the *ressentiment* of the slaves and, eventually, recruited them into the service of his political agenda.⁶⁸ So it was, according to Nietzsche, in the early years of the Empire: Paul united the motley foes of the Empire not only by imparting to them a new, appealing doctrine of immortality, but also by showing them how to bring hatred to life and imbue it with meaning.

It is no coincidence, I offer, that Nietzsche employs this very

66 A 58. Own emphasis

67 A 42

68 GM III: 19-21. Here I follow Aaron Ridley, *Nietzsche's Conscience: Six Character Studies from the Genealogy*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), pp. 15-22, 41-44. See also Conway, *Nietzsche's On the Genealogy of Morals*, pp. 126-34.

description to announce *himself*, in *Ecce Homo*, as the world-historical counterpart to the apostle Paul. Nietzsche is prepared to outbid Paul, apparently, because *he* has 'become flesh and genius' in his own right:

Revaluation of all values: that is my formula for the highest act of self-reflection on the part of humanity, which has become flesh and genius in me [*der in mir Fleisch und Genie geworden ist*]. My lot wills it that I must be the first *decent* human being, that I know I stand in opposition to the hypocrisy of millennia...I was the first to discover the truth, by being the first to sense—*smell*—the lie as a lie...⁶⁹

Having completed with respect to himself 'the highest act of self-reflection', Nietzsche has acquired the right to demand the same of humanity as a whole. His challenge to Christian morality, no longer merely abstract or notional, has yielded a viable way of life, which attests in turn to the successful incorporation [*Einverleibung*] of the new truth he offers.⁷⁰ As evidence of his success in reforming the relationship in which he stands to his own embodiment, he proudly announces that his 'genius' now resides where it formerly was lacking—namely, in his newly rehabilitated senses, most notably his 'nostrils'.⁷¹ Much like Epicurus, that is, he now (or once again) pursues philosophy as a way of life and offers its this-worldly fruits—*behold the man!*—as proof against his enemies and critics.

Section III: Dionysian Immortality

Although Nietzsche presents his case against Paul in the form of a complaint, he does not mean to recommend a reversion or return to the purity of the Epicurean moment that preceded (and was spoiled by) Paul's arrival. In Nietzsche's judgment, the Epicurean option, whose passing he laments, is now historically unavailable. Those among his readers who wish to avail themselves of the wisdom of Epicurus are obliged in particular to acknowledge that they are heirs to nearly two millennia of Pauline acculturation. If these readers wish to act on their enthusiasm for the wisdom of Epicurus, they will need to do so in a way that accommodates the non-negotiable influence of Pauline Christianity. In short, Paul must be outbid in turn, which is precisely what Nietzsche aims to do.

69 EH, *Destiny* 1

70 EH, *Destiny* 1

71 EH, *Destiny* 1

Although his counter-proposal incorporates elements of the teachings of Epicurus, most notably the pursuit of philosophy as a way of life, it also affirms, and bears witness to, its Pauline heritage. Toward this end, Nietzsche is concerned to recommend an alternative model of immortality, which is a teaching that Epicurus expressly rejected. As we shall see, in fact, Nietzsche means to outbid Paul by supplanting the Pauline-Christian doctrine of immortality (i.e., of the soul) with a Dionysian doctrine of immortality (i.e., of Life itself). Having grown accustomed to the concept of immortality, or so he apparently means to suggest, we are now in a position to sample—and perhaps affirm—the real thing. Indeed, we receive a potentially appealing preview of this Dionysian doctrine of immortality in Nietzsche's interleaf epigraph to *Ecce Homo*, where he expresses his gratitude for his 'whole life'.⁷² On the particular day in question, he explains, he has 'buried' his forty-fourth year, but only after ensuring that 'whatever was life in it has been saved, is immortal'.⁷³

If Nietzsche is to play the signal role he reserves for himself in the elaboration of a viable Dionysian alternative, he will do so only as a product of the dominant Pauline-Christian lineage of acculturation. Whatever he may intend by the opposition with which he closes *Ecce Homo*—'Dionysus vs. [gegen] The Crucified One'—he cannot mean to present himself as anything other than an outgrowth of the lineage he also claims to oppose. If Dionysus is to be steered into opposition with 'The Crucified One', that is, this opposition must be transacted within a historical lineage to which Paul was and remains a potent contributor.

While Nietzsche provides us with precious few clues as to what this concluding opposition might entail, his discussion of Epicurus may point us in a promising direction. According to Nietzsche, as we have seen, Epicurus prevailed over the subterranean, proto-Christian cults that struggled for traction in the early days of the Roman Empire. By denouncing the odious concepts of 'guilt, punishment, and immortality',⁷⁴ he and his followers succeeded in promoting an affirmation of mortality, which suited the 'respectable spirits' of the early Empire. Had it not been for the intervention of Paul, Nietzsche suggests, Epicurus would have continued to prevail well into the Common Era, which, we may presume, would

72 EH, E

73 EH, E

74 A 58

have vouchsafed the bountiful 'harvest' that Europe was poised (but never able) to reap.⁷⁵ Nietzsche thus identifies Paul as the mastermind responsible for the transformation of Jesus into 'The Crucified One', whose death was (and is) said to have repaid the debts incurred by humankind:

How much this dysangelist sacrificed to hatred. Above all, the Redeemer: he nailed him to *his own* cross. The life, the example, the doctrine, the death, the meaning and the right of the entire evangel—nothing remained once this hate-inspired counterfeiter what alone he could use.⁷⁶

This transformation paved the way for the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, belief in which enabled Paul to 'deprive 'the world' of value'.⁷⁷ With this doctrine in place, Paul was able to best the Epicureans and discredit their teaching of the mortal soul.

What Nietzsche has in mind, apparently, is this: As a consequence of the decisive triumph of Paul and 'The Crucified One', whereby 'the concept of 'hell' [became] master over Rome',⁷⁸ we late moderns find that we have acquired an involuntary proclivity for the idea of personal immortality. Whether or not we believe in immortality, or even wish to do so, is irrelevant. Our sense of ourselves, as possessors and curators of individuated souls, is the ongoing production of a moral tradition that has been shaped by the Pauline doctrine of personal immortality. Much to Nietzsche's provisional chagrin, this acquired proclivity has become second nature to us; it is now, and has been for some time, an entrenched trait of our all-too-human nature.⁷⁹ As such, this acquired proclivity is either constitutive or supportive of some of our most enduring moral prejudices. Many of these prejudices—e.g., in favour of neighbour-love, self-surveillance, self-castigation, etc.—are predicated on the acquired (and now deeply embedded) notion that our immortal souls will be judged on the basis of what we have and have not done. As a result, we live our lives not as heroic, daring mortals, for whom *ecce homo* would be a fitting rallying cry or epitaph, but as timid, judgment-fearing immortals, for whom suffering is the primary index of our goodness and of the redemption that awaits us.

75 A 58

76 A 41

77 A 58

78 A 58

79 BGE 12

Nietzsche's objective in avenging Epicurus is not to eradicate our acquired proclivity for immortality, as if such a thing were even possible, but to hijack and supervise its ongoing role in shaping our sense of who we are and have become. Building on two thousand years of Christian discipline and acculturation, Nietzsche is now in a position to trump Paul's doctrine of personal immortality with his alternative doctrine of Dionysian immortality, which, he insists, neither requires nor allows us to denigrate the value of our mortal existence. Whereas the teachings of Paul have inured us to an understanding of ourselves as the possessors of immortal souls, the teachings of Nietzsche will accustom us to an understanding of ourselves as partaking of the ceaseless flux of eternal Life.

Here, too, Nietzsche appeals to the unique historical conditions of his challenge to the apostle Paul. It is not simply the case, after all, that we have accustomed ourselves to our share in an immortal existence. Owing to the influence of Paul, we have grown accustomed to an understanding of ourselves as the possessors of immortal *souls*. At the same time, however, the particular kind of soul to which we have learned to attach our supposed immortality—namely, 'the soul as something indestructible, eternal, indivisible, as a monad, as an *atomon*⁸⁰—no longer resides comfortably beyond doubt, question, suspicion, and reproach. Indeed, no less an authority than science itself now demands that we consider more promising (and more dignified) alternatives:

But the way is open for new versions and refinements of the soul-hypothesis; and such conceptions as 'mortal soul,' and 'soul as subjective multiplicity,' and 'soul as social structure of the drives and affects,' want henceforth to have citizens' rights in science.⁸¹

Elaborating on this appeal to the distinctly normative force of contemporary science, Nietzsche elsewhere explains that the '*good* Europeans' among his readers now possess a 'scientific conscience', which, inasmuch as it strictly demands 'intellectual cleanliness at any price', forbids their recourse to those versions of the soul-hypothesis that fail to meet the newly elevated standard of scientific 'truthfulness [*Wahrhaftigkeit*]'.⁸²

80 BGE 12

81 BGE 12

82 GS 357. Here I follow Randall Havas, *Nietzsche's Genealogy: Nihilism and the Will to Knowledge*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1995) pp. 166-73; and

As this analysis suggests, Nietzsche develops his critique of 'soul atomism' against the familiar backdrop of his post-Zarathustran philosophical project. While he bids us to revisit the 'soul-hypothesis', for example, he also expects us to do so in light of our growing awareness of 'the greatest recent event—that 'God is dead,' that belief in the Christian God has become 'unbelievable' [*unglaublich*]'.⁸³ Inasmuch as the death of God 'is already beginning to cast its first shadows over Europe',⁸⁴ should we not regard the death (or 'death') of the immortal soul as imminent, and as inevitable in any event? In anticipation of this particular after-shock, and as potential recruits into the ranks of Nietzsche's 'new psychologists',⁸⁵ should we not welcome the opportunity to probe and explore the human soul, unconstrained by folk prejudices, religious pieties, and outdated beliefs? If we belong among those intrepid truth-seekers whom Nietzsche indirectly addresses,⁸⁶ moreover, are we not *bound* to do so, even at our own expense?⁸⁷

In nudging his best readers along this path, Nietzsche appears to reprise the cheerful positivism and bold experimentalism of his so-called 'middle' period. In *Daybreak*, we recall, he concluded a similarly buoyant paean to science—noting in particular its restoration of 'the idea of *definitive death*'—by proclaiming that 'Epicurus triumphs anew'.⁸⁸ Here, emboldened by his 'cheerful' reception thus far of the 'event' of the 'death of God',⁸⁹ he renews his allegiance to science and doubles down on the revitalized science of psychology, whose practitioners are now free to map the mortal soul.⁹⁰

In his writings from 1888, however, Nietzsche wishes to go further still. While generally sympathetic to any number of 'new versions and refinements of the soul-hypothesis',⁹¹ he also wishes to leverage the taste

Ridley, *Nietzsche's Conscience*, pp. 135-42.

83 GS 343

84 GS 343

85 BGE 12

86 GM III: 24

87 See Ridley, *Nietzsche's Conscience*, pp. 115-20; and Conway, *Nietzsche's on the Genealogy of Morals*, (2008), pp. 137-47.

88 D 72

89 GS 343

90 See Robert B. Pippin, *Nietzsche, Psychology, and First Philosophy*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2010), pp. 52-65.

91 BGE 12. Here I follow Graham Parkes, *Composing the Soul: Reaches of Nietzsche's Psychology*. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1994), pp. 346-62.

and habit for immortality that have become ours by virtue of our long training in Pauline Christianity. (The 'atomism which Christianity has taught best and longest', he explains, is none other than the '*soul atomism*'.⁹²) Indeed, a promising experiment within this new articulation of psychology is Nietzsche's own attempt, in *Ecce Homo*, to present the soul as an achievement, i.e., as something made or won over the course of a lifetime, by virtue of which one becomes what one is and affirms oneself as such.⁹³ One pursues this achievement, moreover, not in denial of one's mortality, but in joyful anticipation of the destruction of the highest forms and types of Life, including one's own eventual return to the undifferentiated Dionysian flux.⁹⁴

Epicurus will be avenged, that is, not by a return to the halcyon days prior to the appearance of Paul, but by Nietzsche's counter-promise of Dionysian immortality. The problem, we are now in a position to understand, lies not with the concept of immortality itself, which Epicurus was right at the time to combat, but with the denigration of life from which this particular concept of immortality was derived. As Nietzsche explains,

The will to *immortalize* also requires a dual interpretation. It can be prompted, first, by gratitude and love ... But it can also be the tyrannical will of one who suffers deeply, who struggles, [and] is tormented ...⁹⁵

Detecting the latter interpretation at the heart of Paul's influential teaching of immortality, Nietzsche offers the following diagnosis:

If you distract from the seriousness of the self-preservation [*Selbsterhaltung*], the energy increase of the body, *in other words of life*, if you construct an ideal out of anaemia, 'the salvation of the soul' out of contempt for the body, what else is

92 BGE 212

93 Pippin, *Nietzsche, Psychology, and First Philosophy*, pp. 59-62.

94 I am indebted here to Henry Staten, *Nietzsche's Voice*. (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1990), pp. 150-56; Adrian Del Caro, 'Nietzschean Self-transformation and the Transformation of the Dionysian,' in *Nietzsche, Philosophy and the Arts*, eds. Salim Kemal, Ivan Gaskell, and Daniel Conway. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998), pp. 75-89; and James I. Porter, *The Invention of Dionysus: An Essay on The Birth of Tragedy*. (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2000), 21-33, 110-19.

95 GS 370

that if not a *recipe* for *décadence*?...⁹⁶

As we have seen, however, this 'recipe for *décadence*' has yielded an unexpected outcome, most notably in the person of Nietzsche himself. Despite being a *décadent*, just as the 'recipe' in question specifies, Nietzsche is also, and simultaneously, the 'opposite' [*Gegensatz/ Gegenstück*] of a *décadent*.⁹⁷ As such, moreover, he qualifies as the 'first immoralist', which is also why he claims to be a 'destiny'.⁹⁸

For an apt characterization of Nietzsche's model of Dionysian immortality, we need look no further than the concluding section of *Twilight of the Idols*:

Saying Yes to life even in its strangest and hardest problems, the will to life rejoicing over its own inexhaustibility even in the very sacrifice of its highest types—that is what I called Dionysian, *that* is what I guessed to be the bridge to the psychology of the *tragic* poet. *Not* in order to be liberated from terror and pity, not in order to purge oneself of a dangerous affect by its vehement discharge—Aristotle understood it that way—but in order to be *oneself* the eternal joy of becoming, beyond all terror and pity—that joy which included even joy in destroying.⁹⁹

It is on the strength of this statement, we should note, that Nietzsche re-introduces himself as 'the last disciple of the philosopher Dionysus' and, accepting the 'destiny' offered to the convalescent Zarathustra by his animal companions,¹⁰⁰ as 'the teacher of eternal recurrence'.¹⁰¹

Repeating the former (but not the latter) self-avowal in the Preface to *Ecce Homo*,¹⁰² Nietzsche implores his readers not to '*mistake [him] for someone else*'.¹⁰³ This is important, as he explains, for the success of his 'revaluation of all values', which is the 'demand' with which he soon 'must

96 EH, *Daybreak* 2

97 EH, *Wise* 2

98 EH, *Destiny* 2

99 TI, *Greeks* 5

100 Z III 13, 2

101 TI, *Greeks* 5. Here I follow Paul S. Loeb, *The Death of Nietzsche's Zarathustra*. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), pp. 208-13.

102 EH P 2

103 EH P 1

confront humanity',¹⁰⁴ depends in part on our reception of him as the author of this 'demand'. If we receive him as a 'disciple of the philosopher Dionysus', apparently, we are perhaps more likely to respond as hoped to the demand he soon will press. The crucial point here is that Nietzsche readily acknowledges the need to convince his readers of his *bona fides* as a disciple of Dionysus. One way to do this, as we have seen, is to recommend and enact a doctrine of Dionysian immortality.

The opposition with which Nietzsche concludes *Ecce Homo*—Dionysus vs. the Crucified One—thus announces a contrast between two competing models of immortality: *Dionysian* immortality, which is born of affirmation, superfluity, and *amor fati*; and *Christian* immortality, which is born of revenge, resentment, and self-contempt. In light of this contrast, it would appear that Paul is to be affirmed for cultivating in us the taste and habit for immortality that Nietzsche means to exploit. Having ingested and survived Paul's poisonous teachings, Nietzsche and his fellow 'immoralists' are now in a position to promulgate a Dionysian model of immortality, which Nietzsche regards as a worthy complement to the teachings of Epicurus.

By way of closing, let us help ourselves to one of Nietzsche's most quotable epigrams: The teachings of Paul did not kill us; *therefore*, they made us stronger. Strong enough, evidently, that we now may aspire to the Dionysian discipleship to which Nietzsche invites his best readers, the proof of which he displays in his writings from 1888.¹⁰⁵

104 EH P1

105This essay owes its provenance to a lively series of discussions following a lecture presented by Keith Ansell-Pearson at Texas A&M University in 2014. I am grateful to Keith for encouraging me to re-acquaint myself with Epicurus and for leading the way with his own research.

What place discourse, what role rigorous argumentation? Against the standard image of Hadot's conception of ancient philosophy as a way of life

MATT SHARPE

A 1994 collection edited by Jocelyn Couture and Kai Nielson, *Métaphilosophie? Reconstructing Philosophy*, responds to what the editors describe as a reviving interest in metaphilosophy.¹ The collection, based on a special edition of the *Canadian Journal of Philosophy*, spans pieces in two languages from over a dozen professional contributors. It aims at an authoritative, representative sample of later modern philosophical views on the timeless questions which still perplex most non-academics as much as Socrates' 'men of Athens': why would anyone want to study or 'do' philosophy? What use or goods does it serve? Is it a worthwhile pursuit, and one the public should sponsor, in a world of so many competing social, political and economic demands?

As Nielson and Couture's 'Introduction—Construing Philosophy' lays out, the metaphilosophical debates amongst professional philosophers turn largely on philosophy's fate in an age when first the natural, and more recently the human, sciences have seemingly usurped philosophy's authority concerning 'first order' questions about the world.² A host of responses to the seemingly endless 'ends of philosophy' that have resulted in the last 200 years are examined. For Isaiah Berlin, the 'purpose of philosophy' is to deal with those 'perplexities' which remain, once all the questions we *do* know how to answer have been attended to, by way of

1 Jocelyn Couture and Kai Nielson, *Métaphilosophie? Reconstructing Philosophy* being *Canadian Journal of Philosophy: Vol. 23, Supplementary Volume 19* (Calgary: University of Calgary Press, 1994).

2 Jocelyn Couture and Kai Nielson, 'Introduction—Construing Philosophy' in their *Métaphilosophie? Reconstructing Philosophy*, 1-55, esp. 13-15. For version of this claim that philosophy just is, in the age of the sciences at least, a 'second order discipline' see P.M.S. Hacker, *Wittgenstein's Place in Twentieth Century Analytic Philosophy?* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 272-3; A.R. White, 'Conceptual Analysis', in C.J. Bontempo & S.J. Odell (eds.), *The Owl of Minerva: Philosophers on Philosophy* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975), 104.

'careful and disciplined reflection'.³ For an entire 'therapeutic' stream in modern philosophy, philosophers in an age of science can use their analytic, logical or reflective acumen to show how Berlin's extra-scientific perplexities pliantly disappear when we correctly examine the languages we use and reshape the presuppositions we bring to the table. Or else they can show that these pseudo-problems should be left for poets, priests, and dreamers. Whereof one cannot speak, one at least *should* remain silent.

For many others, since philosophers can no longer declaim (or we can, but few listen) about nature, economy, society, political or metaphysical realities, philosophy's role can be to 'talk *about* the talk' involved in first order discourses on these topics. This is a consolatory direction which intersects with, and goes some way to explaining, why so much of 20th century philosophy focused on language, as well as taking the historicising turn.⁴ A bolder line or lineages looking back to Kant from Anglo-American thinkers like Passmore or Hampshire⁵ (and much of continental thought, not considered, after Husserl and Heidegger) holds out that, although philosophy can no longer tell us about what is, it can reflectively elucidate the 'transcendental' categories people are 'always already' committed to when they do talk about the world.⁶ But these transcendental lineages, again, have been almost ceaselessly challenged. On the continental, historicising side, well-founded observations have been concerning the cultural relativity and temporal dynamism of allegedly 'transcendental' categories.⁷ More recently, analytic or Anglo-American philosophy has been shaken by Quine's questioning of the 'second dogma of empiricism' that we could insulate analytic or *a priori* categories from the *a posteriori*, then Donald Davidson's devastating deconstruction of the incoherencies attending any strong scheme-content distinction.⁸

3 Berlin's position is discussed at Couture and Nielson, 'Introduction—Construing Philosophy', 8-12.

4 Couture and Nielson, 'Introduction—Construing Philosophy', 13-14 ('talk about the talk about the world').

5 Couture and Nielson, 'Introduction—Construing Philosophy', 18-24.

6 Cf. Paul Gilbert and Stephen Burwood, *An Introduction to Metaphilosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013), 37-40.

7 Cf. Couture and Nielson, 'Introduction—Construing Philosophy', 21-23.

8 Some philosophers in the European legacy, whose kind of position Couture and Nielson do not raise, have made bold to question scientificity itself, whether by underscoring science's categorical debts to things it can't explain (for example, as in Husserl, the laws of logic); by highlighting the incredible difficulties surrounding the 'hard question' about how, if at all, naturalistic approaches can

Two comments on Couture and Nielson's collection serve to introduce what follows. First, it is clear that none of the answers précised above, or those covered in the collection *Métaphilosophie* would likely speak to most non-academics.⁹ Instead, in a way which in one sense is healthy for the profession, all comers take for granted that academic philosophy, with its specific later modern history, problems, and ways of thinking, debating and writing, is given, here to stay and will continue—even if only *by* continuing to wrestle with those 'philosophical' species of 'anti-philosophy' represented by the names of Heidegger, Wittgenstein, Rorty, Quine and others.¹⁰

Secondly, it is remarkable that in this collection, the very idea that philosophy might be (and as it happens, is) also an activity carried out by human beings who need to be trained or formed into these specific ways of thinking, speaking, and writing in the context of specific institutions and disciplinary programs, is raised in only two of the articles.¹¹ The idea that 'philosophy', even as a professional discipline and set of institutional realities, is in the business of trying to form *students* with specific intellectual and (perhaps) practical skills or virtues is likewise basically invisible. Passmore pitches his argument about philosophy as a mode of critical self-reflection, at one point, against the idea that philosophy would only be 'a way of life': by which he means one professional career choice amongst others, which it nevertheless remains for a minority of people.¹² Gilles Gaston-Granger mentions philosophy as an *ascese*, commenting in

... speak meaningfully to our phenomenological self-experience; or, opening philosophy out onto social and political questions, asking about the tensions between science and technologies' developments and the human *lebenswelt*, including peoples' continuing aspirations to live well, individually and collectively. Couture and Nielson's collection does not include these perspectives, except in Thomas McCarthy's contribution, Thomas McCarthy, 'Deconstruction and Reconstruction in Contemporary Critical Theory', pp. 247-264.

9 This is not to say that these questions and traditions are not real and important. It is to make a sociological observation concerning the place of philosophy in larger polities.

10 See Couture and Nielson, 'Introduction—Construing Philosophy', 3-7, with Simon Blackburn, 'Can Philosophy Exist?' in *Métaphilosophie? Reconstructing Philosophy*, 83-93.

11 Compare the contenders analysed in Soren Overgaard, Paul Gilbert and Stephen Burwood, *An Introduction to Metaphilosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2013), 'What is Philosophy?', 17-44 (part of science, immature science, midwife or 'residue' of the sciences, Platonism, the logic of science, contribution to human understanding, transcendental inquiry, articulation and argument for world-views, edifying conversation).

passing that philosophy's cultivation of reasoned reflection 'counterbalances [people's] immediate natural reactions'. As such, he argues, philosophy's contribution to humanistic *bildung* should engender in students 'a sense of the complexity of the human' necessary for sound political and wider judgment.¹³ But he is quick to limit this what he terms a 'formal matter'.¹⁴

Nielson and Couture's collection, it seems to us, reflects deep-set 'traditional' developments (to use the term in the contemporary analytic sense) in modern academic Western philosophy cut across the 20th century analytic-continental divide. For all contenders, philosophy just is a type of reflective, analytic, synthetic, critical or historicising activity whose institutional locales are the classroom and the conference or seminar hall. Its products are less people than arguments, monographs (40-100,000 words) and refereed journal articles written in a precisely delimited 'argumentative' style (4-10,000 words). Book reviews (1000-2500 words) form an increasingly poor cousin unrecognised in most governmental metrics and employment panels.¹⁵ A historian, sociologist, or political scientist might find it useful to reflect upon philosophy conducted in this way, from the outside—as a 'tradition' which dates no farther back than von Humboldt in Germany, and in the anglosphere even later, as one of Nielson and Couture's contributors notes.¹⁶ Should anyone suggest that philosophy *per se* might have a different or wider humanistic purview than this, as the French classicist, philologist and philosopher Pierre Hadot famously did after 1960, we shall be bound to inform her that this is not really philosophy. Or else we shall have to say

12 John Passmore, 'Demarcating Philosophy' in *Métaphilosophie? Reconstructing Philosophy*, 107-8.

13 Gaston-Granger, 'A quoi sert la philosophie?', 58. See Passmore's comments against specialisation and 'philostinism' at Passmore, 'Demarcating Philosophy', 117.

14 Gilles Gaston-Granger, 'A quoi sert la philosophie?' *Métaphilosophie? Reconstructing Philosophy*, 64.

15 For an open statement of this otherwise assumed position, see Blackburn, 'Can Philosophy Exist?', 102: 'there is no way to get to get a purchase on the truth or falsity of such theses [whether there is an *a priori*, questions of normative epistemology ...] except in the ways we are trained for: deploying the arguments, distinctions, techniques that have filled journals such as *Philosophical Review* or *Mind ...*' That such arguments or distinctions might arise in discussions, or other literary media, is not argued for or demonstrated.

16 Compare Overgaard, Gilbert and Burwood, *An Introduction to Metaphilosophy*, 17-20 on 'really-existing philosophy' today.

that when Hadot claims that 'philosophy' was first and foremost a 'way of life' in the West, he was ceding to nostalgia. Hadot confuses philosophy proper with its religious, poetic, medical, spiritual or other pre-rational prehistories.

This in any case *is* exactly what has happened to Hadot, outside of his limited continental reception mediated via Michel Foucault's later work,¹⁷ and his acceptance as more or less authoritative amongst historians of ideas like Stephen Gaukroger, Peter Harrison, Ian Hunter, and Wayne Hankey.¹⁸ '[C]an we really believe,' Bernard Williams asked in a paradigmatic, acerbic review of Martha Nussbaum's *Therapy of Desire* on the Hellenistic thinkers, 'that philosophy, properly understood in terms of rigorous argument, could be so directly related to curing real human misery, the kind of suffering that priests and doctors and – indeed – therapists address?'¹⁹ Despite the nearly-600 pages of evidences adduced in Nussbaum's tome to this effect, William's answer remains a bearish 'no', or at least that the answer had *better* be 'no'. For, Williams reminds us, 'we' now agree or know that philosophy just is the exercise of 'rigorous argument', leading to books, reviews and journal articles, and otherwise floating more or less free of any existential or ethical purpose.²⁰ Even analytic classicist John M. Cooper, whose 2012 *opus Pursuits of Wisdom* was devoted to analysing the ample ancient testimony about philosophy as a *biou gubernētēs*, 'steersman of life', pre-empts things on page 17 of his book. Here, he informs us that he is assuming²¹:

17 On Foucault's later work on the ancients, see Edward F. McGushin, *Foucault's Askēsis* (USA: Northwestern, 2007), and Michel Foucault, *Hermeneutics of the Subject Lectures at the Collège de France 1981-1982* translated by Frédéric Gros, edited by Graham Burchell (Picador; Reprint edition, 2005).

18 For a sample of work in the history of ideas that draws from Hadot, see Stephen Gaukroger, *Francis Bacon and the Transformation of Early-Modern Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001); Peter Harrison, *Territories of Science and Religion* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014); Sorana Corneanu, *Regimens of the Mind* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2011); John Sellars, 'De Constantia: A Stoic Spiritual Exercise', *Poetics Today* Volume 28, Number 3 (2007): 339-362; W.J. Hankey, 'Philosophy as Way of Life for Christians? Iamblichan and Porphyrian Reflections on Religion', *Virtue, and Philosophy in Thomas Aquinas*, 'Laval Théologique et Philosophique', 59:2 [Le Néoplatonisme] (Juin 2003): 193-224; Ian Hunter, *Rival Enlightenments: Civil and Metaphysical Philosophy in Early Modern Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 2001).

19 Bernard Williams, 'Do Not Disturb', *London Review of Books*, Vol. 16 No. 20 (October 1994), pp. 25-26.

20 Williams, 'Do Not Disturb', 25.

...that for the ancients with whom I am concerned, exactly as with us, the essential core of philosophy is a certain, specifically and recognisably philosophical, style of logical, reasoned argument and analysis. Anyone who has read any philosophy at all is familiar with this style, whether it takes the form we find in the question-and-answer dialectic of the character Socrates in Plato's Socratic dialogues ... or, again, in the writings of a contemporary analytic philosopher.²²

A similar claim that the ancients were, or should have been 'exactly as with us' metaphilosophically surfaces in Martha Nussbaum's book on ancient therapeutic philosophy when she writes about Michel Foucault. To the extent that these figures claim that ancient philosophy was not exhausted by or primarily devoted to the production of written, rigorously argued philosophical discourse, Nussbaum agrees with Cooper and Williams that the specific nature and dignity of 'philosophy' is threatened.²³ The concern is that what must demarcate philosophy (even when it *is* undeniably therapeutic, *pace* Williams) from 'religion,'²⁴ just has to be

21 In a way that duly commits him to excising the Pythagoreans and Cynics from philosophical status: 'I think it is better to treat the long-lasting and fascinating movement of Cynicism in ancient Greece and the Roman Empire as aspects of social history, rather than as part of the history of philosophy.' John M. Cooper, *Pursuits of Wisdom: Six Ways of Life in Ancient Philosophy from Socrates to Plotinus* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2012), 62 n. 54; cf. pp. 21–22. Here, Cooper departs from unchallenged ancient consensus, although he does not remark on this. See Diogenes Laertius, *The Lives of the Philosophers*, 'Book VI: The Cynics' and 'Book VII: Pythagoreans', translated by Robert Drew Hicks, online at:

https://ebooks.adelaide.edu.au/d/diogenes_laertius/lives_of_the_important_philosophers/complete.html, last accessed April 2015.

22 Cooper, *Pursuits of Wisdom*, 17. I have argued for this assessment and criticism of Cooper's reading of the ancients in *Pursuits of Wisdom* at length in Matthew Sharpe, 'Drafted into a Foreign War: On the Very Idea of Philosophy as a Way of Life', in *Ancient Philosophy and Analytic Philosophy*, ed. Alberto Vanzo and Catherine Rowett (UK: Oxford University Press, 2016 [in press]).

23 Martha Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire* (Princeton: Princeton UP, 1993), 5-6, 373. Foucault's work on the Hellenistic philosophers, Nussbaum claims, 'fails to confront the fundamental commitment to reason that divides philosophical techniques *du soi* from other such techniques'.

24 In the opening pages of *Pursuits*, Cooper adds the historical claim that when Hadot tells us that ancient philosophy in the different schools involved 'spiritual exercises' or forms of 'asceticism', this at most describes philosophy in its late antique decline, once it had undergone a fatal 'contamination ... by religion' in neoPlatonic, then Christian, thought. Cooper, *Pursuits*, 22.

something very like 'its commitment to rational argument'²⁵, 'the pursuit of logical validity, intellectual coherence, and truth'²⁶ can admit no place to extra-cognitive practices or 'technologies of the self'. After all:

... many forms of life in the ancient world purveyed [what Foucault calls] *techniques du soi* ... what sets Stoicism [and philosophy more widely] apart from other forms of ... therapy is its very particular concern for the student's own active exercise of argument. For all these habits and routines [Foucault and Hadot describe in their talk of *techniques du soi* or *exercices spirituels*] are useless if not rational ...²⁷

There are many possible criticisms of Hadot and Foucault's claims about classical philosophy, of 'philosophy as a way of life'.²⁸ This paper responds only to the criticism introduced above, as voiced in the work of Williams, Cooper and Nussbaum. This points (first) to an unacceptable or 'non-philosophical' misrepresentation of the place of rational argumentation and discourse in Hadot's claims about ancient philosophy. It holds that Hadot et al's positing a larger existential role for ancient philosophy in forming the self *just must* mean that (secondly) ancient philosophy's discursive callings are directly undermined or sidelined in his picture—to be supplanted by some form of meaningfully 'religious' concerns or practice, or by forms of imaginative poetry or rhetoric. I take this criticism of the idea of philosophy as a way of life to be paradigmatic amongst (particularly analytically trained) academic philosophers

25 Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire*, 373.

26 Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire*, 5.

27 Nussbaum, *Therapy of Desire*, 373. It is notable that Hadot challenges the idea that ancient religious practices included anything like the exercises developed in the philosophical schools, at Pierre with Hadot, *The Present Alone is our Happiness*, Conversations with Jeannie Carlier and Arnold I. Davidson, translated by Marc Djaballah (Stanford: Stanford UP: 2009), 36: 'In the Greek and Roman religions, which did not involve an inner commitment of the individual but were primarily social phenomena, the notion of spiritual exercises was absent...' The sense that ancient religions involved such exercises, he claims is an anachronistic projection back based on our greater familiarity with different and subsequent religious traditions.

28 Not least the social-justice complaint that any and all such interest in self-formation is elitist (what students today might call a 'first world' concern), if not narcissistic. For a strong recent statement of this kind of criticism, from a broadly Marxist and theological perspective, see Roland Boer, *Vale of Tears* (Leiden: Brill, 2013), 252-260.

—although there are also continental variants of the position imaginable.²⁹ This kind of criticism reflects the way philosophy is practiced and understood by many professionals across today's philosophical subdisciplines (ethics, metaphysics, epistemology, ontology ...), a self-conception encouraged by institutional incentives which measure *written* 'outcomes' in assessing professionals' credentials. It also points to a real tension between philosophy's perennial aiming at the truth and engendering happiness: a tension condensed in the ancient conceptions of *sophia* or *sapientia*.³⁰ Accordingly, however much defenders of Hadot's or Foucault's later work can be tempted to dismiss these criticisms as fundamentally ill-founded, they are deeply important. They are also very real barriers to the very idea of philosophy as a way of life being taken seriously in contemporary philosophical discourse.

Our method to assess these criticisms will involve looking closely at three untranslated papers Pierre Hadot wrote which we will show directly address criticisms very like Nussbaum, Cooper, Williams *et al*'s *avant la lettre*.³¹ These papers, we will try to show, demonstrate that Hadot maintained that there is an inescapably vital role for philosophical argumentation in philosophy as a way of life in the ancient schools—*while* proposing that the ancient philosophers also recommended extra-cognitive 'spiritual exercises' to facilitate students' *living* certain kinds of lives. Hadot indeed severally stresses, especially in 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique', just how important practices of *dialogue* were throughout the classical period, as we will see.

Part I of what follows lays out, as briefly as possible, what we will call the 'standard view' of Hadot promoted by the texts that have been translated hitherto, and which has attracted Cooper, Nussbaum *et al*'s criticisms about misrepresenting the place of rational argument in philo-

29 Clearly, for instance, Heidegger's task to disclose the meaning of Being, while drawing on certain characteristic modes of experience (notably, angst), is primarily a kind of discursive activity; as deconstruction is an operation performed in writing about others writings ... and so on.

30 See Pierre Hadot, 'La Figure du Sage', in *Études de Philosophie Ancienne* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2010 [*deuxieme tirage*]), 233-236.

31 The papers in question being Pierre Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', in *Études de Philosophie Ancienne* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2010 [*deuxieme tirage*]), pp. 207-232; Pierre Hadot, 'Les Divisions des Parties de la Philosophie dans Antiquité', in *Études de Philosophie Ancienne*, 125-158' Pierre Hadot, 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique dans L'Antiquité', in *Études de Philosophie Ancienne*, 159-193.

sophy '*comme manière de vivre*'. In Part II, will we see how several of Hadot's pieces mentioned above, led by 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', indicate his own much more qualified perspectives about the place of discourse in ancient philosophy conceived as a way of life.

Part 1. The 'standard image' of Hadot's ancient philosophy as a way of life: rigorous argument in philosophy?

Pierre Hadot's work on ancient philosophy as a way of life has become available to Anglophone readers through *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, *Philosophy as a Way of Life* and *The Inner Citadel: on the Meditations of Marcus Aurelius* in particular.³² First, ancient philosophy across all the schools was conceived, and practiced, as a way of life:

All of the ancient philosophical schools refused to consider philosophical activity as purely intellectual or as purely theoretical in form ...³³ As Epictetus says it: 'the carpenter does not say to you: 'hear my argument on the art of carpentry', but he makes the contract for the house and he builds it [...] Do the same yourself [as a philosopher]. Eat as a man, drink as a man, [...] get married, have children, participate in civic life, strive to endure your injuries, and support other men...'³⁴

This idea comes first and last for Hadot. Second, to seriously undertake a 'course of study' (if that is the term) in one of the ancient schools was thereby to have made an existential commitment: to try to live, outside the classroom, according to the categories which one was taught within it: '[the ancients] considered philosophy as a choice, which committed all of a person's life and their entire psyche (*toute l'âme*).'³⁵

32 Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, ed. A. Davidson, trans. M. Chase (London: Wiley-Blackwell, 1996); Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?* Translated by Michael Chase (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University, 2002); Pierre Hadot, *The Inner Citadel*, trans. Michael Chase (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2001)

33 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 216.

34 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 216-7.

35 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 211. Hadot's stress on the choice of a philosophical way of life has also attracted criticism. At times, for instance at *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 82, this choice can seem fideistic, not rational ('... the choice of a way of life [was] not . . . located at the end of the process of philosophical activity, like a kind of accessory or appendix. On the contrary, its stands at the beginning, in a complex interrelationship with

Third, philosophical study in the schools for this reason involved the adoption and practice of regimes of 'spiritual exercises' to form or transform *toute l'âme*³⁶. This means, to echo a Stoic tripartition to which Hadot recurs, transforming not simply the students' thoughts or judgments (like philosophy as we know it today), but also their impulses and actions, desires and passions.³⁷ These exercises far exceeded the kinds of examinations and essays we set students in order to inform and form them intellectually. They included many practices presently considered non-philosophical: practices of meditation, imaginative visualisation, pre-meditation, recollection, protreptic exhortation, 'notes to self' (*hypomnēmata*), consoling and counselling:

Alongside the exercise of meditation may be added many other spiritual exercises: amongst the Stoics, inner detachment with regard to objects and persons or preparations intended to make us capable of overcoming future difficulties; the memory of past pleasures and fraternal correction amongst the Epicureans; and the examination of conscience, finally, ... a practice common to all the ancient philosophical schools.³⁸

Fourth, the ancient philosopher was hence, as it were, a distinct cultural type recognisable by ancient men and women, not because of the

critical reaction to other existential attitudes...') Cf. François Renaud, 'Philosophy as a Way of Life; Qu'est-ce que c'est le Philosophie Antique? Review', *Journal of the History of Philosophy*, Volume 35, Number 4, October 1997, pp. 637-640, pp. 639-640; John M. Cooper, 'Socrates and Philosophy as a Way of Life', in *Maieusis: Essays in Ancient Philosophy in Honour of Myles Burnyeat*, ed. Dominic Scott (Oxford: Oxford UP), 20-42, esp. p. 26; Thomas Flynn, 'Philosophy as a Way of Life: Foucault and Hadot', *Philosophy and Social Criticism* vol 31 nos 5-6 (2005), pp. 609-622, esp. pp. 616-618.

36 The *locus classicus* on this subject is Pierre Hadot, 'Spiritual Exercises' in *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 81-125.

37 For Hadot's claims concerning the three disciplines of judgment, assent and desire in Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius, see Pierre Hadot, 'Marcus Aurelius,' in *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, pp. 179-205; also Hadot *Inner Citadel*, chapter 5, pp. 82-98, and several untranslated pieces in French, notably Hadot, 'La Physique Comme Exercice Spirituel ou Pessimisme et Optimisme chez Marc Aurèle' in Pierre Hadot, *Exercices Spirituels et Philosophie Antique*, Préface d'Arnold Davidson (Paris: Éditions Albin Michel, 2002), pp. 145-64, and Pierre Hadot, 'Une Clé des Pensées de Marc Aurèle: Les Trois Topoi Philosophiques selon Épictète', in *Exercices Spirituels et Philosophie Antique*, pp. 165-192.

38 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 215. Again, see Hadot, 'Spiritual Exercises' in *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 81-125.

excellent discourses they may have written, but by their manner of speaking, acting, dressing and dying—whether to be hymned, as in Plutarch on Phocion, Arian's *Discourses* of Epictetus, or Diogenes' life of Epicurus, or to be the butt of ridicule as in Aristophanes' *Clouds*, Lucian's *Philosophers for Sale* and other satires.³⁹ Fifth, the ideal of this cultural type was the figure of the Sage: a kind of counterfactual, perfected human being like Socrates, Epicurus or the younger Cato, presented to students as the living achievement of *Sophia* as an all-encompassing *technē tou biou*, at least insofar as such *sophia* is achievable by mortals at all.⁴⁰

Sixth, throughout the ancient world would-be 'philosophers' who prided themselves on their dialectical or rhetorical abilities alone were the object of philosophers' own satirical jibes:

In the third century BCE, the Platonic philosopher Polemon reproached certain of his contemporaries for wanting to be admired in their dialectical interrogations, but who contradicted themselves ... in their inner dispositions.⁴¹ It is above all in the concerns of life, Polemon said, that is necessary to exercise oneself. Many centuries later, the Stoic Epictetus ... spoke with scorn of these philosophers who do not go further than cultivating a beautiful style or dialectical subtlety.⁴²

If we ask Hadot bluntly, '*so where's the evidence?*' for this exotic conception of philosophy, Hadot responds by pointing to the *philological* issues that brought him to his metaphilosophical view. Hadot began his academic life as a philologist, and:

39 See Hadot, 'Forms of Life and Forms of Discourse', *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, 57–58.

40 For modern commentaries, see Pierre Hadot, 'La Figure du Sage dans L'Antiquité Gréco-Latine,' in *Études de Philosophie Antique* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2010), 233–58; also Julia Annas, 'The Sage in Ancient Philosophy,' in *Anthropine Sophia*, ed. F. Alesse et al. (Naples: Bibliopolis 2008), 11–27. For ancient Stoic texts, see especially Stobaeus, *Anthology*, 2.5–12 (which is 'Text 102' in *The Stoics Reader: Selected Writings and Testimonia*, ed. Lloyd P. Gerson and Brad Inwood [London: Hackett Publishing, 2008], 124–51; the relevant sections on the surpassing virtues of the sage are numbered by the editors 5b10–12 (pp. 128–29), 11d (pp. 140–41), 11g (pp. 142–43), 11j–k (pp. 144–46).

41 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives*, IV.18.

42 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 211. See Epictetus, *Discourses*, trans. W.A. Oldfather (UK: Loeb Classical Library [218], 1928) volume III, ch. 23.

... like many of my predecessors and contemporaries, I was struck by the well-known phenomenon of the seeming incoherencies or contradictions that one encounters in the works of the philosophical authors in antiquity ...⁴³

To the extent that we do attempt to read ancient texts as drafts for the kinds of professional academic writing we recognise today, we will be bemused, underwhelmed or confounded. Our first option, taken by many analytical and continental authors, will be to simply ignore a large part of these writings in order to get to the 'argumentative content' or, perhaps (to imagine a Heideggerian) the philosopher's 'conception of *Sein*.' As for figures like Diogenes of Sinope—and indeed all of the philosophers Diogenes Laertius tells us about who appear to have written nothing—we will have to follow John M. Cooper and exclude them as 'not an instance of philosophy ... at all.'⁴⁴

Hadot's different wager, for which he cites a decisive debt to the later Wittgenstein (on whom he wrote four essays, now collected in *Wittgenstein et les limites du langage*)⁴⁵, is to suspend the assumption that ancient philosophers wanted to play the same 'language games' as we do. Once we do this, we need not be threatened or bemused by the sheer proliferation of different genres in which what the ancients called 'philosophy' was purveyed: a polyphony which make our essays, reviews and monographs seem historically contingent and comparatively limited. In a course at the *Collège de Hautes Etudes* of 1979-1980, Hadot thus set about dividing this proliferation of forms of written philosophy. His *divisio* divides ancient philosophical texts first into poetic, prose, and dialogical genres (alongside those philosophers who spoke, but did not write at all). Then, using Aristotle's four causes as his heuristic, he proceeds to divide the texts under these heads into well over 20 different genres, ranging from apophatic writings, hymns, myths, prayers, lives and consolations, through to the lectures notes, responses and refutations or systematic presentations we might credit as 'serious' philosophising

43 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 207. Cf. Pierre Hadot, *Present Alone is Our Happiness: Conversations with Jeannie Carlier and Arnold L. Davidson*, trans. Marc Djaballah (Stanford, CA: Stanford University Press, 2009), 30–32, 59.

44 Cooper, *Pursuits*, 61.

45 Pierre Hadot, *Wittgenstein et les limites du langage* (Paris: Vrin: Bibliothèque d'Histoire de la Philosophie: Poche, 2004).

today.⁴⁶

What this diversity of ancient philosophical writing forces us to accept is that the ancients' was a very different, and perhaps much broader, metaphilosophy than anything like what Nielson and Couture's collection (introduced above) considers. For there is only one plausible account of the necessary and sufficient conditions of this ancient generic diversity of philosophical writing, Hadot reasons. This is that ancient philosophers felt their writings should affect and *form* audiences in host of different ways (from consoling them, to urging them to philosophise, to inspiring them against hardships, to training them in how to read or how to argue, and more). There was a lively sense that aspiring philosophers were not 'pure minds' whose theoretical life and pursuits might somehow float free of all wider existential, ethical and political concerns.

Herein, with the question of what Hadot in 1979-'80 calls the 'external finality of the texts', lies our issue. Hadot argues against our uncritically accepting the presupposition that ancient philosophical writing, and ancient philosophers more widely, ever aimed *solely* at conveying the Truth for its own sake or constructing systems. 'We thus see that, in a general manner, theoretical and systematic discourse was aimed ... at producing an effect upon the soul of the auditor or the reader,' Hadot reflects in 'Ancient Philosophy, An Ethics or a Practice?':

This is not to say that this theoretical discourse doesn't respect the demands of logical coherence. But its presentation, its literary form and content are modified by the pedagogical intention to influence the students. Towards this end, rhetorical means are abundantly utilised by the philosopher. It thus happens that we can, in many ancient texts, pass rapidly from theoretical exposition to exhortation, as [for instance] is often the case in the treaties of Plotinus ...⁴⁷

The critical readers at this point can and have retorted: if even *rhetoric*, the ancient Gorgianic foe of philosophy *per se*, can thereby be allowed in Hadot's version of ancient philosophising, what can the place of rigorous argument be in this? And if the 'external finality' of Hadot's ancient

46 Pierre Hadot, 'Course de *L'École Pratique des Hautes Études*. Année 1979-1980', in Pierre Hadot, *Études de Patristique et D'Histoire des Concepts* (Paris: Les Belles Lettres, 2010), 162-167.

47 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 214.

philosophising was always seemingly non- or extra-discursive, residing in an existentially transformed student rather than a well-parsed monograph or essay, why need we bother with philosophical discourse, or with systematic theory-construction? As Hadot reflects in 'Ancient Philosophy, An Ethics or a Practice?' concerning Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* (alongside the *Enneads*, arguably Hadot's most abiding and key exemplar):

The *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius, for example, represent a written text which, from one end to the other, is a spiritual exercise. And precisely, because of this work, we can observe how, in this effort to transform himself *one can say in a certain sense that all means are good*. To redress mistaken opinions, tenacious pre-judgements or unreasonable terrors, it is necessary in some way to force them in another direction, [*even*] to *exaggerate* to compensate against them.⁴⁸

To adapt a phrase from Quine, at this point shouldn't we as philosophers worry that 'the fence is down'⁴⁹—not (happily, as Quine supposed) between philosophy and science, but (unhappily, as Hadot's critics stress) between philosophy and *any or all* forms of fictive, imaginative, charismatic, and irrationalist imposture? What role can remain for what we today take to be distinctly philosophical modes of discourse and argumentation in Hadot's image of ancient thought?

Part 2. The place of theoretical dialectic in Hadot's conception of ancient philosophy

The Stoics thought that 'logic,' one of the three parts of philosophical discourse, had at least four levels. Or so Hadot argues in 'Ancient Philosophy, An Ethics or a Practice'.⁵⁰ One of these, which Hadot calls 'lived logic' (*logique vécue*), aimed to put us on our guard against the kinds of informal fallacies our passions push us towards, like the passions understandably involved in defending a widespread self-understanding of philosophy as solely a discursive, argumentative, writerly business.⁵¹ With this kind of 'lived logic' in view, let us say that it is one thing for Hadot to have held that ancient philosophy *included* and prescribed non-

48 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 215 (italics ours).

49 Willard Van Orman Quine, *Quine in Dialogue* ed. Dagfinn Føllesdal, Douglas B. Quine (Harvard: Harvard UP, 2008), 337.

50 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 217.

51 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 217-218.

or extra-cognitive exercises to habituate students, with the three-fold goal of tranquillity of mind (*ataraxia*), inner liberty (*autarchia*), and *conscience cosmique* (consciousness of the whole).⁵² It would have been quite another if Hadot had promoted the idea that philosophical discourse (about logic, physics, ethics, politics, metaphysics, theology ...) had *no* place in ancient thought. Yet he never did this. Accordingly, as we will see, it is a question of establishing *what* Hadot assigned to rational argumentation in his image of ancient philosophy, and whether his position on this issue is adequate both in itself, and relative to the ancient materials.

To be fair to him, even in his more-widely-known texts unfolding what Part I called the 'standard image' of Hadotian ancient philosophy, Hadot does go to some length to guard his readers against supposing that his idea of ancient philosophy speaks against rational philosophical argumentation. Hadot's point is just that philosophical discourse and more or less formal, often-written argumentation cannot claim to be the whole of which it was always only ever *the key part*.⁵³ So what then are the positive roles that Hadot thinks spoken or written rational discourse had in ancient philosophy?

Firstly, as Hadot stresses, spoken or written philosophical discourse remained in the ancient world the only way the philosopher could communicate his teachings to students in order to have any pedagogical or existential effect upon them.⁵⁴ Typically, Hadot claims that the more or less systematic philosophical discourses of the ancient philosophers on

52 Hadot nominates this as one of three ideals at play in 'wisdom as a mode of life' in Hellenistic and Roman thought, alongside tranquillity and '*conscience cosmique*' at Pierre Hadot, 'La Philosophie comme Manière de Vivre', in in *Exercices Spirituels et Philosophie Antique* (Paris: Broché, 2002), esp. 291-292.

53 Speaking against the idea that philosophical discourse and writing was the whole or principal goal of ancient philosophy, first and foremost, is the amply attested fact we have also stated that many recognised philosophers, led by Socrates, seem never to written a philosophical word. Secondly, there is the equally abundantly attested phenomenon we have seen, that when ancient philosophers did write, a good deal of what they wrote differs markedly from what would today be publishable in *Analysis* or any other peer-reviewed professional journal.

54 Philosophical discourse, in Hadot's words, 'is a privileged means by which the philosopher can act upon himself and others: for if it is the expression of the existential option of the person who utters it, discourse always has, directly or indirectly, a function which is formative, educative, psychagogic, and therapeutic' Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, trans. M. Chase (USA: Belknap Press, 2002), 176.

the one hand 'radiated out from'⁵⁵ the school's conception of philosophy 'as an exercise of virtue and wisdom ... a unique act, renewed at each instant'⁵⁶ and on the other hand examined, explained, contextualised, and sometimes also advertised⁵⁷ this conception and way of life.⁵⁸

Secondly, Hadot repeats that there is nothing in his metaphilosophical purview of philosophy as a way of living that prevents rational systematisation being central to their conceptions of what they were doing. There are (for instance) the systematic epitomes of Epicurean teaching we find in Epicurus' extant letters concerning ethics and physics preserved in Diogenes Laertius; and many other texts from every school could be cited.⁵⁹ Euclidian geometry, Hadot claims, remained a kind of systematic ideal in ancient philosophical culture precisely because of its formal, axiomatic presentations of mathematical teachings.⁶⁰ Hence:

... it is necessary to properly acknowledge that this conception of philosophy [as a way of life] presupposes in fact the existence of theoretical discourses which are very systematic. Even in antiquity, the extraordinary coherence of the Stoic system,

55 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 222.

56 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 220.

57 Pierre Hadot, 'Mes livres et mes recherches', in *Exercices Spirituels et Philosophie Antique*, 368. Some formulations express the relationship as completely reciprocal, although clarification can still be desired: 'the choice of life determines the discourse, and the discourse determines the choice of life by justifying it theoretically.' Hadot, *Qu'est-ce que c'est le Philosophie Antique?*, 269, cited at Renaut, 'Philosophy as a Way of Life; *Qu'est-ce que c'est le Philosophie Antique?* Review', 370.

58 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 220.

59 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, 'Book X: Epicurus', trans. C.D. Yonge (1895) at www-site <http://www.attalus.org/old/diogenes10a.html> (Letter to Herodotus (paragraphs 35-83), Letter to Pythocles (paragraphs 84-121), Letter to Menoecus (paragraphs 122-138)).

60 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 207-8 ('Many modern historians of philosophy begin with the postulate that Plato and the other ancient philosophers wanted to construct theoretical systems in the same way as modern philosophers. And, in fact, one could believe that this is what they wanted to do, if one judges things by the considerable number of divisions, classifications, and hierarchical distinctions that one finds in ancient philosophy, from Plato to the *Elements of Theology* of Proclus. The famous *Elements of Euclid* indeed represent the endpoint of the idea of Platonic axiomatisation and they remained, for all antiquity, the model of the philosophical exposition, whether for Epicurus or for Proclus. I have myself often been compelled to recognise the traces of this ideal of systematisation amongst the different philosophers, notably amongst the Stoics ...')

for example, was widely admired. And we can recognise also the highly systematic character of Epicurean physics ...⁶¹

Hadot's point is only that such systematisation was not celebrated as the self-standing goal of philosophising *per se* by the ancients. It found its place within a wider array of philosophical endeavours. The key consideration to understand the role of theoretical systematisation in ancient thought remains that philosophising was taken to be meaningfully therapeutic or eudaimonistic, as Nussbaum has argued.⁶² Each school held to what we would call minimally 'cognitivist' views in the philosophy of mind.⁶³ According to views, individuals' apparently 'irrational' desires and passions involve beliefs about the world and what we need within it in order to flourish. Such governing *pathē*, that is to say, constitute already their own kind of 'inner discourse' which has an 'all-too-lived' effect on how we feel, think, and behave. It is this pathological inner discourse, as differently conceived,⁶⁴ which the competing, more compellingly-reasoned accounts of ancient philosophy aim to contest and overthrow:

One could even say that philosophy consists, for those who practice her, in mastering their own inner discourse, on the basis of the theoretical discourse formulated in the school to which they belong ... The student internally repeats in some way the theoretical discourse of the master, the way of putting his interior discourse in order by basing it upon the final principles and options which are the point of departure of the school's theoretical discourse. Philosophical discourse goes, in this sense, 'from the outside to the inside'.⁶⁵

Even theoretical systematisation against this background was recommended not only as a means for students to theoretically comprehend all the aspects, implications, and presuppositions of the school's worldview. It

61 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 213.

62 Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire*.

63 We add 'minimally' here, since some Platonic and Aristotelian formulations (and Platonic metaphors) concerning parts of the psyche point in the direction of conceiving of the passions as irrational, even animalistic. Nevertheless, if philosophy is to have any role as a species of discursive activity, these 'animal passions' must be open to at least hearing the arguments of reason, at least backed by practices of habituation.

64 To use a term revisited by Kant, with a similarly descriptive and normative register.

65 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 213.

was also seen as a means to enable philosophers to *recall* and readily *apply* the principles they had theoretically assented to in relevant instances. Systematisation, that is, was and is an *aide-mémoire*:

The spiritual exercises of the disciple ... consist precisely in his attempts to always have present to mind these rules of life. It is ... in this perspective that we must understand the efforts at systematisation undertaken by the Stoics and Epicureans. The system is not elaborated as an intellectual construction which will be an end in itself ... [t]he Stoic or Epicurean systems have for their goal to bring together as forcefully as possible the different fundamental teachings, ... to concentrate them so that the philosopher can have them at hand at each instant of his life. The presentation in a systematic form [itself] produces certitude, and thus a peace and serenity of mind.⁶⁶

Once more, then, a critical reader might protest that we have reached the uncomfortable situation noted by Cooper et al and reflected in the fact that, for instance, Hadot will at different points describe Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations* as a whole as one (*un*) spiritual exercise (as above)⁶⁷, as well as (b) the episodic collection of a *series* of Stoic philosophical exercises addressed by the philosopher-emperor to himself [*Ta Eis Heauton*].⁶⁸ As we might ask, if even systematisation is a spiritual exercise, or (as Hadot himself sometimes claims) if *all* of a book like the *Meditations* is a 'spiritual exercise', hasn't philosophy inescapably lost its identifying concern to discover truth using reason alone, in relative disregard for the well-being or feelings of the inquirer?

With this recurring worry concerning even the more qualified version of Hadot we have so far presented in Part II in mind, we turn now to three of Hadot's lesser-known essays which clarify Hadot's defence of the place of discourse and rigorous argument in ancient philosophy.

Hadot's more famous post-1970 work might be said to largely 'face outwards' towards an anticipated audience of non-specialist readers for whom the entire conception of philosophy as a *bios* will at first seem novel or misgiven. By contrast, 'Les Divisions des Parties de la Philo-

66 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 222.

67 Directly in the quote cited at end of Part I from Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 215.

68 For example at Hadot, 'Mes livres et mes recherches,' 370-371; Cooper makes this (I think correct) point at Cooper, *Pursuits of Wisdom*, pp. 402-403, n. 4.

sophie dans Antiquité', 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique dans L'Antiquité' and 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?' were published in classics journals (*Studia philosophica*, *Museum Helveticum*) and a learned collection (on *Problèmes de morale antique*). In these pieces, then, Hadot addresses specialists more exclusively. Because he is doing so, he can and does also take more things for granted, historically and metaphilosophically. Like Nielson and Couter's respondents who dive un-self-consciously into Quine, Davidson, 'Oxford Science', Rorty *et al* to answer 'what is philosophy?' in *Métaphilosophie? Reconstructing Philosophy*, in these pieces we see Hadot the philologist at work. He dives *sans apology* into Plato, Polemon, Arcesilaus, Xenocrates, Chrysippus, Plotinus, Cicero, Antiochus, Marcus, Plotinus and Epictetus. The result, as we will now show, is that Hadot here gives a more nuanced picture of the key meta-philosophical claims at issue in ways which allow us to much better put Cooper, Nussbaum, and Williams' worries to rest.

i. 'Ancient Philosophy, an Ethics or a Practice?': a question of replacing a passionate, with a philosophical, 'inner discourse'

We begin with the programmatic Hadotian piece 'Ancient Philosophy, an Ethics or a Practice?' The article, from its opening lines, represents an attempt to explain and defend Hadot's signature claim about the place and role of 'spiritual practices' in ancient philosophy *tout court*. Hadot thus has to address, on one side, how to comprehend why the Platonic, peripatetic, and Stoic philosophers developed such systematic philosophical theories, if their aim was in a decisive sense practical or ethical. On the other side, he has to justify how his idea that for the ancients philosophy was a way of life applied even to Plato and Aristotle, whom modern philosophers tend to think of us more unmistakably 'like us': in the business of theory-construction *sans* wider ethical or existential concerns, as it were.

Concerning the latter charge, Hadot claims that when we today say that Aristotle (to take what seems to be the hardest case) is a more purely 'theoretical' philosopher than, say, the Hellenistics of the period of the 'decline of the Greek city-state'⁶⁹, we court 'confusion concerning what is at stake when Aristotle talks of the 'theoretical'.⁷⁰ We do so to the extent that we obviate how in the *Ethics* X, *Politics* VII and *Metaphysics* XII Aristotle specifies that what he is pre-eminently concerned with when he

69 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 223-224.

70 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 225.

talks of *theoria* is an activity:

... the activity of contemplation, which is the highest human activity. Such theoretical activity is not opposed to practised or lived philosophy, since it is itself a lived practice; the exercise of a life, and of an activity which makes for the happiness of God and of its human practitioner ...⁷¹

The discomfort that even someone as learned as Martha Nussbaum shows in *Fragility of Goodness* about Aristotle's hymn to contemplation in *Nicomachean Ethics* book X (she feels compelled there to simply allocate this text to an earlier 'Platonic' Aristotle, although there is no decisive historical evidence for such a supposition⁷²) underscores Hadot's claim here. Aristotle's *Ethics* indeed culminates in X 7 in a kind of hymn to what Hadot sees is clearly for Aristotle 'a life and a *praxis*, and one which can even unfold in an activity of thought which is non-discursive, when it is a matter of perceiving indivisible objects and God himself by noetic intuition...'⁷³ There is for Hadot no need to hypothesise speculatively about early and later Aristotles to understand the continuity of this famous chapter with the preceding text. The ethical concern with how best to live runs through both, albeit that in book X the best life is supposed to be that which maximally participates in contemplating timeless things.⁷⁴

But what then, if even Platonic and Aristotelian thought thereby admit of extra-discursive ends in a *bios theoretikos*, does Hadot add here to his 'standard image' views concerning the seemingly subordinate place of argued discourse in ancient philosophy?

The central part of 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?' turns more focally to the Stoics. It sees Hadot directly challenging the idea that for them, as we might suppose, 'logic and physics represent[ed] ... the theoretical part of philosophy, and ... ethics [alone] ... that part of philosophy wherein the spiritual exercises, exhortations, meditations, *etc.*, are located.'⁷⁵ Hadot makes much of a distinction in Diogenes Laertius' account of the Stoics in the *Lives of the Philosophers*.

71 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 225.

72 See Martha Nussbaum, *Fragility of Goodness* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986), 'Appendix to Part III', 373-377.

73 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 225.

74 See Martha Nussbaum, *Fragility of Goodness* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986), 'Appendix to Part III', 373-377.

The distinction distinguishes:

... between philosophical discourse (*hoi kata philosophian logoi*) and philosophy herself. They [the Stoics] claimed that it was philosophical discourse which was divided into three parts: physics logic and ethics; and this implies that philosophy herself was not, properly speaking, divided into parts ...⁷⁶

Diogenes Laertius VII 39-40 might almost be termed Hadot's golden sentences.⁷⁷ Their interpretation certainly bears a good deal of evidentiary weight for him as guide both to the Stoics and ancient philosophy in this programmatic essay. What Hadot takes Diogenes Laertius to be indicating is that, in the Stoics' physics-logic-ethics division of the parts of philosophy, 'practice' (including the Stoic mnemonic, imaginative, rhetorical and meditative exercises) did not belong within ethics alone; any more than philosophical discourse remained solely the 'theoretical' business concerned with nature (physics) or the structures of thought (logic). On the one, theoretical side, philosophical ethics involved a good deal of theoretical discourse: for example concerning the ontological and anthropological bases for the Stoics' different practical claims. On the other,

75 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 216. This supposition would reflect the broadly Aristotelian sense of the parts of philosophy, which we arguably largely inherit today.

76 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 220.

77 To cite the relevant text in full: '[39] Philosophic doctrine (*hoi kata philosophian logoi*), say the Stoics, falls into three parts: one physical, another ethical, and the third logical. Zeno of Citium was the first to make this division in his Exposition of Doctrine, and Chrysippus too did so in the first book of his Exposition of Doctrine and the first book of his Physics; and so too Apollodorus and Syllus in the first part of their Introductions to Stoic Doctrine, as also Eudromus in his Elementary Treatise on Ethics, Diogenes the Babylonian, and Posidonius. / These parts are called by Apollodorus "Heads of Commonplace"; by Chrysippus and Eudromus specific divisions; by others generic divisions. [40] Philosophy, they say, is like an animal, Logic corresponding to the bones and sinews, Ethics to the fleshy parts, Physics to the soul. Another simile they use is that of an egg : the shell is Logic, next comes the white, Ethics, and the yolk in the centre is Physics. Or, again, they liken Philosophy to a fertile field : Logic being the encircling fence, Ethics the crop, Physics the soil or the trees. Or, again, to a city strongly walled and governed by reason. / No single part, some Stoics declare, is independent of any other part, but all blend together. Nor was it usual to teach them separately. Others, however, start their course with Logic, go on to Physics, and finish with Ethics ; and among those who so do are Zeno in his treatise On Exposition, Chrysippus, Archedemus and Eudromus.'

practical side, more decisively, Hadot claims that the spiritual exercises belong in Diogenes Laertius' distinction on the side of philosophy herself, 'as an exercise of virtue and wisdom ... a unique act, renewed at each instant...', as *against* philosophical *discourse*. And just as there were physical, logical, and ethical parts of Stoic discourse, so too were there 'physical', 'logical', as well as 'ethical exercises' in the way **figure one** maps out.⁷⁸

Figure One: Hadot's 'horizontal', not vertical, Stoic theory-practice division

Theory (discourse)	Discourse about nature (physics)	Discourse about our relations with others; the theoretical bases of duties, etc. (ethics)	Discourse about discourse (what representations are clear and comprehensive, compelling) (logic)
Practice (philosophy herself)	Lived physics: exercises in training desire	Lived ethics: exercises in rationally taming impulses	Lived logic: exercises in disciplining our assent to ideas

What the Stoics' unlikely designations of logical acumen and mastery of physics as 'virtues' of character indicates for Hadot is exactly how attaining knowledge of these parts of philosophical discourse was supposed to have practical 'pay-offs' for the student, in terms of the way she both thought and acted in the world. The cultivation of practiced logic, or what Epictetus calls 'the discipline of assent', teaches us to withhold assent to any ideas that are not clear and comprehensive (as in Seneca's *De Ira*, wherein we can avoid anger by suspending assent about others' badmouthing us, if we know of this only by hearsay, etc.).⁷⁹ Practiced Stoic physics teaches the aspirant to distinguish between things which do and do not depend upon her, so she can train herself by repeated exercises to recognise and welcome everything she cannot control as

⁷⁸ Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 220, 221.

⁷⁹ Seneca, *de Ira* II 24: '... let us believe nothing unless it forces itself upon our sight and is unmistakable [*viz.* the famous *kataleptike phantasia*], and let us reprove ourselves for being too ready to believe, ...: for this discipline will render us habitually slow to believe what we hear.'

evidently having 'been disposed by Zeus Himself (that is to say, universal reason), which He has defined and placed in order with the *Moirai* who, present at your birth, have woven the fabric of your destiny.'⁸⁰ As Hadot explains:

The discipline of desire supposes, therefore, that the developed teachings of theoretical physics concerning the enchainment of causes have been meditated upon, assimilated; that they have become the objects of a concentration of mind [*prise de conscience*], because of which the philosopher perceived himself always as just one part of the Whole. Lived physics is ... this attitude of consent to the will of nature.⁸¹

According to 'Ancient Philosophy, An Ethics or a Practice?', we thus see, philosophy as a *bios* in no way negates the defining import of rational argumentation and discourse in philosophy. Everything remains in place. It is just that Hadot stresses that, for the ancients, philosophical discourse needs to be fully *internalised*, not simply assented to in abstraction, if the practical and normative implications of its theoretical claims about the world are to be integrated into a person's life. The exercises do not usurp the philosophical discourse and theoretical claims, which can be (and were often) highly systematic and rational. They just respond to an all-too-sage recognition of the ethical difficulties for passionate, partial beings like us to avoid what Aristotle thematised as *akrasia* (lack of self-control), even when our admiration for certain philosophical claims convinces us in the abstract that it would be rational and beneficial to live and act in certain ways. Guardrails against *akrasia*, Hadot's spiritual exercises represent the habituating conduits necessary to make the theoretical conquests of the philosophical discourse into the lived realities of students' changed ways of thinking, feeling, and acting, faced with the countervailing forces of habit, convention, and the passions.⁸²

ii. 'The Divisions of the Parts of Philosophy in Antiquity': *hierarchical or organic, in tension with (not trumped by) pedagogical divisions*

If we turn next to 'The Divisions of the Parts of Philosophy in

80 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 218. Hadot is citing Epictetus' *Discourses*, IV.4.13.

81 Hadot, 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?', 218.

82 For a confirming, intra-mundane perspective on such exercises, see John Sellars, *The Art of Living: the Stoics on the Nature and Function of Philosophy* (London: Duckwell, 2009 (2nd edition)).

Antiquity' (1979), we again see critical anxieties about Hadot not crediting the specifically rational component of ancient philosophy. The standard image underlying these worries would expect Hadot to propose that the pedagogical, and thus rhetorical, concern to form students would completely trump the systematic divisions of the philosophical sciences we see formalised in Aristotle and the Stoics, in particular. The standard image would lead us to expect Hadot to argue that such 'merely discursive' divisions are comparatively unimportant: subordinate to the overarching therapeutic and existential aims of all the ancient philosophies. Yet Hadot's article instead delineates three models for the divisions of philosophical *discourse* in antiquity, more or less wholly leaving aside the issue of the relation of discourse *per se* to the philosophical practices which elsewhere form his focus.

First comes the foundationalist, hierarchical or pyramid-style of divisions between philosophical discourse in Plato and Aristotle (principally *Metaphysics* V), leading up in the latter thinker towards metaphysics as the science of *ousia*, being qua being, and theology as discourse concerning the highest, unchanging and most self-sufficient things.⁸³ By contrast, the second, 'raft'-like model of division of the parts of philosophy amongst the ancient schools is exemplified by the interpenetrating, mutually supporting 'ethics-physics-logic' trinity of the Stoics. This division of the parts of philosophical discourse reflects the Stoics' monistic ontological postulate that the same structuring *Logos* of the world unfolds itself as the organising principle of events (hence, physics), norms of thought (thus, logic) and human relations (whence ethics).⁸⁴

Only with the third type of division between kinds of philosophical discourse in antiquity that Hadot examines—one which involves 'the method of exposition, [and thus] a temporal order, a succession of movements, an intellectual and spiritual progress'⁸⁵ and occupies less than one third of Hadot's essay—do we seem to arrive at specifically Hadotian concerns. This third type of classification is pedagogical: as such, related to the business of shaping students, rather than describing or analysing phenomena, nonhuman and human. Evinced for instance in the later neoPlatonic philosophers' famous concerns about the 'reading order' of the Platonic dialogues (as against more specifically modern preoccupations with their *writing* order), the pedagogical divisions of the parts of

83 Hadot, 'Les Divisions des Parties de la Philosophie dans Antiquité', 127-132.

84 Hadot, 'Les Divisions des Parties de la Philosophie dans Antiquité', 134-136.

85 Hadot, 'Les Divisions des Parties de la Philosophie dans Antiquité', 139.

philosophical discourse 'correspond to the concrete reality of philosophical activity. It is not given once and for all. It is realised in communication ... in the 'discourse' which exposes it and transmits it to the student.'⁸⁶ The concrete demands of addressing real, particular auditors, as all good teachers know, introduces pedagogical priorities. You need to speak to and with students, adapting your discourse and examples to their situation, terms of reference and interests in order then to challenge and educate them—perhaps starting with simpler matters, or treating complex matters more generally, before proceeding to more difficult fare. Such pedagogical requirements can and do pull against the more purely systematic requirements of either of the first two forms of division of the parts of ancient philosophy, Hadot notes. As Aristotle reflects, what is first 'for us' and what is first 'by nature' are different things. This is why, for Aristotle, metaphysics should come *last* pedagogically, even though its objects are 'by nature' *first*; and it is also why the Stoics, while accepting the logical interdependency of physics, ethics, and logic, equivocated and disagreed about which could best be *taught* first.⁸⁷

Our point here is that, far from announcing that ancient philosophy was always only pedagogical—as the standard image of his work might lead us to expect—Hadot's 'Divisions of the Parts of Philosophy in Antiquity' goes no farther than speaking of the 'conflict between the logical and the pedagogical order' in the Platonic, Aristotelian, and Stoic schools.⁸⁸ Hadot seeks, indeed, to delineate the different ancient *accommodations* of the demands of theory and those of pedagogy, rather than subsuming the former beneath the latter in all cases, as his critics might lead us to suppose. It is only in later antiquity, with the Neoplatonists after the first century CE, that Hadot argues we find ascendant the pedagogical notion of philosophical activity as a course of study which is also a spiritual ascent, beginning from ethics and passing up through physics towards 'epoptic'—the beatific vision of the *ens realissimum*—later transformed by the patristics, Clement and Origen.⁸⁹ He in no way,

86 Hadot, 'Les Divisions des Parties de la Philosophie dans Antiquité', 140. See for example Hadot's 'the exposition is addressed to an auditor, in this auditor introduces another component, to know the phases, the stages of his spiritual progress: it is a matter here* of a properly psychological or more or less pedagogical temporality,' at 140-141.

87 Hadot, 'Les Divisions des Parties de la Philosophie dans Antiquité', 142-3. Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers*, VII 40-41.

88 Hadot, 'Les Divisions des Parties de la Philosophie dans Antiquité', 141.

89 Hadot, 'Les Divisions des Parties de la Philosophie dans Antiquité', 146.

however, claims that this particular later ancient program expressed the agreed model in all of ancient thought.

iii. Hadot on philosophy and dialectic, as in no way subordinated to rhetoric in ancient philosophy

In this light, it becomes less surprising that Hadot's 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique dans L'Antiquité' of the following year (1980), the third of the untranslated essays, again does not propose any grand reduction of philosophy, via dialectic, this time to *rhetoric*—that ancient Platonic foe of philosophical reasoning and rigour. Hadot instead concerns itself first of all with how dialectic, sharply divided by Plato from rhetoric as *the* method of philosophy, is distinguished from 'didactic' philosophy proper in Aristotle; before both dialectic and rhetoric are reintegrated in different ways and phases in the pedagogical programs of the middle and later academy and the Stoa. Hardly a simple whitewash of the place of discursive argumentation in philosophy, the essay is a patient and nuanced historical consideration of different philosophical programs, shaped by differing assessments of both dialectic and rhetoric.

After its famous Platonic denigration beneath philosophical dialectic or *elenchus* in the *Gorgias*, Hadot observes, rhetoric was reinstated as its own subordinate branch of inquiry in the peripatetic Lyceum: both as a protreptic skill to win students to philosophy and educate governing elites,⁹⁰ as well as its own independent subject of study. Yet dialectic for the peripatetics was at the same time downgraded, as against the Platonic conception. It remained an exercise restricted to 'common notions,' in contrast to reasoning on the basis of philosophically secured *axiomata*. Dialectic was to be practiced pedagogically as a kind of 'scholarly exercise' or 'intellectual gymnastics',⁹¹ as Hadot reads the stipulations set out in the *Topics*. Dialectic moves (like rhetoric) from pre-given conclusions ('this guy is innocent') back towards premises ('he wasn't even in the building'), with a view to persuading specific interlocutors ('gentlemen of the jury').⁹² It is thus to be distinguished from philosophical 'analytic',⁹³ on one side (which reasons on the basis of philosophical principles), as well as rhetoric, in a three-fold peripatetic division of possible modes of cognition and persuasion. Most certainly, then, Hadot

90 Hadot, 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique dans L'Antiquité', 165.

91 Hadot, 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique dans L'Antiquité', 167-9.

92 Hadot, 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique dans L'Antiquité', 163-7.

93 Hadot, 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique dans L'Antiquité', 177.

grants that dialectic and rhetoric both had a key place in what was taught in the Lyceum, alongside philosophy more narrowly viewed—yet in no way suggests philosophy lost its specificity thereby.

When it comes to the post-Platonic Athenian academy, Hadot argues that philosophical teaching actually seems very largely to have been carried out in dialectical exercises *contra theism*: wherein some question ('can the sage be angered?') was either put by the students to a master who would then rhetorically expostulate in an extended, crafted discourse (in the early academy); or later, students would be asked to present some opinion ('the sage will never experience fear') which the teacher would then dialectically contest. Such programs reflect the Platonic sense that philosophy is a dialectical business, in contrast sophistry or oratory, practices of captivating monologue.⁹⁴ Later, in the probabilistic, post-Arcesilausian Academy (although never in the Stoics⁹⁵), the teacher would present arguments for either side of a question *in utramque partem*, a feat modelled in Cicero's *de Republica* III or *de Natura Deorum*.⁹⁶

In the Stoic school, meanwhile, the header 'logic' came to encompass both rhetoric and dialectic: as such, these practices were together assigned to just one of the three parts of philosophical discourse. Yet the former, rhetoric, remained more or less distrusted by the Stoics, who prided themselves on their Socratic credentials, at the same time as they understood well its psychological powers.⁹⁷ And dialectic here, far from serving any solely psychagogic, extraphilosophical ends, was considered essential as the principal means of teaching students to maieutically clarify their 'natural notions' about things: so that their inner *Logos* might harmonise with the larger *Logos* or order of things.⁹⁸

What 'Philosophy, Dialectic, and Rhetoric in Antiquity' accordingly makes very clear is that the kind of primacy of rhetoric over argument

94 See Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, 63-71.

95 Hadot, 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique dans L'Antiquité', 173-4

96 Hadot, 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique dans L'Antiquité', 170-2. Even after the dispersal of the schools in the Roman period, and the increasing recourse to textual commentary in Alexandria and elsewhere in the empire, Plotinus' *Enneads* would be based on Plotinus' responses to students' questions; and Epictetus would divide classes between expositions of Chrisippus and dialectical exercises with students. (Hadot, 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique dans L'Antiquité', 175-6)

97 Hadot, 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique dans L'Antiquité', 173, 180.

98 Hadot, 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique dans L'Antiquité', 177-178.

that Nussbaum, Cooper at al's critiques of Hadot's idea of philosophy as a way of life would lead us to expect everywhere in Hadot's work, *just does not exist*. Here again, the point that admitting that rhetoric played an important role in some of the ancient philosophical exercises does not open the floodgates towards any kind of usurpation of argument's proper role. Any such primacy of rhetoric amongst the ancients, this essay instead argues, arose only in the probabilistic academy with the 'Ciceronian ideal of the orator-philosopher,' and then after the end of pagan antiquity, by way of the Christian acceptance of Ciceronian and certain Aristotelian texts.⁹⁹ If anything, it is the 'question-answer' schema that Hadot stresses in this piece as having presided over ancient philosophical teaching across the ancient schools, which left its mark on the predominant ancient philosophical genres of the epistle and the dialogue.

Such a primacy might give comfort to us, as professional teachers of philosophy today, given the parallels Cooper rightly observes between 'the question-and-answer dialectic of the character Socrates in Plato's Socratic dialogues ... or, again, in the writings of a contemporary analytic philosopher ...'¹⁰⁰ Hadot's argument in 'Philosophy, Dialectic, and Rhetoric in Antiquity' does still finally go in a different direction from what his analytic critics might have led readers to expect. For as with philosophical systematisation, Hadot here stresses that dialectic, 'always addressed to someone' and beginning *ad hominem* in *their* opinions or 'common notions,' was conceived not simply as the best means to discover theoretical truths (when it was conceived in this way). It was also conceived as the primary means available to pedagogues to operate the 'radical' philosophical 'conversion of the [students'] natural attitudes, a rupture with their 'everyday' way of seeing things' by way of the 'systematisation of these common notions'. And this 'conversion', we know he thinks is the core of ancient philosophising as involving a way of life.¹⁰¹ On this model, even the modes of philosophical argument and discussion we teach in academic classrooms today might be considered as

99 Hadot, 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique dans L'Antiquité', 183. The middle academy adapted Plato's willingness to accept 'likely stories,' and merely persuasive (as against convincing) dialectical inquiries concerning uncertain matters (like cosmogenesis in the *Timaeus*): a situation which the sceptical Platonists famously held applied much more generally than their founder. *Loc cit*, 179.

100 Cooper, *Pursuits*, 17.

101 Hadot, 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique dans L'Antiquité', 185; see Pierre Hadot, 'Conversion', in *Exercices Spirituels et Philosophie Antique*, 223-238.

continuous with Hadot's sense of philosophical activity. Hadot will elsewhere insist that dialogue was for the ancients a spiritual exercise, as well as a mode of inventing, discovering, or defending propositions.¹⁰²

Concluding Remarks

Pierre Hadot has famously defended the unusual idea that ancient philosophy involved spiritual exercises, including non- or extra-cognitive activities like forms of memorisation, meditation, or counselling. We have argued here that this just did not and does not commit him to down-playing, dismissing, distorting or denying ancient philosophers' specific discursive means and practices, or their systematic theoretical goals (at least the goals of the dogmatic, non-sceptical schools). In Part 2, we have shown by recourse to three lesser-known Hadotian essays how his meta-philosophical vision of the ancient philosophers did not commit Hadot, either *de jure* or *de facto*, to arguing either that all philosophy was directly ethical *sans* theoretical interest or impartiality (an idea corrected in 'La Philosophie Antique: Une Éthique ou une Pratique?'); or that philosophy's pedagogical interest in existentially transforming students militated against the rational systematisation of philosophical claims (the idea we have seen refuted by 'Les Divisions des Parties de la Philosophie dans Antiquité'); or, finally, that philosophy's transformative or therapeutic ends reduce all philosophical discourse to mere rhetoric (an idea which we have seen disproven by 'Philosophie, Dialectique, Rhétorique dans L'Antiquité').

Although we cannot pursue this here, it is worth finally repeating that for Hadot, the spiritual exercises about which Cooper, Nussbaum or even Brad Inwood¹⁰³ seem anxious had no more mystical or necessarily extra-rational purpose than addressing that worry Aristotle registers in the *Ethics*, when he notes that many people 'take refuge in theory and think they are being philosophers and will become good in this way, behaving somewhat like patients who listen attentively to their doctors, but do none of the things they are ordered to do.'¹⁰⁴ This is why he can and does disclose evidence across each of the schools, including those dour materi-

¹⁰²Pierre Hadot, *What is Ancient Philosophy?* trans. M. Chase (London: Belknap Press, 2002), 6, 56, 63-69, 73-74.

¹⁰³Brad Inwood, 'Review of John Sellars, *The Art of Living: the Stoics on the Nature and Function of Philosophy*', *Notre Dame Philosophical Reviews* 2004.04.04, online at [www-site https://ndpr.nd.edu/news/23760-the-art-of-living-the-stoics-on-the-nature-and-function-of-philosophy/](https://ndpr.nd.edu/news/23760-the-art-of-living-the-stoics-on-the-nature-and-function-of-philosophy/), last accessed November 2015.

¹⁰⁴Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* II.4 (end).

alists, the Epicureans. Creatures in good measure of custom or habits which often persist, unhappily, long after we have become aware of their undesirability, regimens of repeated exercise can be seen—very rationally—to be the kind of thing the philosopher interested in living according to their philosophical convictions will need. Rhetoric is here called for, not to trump rational argument, but if anything to make vividly clear and urgent the conclusions of philosophical deliberations: as when Hadot talks of Marcus writing down 'chapter headers' in his *Meditations*—aphoristic formulations which serve to recall to mind the Stoic theoretical ideas he has accepted as right or true, as well as the entire inferential background that has led to this practical conclusion; or undertaking 'imaginative variations' depicting for himself the results, again, of Stoic physical theory—like when he urges himself to recall that wine is but the juice of a grape, sex the physical rubbing together of two bodies, the entirety of Augustus' or previous emperors' great retinues now dead.¹⁰⁵

Everywhere for Hadot the philosophically-argued vision of the world and of the good life remains directive, as we might say. But the philosophical therapist and *director*¹⁰⁶ also appreciates the very good philosophical and psychological arguments in favour of students undertaking extra-argumentative exercises to 'contract a confederacy between the reason and imagination against the affections...', rather than dreaming that theory alone assists people in living better, more philosophical lives.¹⁰⁷

105Hadot, *Inner Citadel*, 38, 47-48.

106On the notion of 'spiritual director' in the ancients, compare Ilsetraut Hadot, *Sénèque: direction spirituelle et pratique de la philosophie*. (Paris: Librairie Philosophique J. Vrin), 2014.

107Bacon, *Advancement* II.XVIII.4.

We Don't Need No Noumena? Freedom Through Rational Self-Cultivation in Kant

LOUISE R. CHAPMAN

*In this paper I argue that we find in Kant a more plausible alternative to his transcendental conception of freedom. In the *Metaphysics of Morals* in particular, we find a naturalistic conception of freedom premised upon a theory of rational self-cultivation. The motivation for a naturalising reading of Kant is two-fold. On the one hand, a naturalistic conception of freedom avoids the charges levelled against Kant's 'panicky metaphysics', which both forces us to accept an ontologically extravagant picture of the world and the self, and also commits us to understanding freedom in non-spatiotemporal terms, thus excluding the possibility that the process of becoming free is progressive. And second, on a naturalistic reading we can repackage normativity back into Kant's account of freedom, which has seemed to scholars unacceptably absent. I explain how the process of becoming free, on the naturalistic view, involves cultivating certain 'aesthetic preconditions of the mind's receptivity to concepts of duty'.¹ Happily, these conditions incur no unpalatable ontological penalties; rather, they constitute an achievement of the rational aspect of the self. Pointedly, this is not a self who is free only in virtue of having membership in the noumenal realm. Rather, effortful self-development entails a battle to become practically free, and thereby moral. The primary attraction to this reading of Kant is that it describes freedom as a naturalistic achievement, rather than a metaphysical given. Thus I show that by jettisoning, or at least naturalising, the picture of noumenal selfhood we not only find a theory that is poorer in panicky metaphysics, but much richer in normative force.*

1 Paul Guyer, 'Progress Towards Autonomy,' in *Kant on Moral Autonomy* ed. Oliver Sensen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 76.

Introduction

The aim of this paper is to bring to light, and critically examine, a novel and normatively richer alternative to Kant's transcendentalist account of freedom. By looking beyond Kant's most famous ethical texts and towards his final ethical treatise, the *Metaphysics of Morals*,² in particular part two of that work, *The Doctrine of Virtue*, we find Kant discussing freedom in much earthier terms—worlds apart from his earlier transcendentalist account. In particular, Kant propounds the view that as human beings we have the power to cultivate inner-freedom through a process of self-mastery, or *autocracy*.³ Crucially, this alternative account of freedom *excludes* its transcendentalist predecessor, given that freedom understood as self-cultivation in accordance with a rational principle is a *temporally-extended* process, whereas freedom on the transcendentalist schema can succumb to no such rubric.

I will be following the lead of Paul Guyer in proposing a compatibilist reading of Kant that allows the possibility of freedom consistent with the laws of nature, when we understand freedom as a condition cultivated through a naturalistic process of self-mastery.⁴ A concern that will appear germane, not to mention threatening, to any compatibilist or naturalistic account of freedom stems from Kant's claims about causation in the Second Analogy of the first *Critique*. Kant's claims in the Second

2 Kant's *Metaphysics of Morals* (1797) was written nearly a decade after the *Groundwork* (1785) and second *Critique* (1788).

3 It is worth explaining what separates autonomy from autocracy in Kant's practical corpus. *Autonomy* is the *legislative* power of the will, that is, the power the will has to set laws for itself, meanwhile *autocracy* can be understood as an *executive* power, without which inclination would drag us away from self-legislated maxims. Autonomy can therefore be called merely legislative, while autocracy is the strength (*fortitudo moralis*) of the will to bat away contra-moral inclinations—autonomy is the capacity of the will to set the law, autocracy the capacity to *abide* by its dictates. In Kant's discussion of self-cultivation, then, autonomy has no part to play, since autonomy is presupposed as a property of the will in virtue of our part-rational/part-sensible constitution. Autocracy, by contrast, is an empirically *acquired* disposition that we can progressively cultivate. It follows that an autonomous being that has not cultivated autocracy might be called *akratic* in the sense adopted by Aristotle, for that being has not attempted to cultivate the strength of will required to follow through on rational self-legislation. See Baxley (2010), pp. 50-60.

4 Paul Guyer, 'Naturalistic and Transcendental Moments in Kant's Moral Philosophy,' *Inquiry: An Interdisciplinary Journal of Philosophy* (2007), pp. 444-464.

Analogy commit him to determinism of natural causes, whereby every phenomenal event must have a corresponding phenomenal cause. Thus, human action, when considered as the effect of a psychological event, must also fall within the purview of the Second Analogy.

My task here, however, isn't to attempt a way out of the mechanism of nature. To the contrary, I am interested in how *within* the remit of empirical psychology Kant believes we can enhance our susceptibility to the demands of morality, which constitutes part of his task in the *Metaphysics of Morals*. While his challenge in the *Groundwork* was to *derive* the supreme principle of morality, in the *Metaphysics of Morals* Kant investigates how, as empirically situated and imperfectly rational beings, we actually become psychologically susceptible to this principle. While, therefore, in deriving the moral law in the *Groundwork* Kant makes a vehement prohibition on the role of sensibility and anthropology to the metaphysics of morals, Kant eventually concedes in *The Doctrine of Virtue* that in becoming receptive to the concept of duty (a necessary condition on becoming its executor), we must employ some mode of sensibility, which Kant discusses under the title the 'aesthetic of morals'.⁵ There is, therefore, a positive role for feeling in Kant's ethics, *viz.* in becoming receptive to the demands of duty, where unlocking this receptivity largely consists in overthrowing contra-moral inclinations. Kant suggests that in the very removal of hindrances to acting from duty we make a substantive moral gain. Though Kant does not put this spin on his account, I consider this moral gain to be an increase in our freedom to act from duty.

Incentives in the will, Kant suggests in the second *Critique*, operate according to a hydraulic model, whereby in gaining mastery over inclination we enhance our capacity to act from duty.⁶ How we gain mastery over inclination in the first instance involves fostering a competing *non-pathological* feeling that opposes and overthrows pathological incentives in the will: practical or moral feeling. Kant characterises moral feeling in *The Doctrine of Virtue* as our 'susceptibility on the part of free choice [*Willkür*] to be moved by pure practical reason [*Wille*]'.⁷ Cultivating

5 Immanuel Kant, trans. Mary Gregor, *The Metaphysics of Morals* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 6:406.

6 '[H]umiliation on the sensible side [...] is an elevation of the moral [...] [for], whatever diminishes the hindrances to an activity is a furthering of this activity itself.' Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, [5:79].

7 Kant, *Metaphysics of Morals*, [6:528-9].

moral feeling as part of an arsenal of aesthetic preconditions of our susceptibility to the demands of duty has the effect of drowning out the beckoning calls of countervailing incentives and, as a result, brings the voice of pure practical reason—identifiable with the will (*Wille*) itself—into audible range. So in the process of silencing countervailing incentives, we gradually realise our capacity to listen to the voice of the will, whose ends and edicts just are those of the categorical imperative. At the empirical level, we can use the power of choice (*Willkür*) to enhance our *pro*-moral sentiments such that *contra*-moral calls to action become progressively silenced (though never fully extirpated), and the voice of practical reason becomes audible. Over time, and with consistent practice, practical reason can become the loudest voice in our entire volitional system.

According to this story, it is not the case that acting from duty is directly produced by a mechanism of nature. After all, self-cultivating in the way I have described is not a *determinate* cause to acting from duty. It is, however, a process that imperfectly rational agents like ourselves must of necessity undertake in order to become receptive to the concept of duty in the first instance. The conclusions of the Second Analogy shouldn't, therefore, threaten how we understand the freedom of moral actions according to the narrative of this paper. Though we need to cultivate ourselves in order to become receptive to the dictates of practical reason (our objectively moral ends), even *then* we retain the capacity to do otherwise, that is, fail to carry out our duty. Insofar as we are capable of practising and reinforcing autocracy through the dominion of moral over pathological feeling, we progressively improve our capacity to *discern* the voice of pure practical reason. And it is insofar as our discernment improves (which I like to understand along the lines of increased audibility), that our executive capacity *correlatively* improves—but merely improving our discernment of the moral law neither guarantees nor causes its execution. Notwithstanding, without at least *cultivating* our capacity to listen to the moral law, its execution would be practically impossible. It is *this* story about cultivation that I wish to tell, and which, to the extent that it can be construed as a theory of freedom, makes it more interesting than its transcendental counterpart.⁸ The story of self-

⁸ Notwithstanding, concerns will rightly linger regarding under what taxonomy of desire our so-called 'pro-moral' inclination falls, such that it can provide the right kind of inclination to morality, and, moreover, such that it has the right causal origin. Across his moral and anthropological work, Kant has reflected a spectrum of opinions regarding the rightful place of inclination in ethics. It is not

cultivation indexes the conditions of possibility of freedom to the empirical world, and so what grounds our freedom to act from duty must be considered as dependent upon our empirical location and constitution, since it requires both a spatiotemporally extended process, and man's faculty of sensibility.⁹

The structure of this paper

In what follows, I will first (§1) outline the transcendental picture of freedom—to reject it requires giving it a fair hearing. Then (§2a) I will construct my positive thesis, namely the suggestion that our capacity for freedom can be actively cultivated through rational self-mastery or autocracy. I will explain how (§2b), in specific, the process of self-cultivation enables us to become the kinds of agents who choose in accordance with the moral law. I will then explain (§3) how this account of freedom *enriches* Kant's deontology, by suggesting that our *foremost* duty as moral agents is to cultivate the conditions for freedom. In the last section (§4) I expose the metaphysical differences between the theses in tension in this paper. Finally, I reiterate the intended scope of this paper, to anticipate objections regarding the extent of my conclusion.

§1. (Why) We Don't Need No Noumena

In the *Critique of Pure Reason*, Kant makes commitment to transcendental idealism a requirement of all practical philosophy. He claims that if we deny transcendental idealism we lose all practical freedom and so, for the purposes of ethical theory, questions such as what *ought* to

uncontroversial to suggest that by the *Metaphysics of Morals*, Kant's once fanatical prohibition on the role of sensibility in morality had softened. Kant's considered view about inclination is quite distant from his position in the *Groundwork*, though his position in that work is often cited as though it reflects his considered view.

- 9 Is the thesis about transcendental freedom really in competition with the story about freedom acquired through self-cultivation? There are ways in which the self-cultivation story supplants transcendental freedom, but there still remains an explanatory gap about the possibility of free action. Though it is beyond the scope of this paper, I am also inclined to attempt a naturalistic reading of Kant on this point, invoking a Frankfurtian model of volition, employing Kant's notions of *Wille* and *Willkür* as the respective faculties involved in reflective endorsement. On such an account we could once again do away with Kant's heavy metaphysics, and give a plausible account of free action within the parameters of empirical psychology.

have happened evaporate.¹⁰ Without transcendental idealism and the freedom it discloses, Kant thinks our actions inevitably succumb to the model of the Second Analogy, which states that every event is determined by another in time, in accordance with necessary laws.¹¹ But transcendental idealism, Kant claims in the *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, 'negates the impudent assertions of [...] fatalism [...] and [serves] to provide moral ideas with the space outside the field of speculation.'¹² So how is this possible on the transcendentalist account?

Put succinctly, transcendental freedom is a pure transcendental idea that must be regarded from two points of view. On the one hand it can be regarded as a *thing-in-itself*, a causality intelligible in its action, whilst also belonging to the natural world, wherein it is sensible in its effects. So when we bring the *subject* into the picture, we can say that the transcendental self *qua* noumenon enjoys *agent-causal libertarianism*: the power to be a causality given its fundamental membership in the world of intelligence. At the level of phenomenon, however, the self is situated in a world where 'every event is causally determined.'¹³ Thus, according to Kant's transcendental picture, it is in virtue of the self's noumenal membership that our actions can be called free.

As Kant sees it, the two-part self can begin a causal process in the noumenal realm, the effects of which are reflected in the phenomenal realm, in the form of free actions. So when we as agents take these two points of view, we are entitled to think of ourselves as free, given our primitive noumenal identity. This identity, Kant believes, sufficiently grounds the belief that when we act morally, we act freely. This is because moral action, *ex hypothesi*, eliminates all sensible impulses, and therefore, what instigates our action is the rational, noumenally-free aspect of us. So, when we act morally, we act under the 'idea' of freedom,¹⁴ adopting the noumenal standpoint, which suffices (Kant believes) to make our actions free. Kant claims that we are entitled to assume that underlying appearances there are things as they are in themselves. But, as

10 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason*, trans. Norman Kemp Smith (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), A534/B562.

11 Ibid.

12 Immanuel Kant, *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics*, trans. Gary Hatfield (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), [4:363].

13 Ralph Walker, *Kant: The Arguments of the Philosophers* (London: Routledge, 1978), p. 148.

14 Kant, *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, [4:448].

I see it, Kant is not entitled to any such assumption since he violates his own epistemology.

In essence, Kant is not permitted to make any positive or negative property attributions to the noumenal self. As a thing-in-itself, outside of time and space, noumenal realms and selves are not an accessible part of our epistemology. This can only mean that the postulation of the noumenal realm is mere fideism and a gratuitous circumvention of determinism. But this is the central tenet of his transcendental idealism. Kant might be right, we might be free – but he can't know it, he can't say it, and he has no reason to think it. If he's right, it's a blind guess. As Strawson notes, this conclusion looks disastrous for Kant, since human freedom and moral justice would be illusory if the natural world were all there was.¹⁵ Thankfully, however, Kant's moral theory can survive without what Onora O'Neill dubbed his 'panicky metaphysics',¹⁶ and I will be arguing for a conception of freedom that requires no such thing.

It is worth noting, finally, that Kant's motivation for invoking transcendental freedom at the end of *Groundwork* III is *metaphysical* and not *normative*. That is, Kant does not invoke transcendental freedom to show *why* the moral law *should* govern us as human beings, but simply *that it does*, given that, Kant claims, the moral law *just is* the fundamental grounding to us as transcendently free agents.¹⁷ Since transcendental freedom does *no* normative explanatory work in his moral theory, I believe that Kant's transcendental view can be unproblematically divorced from his practical philosophy without doing violence to his *normative* moral theory.

By contrast, my account makes a normative call on us from the start. Since, I shall argue, freedom can be cultivated through self-mastery, our *foremost* priority as agents is to develop ourselves in such a way that can ultimately set us free. Moreover, since freedom is the ultimate *condition of possibility* in Kant's moral philosophy, I shall argue that we have a *second-order* moral duty to develop ourselves in this way. To this end my thesis *repackages* moral normativity back into freedom, leading to an

¹⁵ Peter F. Strawson, *The Bounds of Sense: An Essay on Kant's Critique of Pure Reason* (Methuen: Routledge, 1966), p. 241.

¹⁶ Onora O'Neill, *Constructions of Reason: Explorations of Kant's Practical Philosophy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), p. 210.

¹⁷ 'The moral "ought" is then his own necessary "will" as a member of an intelligible world.' Kant, *Groundwork*, [4:455].

even fuller and richer deontological theory of freedom than that which we find in Kant's transcendental account.

So what exactly does freedom as self-cultivation consist in? In short, it amounts to becoming as psychologically attuned as possible to the moral law—like tuning in to *Categorical Imperative FM* with as little interference as possible from the background noise of inclination. So the more successfully we can approximate ourselves with the moral law as our guiding action principle, the weaker heteronomous calls to action will be.¹⁸ As Kant remarks in *The Doctrine of Virtue*, it is only when duty *itself* becomes 'irresistible'¹⁹ that we 'prove our freedom in the highest degree.'²⁰

§2a. From Noumena to Naturalism about Freedom: The Progressive View

Kant's progressive view of freedom, as I shall call it, involves positive self-compulsion.²¹ In this vein, Kant remains close in spirit to Rousseau who claims that to in order to escape the slavery of our appetites we must impose a law onto ourselves.²² The notion of self-compulsion, understood as the capacity to prevail over inclination, is fundamental to the acquisition of freedom on the progressive view.

18 There has been substantial discussion as to whether Kant's account of freedom as *virtue* instead amounts to freedom as *continence*. I follow Stephen Engstrom (2002) in regarding Kant's naturalised account of freedom as suggesting that the more we succeed in self-compulsion, the fewer countervailing incentives there will be to action. That is, the more successfully we have self-cultivated, the further we are from mere continence, and the closer we are towards *bona fide* virtue. It seems that the process of self-cultivation will always *begin* with continence, since all dually-constituted (rational and sensible) beings have naturally imperfect wills, which become *perfected* (freed from the tugs of sensibility) through rational self-cultivation. It could only be on account of your possession of a *holy* will that you would not need to self-cultivate the inner conditions of freedom on the view I am propounding. As Baxley (2010) comments, an infinite holy will 'is *wholly immune to the very possibility of temptation*' and a finite holy will 'is *constitutionally incapable of succumbing to temptation*'.

19 Kant, *Doctrine of Virtue*, [6:382n].

20 Ibid.

21 Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, trans. Peter Heath, ed. Peter Heath and J.B. Schneewind (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), [27:269-270].

22 Jean-Jacques Rousseau, *The Social Contract*, trans. Christopher Betts (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1994), p. 59.

Crucially, Kant remarks that, no man is *above* self-compulsion.²³ If this is true, if we really are *all* capable of this self-compulsion, we can retain the possibility of moral accountability, since self-compulsion is consistent with a compatibilist theory of freedom: it's up to us. Therefore, on the progressive view, you are *pro tanto* morally accountable, that is, *to the extent that* you have developed yourself through self-compulsion.

This thought is developed by Guyer, who argues that freedom as self-compulsion is nothing more than moral discipline that can be cultivated by regulating our inclinations according to a rational principle.²⁴ According to Guyer, if we are going to realise our freedom whilst rejecting the transcendental picture, we will need to achieve control over our other feelings through our determination to act in accordance with the moral law. For this, he claims, we require certain '*aesthetic preconditions* of the mind's receptivity to concepts of duty',²⁵ which turn out to be the same conditions of possibility for freedom on the progressive view.

§2b. Naturalistic *Conditions of Possibility*

In his discussion of the 'aesthetic of morals',²⁶ Kant's first stop is *moral feeling*—the feeling of respect we have for the moral law. In cultivating moral feeling as a precondition of self-mastery, Kant says we must learn to 'strengthen it through wonder at its inscrutable source',²⁷ namely the moral law itself. In strengthening our affective respect for the moral law we increase our capacity for self-mastery over inclinations, whereby the practical moral feeling, 'self-wrought by means of a rational concept',²⁸ defeats competing *pathological* hindrances to our ability to act from duty. Furthermore, since this affect is rational, its cultivation can be guarded against the charge of heteronomy.

A further precondition of successful self-mastery is to cultivate *conscience*.²⁹ Conscience for Kant consists in 'the voice of the inner

23 Kant, *Lectures on Ethics*, [27:270].

24 Paul Guyer, 'Progress Towards Autonomy,' in *Kant on Moral Autonomy* ed. Oliver Sensen (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013), p. 76.

25 *Ibid.*, p. 82. My emphasis.

26 Kant, *Doctrine of Virtue*, [6:406].

27 *Ibid.*, [6:400].

28 Kant, *Groundwork*, [4:401n].

29 In the *Doctrine of Virtue*, Kant invites us to think of human being as bearing a dual *personality* [DV, 6:439n]. His motivation for this comes from his discussion of

judge',³⁰ to whom an agent can listen more successfully the better that person gets to know himself. As Kant states in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, the moral law itself has the power to '[humiliate] every human being when he compares the sensible propensity of his nature with it.'³¹ So when we develop our consciences, we succeed in holding our inclinations up to rational scrutiny, whereby this scrutiny can serve to humiliate and humble us when we notice how far our incentives deviate from the standard demanded by the categorical imperative. Accordingly, conscience requires that we learn to discriminate between autonomous and heteronomous incentives.

But this does, admittedly, look like a dodgy move on Kant's part. Across his practical philosophy, Kant maintains that we cannot be sure whether our incentives are moral or non-moral. His position in *The Doctrine of Virtue* might, therefore, amount to no more than wishful thinking. For while he grants that 'a human being cannot see into the depth of his own heart so as to be quite certain of the purity of his moral intention',³² Kant maintains that an agent must nevertheless 'strive with all [his] might that the thought of duty for its own sake is the sufficient incentive of every action conforming to duty.'³³

Thus far, then, the naturalistic picture of self-cultivation as a means to acquiring freedom has shown how the achievement of self-mastery necessary for freedom involves that we practice techniques that help support the reign of the moral law, where the better we become at this, the better able we are to judge countervailing inclinations as productive of unfit, heteronomous maxims for action. When freedom is acquired through this process of self-mastery, the cultivation of moral feeling and conscience help us suppress competing inclinations. When we become able to surmount inclinations we finally realise what Kant calls 'inner-

conscience—the concept of which he says would be 'contradictory' if we didn't conceive of man as bipartite. That is, the idea that we have an inner, authoritative juror (in what Kant calls the 'inner court') is absurd if there is not also part of us standing trial. It seems that Kant can maintain the fundamental *idea* of bipartition without having to commit to any panicky metaphysics. The contemporary analogue of the bipartite (moral) personality could be the picture of human agency found in Frankfurt's 'Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person.'

30 Ibid., [6:401].

31 Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, trans. Mary Gregor (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), [5:74].

32 Kant, *Doctrine of Virtue*, [6:392].

33 Ibid., [6:393].

freedom',³⁴ which he also describes as the 'virtue of moral self-constraint'.³⁵

It should be apparent therefore that, according to the view I am propounding, freedom constitutes an *achievement* of the rational aspect of the self. Pointedly, this is *not* a self who is free *only* in virtue of having membership in the noumenal realm; instead, effortful self-development entails a *battle* to become practically free. Kant remarks that our inclinations are 'monsters [we have] to fight',³⁶ and only through the process of rational self-development do we emerge victorious, earning ourselves a place in a possible realm of ends. So as we progressively become better autocrats, we earn and enhance our capacity for agency, and so for freedom.

Added corroboration for these sympathies is found in Kant's *Lectures on Anthropology*. Here Kant speaks of the battle between sensibility and the power of choice as a battle we have the power to win.³⁷ It seems that if Kant were wholeheartedly committed to the transcendental picture of freedom, there would be no *sense* in discussing a power of choice and our requirement to discipline sensibility through the understanding. This is brought out further in Kant's claim that sensibility deserves blame since 'it draws us against our power of choice in the direction where the understanding did not want to go'.³⁸

On this point, it bears recalling Sidgwick's objection to Kant's transcendental theory of freedom.³⁹ Sidgwick contends that the picture of freedom and morality jointly issuing from the self *qua* noumenon renders paradoxical the possibility we can do wrong willingly. In short Sidgwick's objection is this: if we do wrong freely, we are, in fact, not acting freely after all, since on Kant's picture when we act freely we are *ex hypothesi* acting morally. Sidgwick's objection can, however, be met if we accept a naturalisation of Kant's account of freedom. That Kant discusses the possibility of censuring immoral conduct is an invitation to think

34 Denis, 'A Kantian Conception of Human Flourishing,' p. 182.

35 Ibid.

36 Ibid.

37 Immanuel Kant, *Lectures on Anthropology*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012), [25:1231].

38 Ibid.

39 Henry Sidgwick, 'The Kantian Conception of Free Will', *Mind*, Vol. 13 (1888), p. 405.

pragmatically about his theory of freedom. In this vein, naturalising Kant's account of freedom enables us to move away from the cramped and unhappy disjunctions of 'free or un-free' and 'moral or immoral' towards thinking about such normative concepts as operating in matters of *degree*. I imagine that Kant with his anthropological hat on would welcome this interpretative move. At the very least, the texts to which I have been referring give license to this reading.

§3. The Duty to Self-Master

It should be apparent, then, that according to the progressive view of freedom, we have a *second-order duty* to cultivate ourselves as autocrats. Accordingly, normativity is restored to Kant's theory of freedom. As I see it, the duty to self-master is a duty preceding all other duties. For example, first-order duties would include particular moral acts themselves, namely those that conform to the categorical imperative. A second-order duty, however, would involve cultivating the kind of *character* that is maximally *susceptible* to the normative force of the categorical imperative. As Guyer sees it, and to use Kant's deontic terminology, this kind of self-cultivation constitutes an *imperfect* duty to oneself, whereby we 'perfect [our] moral [personalities]⁴⁰ and 'make [ourselves] more perfect than mere nature created [us]'.⁴¹ Recall, furthermore, that, according to Kant, imperfect duties *promote* the very possibility of free choice. Therefore, if free choice *itself* depends upon self-cultivating the aforementioned *aesthetic preconditions* of the mind's receptivity to duty, then through self-cultivation we *make possible* our capacity for freedom and morality—all the while without noumenal membership. As Kant states in the *Critique of Practical Reason*, 'whatever diminishes the hindrances to an activity is a *furthering of this activity itself*'.⁴² In cultivating the aforementioned aesthetic preconditions, we wrest power from *pathological* inclination, which would otherwise thwart the practical efficacy of the moral law. But whilst removing this merely negative condition—like freeing a prisoner from his shackles—we simultaneously achieve something positive: the ability to act from the motive of duty itself. We might otherwise call this an enhancement in our freedom.

40 Paul Guyer, *Kant and the Experience of Freedom* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 32.

41 Ibid.

42 Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*, [5:79]. Own emphasis.

However, while Kant stipulates that the duty to self-cultivate is imperfect, he also claims that it is a *wide* duty.⁴³ It bears recalling that, according to Kant, *wide* duties are those that are not absolute, that is, no *rational* principle prescribes the degree to which we must engage in them. However, given what's at stake, I think Kant is wrong on this point—surely the duty to self-cultivate should be made more stringent? For self-cultivation is, on the view I have propounded, the very *condition of possibility* for freedom itself—shouldn't its cultivation therefore constitute a *narrow* duty? After all, failure to self-cultivate entails our failure to fulfill all further moral duties through aesthetic unresponsiveness to the dictates of practical reason itself. I grant that Kant may be right insofar as reason cannot dictate *exactly* how far we should self-cultivate: reason would, I presume, suggest we self-cultivate *as much as possible*, allowing a degree of latitude, or 'space of permissions.' Notwithstanding, in his discussion of the duty to self-cultivate as contributing towards one's moral perfection, Kant *does* himself recognise that this duty 'promotes [our] capacity to realise all sorts of possible ends',⁴⁴ thus rendering it, he says, a 'duty in itself'.⁴⁵ So perhaps the distinction between wide and narrow duties is really a moot point: Kant *does* recognise the foremost importance of self-cultivation, since our capacity to set moral ends *tout court* depends upon it.

§4. Naturalising the Noumenal

Finally, I want to draw attention to the fact that the metaphysics of transcendental freedom is incompatible with the mechanics of the progressive view of freedom I have offered here. At bottom, the transcendental claim that the moral self is properly located in a non-spatiotemporal realm *cannot coexist* with a naturalistic reading of Kant, which, by contrast, describes the act of becoming free as a *temporally-extended* process. That Kant did in fact accept such a view is intimated throughout *The Doctrine of Virtue* by his very choice of language. For example, Kant describes freedom from contra-moral inclinations⁴⁶ in

43 Kant, *Doctrine of Virtue*, [6:392].

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid. Kant's choice of language here is quite revealing. If a 'duty in itself' is intended in the same sense as 'an end in itself' (when Kant speaks of respect for humanity in *Groundwork* II), is Kant not suggesting that the duty to self-cultivate can and should be made universal law—of objectively, unconditional value? If so, then the duty to self-cultivate looks not to be wide after all.

46 Kant, *Doctrine of Virtue*, [6:477].

temporally-extended terms, citing 'strength',⁴⁷ 'cultivation' and 'striving'⁴⁸ as properties required on the part of the agent to make inner-freedom possible. Furthermore, Kant claims that these character attributes arise from '*deeds* and not *gifts*'.⁴⁹ It seems that if Kant *repudiated* the idea that freedom could be gifted to us, the 'freebie' of noumenal membership is something of an unwanted present. Freedom understood as a *de facto* disposition is an unwelcome notion in *The Doctrine of Virtue*.⁵⁰

Furthermore, on a more *technically* linguistic note, the very talk of 'becoming' is nonsensical when it comes to noumena. As Paul Guyer notes, if we uphold the ontology of transcendental selfhood, the act of moral choice amounts to nothing more sophisticated than merely 'throwing an on-off switch in the noumenal world'⁵¹ and thus not describable in progressive terms at all. Accordingly, the intelligibility of terms such as 'strength', 'striving' and 'success' (and even virtue itself) is annulled if transcendental selfhood is upheld. By contrast, these terms cohere unproblematically with Kant's naturalised stance in *The Doctrine of Virtue*, whereby the *degree* to which we succeed in matters of freedom and morality is necessarily correlated with our success in the foremost task of self-cultivation.

Conclusion

Thus, to reiterate a claim I made in the introduction to this paper, my task here was to make a case regarding the role of self-cultivation as a precondition of our responsiveness to the concept of duty. It was not my intention to proffer a naturalistic account of freedom concerning the *moment* at which actions are taken. Rather my interest was to expose and evaluate Kant's claim that without cultivating a primitive susceptibility to concept of duty, the moral law could not affect us. I have developed this claim into a theory of freedom whose scope is necessarily limited. According to my account, in growing susceptible to the concept of duty we do not guarantee that we become the law's unerring executors. Rather, we merely become *responsive* to its dictates, and only subsequently

47 Ibid., [6:405].

48 Ibid., [6:446].

49 Ibid., [6:386]. My emphases.

50 Owing to this, Kant's dogmatic assertion in the second *Critique* that the 'fact of reason' is the grounding of the freedom of the will is as unpalatable a claim as the ontological dogmatism of noumenal membership we find in *Groundwork III*.

51 Guyer, *Progress Towards Autonomy*, p. 78.

responsible for its execution, according to a principle that stipulates *ought implies can*.

Thus, given that my focus here was on our *susceptibility* to the moral law, transcendental freedom might appear to be a false opponent, in tension only *prima facie* with my thesis. After all, these theories might not be in competition, rather, they might be concerned with different and non-overlapping aspects of agency: self-cultivation as an aesthetic precondition of Kantian agency, and transcendental freedom as a guarantee that moral action can, after all, be causally adduced to pure practical reason. However, transcendental freedom according to Kant, at least at the end of the *Groundwork*, is invoked as the *whole* story about agency: everything from susceptibility to efficacy is, Kant holds, accounted for by the theory. But according to the evidence of *The Doctrine of Virtue*, Kant explicitly naturalises the part of the story concerned with susceptibility, and new terminology (in particular *Willkür*, which is notably absent in the *Groundwork*) is brought in to help explain our capacity to develop, for example, susceptibility to the concept of duty in the first place. Freedom as self-cultivation should therefore be understood quite apart from Kant's theoretical commitments, instead as part of moral anthropology, for which we need do no heavy metaphysics.

Anti-Stoic Lessons for the Concept of *Amor Fati* in *Gay Science* IV

HEDWIG GAASTERLAND

Book IV of The Gay Science explicitly criticizes Stoicism (306) yet seems to implicitly adopt elements of it as well, e.g. in the ideal of amor fati (276). Yet, this paper proposes an alternative reading of amor fati, one that moves away from the assumption that it is inspired by Stoicism. Tracing Nietzsche's growing sense of dissatisfaction with the Stoic take on passions in the pursuit of knowledge, a new light is shed on amor fati, related in the first place to the dangerous quest for truth, but also, indirectly, to the importance of health and self-cultivation. Amor fati should be understood in this context not just as non-Stoic; it is even anti-Stoic.

Introduction

Amor fati is often regarded as a form of therapy resembling one of the Stoic exercises for self-cultivation. Peter Groff for instance finds it 'illuminating to read Nietzsche as a kind of late modern neo-Stoic, providing us with a veritable banquet of spiritual exercises aimed at the cultivation of the self and the affirmation of fate.'¹ Michael Ure's book *Nietzsche's Therapy* discusses in great detail Nietzsche's turn to the Stoics, claiming that 'what looms large in Nietzsche's thinking is the question of psychological health and sickness [...]. In the middle period, [...] he conceives the patient, piecemeal labour of psychological self-observation as a therapy of the soul.'² Ure's article 'Nietzsche's Free Spirit Trilogy and Stoic Therapy' further explores the implications of

1 Peter Groff, 'Al-Kindī and Nietzsche on the Stoic Art of Banishing Sorrow', in *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 28 (2004), p. 154.

2 Michael Ure, *Nietzsche's Therapy; Self-Cultivation in the Middle Works* (Lanham MD: Lexington Books, 2008), p. 3.

Nietzsche's adoption of Stoic therapy for the notion of *amor fati*.³ Although it is claimed that *amor fati* is set up as an alternative to those elements of Stoicism that Nietzsche is discontent with, it is stated throughout that it remains faithful in many respects to the basics of Stoic therapy. In short, Nietzsche's suggestion to love one's fate mirrors, according to Michael Ure, Epictetus' advice: 'Do not seek to have events happen as you wish, but *wish* them to happen as they do happen, and all will be well with you.'⁴

The aim of this paper is to respectfully challenge two of the main assumptions instructing this view. First, I will trace Nietzsche's engagement with Stoicism in the Middle Works, or the so-called 'Free Spirit Trilogy', which include *Human, All Too Human (HAH)*, *Daybreak (D)*, and *The Gay Science (GS)* until Book IV.⁵ I hope to show that the motivation for turning to the Stoics is not, at least not exclusively, the question of psychological health and sickness, or self-observation as a therapy of the soul. Parallel to this interest namely, and closely related to it as I will show, runs Nietzsche's fascination for truth and the scientific practice aimed at the increase of knowledge. I will argue that Nietzsche's passion for knowledge, known in German as the 'Leidenschaft der Erkenntnis', shapes the engagement with Stoicism in a stronger sense than his quest for health.

Secondly, after showing how Nietzsche's stance towards Stoicism starts out sympathetic in *HAH* yet ends fiercely critical in *GS*, I will make the case that *amor fati* is not only un-Stoic, but even anti-Stoic. *Amor fati* occurs only ten times in the totality of Nietzsche's works, including the *Nachlass* and his letters, and its first published occurrence is in the first

3 Michael Ure, 'Nietzsche's Free Spirit Trilogy and Stoic Therapy', in *Journal of Nietzsche Studies* 38 (2009), pp. 60-84.

4 *The 'Encheiridion' of Epictetus and its Three Christian Adaptations*, trans. by Gerard Boter (Leiden: Brill, 1999), 8. It is quoted by Ure, 'Nietzsche's Free Spirit Trilogy and Stoic Therapy', p. 75. On p. 76 he writes: 'Nietzsche develops a quintessentially Stoic ethic, anchored in in the complete affirmation of natural necessity'.

5 Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, trans. by R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), hereafter *HAH*; Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *Daybreak*, trans. by R.J. Hollingdale, ed. by Maudemarie Clark and Brian Leiter (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), hereafter *D*; Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. by Josephine Nauckhoff, ed. by Bernard Williams (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001), hereafter *GS*.

aphorism of *GS* IV. I will argue that the timing of this first occurrence is not coincidental: the introduction of *amor fati* follows from Nietzsche's growing dissatisfaction with Stoicism. This also has an impact on our understanding of *amor fati*, at least of its meaning in *GS*.⁶ Although I will suggest that *amor fati* can still be interpreted as a form of self-cultivation, my point is that it is informed by Nietzsche's struggle with the desire for truth to a much larger extent than has been acknowledged so far. *Amor fati* can only be understood as the wish for the counterweight of joyful and aesthetic self-interpretation against the exhausting burden of the 'Leidenschaft der Erkenntnis', I claim.

The contrast between the Opening of Book IV and *GS* 306

Nietzsche's attitude towards Stoic ethics in general is characteristically ambiguous. This can hardly come as a surprise, since most of Nietzsche's responses to important philosophical schools or figures are ambivalent: some aphorisms betray clear admiration, others – sometimes even within the same book – betray aversion and a highly polemical attitude. Moreover, not many texts explicitly mention the philosopher he admires or attacks. The reader is expected to be so familiar with the philosophical tradition that s/he is capable of recognizing Nietzsche's implicit opponent or ally. Developing a consistent account of Nietzsche's relation to Stoicism, therefore, faces these two difficulties: we have to take into account that whom Nietzsche fights in one text might be admired in another, and we have to be aware that Nietzsche might discuss Stoicism in an aphorism lacking explicit signs of it.

Book IV of *GS* serves as a good example. This Book shows both difficulties. Nietzsche seems to be critical and appreciative of Stoicism, both implicitly and explicitly. It contains one of the most explicit evaluations of Hellenistic Ethics in the totality of Nietzsche's oeuvre, namely aphorism 306 entitled 'Stoics and Epicureans'. Nietzsche clearly prefers

6 I agree with Tom Stern, 'Nietzsche, *Amor Fati*, and *The Gay Science*', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* Vol. CXIII,2 (2013), pp. 145-62, who argues that the meaning of *amor fati* changes in between *GS* and its last appearances in 1888. On pp. 157-8 he rightly argues: 'Nietzsche scholars are far too relaxed about picking and choosing from his different books to construct a version of Nietzsche that suits their particular interests. [...] This would be unobjectionable if his views about some of the key notions associated with *amor fati* (in *The Gay Science*) were not subject to change in the coming years. As it happens, they were.'

the Epicureans over the Stoics in this text. But several other aphorisms reveal an implicit dialogue with the Stoic philosophers as well. The Opening of Book IV, for instance, betrays a remarkable yet implicit similarity with the Stoic therapy of affirming fate, that is, according to several commentators.⁷ We read:

GS 276 For the new year. I'm still alive; I still think: I must be still alive because I still have to think. *Sum, ergo cogito: cogito, ergo sum.* Today everyone allows himself to express his dearest wish and thoughts: so I, too, want to say what I wish from myself today and what thought first crossed my heart – what thought shall be the reason, warrant, and sweetness of the rest of my life!

Nietzsche playfully turns the famous Cartesian saying that we can only know for certain that we exist, because we think: 'cogito, ergo sum'. For Nietzsche, the connection goes both ways, which makes the intimacy between thinking and living even stronger. 'I must be alive, because I still have to think': there is no thinking without living. Moreover, and in opposed direction, the thought he wishes to express 'for the new year' is 'his dearest'. To think a particular thought, it appears, has the power to have a lasting impact on one's life: it can become one's 'reason, warrant', and even one's 'sweetness', changing drastically its taste, sensation, or quality. There is no thinking without living; there is no living well – for Nietzsche – without thinking this particular thought.

This intimate connection is taken as a clue pointing towards the idea that Nietzsche is engaged in a dialogue with Hellenistic philosophy. That is: especially the Stoic tradition has made us familiar with the idea that the way we think affects the way we feel.⁸ Secondly, it is not only the fact that our thinking affects our well-being; it is moreover a specific thought that will have a therapeutic effect on us, namely that of affirming

7 Michael Ure and Peter Groff are not the only ones; see for instance also John Sellars, 'An Ethics of the Event, Deleuze's Stoicism', in *Angelaki Journal of the Theoretical Humanities* II,3 (2006), pp. 157-71, and Thomas Brobjer. 'Nietzsche's reading of Epictetus', in *Nietzsche-Studien* 32 (2003), pp. 429-32.

8 Pierre Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995) is one of the most prominent works in this field. John Sellars' *The Art of Living. The Stoics on the Nature and Function of Philosophy* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2003), p. 3-4, suggests that Nietzsche's notion of philosophy as an 'art of living' is influenced by Stoicism.

fate. For the Stoics, we are radically unfree, since the world is fated – yet we can achieve happiness (*eudaimonia*) and psychological health by accepting and embracing our fate, even if it seems to be a horrendous one. The ‘dearest wish’ that Nietzsche expresses in the first aphorism, after loosely introducing it in the ‘motto’ preceding Book IV⁹ is the following:

I want to learn more and more how to see what is necessary in things as what is beautiful in them – thus I will be one of those who make things beautiful. *Amor fati*: let that be my love from now on! I do not want to wage war against ugliness. I do not want to accuse; I do not even want to accuse the accusers. Let *looking away* be my only negation! And, all in all and on the whole: some day I want only to be a Yes-sayer!

Nietzsche sees in *amor fati* a thought that can become a ‘sweetness’, making ‘all things well’. Even though he does not explicitly name a Stoic philosopher, it would take some argumentation to show that these concepts, so strongly reminiscent of Stoicism, actually have a different background.

The apparent attitude of agreement with Stoic doctrines does not last throughout the Book, however. Aphorism 306, where Nietzsche explicitly compares and evaluates Stoic and Epicurean ways of living, is radically different in tone.

GS 306 Stoics and Epicureans. The Epicurean seeks out the situation, the persons, and even the events that suit his extremely sensitive intellectual constitution; he foregoes the rest – that is, almost everything – because it would be too strong and heavy a diet. The Stoic, by contrast, trains himself to swallow stones and worms, glass shards and scorpions without nausea; he wants his stomach to be ultimately insensible to everything the chance of existence pours into him [...].

Nietzsche prefers Epicurean selectivity, and mocks the Stoic aim to be completely open to whatever fate may bring. On first sight, Nietzsche does not have different Stoic doctrines in mind here: in both *GS 276* and *306* the Stoic idea is central that we are dependent on fortune somehow and that we should ‘wish the events as they happen’ instead of ‘making

⁹ Motto *GS IV*: ‘Ever healthier it rises, Free in fate most amorous’.

the events happen as you wish'. However, in contrast to the Opening, Nietzsche firmly rejects this idea in 306. We should not become 'ultimately insensible to everything the chance of existence pours into us'; rather, we should actively 'seek out the situation, the persons, and even the events' that suit our constitution, not passively accept whatever comes our way. How to explain this inconsistency?

Science and knowledge 1: Nietzsche's appreciation of the Stoic approach to emotions

In order to develop a more refined account of Nietzsche's relation with Stoicism up until *GS*, it is crucial to distinguish between two major concerns in the 'Free Spirit Trilogy': *health* and *science* (science taken in the broadest sense possible here, not limited to the natural sciences; 'Wissenschaft' being the German equivalent). My approach concurs with that of Melissa Lane, who, different from commentators like Michael Ure and Peter Groff, but also Martha Nussbaum and Keith Ansell-Pearson, does not evaluate Nietzsche's engagement with Stoicism merely from the angle of ethics and therapeutic self-cultivation.¹⁰ Whereas Peter Groff claims that Nietzsche is 'committed to the task of banishing or overcoming sorrow' arguing that he 'appropriate[s] many of the Stoics' therapeutic techniques toward this end', Melissa Lane's point is that 'while self-fashioning has become a leading theme of the 'post-modern' reading of Nietzsche, [...] there has been little discussion of [...] the extent to which Nietzsche marks out a virtue of honesty named *Redlichkeit* from *Daybreak* (1881) onward'.¹¹ Yet, whereas her analysis reveals 'the extent to which honesty and intellectual adequacy came to weigh for him on the

10 Melissa Lane, 'Honesty as the Best Policy. Nietzsche on *Redlichkeit* and the Contrast between Stoic and Epicurean Strategies of the Self', in *Histories of Postmodernism*, eds. Mark Bevis, Jill Hargis, Sara Rushing (New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 25-51. See also Keith Ansell-Pearson, 'Beyond compassion: on Nietzsche's moral therapy in *Dawn*', in *Continental Philosophy Review* 44.2 (2011), pp. 179-204; Keith Ansell-Pearson, 'For Mortal Souls: Philosophy and Therapeia in Nietzsche's *Dawn*', in *Royal Institute of Philosophy Supplement* 66 (2010), pp. 137-163; Martha Nussbaum, 'Pity and Mercy, Nietzsche's Stoicism', in *Nietzsche, Genealogy, Morality; Essays on Nietzsche's 'On the Genealogy of Morality'*, ed. by Richard Schacht (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1994).

11 Melissa Lane, 'Honesty as the Best Policy. Nietzsche on *Redlichkeit* and the Contrast between Stoic and Epicurean Strategies of the Self', in *Histories of Postmodernism*, eds. Mark Bevis, Jill Hargis, Sara Rushing (New York: Routledge, 2007), pp. 25-51, p. 25.

side of Stoicism', my conclusion shall be that Nietzsche increasingly criticizes the Stoics, precisely for their misapprehension of the value of rationality in the pursuit of truth.¹²

It is clear from the beginning of Nietzsche's philosophical project that the interests in truth and health do not complement each other.¹³ As the first Book of *Human, All Too Human* reveals, for instance in the title of aphorism 33 '*Error regarding life necessary to life*', the search for truth might uncover things that do not sit well with our 'human, all too human' constitution. In aphorism 34 this thought is formulated as follows:

HAH 34 Will truth not become inimical to life, to the better man? A question seems to lie heavily on our tongue and yet refuses to be uttered: whether one *could* consciously reside in untruth? or, if one were *obliged* to, whether death would not be preferable?

Yet, this same aphorism reveals how Nietzsche, be it implicitly, has the Stoic philosopher in mind, who can set us an example of how to deal with a devastating yet desired truth (even if the Stoics do not recognize the idea that truth and health may be opposed). This text reveals the presence of Stoicism in at least three ways. Firstly, the temperament that is recommended is one 'by virtue of which a life could arise much simpler and emotionally cleaner', reminding us of the simple life lived by Epictetus and the thought that it would be much better without the burden of great emotions:

HAH 34 I believe that the nature of the after-effect of knowledge is determined by a man's *temperament*: [...] I could just as easily imagine a different one, quite possible in individual instances, by virtue of which a life could arise much simpler and emotionally cleaner than our present life is: so that, though the old motives of violent desire produced by inherited habit would still possess their strength, they would gradually grow

12 Ibid., p. 26.

13 The development of Nietzsche's thought on the relation between health, happiness, and the destructive desire for truth is eloquently and in full detail worked out by Marco Brusotti, *Die Leidenschaft der Erkenntnis: Philosophie und ästhetische Lebensgestaltung bei Nietzsche von Morgenröthe bis Also sprach Zarathustra* (Berlin: W. de Gruyter, 1997).

weaker under the influence of purifying knowledge. [...] For this to happen one would, to be sure, have to possess the requisite temperament, as has already been said: a firm, mild and at bottom cheerful soul.

The description of ‘a firm, mild and at bottom cheerful soul’ is similar to the state of *eupatheia* the Stoics envision; resembling their ideal of a calm and rational temperament, well balanced, in which all extreme passions are held in check.¹⁴

Secondly, this state is traditionally achieved through adopting an attitude of ‘detachment’. One should be able to perceive most things as ‘indifferent’ and ‘forgo much’:

[He] must, rather, without envy or vexation be able to forgo much, indeed almost everything upon which other men place value; that free, fearless hovering over men, customs, and the traditional evaluations of things must *suffice* him as the condition he considers most desirable.

The idea is simple. Dismissing as indifferent the things that we would normally value means to be able to remain cheerful and calm, also when these are taken away or fundamentally questioned. This attitude of ‘detachment’ is illustrated in this aphorism as ‘free, fearless hovering over men, customs, and the traditional evaluations of things’, a description that is almost identical to what we find in Marcus Aurelius’ *Meditations*:

MA VII 48 One who would converse about human beings should look on all things earthly as though from some point far above, upon herds, armies, and agriculture, marriages and divorces, births and deaths, the clamour of law courts, deserted wastes, alien people of every kind, festivals, lamentations, and markets, this intermixture of everything and ordered combina-

14 This similarity is also identified by Michael Ure, *Nietzsche’s Therapy*, p. 126. *Eupatheia* literally means a ‘state of good passion’. In Stoic psychology a passion is understood to be a mistaken judgment. It is often stated that the ultimate Stoic goal is to reach ‘*apatheia*’, a state without mistaken judgments, hence of emotionlessness. But a life in which impulses are rational, moderate, and held in check leads, according to Seneca for instance, to a state of calm joy: *eupatheia*.

tion of opposites.¹⁵

Thirdly, the relation between temperament and truth is double. On the one hand, Nietzsche acknowledges that the response to knowledge depends on one's 'temperament': a nature whose life is 'emotionally cleaner' might react more calmly and rationally. On the other hand, it is *because* of the effects of knowledge that the passions lose their strength and weaken, for knowledge can be 'purifying' as we have seen above: 'though the old motives of violent desire [...] would still possess their strength, they would gradually grow weaker under the influence of purifying knowledge.' The implicit idea seems to be that it is not the things themselves that are threatening or disturbing, rather it is our *opinion* or reaction to it – an idea that we find recurring in Marcus Aurelius' *Meditations*.¹⁶ We should, thus, calm down in order to be able to deal with the consequences of knowledge wisely, and use the purifying workings of this knowledge in order to calm down our passions.

Consequently, we can see how Stoicism is taken on board by Nietzsche as part of a therapy that will not only prepare us to face a hostile truth by adopting a calm attitude of passion-free detachment, but that moreover changes our expectations of that truth: it may be devastating at first, but it may, in the long run, purify and even liberate us. This idea can be found explicitly in *HAH* 170: 'To perceive all this can be very painful, but then comes a consolation: such pains are birth-pangs. The butterfly wants to get out of its cocoon'.

Science and knowledge 2: Nietzsche's rejection of the Stoic approach to emotions

Nevertheless, this hopeful attitude concerning the relation between knowledge and psychological health changes in *Dawn*. Correspondingly, the appreciative stance towards the Stoics develops into one of rejection, the most explicit example of which is *GS* 306, as we have seen. *GS* 305 reveals in more detail what exactly Nietzsche's disappointment with Stoicism entails.

GS 305 *Self-control*. Those moralists who command man first

¹⁵ Marcus Aurelius, *Meditations*, trans. by Robin Hard (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2011), hereafter *MA*.

¹⁶ For instance: *MA* IV 7: 'Do away with the judgment, and the notion 'I have been harmed' is done away with; do away with that notion, and the harm itself is gone.'

and above all to gain control of himself thereby afflict him with a peculiar disease, namely, a constant irritability at all natural stirrings and inclinations and as it were a kind of itch. [...] [N]o longer may he entrust himself to any instinct or free wing-beat; instead he stands there rigidly with a defensive posture, armed against himself, with sharp and suspicious eyes, the eternal guardian of his fortress, since he has turned himself into a fortress. [...] [H]ow impoverished [he has become] and cut off from the most beautiful fortuities of the soul! And indeed from all further *instruction*! For one must be able to lose oneself if one wants to learn something from the things that we ourselves are not.

The fact that this aphorism is immediately followed by 306, ‘Stoics and Epicureans’, suggests that Nietzsche sees at least the Stoics (perhaps the Epicureans, too) as examples of sick ‘moralists who command man first and above all to gain control of himself.’ They are described here as those who rigidly defend their own ‘fortresses’, a very familiar image within the writings of Marcus Aurelius.¹⁷ But interestingly, Nietzsche’s objection to this kind of attitude is not just that it is unhealthy; it is also inappropriate for those who wish to *learn*. Nietzsche’s desire in this time is still (partly at least) to find truth, which is confirmed by *GS* 309: “This penchant and passion for what is true, real, non-apparent, certain – how it exasperates me!” *GS* 305 shows Nietzsche’s awareness that if one wishes to grow, to *learn*, one must have faith in one’s own instincts. Only if we ‘lose ourselves’, ‘entrust ourselves to any free wing-beat’, we will not be cut off ‘from further *instruction*’ and will actually come to discover new things.

This preoccupation with learning can also be recognized in *GS* 306, where Nietzsche prefers the Epicureans over the Stoics because the Epicurean attitude fits a learning attitude (formulated as ‘the work of the spirit’) better:

17 See Pierre Hadot, *The Inner Citadel. The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*, trans. by Michael Chase (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001) on the writings of Marcus Aurelius; moreover, we can find in *MA* VIII 48 an explicit example by Marcus Aurelius himself: ‘Remember that your ruling centre becomes invincible when it withdraws into itself and rests content with itself, doing nothing other than what it wishes, even where its refusal to act not reasonably based; and how much more contented will it be, then, when it founds its decision on reason and careful reflection. By virtue of this, an intelligence free from passions is a mighty citadel’

GS 306 But someone who more or less *expects* fate to allow him to spin *a long thread* does well to take an Epicurean orientation; people engaged in the work of the spirit have always done so! For it would be the loss of all losses, for them, to forfeit their subtle sensitivity in exchange for a hard Stoic skin with porcupine spines.

What insight made Nietzsche change his mind between *HAH* and *GS* concerning the right attitude for dealing with truth? Whereas *HAH* obviously regards Stoic *eupatheia*, an attitude with calmed and purified passions, as the right preparation for uncovering even these truths that are inimical to life, *GS* encourages us to adopt a selective, Epicurean attitude instead, one that protects its ‘subtle sensitivity’ and deems the Stoic attitude ‘insensible’, ‘inflexible’, ‘defensive’, ‘suspicious’, having a hard skin ‘with porcupine spines’, reminiscent of what he would later, especially in *GM* III, come to term ‘asceticism’ – a term to which I will return below.

In *Dawn* a shift occurs. Importantly, this change concerns the role of the passions in the quest for knowledge. Even though *Dawn* is mostly read in the context of therapy and self-cultivation, it also contains many aphorisms showing an involvement with ‘Wissenschaft’ and objective judgment. On that subject, we find on the one hand texts in which the Stoic attitude of rational detachment, even of hovering over all things, is still appreciatively adopted, for instance in the following aphorism:

D 137 To view our own experiences with the eyes with which we are accustomed to view them when they are the experiences of others – this is very comforting and a medicine to be recommended. [...] [This] maxim is certainly *more in accord* with reason and the will to rationality, for we adjudge the value and meaning of an event more objectively when it happens to another than we do when it happens to us.

This text resembles what we saw in *HAH*. It contains a direct reference to Epictetus¹⁸ and stresses the importance of reason: arguably it is more

18 The inspiration must have come from Epictetus’ *Encheiridion* 26: ‘The will of nature may be learned from things upon which we are all agreed. As when our neighbor’s boy has broken a cup, or the like, we are ready at once to say, ‘These are casualties that will happen’; be assured, then, that when your own cup is likewise broken, you ought to be affected just as when another’s cup was broken. Now

rational to regard one's experiences through the eyes of others, leading to a more 'objective' evaluation of the event – being untroubled by passions that stand in the way of a clear and rational judgement. Also, in *D* 497, we find the suggestion that men with 'true geniuses' are those who possess 'the *pure, purifying* eye which seems not to have grown out of their temperament and character but, free from these and usually in mild opposition to them, looks down on the world as on a god and loves this god', again hinting at the importance of a kind of rational strength functioning detached from one's emotional humours. It even has the potential to hover over them: 'the spirit seems to be only *loosely attached* to the character and temperament, as a winged being who can easily detach itself from these and then raise high above them.'

On the other hand we find examples that reveal a slowly dawning awareness of truth being such that it will not be uncovered by adopting a detached and rational point of view. *D* 539: 'Have you never been plagued by the fear that you might be completely incapable of knowing the truth? The fear that your mind may be too dull and even your subtle faculty of seeing still much too coarse?' And this is not the only fear; slowly its possible implication is explored, namely that we may not have *any* access to a truth outside. We may be imprisoned by our deceptive senses, as *D* 117 holds: 'it is by these horizons, within which each of us encloses his senses as if behind prison walls, that we *measure* the world [...] and it is all of it an error!' And, further below: 'The habits of our senses have woven us into lies and deception of sensation: these again are the basis of all our judgements and 'knowledge' – there is absolutely no escape, no back way or bypath into the *real world!*' This line of thought, then, leads to a kind of despair expressed in *D* 483: 'Learn to know! Yes! But always as a man! What? [...] Never to be able to see into things out of any other eyes but *these?* [...] What will mankind have come to know at the end of all their knowledge? – their organs! And that perhaps means: the impossibility of knowledge! Misery and disgust!'

The conclusion then must be that 'truth', if possible at all, will not reveal itself to those who are engaged in purely rational activity: 'Or do you believe that today, since you are frozen and dry like a bright morning

apply this to greater things. Is the child or wife of another dead? There is no one who would not say, 'This is an accident of mortality.' But if anyone's own child happens to die, it is immediately, 'Alas! how wretched am I!' It should be always remembered how we are affected on hearing the same thing concerning others.'

in winter and have nothing weighing on your heart, your eyes have somehow improved? Are warmth and enthusiasm not needed if a thing of thought is to have *justice* done to it?' (*D* 539) Rather, we are constantly presented with the results of our own inner sensitive movements: 'when you are tired you will bestow on things a pale and tired coloration; when you are feverish you will turn them into monsters' (*ibid.*). Hence it is acknowledged that passions and drives should not be left out of the process of acquiring knowledge – rather, they may possibly be the only thing we will ever get to know, or at least they provide us with the only method that perhaps enables us to acquire small amounts of knowledge:

GS 333 Before knowledge is possible, each of these impulses [to laugh, lament, and curse] must first have presented its one-sided view of the thing or event; then comes the fight between these one-sided views, and occasionally out of it a mean, an appeasement, a concession to all three sides, a kind of justice and contract.

It should not come as a surprise, therefore, to find Nietzsche in *GS* encouraging the stimulation of as many impulses, passions, and 'views' as possible – which is quite opposite to the idea of the possibility of a 'detached genius' we encountered in *D*, and of the adoption of a Stoic, calm, rational attitude we saw Nietzsche defending in *HAH*. *GS* 12 reveals explicitly how Nietzsche had not forgotten about the Stoics; here he formulates very precisely and in a tone of respect how he has come to disagree.

GS 12 But what if pleasure and displeasure are so intertwined that whoever *wants* as much as possible of one *must* also have as much as possible of the other [...]? And that may well be the way things are! At least the Stoics believed that this is how things are, and they were consistent when they also desired as little pleasure as possible in order to derive as little pain as possible from life [...].

This aphorism conveys appreciation for the Stoic doctrine of passions as communicating vessels (it is impossible to have more pleasure without an increase of pain¹⁹). But importantly, it is entitled '*On the aim of science*',

19 In this context the first sentence of *GS* 318 might be revealing as well: '*Wisdom in pain*. – There is as much wisdom in pain as in pleasure'. See also *GS* 338: 'happiness and misfortune (*Glück und Unglück*) are two siblings and twins who

suggesting that its focus is science, not well-being. It finishes as follows:

With *science* one can actually promote either of these goals! So far it may still be better known for its power to deprive man of his joys and make him colder, more statue-like, more stoic. But it might yet be found to be the *great giver of pain!* – And its counterforce might at the same time be found: its immense capacity for letting new galaxies of joy flare up!

Again it can be noticed how this aphorism describes the Stoic attitude in terms of stiffness and inflexibility, adding ‘cold’ and ‘statue-like’ to the list of adjectives. But it also shows how the Stoic denunciation of pain and pleasure, like all passions – still adopted in *HAH* as the only attitude available for those attempting to uncover truth – is now rejected. Instead of encouraging to ‘purify’ all our passions Nietzsche reaches the conclusion that the practice of science rather involves their full engagement and stimulation.

Health, well-being, and aesthetic self-cultivation

Having traced the development of Nietzsche’s stance towards the Stoic dealing with passions in the context of the desire for truth – from one of appreciation to its opposite – it is time to return to the initial question: how to understand the apparent incompatibility between *GS* 276 and 306 on the affirmation of fate? For although we have seen that the rejection of the Stoic attitude in *GS* 306 concerns the practice of science, we still cannot deny that the *amor fati* of *GS* 276 closely resembles the remark in *GS* 306 that a Stoic ‘wants his stomach to be ultimately insensible to everything the chance of existence pours into him [...]’. Two questions still need to be answered at this point: what does it mean for Nietzsche to love fate; and to what extent is *amor fati* different from what can be described as Stoic indifference in *GS* 306?

To answer these question we should, first of all, turn to the second issue that is on Nietzsche’s mind in these years: health. Health is of importance in at least two ways. On the one hand, keeping in mind his personal health issues, Nietzsche is concerned with it in its own right. But it also can be related once again to the exhausting project of finding truth. One revealing instance in this context is *GS* 333, in which the ‘the fight

either grow up together or – as with you – *remain small* together!’

between these one-sided views', compelled, as we know, by different impulses, 'might well be the source of that great and sudden exhaustion that afflicts all thinkers'. But there are also texts that hint at the presence of a danger that is even more serious. *GS* 423 explicitly connects the practice of knowledge with danger: 'And knowledge itself: let it be something else to others [...]; to me it is a world of dangers and victories'. The strongest sense of danger might be found in *GS* 107, where the threat of nausea and suicide is brought up:

GS 107 Had we not approved of the arts and invented this type of cult of the untrue, the insight into general untruth and mendacity that is now given to us by science – the insight into delusion and error as a condition of cognitive and sensate existence – would be utterly unbearable. *Honesty* would lead to nausea and suicide.

The danger of nausea and suicide is connected to the unbearable insight, uncovered by science, that our 'human, all too human' constitution is not suited for truth. As a consequence, life is inescapably filled with untruth, delusion and error. Especially for someone like Nietzsche, who suffers from the 'Leidenschaft der Erkenntnis' and desires truth and nothing short of it, the danger of nausea and suicide is very real.

This aphorism contains an important clue for a better understanding of *GS* 276 and *amor fati*. For, first of all, in *GS* 276 a sense of danger, even of death is recurrent as well: as we have seen, the very first sentence is 'I'm still alive; I still think', a sentence that seems to silently invoke the afterthought 'against all expectations'. Only two aphorisms further, in *GS* 278, we find the title '*The thought of death*'. Secondly, both *GS* 276 and 107 hint at a way in which this danger can be, if not averted, at least reduced: *GS* 107 speaks about the 'arts' and 'this type of cult of the untrue' that prevent science from becoming 'unbearable'; *GS* 276 introduces *amor fati* not only as a 'warrant', but also as the process through which one might 'learn more and more how to see what is necessary in things as what is beautiful in them', turning whoever achieves this into 'one of those who make things beautiful.'²⁰

In other words: the desire for truth leaves its victim – Nietzsche, in

20 For another interesting and recent interpretation of *amor fati* in the context of *GS* see Tom Stern, 'Nietzsche, *Amor Fati*, and *The Gay Science*', *Proceedings of the Aristotelian Society* Vol. CXIII,2 (2013), pp. 145-62.

this case – exhausted, suffering from nausea and longing for suicide; but *amor fati*, as an attitude depending on the relief of art and beauty, might be a lifesaving strategy that guarantees at least a minimum of health. Let me, before turning to the differences between *GS* 276 and 306, say a little bit more about this turn to the aesthetic. To begin with, it is clear from several texts in *GS* that what should be made beautiful is, as a starting point at least, oneself. In *GS* 107 we find some more clues revealing not only why, but also how one should look upon oneself with a benign and aestheticizing eye:

GS 107 As an aesthetic phenomenon existence is still *bearable* to us, and art furnishes us with the eye and hand and above all the good conscience to be *able* to make such a phenomenon out of ourselves. At times we need to have a rest from ourselves by looking at and down at ourselves and, from an artistic distance, laughing *a t* ourselves, or crying *a t* ourselves; we have to discover the *hero* no less than the *fool* in our passion for knowledge.

It seems therefore that the ‘hovering’ position, associated with Stoicism and rationality in *HAA* and *D*, has developed in *GS* into a distanced approach towards ourselves, yet no longer with the seriousness that characterizes Marcus Aurelius or Epictetus, but rather with humour and artistic relief. There are, moreover, several aphorisms in *GS* that take up the thread of aesthetic self-cultivation. One of these is *GS* 290, in which it is claimed that ‘*One thing is needful*. – To ‘give style’ to one’s character – a great and rare art!’ This aphorism makes use of the tricks presented in *GS* 299: ‘What means do we have for making things beautiful, attractive, and desirable when they are not? And in themselves I think they never are! Here we have something to learn from physicians [...]; but even more from artists’. We find, for instance, advises with respect to those elements in our character that we think are ugly: ‘Here the ugly that could not be removed is concealed; there it is reinterpreted into sublimity.’

We can thus say that Nietzsche’s interest in health is at least partly introduced as a necessary counterweight to the devastating ‘*Leidenschaft der Erkenntnis*’, which has the power to exhaust and sicken its victim. Health, then, is associated with the creativity to look upon ourselves with ‘artistic distance’, aesthetically beautifying the elements that are ugly. What is more, in *GS* 290 we read that ‘one thing is needful: that a human being should *attain* satisfaction with himself – be it through this or that

poetry or art'. This thought is easily linked to one of the possible reactions to the famous words on the eternal return of the demon in *GS* 341: 'how well disposed would you have to become to yourself and to life *to long for nothing more fervently* than for this ultimate eternal confirmation and seal?'

Clearly all this has everything to do with *amor fati*. To begin with, *GS* 276 opens in a sphere of wonder, 'I'm still alive', suggesting that the desire for truth is full of danger; accordingly, *amor fati* is introduced as the thought that must provide some relief, wishing that it 'shall be the reason, warrant, and sweetness of the rest of my life!'; and thirdly, it is clear from the start that this is supposed to be achieved through the workings of beauty: 'I want to learn more and more how to see what is necessary in things as what is beautiful in them – thus I will be one of those who make things beautiful.' *Amor fati* is therefore the concept that summarizes the aesthetic love for these things that cannot be changed, the first of which being our own character and life.

Amor fati and Stoicism

How does this analysis of *amor fati* relate to Stoicism, and to *GS* 306? *GS* 306 portrays the Stoic as someone who 'trains himself to swallow stones and worms, glass shards and scorpions without nausea; he wants his stomach to be ultimately insensible to everything the chance of existence pours into him'. At first sight, even if the two descriptions differ in tone heavily, they seem to describe the same procedure, namely that of 'Ja-sagen' to fate, that is, to everything that fate, or chance, might confront us with: 'Do not seek to have events happen as you wish, but *wish* them to happen as they do happen.' Nevertheless, it follows from what have seen so far that, in fact, the two descriptions should be taken to denote different attitudes, in different contexts, which also contain different connotations of 'fate' or 'chance'. While *GS* 276 speaks about an aesthetic 'Ja-sagen' that has everything to do with our own character (and not so much with the occurrence of 'events' as Epictetus formulates it), *GS* 306 concerns an attitude towards knowledge. The object of what is loved in *GS* 276 – '*fatum*' – is first of all ourselves; the object to be 'swallowed' in *GS* 306 could be knowledge or 'truth'.

We could say that the story as developed thus far begins with a reflection on the past in *GS* 306 and ends with a future-oriented perspect-

ive in *GS* 276. That is: we have seen that Nietzsche's desire for truth leads him in *HAH* to go along with the typically Stoic idea that the best method of acquiring knowledge is to suppress one's emotions and develop a 'purified', rational outlook. We also saw how Nietzsche slowly comes to change his mind, realizing how indispensable passions, drives and impulses are for knowledge. In *On the Genealogy of Morality* he looks back upon this earlier phase as follows²¹:

GM III 24 [...] Perhaps I am too familiar with all this: [...] that stoicism of the intellect which, in the last resort, denies itself the 'no' just as strictly as the 'yes', that *will* to stand still before the factual, the *factum brutum*, that fatalism of '*petits faits*' (*ce petit fatalisme*, as I call it) [...] – on the whole, this expresses the asceticism of virtue just as well as any denial of sensuality (it is basically just a *modus* of this denial).

It is in this context that I believe we should place *GS* 306, for it seems that Nietzsche there, too, looks back at the attitude he used to adopt in *HAH* and *D* (a kind of fatalism indeed, as *GM* III has it²²) but now rejects it. Instead, the proper attitude towards truth should hold a combination of adopting as many emotional perspectives as possible on the one hand, balanced on the other by the aesthetic relief of joyfully turning oneself into a piece of art – as this is the only way of averting the danger of suicide and other forms of sickness.

In *GS* 276 the aspects of both danger and aesthetic relief can be recognized, as we have seen. *Amor fati* should therefore no longer be associated with Stoic rational calmness towards 'everything the chance of existence pours into him'; rather, it is an expression of hope for a future ('some day I want only to be a Yes-sayer!') in which joy will outweigh any form of dissatisfaction. The loving of fate, i.e., the project of self-cultivation, is the attitude Nietzsche considers most fruitful with respect to the attainment of health as well as, indirectly – once the danger of nausea and suicide is averted – the development of truth (hence the signi-

21 Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morality*, trans. by Carol Diethe, ed. by Keith Ansell-Pearson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), hereafter *GM*.

22 Which can also be well connected to what Nietzsche describes several years later in *Ecce Homo* as 'Russian Fatalism' ('why I am so wise' 6). Friedrich Wilhelm Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols*, trans. by Judith Norman, ed. by Aaron Ridley (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2005).

ficance of *amor fati* appearing for the first time in a book called *The Gay Science*). It is the expression of a joyful, artistically healthy *and* scientifically promising perspective for a future *away* from stiff and rational Stoicism.

Conclusion

Amor fati is not to be understood as resembling the Stoic therapy to embrace all events, fortunate as well as unfortunate. This paper has attempted, first, to challenge the assumption made by Ure, Nussbaum, Ansell-Pearson, and Groff, that Nietzsche's reflection on Stoicism takes place for the most part in the context of psychological health and therapy. I have argued, instead, how Nietzsche's stance towards Stoicism in the context of the desire for truth shifts from being appreciative in *HAH* to fiercely critical in *GS*. The difference between the two approaches concerns the role of passions and drives in this quest. Whereas *HAH* still concurs with the Stoic idea that one should be calmly rational, allowing as little emotion as possible in the practice of 'Wissenschaft' (in which also our emotions will be 'purified'), *GS* holds the opposite: we need all the drives and passions we have in order to increase the amount of perspectives on things. Hence Nietzsche's preference in *GS* 306 for the Epicurean 'selectivity': only this attitude can safeguard our sensitivity. Losing contact with our emotional inner life would be 'the loss of all losses' (*GS* 306), leaving us 'cut off from the most beautiful fortuities of the soul! And indeed from all further *instruction!*' (*GS* 305). In short: the ascetic stance towards truth is one that Nietzsche is 'too familiar with' (*GM* III 24) – but that is abandoned nevertheless.

Secondly, *amor fati* in *GS* 276 should be placed within this context as well. Whereas *GS* 306 concerns the dealing with truth, *GS* 276 concerns health and aesthetic self-cultivation; yet this turn to beauty should be seen as a reactive sort of self-protection (a 'warrant') against the devastating, even dangerous 'Leidenschaft der Erkenntnis'. It is only by means of art ('I want to learn more and more how to see what is necessary in things as what is beautiful in them – thus I will be one of those who make things beautiful') that the danger is outweighed. It is only by means of self-beautification and laughter that one's drives can be given some relief, offering a chance to continue the life-threatening quest for truth afterwards, including its dazzling stimulation of the drives.

My aim has been to show that the introduction of *amor fati* in *GS* Book IV meaningfully corresponds with one of the most critical aphorisms on Stoicism. Since *GS* marks the endpoint of a growing sense of dissatisfaction, and since *amor fati* might be seen as an alternative strategy, we cannot but conclude that *amor fati* is not just un-Stoic; it is anti-Stoic.

Schopenhauer and the Stoics

JONATHAN HEAD

This paper considers the largely unexplored relation between Schopenhauer's metaphysical system of Will and the philosophical therapy offered by Stoicism. By focusing on three key texts from disparate points in Schopenhauer's philosophical career, as well as considering live debates regarding the metaphorical nature of his thought and his soteriology, I argue that the general view of straightforward opposition between himself and the Stoics is not the correct one. Rather, there are deep parallels to be found between the therapeutic aspects of The World as Will and Representation (WWR) and the ethical recommendations made by the ancient Stoics. I will argue, further, that Schopenhauer recognised these similarities between his thought and Stoic ethics, often defending what he sees as the true essence of Stoicism. I conclude with some thoughts regarding the adoption of Stoic ideals by Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, in relation to their reading of Schopenhauer's work.

I

Michael Ure offers us a familiar picture of Nietzsche, in *Human, All Too Human* mostly but also *Dawn* to some extent, turning away from Schopenhauerian salvation, in which one engages in practices of self-denial designed to mortify the will, towards a Stoic 'self-fashioning', in which we attempt to construct a 'stable, mild, and basically cheerful soul'¹ that does not draw away from others, as more egocentric therapies are liable to do. Not only that, Ure writes, 'Taking his lead from the Hellenistic schools, Nietzsche develops a philosophical therapy that turns on resisting the seductions of the metaphysical and religious chimeras of

1 Nietzsche, *Human, All Too Human*, trans. by R.J. Hollingdale (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), p. 34.

a transcendent world'². So, it seems that, in his 'Middle Period', Nietzsche turns away from a Schopenhauerian soteriology, or theory of salvation, and towards a Stoic philosophical therapy, in order to escape from the metaphysical trappings of his system, as well as to avoid encouraging therapies that would lead to individuals turning away from the world and others. In something of a contrast, in a recent paper, 'Schopenhauer's Influence on Wittgenstein', Severin Schroeder has suggested that *Tractatus*-era Wittgenstein holds to a Stoic ethical ideal garnered *from* his reading of Schopenhauer.³ Somewhat paradoxically, then, Schopenhauer appears to have acted as a catalyst for both a turning away from Stoicism (in the case of Nietzsche) and a turning towards it (in the case of Wittgenstein). The paradox may only be apparent, though – after all, it was the content and practical consequences of Schopenhauer's system that turned Nietzsche towards Stoicism, whilst it could be the simple fact that the Stoics are mentioned in *WWR* and thereby brought to Wittgenstein's attention that is a sufficient explanation for his dalliance with Stoic ethical ideals. As such, despite Wittgenstein adopting a Stoic-style ethics due to his reading of Schopenhauer, we can still see the latter in this picture as fundamentally opposed to Stoicism.

One example of the widespread assumption that Schopenhauer rejects Stoicism wholesale is provided by Peter Lewis, who states that Schopenhauer regards Stoicism 'as merely an estimable guide to the rational life and [an ethical view] to which the very idea of salvation is incomprehensible', and thus as a view that compares unfavourably to the ascetic traditions found in Christianity and Hinduism⁴. In a recent work, Vandenabeele has also sought to argue for a stark contrast between Schopenhauer and the Stoics, stating that '[Schopenhauer's] own ideal of the complete denial of the will is very different from stoic *ataraxia* or *apatheia*',⁵ a view echoed by Julian Young in a recent paper, who argues that Schopenhauer's denial of the will has to retain a 'transcendent' char-

2 Michael Ure, *Nietzsche's Therapy: Self-Cultivation in the Middle Works* (Lanham, MD: Lexington Books, 2008), p. 128.

3 Severin Schroeder, 'Schopenhauer's Influence on Wittgenstein', in *A Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. by Vandenabeele (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp. 367-384 (p. 368).

4 Peter Lewis, 'Review: Sophia Vasalou, *Schopenhauer and the Aesthetic Standpoint: Philosophy as a Practice of the Sublime*', *Philosophical Investigations*, 37:4 (2014), pp. 383-386 (p. 386).

5 Bart Vandenabeele, *The Sublime in Schopenhauer's Philosophy* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), p. 19.

acter that is unavailable within a Stoic framework⁶. In contrast, I wish to argue that Schopenhauer's relation to the Stoics is not as straightforward as is usually supposed, and is certainly not one of outright opposition. It is not my purpose here to question Ure's reading of Nietzsche, nor Schroeder's view of Wittgenstein's philosophy; rather, I would like to reflect upon whether Schopenhauer's influence in these examples may be more positive than has been presented, and whether in fact it is vestiges of Stoicism *inside* Schopenhauer's system that inspire Nietzsche and Wittgenstein to explore a Stoic philosophical therapy. In this regard, I wish to explore the question of whether one could pursue a Stoic-style philosophical therapy within the framework of Schopenhauer's philosophy, and I will argue that Schopenhauer himself recognises deep parallels between his system and Stoic ethics, even going so far as to express great sympathy for the Stoic approach.

I will begin this investigation into Schopenhauer's relation to the Stoics in the following section by focusing on three key texts that encompass both his earlier and later works; namely, 1) Chapter 16 of the first volume of *The World as Will and Representation* (hence *WWR1*), which the Longman translation entitles 'Practical Reason Properly and Falsely So-Called', 2) its companion chapter in the second volume (hence *WWR2*), entitled (by Schopenhauer this time) 'On the Practical Use of Our Reason and on Stoicism', and finally 3) the section on the Stoics that forms part of his 'Fragments for the History of Philosophy', which falls in the first volume of *Parerga and Paralipomena* (hence *PPI*). I will argue that Schopenhauer's approach to Stoicism is more complex than has been previously recognised, insofar as his criticism of particular Stoic thinkers and extant Stoics texts sits alongside a general defence of what he sees as the 'true spirit' of Stoicism. He is particularly keen to combat any Stoic thinkers and texts that, as far as he sees it, corrupt the original message of Stoicism. In addition, I will argue that we find a positive characterisation of the Stoic sage by Schopenhauer as one who has understood the pessimistic lessons of the metaphysics of Will – as such, we can understand the Stoic sage, the representative of the 'true spirit' of Stoicism, as an important figure in the context of Schopenhauer's wider soteriological scheme.

6 Julian Young, 'Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Death and Salvation', *European Journal of Philosophy*, 16:2 (2008), pp. 311-324 (p. 323n.).

In Section III, I will go on to reflect more generally on Schopenhauer's soteriology and its similarities to Stoicism, with the intent of answering those who may reject my interpretation immediately due to potential conflict between the speculative parts of the Schopenhauerian system (including the 'self-denial of the Will') and the more grounded philosophy found in Stoicism. In particular, I will argue that if we adopt a more metaphorical reading of Schopenhauer's system, which a number of scholars have begun to do, we can see his soteriology as sitting comfortably with the Stoic ethical ideal of coming to terms with nature. To finish, in section IV, I will offer some conclusions regarding what this may mean for our understanding of Nietzsche in his 'Middle Period' and *Tractatus-era* Wittgenstein's adoption of the Stoic ideal. I will argue that we are left with the possibility of interpreting Nietzsche and Wittgenstein as retrieving Stoic aspects of their respective philosophies from their readings of Schopenhauer.

II

In this section, I will examine three key texts in which Schopenhauer explicitly discusses Stoicism. I will argue that close analysis of these texts reveals a multi-faceted approach to Stoicism on the part of Schopenhauer – he is not afraid to paint the core message of Stoicism as lying close to his soteriological scheme, and is even willing to go as far as to criticise those who he feels have distorted that message.

The Stoic sage first makes his appearance in *WWRI* in the context of a discussion of reason in its practical employment. As part of his critique of Kant, Schopenhauer seeks to strictly circumscribe the capacity reason has to inform action. Reason affects action only insofar as its operations expand our sphere of knowledge beyond that which is immediate, both spatially and temporally, by allowing us to have abstract knowledge:

[We] by virtue of knowledge in the abstract, comprehend not only the narrow and actual present, but also the whole past and future together with the wide realm of possibility. We survey life freely in all directions, far beyond what is present and actual.⁷

⁷ Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. 1, trans. by Payne (New York: Dover, 1969), p.84.

Clearly, an increased awareness of the realms of possibility, as well as future consequences of our actions and the lessons of the past, will affect our actions greatly, and it is reason that affords us such awareness. In that way, and in that way alone, Schopenhauer thinks we can speak of reason in its practical employment. Schopenhauer also claims that this is the main attribute that marks human beings apart from other animals, and thereby confirms our status as the highest grade of the Will's manifestation in nature.

The 'double life' of humans, lived in both the abstract and the concrete, not only impacts upon their actions, for it also can show itself in their emotional life. Given that the production of our abstract knowledge goes along the lines of a Humean 'copy principle' for Schopenhauer, the cognitive life we lead through our abstract knowledge is going to be a mere reflection of our concrete life, but crucially it is a calm one, where 'what previously possessed him completely and moved him intensely appears to him cold, colourless, and for the moment, foreign and strange; he is a mere spectator and observer'.⁸ As such, whilst grounded in our concrete, everyday life in response to which our emotions can often fluctuate wildly, our abstract knowledge can give rise to cognitive processes which can reflect dispassionately on events, both actual and possible (Schopenhauer compares this to an actor stepping temporarily away from the stage to act as a spectator of the play, before in time returning to the action).

The Stoic sage comes in at this point, being described as 'the most perfect development of *practical reason* in the true and genuine sense of the word, the highest point to which man can attain by the mere use of his faculty of reason, and in which his difference from the animal shows itself most clearly'.⁹ Such a statement is striking when considered within the wider context of Schopenhauer's soteriology and metaphysical system, regardless of the critique of the historical development of 'Stoic ethics' that follows it, and marks the idealised Stoic sage as potentially one of the most important characters in his thought. How does one attain salvation in Schopenhauer's system? Whilst I cannot provide a detailed answer to this question here, I would first note that for Schopenhauer only human beings, as the highest grade of the Will's manifestation, and

⁸ Ibid., p. 85.

⁹ Ibid., p. 86.

as such the greatest development of reason within the world as representation, are able to attain escape from this world. A major reason for this is the way in which our reason is able to widen our perspective upon the world in which we find ourselves and the sort of existence we have within it; we are able to grasp and come to know both the pain and suffering that dominates the world of representation through both space and time, as well as the underlying unity behind all things. Schopenhauer's soteriological journey takes one through such a widening of perspective, allowing a further insight into the truth about the world and about Will, with an end-point in a perfect moment of self-knowledge, where the Will fully recognises its own nature and recoils from itself in horror, thereby extinguishing itself in some way.¹⁰ With this context in mind, when we reconsider the earlier quote about the Stoic sage, we see quite strikingly that this figure is placed close to the very pinnacle of the soteriological scheme of *WWR*; they are someone whose life is most closely marked by the widest perspective upon the surface and the essence of the world as it really is, they are in that sense close, if not absolutely identical, to Schopenhauer's idealised 'clear mirror of the will'. (It is also noteworthy that on the emotional side of things, the Stoic will also be leading the kind of calm, abstract life that I referred to earlier.) As such, given that Schopenhauer's philosophy is essentially soteriologically focused, the Stoic sage is an incredibly important figure in his work.

The rest of the chapter is taken up with a critique of Stoic ethics in general, as well as particular Stoic philosophers and their texts. Schopenhauer describes what he understands to be the source and

spirit of Stoics [... namely] the thought whether reason, man's great prerogative, which, through planned action and its result, indirectly lightens the burden of life so much for him, might not also be capable of withdrawing him at once and directly, i.e., through mere knowledge, either completely or nearly so, from the sorrows and miseries of every kind that fill his life.¹¹

This is undeniably an echo of the very essence of Schopenhauer's philosophy: reason, which is that which elevates us above all other beings in the world as representation, reveals to us with ever greater clarity the pain and suffering that characterises our existence, and the blind chaos under-

¹⁰ See *ibid.*, pp. 378-98.

¹¹ *Ibid.*, p. 87.

lying it all, such that we are driven to engage with ascetic and other practices in order to withdraw from the Will's influence altogether. It is important to note that this soteriological process is always accompanied by a growth in knowledge: first, in self-knowledge constrained to the individual, then graduating to the self-knowledge of the essence of the world itself. Such a clear invocation of Schopenhauer's very guiding-principles in this description of the 'spirit and true source' of Stoicism, therefore, cannot be accidental and should be taken to indicate a strong underlying agreement between himself and Stoicism.

Michael Ure and Thomas Ryan in a recent paper have acknowledged such a deep similarity, though they remark that the differences between the two regarding the function of reason must always separate them:

The Stoics assume that the correct use of reason can deliver 'joy' or 'tranquillity' in the sense of elevation above the burdens and sorrows of life. Schopenhauer argues that this is not possible because reason is only an instrument of the will... For Schopenhauer, therefore, the only radical cure for life's suffering is not Stoic reason, but the complete denial of the will¹².

Ure and Ryan are correct in stating that reason is only an instrument of the Will. However, within the context of Schopenhauer's system, it is crucially an instrument the Will can use to ultimately bring about its own destruction (and thereby achieve the soteriological end-point). So, both Schopenhauer and the Stoics share a view of reason as having a key soteriological role, despite the secondary status the former gives to reason from an ontological standpoint.

On the topic of reason and its relation to philosophical therapy, then, Schopenhauer and the Stoics may not be as far apart as they might seem. Indeed, a manuscript note from 1808 (or possibly 1809) makes it quite clear that he sees himself as close to the Stoics on this point of the role of reason in philosophical therapy. Here, Schopenhauer writes of a possible problem of ineffectively railing against the evils of the world through attributing disvalue to them directly, rather than seeing them

¹² Michael Ure and Thomas Ryan, 'Nietzsche's Post-Classical Therapy', *Pli: The Warwick Journal of Philosophy*, 25 (2014), pp. 91-110 (p. 98).

correctly as in fact ‘the image of *that real and terrible evil*’, glossed as ‘*an actual evil existing in eternity and not in time*’.¹³ Reason can aid in diverting our attention away from the more directly perceived evils of the phenomenal realm, towards the true super-sensible evil behind all things; as such, it is key for an effective philosophical therapy that ‘[t]raining of the faculty of reason enables us to perceive and avoid this delusion; indeed *this is what the Stoics had in mind*’¹⁴. As such, the use of reason in philosophical therapy, a notion he sees as inherited from the Stoics, is clearly in Schopenhauer’s mind from the very beginnings of his philosophical reflections on the evils of the world and the need for soteriology.

Going back to *WWR1*, we then find critiques of specific Stoic thinkers, such as Epictetus and Zeno. The former is portrayed as acting in conformity with the ‘spirit and aim of the Stoa’¹⁵ but then transitioning into ‘a doctrine of virtue’ that argued pointlessly with the Peripatetics and Epicureans. Zeno, likewise, is described as starting with a very Schopenhauerian principle of attempting to achieve ‘bliss through peace of mind’ and ‘[living] in harmony with himself’, which was later distorted and modified by his successors who saw it as ‘too formal and empty [...] therefore [giving] it material content by the addition ‘to live in harmony with nature’’.¹⁶ The emphasis here, as elsewhere, is a deep unity between Schopenhauerian philosophy and the ‘true spirit’ of Stoicism, with criticism being offered of particular Stoics who seek to distort the true essence of Stoicism in some way. Such a position is reiterated in a very telling manuscript remark from 1814, where Schopenhauer even goes so far as to suggest that the Stoics *misunderstand* their own ideal. The remark is worth quoting in full:

It is a mistake for the *Stoics* to say that only the sage is happy. On the contrary, he alone knows that on earth we cannot be happy at all, that life is only a constantly prevented dying, an illusion, and so forth. But through this knowledge of the essential nature of life the sage will never be capable of being very pleased with or very depressed by the events of life, and thus he will attain to genuine stoic indifference. But for this reason the

13 Schopenhauer, *Manuscript Remains*, vol. 1, trans. by Payne (Oxford: Berg, 1988), p. 9.

14 *Ibid.* – my emphasis.

15 Schopenhauer, *WWR*, vol. 1, p. 88.

16 *Ibid.*, p. 89.

real sage will always possess a placid and silent melancholy which is inseparable from a disappearance of the ordinary illusions concerning life.¹⁷

Admittedly, one could read this as a rejection of the Stoic view of a soteriological end-point in the character of the ‘sage’. However, it is just as possible (and compatible with other passages we are considering) to read this passage as a criticism of the Stoics for *mishandling* and ultimately *betraying* their own ethical ideal, an ideal which Schopenhauer has great sympathy for. Schopenhauer portrays the sage as knowing the fundamental truths to be found in his system (such as the irredeemable nature of the world as representation and the life we have within it) and thereby attaining the state of mind that the Stoics are aiming for. Such a theme of Schopenhauer portraying himself as a defender of a ‘true Stoicism’, even to the extent of criticising specific Stoic figures, as well as finding deep similarities between his philosophical therapy and that offered by Stoicism, is continued in the companion chapter on practical reason in volume two, which we shall turn to now.

Much of Schopenhauer’s chapter on the Stoics in *WWR2* is in fact taken up by a discussion of the Cynics, whom he styles as the precursors of Stoicism:

the fundamental idea of cynicism is that life in its simplest and most naked form, with the hardships that naturally belong to it, is the most tolerable, and is therefore to be chosen. For every aid, comfort, enjoyment, and pleasure by which people would like to make life more agreeable, would produce only new worries and cares greater than those that originally belong to it.¹⁸

The Cynics, then, recognise one of the fundamental truths of Schopenhauer’s system: that our desires will inevitably make us suffer and therefore it is best to attempt to quell them as much as possible. However, whereas Schopenhauer would seek to extinguish desire altogether, the Cynics have a much more limited goal of reducing desires to a minimum

¹⁷ Schopenhauer, *MR*, vol. 1, p. 118.

¹⁸ Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, vol. 2, trans. by Payne (New York: Dover, 1969), p.153.

whilst still keeping in touch with the human world and wider nature (thus, there is no sense in Cynicism of escaping from an illusory world of representation). In addition, Schopenhauer also accuses the Cynics of not acting in humility,¹⁹ which also signals their continuing connection to the world as representation.

Schopenhauer then characterises the evolution of Cynicism into Stoicism as ‘changing the practical into the theoretical’,²⁰ in that they did not advocate dispensing of one’s possessions, but rather of changing one’s attitude towards them, and seeing them more truthfully as products of chance, liable to be taken away at any time. However, the focus on the notion of psychological change, as opposed to the physical change advocated by the Cynics, soon lead the Stoics astray, allowing themselves to feast at luxurious Roman parties, whilst at the same time proclaiming the shallowness of the things they were enjoying; they forgot that ‘between desiring and renouncing there is no mean’.²¹ Such a critique that we find here, though, should not be understood as a critique of the ‘spirit of Stoicism’ as such, but rather a critique of some of the Stoics and the eudaemonism that some fall into. Arrian, for example is lauded for an ‘ascetic tendency’ that reflects the spirit of orientalism,²² a spirit that Schopenhauer himself invokes on numerous occasions (though as we shall see, Arrian is later criticised for going astray in other ways).

Schopenhauer also characterises the essence of Stoicism as ‘[springing] from an incongruity between our desires and the course of the world’,²³ the starting-point of Schopenhauer’s philosophical reflections, and as attempting to adapt our willing to the way things are, which is also the desired ultimate result of his soteriological scheme. Finally, Seneca states, ‘In what does the happy life consist? In safety and unshakeable peace. This is what is attained by greatness of soul, by a constancy that adheres to what is correctly discerned’.²⁴ It is hard not to see Schopenhauer’s salvific ‘relative nothingness’, beyond the destruction of the Will, about which very little can be said, reflected here; he writes of coming to ‘the point where we have before our eyes in perfect saintliness... a world

19 Ibid., p. 155.

20 Ibid.

21 Ibid., p. 156.

22 Ibid., p. 159.

23 Ibid., p. 158.

24 Ibid.

whose whole existence presented itself to us as suffering',²⁵ and of an individual achieving a 'peace that is higher than all reason, that ocean-like calmness of the spirit, that deep tranquillity, that unshakeable confidence and serenity'.²⁶

So, what have we learned from our examination of the two passages on the Stoics from *WWR*? At the very least, I hope we have learned that the relation between Schopenhauer and the Stoics is complex. We must, it seems, attempt to separate Schopenhauer's critique of Stoicism from that of the Stoics, something that he systematically fails to do. However, when we do carefully separate these two critiques, it is impossible to miss that Stoicism itself, which he characterises as its 'true spirit', reflects a large portion of Schopenhauer's key philosophical notions and appears to offer a Schopenhauerian soteriology, though lacking the benefit of later philosophical developments, such as Kantian transcendental idealism. Many Stoics are led astray by such an absence of philosophical nuance, but that does not affect Schopenhauer's views of Stoicism itself.

The final passage on the Stoics we shall look at, arising in the first volume of Schopenhauer's *Parerga and Paralipomena*, does not require as much comment, but there are a couple of interesting facets of the text that I would like to briefly highlight. Here, Schopenhauer praises their theoretical notion of '*logos spermatikos*', a creative rational principle working through all things in the universe, including inanimate matter. Again, he emphasises the use such an idea can be put to in order to expand our perspective upon our own lives and the world in which we live. The '*logos spermatikos*' acts to preserve an identical form through individuals of the same species, and thus 'it is that which prevents death, the destroyer of the individual, from attacking the species'²⁷. Through such a guarantee that the species will continue beyond the death of any particular individual, the individual can gain a certain acceptance or equanimity with regard to their own death – thus, a growth in knowledge and perspective upon our own existence and life aids the therapeutic process of coming to terms with suffering and engaging with will-denial.

25 Schopenhauer, *WWR*, vol. 1, p. 408-09.

26 *Ibid.*, 411.

27 Schopenhauer, *Parerga and Paralipomena*, vol. 1, trans. by Payne (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1974), p. 52.

The rest of the section in *PP* does not, in fact, engage in a critique of Stoic ethics at all; rather, it is a defence of what Schopenhauer takes to be the true spirit of Stoicism in the face of extant texts that conceal or modify it in some way. As an example, he writes of a text by Stobaeus that

it is a pedantic, schoolmasterly, thoroughly diffuse, incredibly dreary, flat, and spiritless exposition of the Stoic morality without force and life and without any valuable, striking, or penetrating ideas. In it everything is derived from mere concepts; nothing is drawn from reality and experience,²⁸

which implies that true Stoicism is none of these things (high praise indeed from Schopenhauer). In addition, he criticises Arrian on the basis that ‘every trace of method, systematic treatment, and even orderly progress’²⁹ is lost from his description of Stoic ethics, again implying that Stoicism involves all of these positive facets. Schopenhauer goes on to argue that not only do these texts undermine the true spirit of Stoicism through their form, they do not even accurately portray the content of Stoic principles. Arrian is accused of offering ‘a strong foreign admixture that smacks of a Christian-Jewish source’³⁰ by offering a view of the world that undermines the true Stoic view of the ultimate unity of all things and the lack of a personal God, and entirely missing the point of Stoicism by ‘[preaching] self-renunciation just because it pleases him’.³¹ By making these criticisms, Schopenhauer is clearly allying himself and his philosophy with the teachings and practice of ‘true Stoicism’, and is indeed keen to defend Stoicism from corrupted and inaccurate portrayals in certain ancient texts.

III

For many readers, there will be an issue that resists any parallel between Schopenhauer and Stoic thought: namely, the metaphysical trappings of the philosophical system put forward in *WWR* and elsewhere. Such features of his system, for example, his claims regarding the identification of the thing-in-itself with Will, seems to place him at a large

28 Ibid., 53.

29 Ibid.

30 Ibid., 54.

31 Ibid., 55.

distance from Stoicism, such that it makes no sense to claim that any legitimate vestiges of a Stoic philosophical therapy can be found within a ‘metaphysics of Will’. Recent developments in Schopenhauer scholarship, however, suggest that we should perhaps be untroubled by the more speculative elements of his system. Though I cannot approach this topic in any great deal in this paper, what is becoming increasingly clear is that one cannot take these elements at face-value.³²

Towards the end of his writings in particular, Schopenhauer begins to talk more often about the metaphorical aspects of his philosophy; he appears to retreat from a literal claim to the identification of the thing-in-itself with Will (by beginning to talk of the term ‘Will’ as a mere label³³) and the unity of being through actions of compassion (in letters, he talks about that process being described as through a trope³⁴). Through the influence on his philosophy of Eastern texts, such as the *Upanishads*, and an increasing focus on the limits of language and communication, he comes to see ever more clearly how metaphysical edifices can be constructed and communicated to bring out long-lasting psychological change, the kind of change that Stoicism attempts to bring about. This is still a live debate in the literature;³⁵ however, we can be confident in seeing some of Schopenhauer’s stronger metaphysical claims as not offer-

32 Work has been recently undertaken to determine the extent to which Schopenhauer’s philosophy can be interpreted as metaphorical in nature, with the result that his controversial metaphysics of Will should not be read literally. This is a rather nascent topic in the literature on Schopenhauer. Including work that I shall reference in this section, examples of texts that have considered the metaphorical interpretive line include Jonathan Head, ‘Schopenhauer on the Development of the Individual’, *Epoché: A Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 20:2 (2016), pp.427-446 and David Cartwright, *Schopenhauer: A Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010), esp. p. 510.

33 See Schopenhauer, *WWR*, vol. 2, p. 195-198.

34 See Schopenhauer, *Gesammelte Briefe*, ed. by Hubscher (Bonn: Bouvier Verlag Herbert Grundmann, 1987), Letter 204.

35 Discussions regarding the metaphorical nature of some of Schopenhauer’s central pronouncements, such as the identification of the thing-in-itself with Will and the self-negation of the Will through ascetic practices, can be found in F.C. White, *On Schopenhauer’s Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason* (New York: E.J. Brill, 1992); G. Steven Neeley, *Schopenhauer – A Consistent Reading* (Lewiston; Queenston; Lampeter: Edwin Mellen Press, 2003), esp. pp. 64-71; and G. Steven Neeley, ‘The Consistency of Schopenhauer’s Metaphysics’ in *A Companion to Schopenhauer*, ed. by Vandenabeele (Malden, Mass.: Wiley-Blackwell, 2012), pp. 105-119.

ing *prima facie* evidence against deep parallels between his thought and that of the Stoics. As such, whilst the exact nature of Schopenhauer's changing views regarding the literal nature of his metaphysics is still up for debate, it is clear that it could make a great deal of sense for him to defend Stoicism, and for someone operating consciously within a Schopenhauerian tradition to overtly adopt Stoic methods and expressions.

The upshot of all this is that whilst Schopenhauer certainly offers a therapeutic scheme different in *presentation* from the Stoics, the two soteriologies may be much closer in terms of *substance*. Schopenhauer, with his notion of a 'need for metaphysics', is aware of the importance of the mode of presentation for therapeutic impact, and presents his system accordingly, with an elaborate metaphysical scheme that is more likely to satisfy our drive for transcendent answers and as such to be truly internalised. Schopenhauer believes that without the use of such metaphors, those on a true path to salvation will inevitably be led astray, and we see this with the examples of Stoics that he criticises. It is also worth emphasising the close parallels between Schopenhauer and the Stoics. We have already seen an emphasis upon the use of reason in the development of a successful philosophical therapy, as well as the Stoic sage offering an ideal that is at least close to Schopenhauer's soteriological end-point of the complete self-denial and negation of the Will. There is also the fact that both Stoicism and Schopenhauer ultimately see salvation as involving a state of mind culminating in a complete state of awareness and self-knowledge, devoid of painful desires and emotions. We also do not need to view Schopenhauer's soteriology as culminating in a destruction of nature itself, in contrast to the Stoic aim of living in harmony with nature. If we continue to consider interpreting Schopenhauer's notion of the 'self-negation of the Will' in metaphorical terms, we may come to see him advocating some form of 'coming to terms' with the world in which we find ourselves, and thereby living the best kind of life that is possible within it. Of course, these interpretive issues remain tricky for readers of Schopenhauer, and I do not expect any agreement regarding 'literal' and 'metaphorical' readings any time soon – I simply seek to point out that the argument for distancing Schopenhauer from a Stoic philosophical therapy is not as obvious as it may seem at first glance.

IV

To conclude, we began with a traditional picture of Nietzsche's turn away from a Schopenhauerian soteriology towards a Stoic philosophical therapy, particularly in *Human, All Too Human*. We also noted that Schopenhauer may have inspired Wittgenstein to adopt a Stoic ethical ideal, though not perhaps because that ideal in any way forms part of the philosophy to be found in *WWR*. I have attempted to put forward some reasons for challenging these accounts, in that a turn towards Stoicism can be thought of as a shift of emphasis within the Schopenhauerian tradition, as opposed to leaving that tradition behind, on the part of Nietzsche, and for Wittgenstein, another part of the way in which Schopenhauer's system itself inspired him. Indeed, we can go as far as to suggest that the aspects of Stoic thought in Nietzsche and Wittgenstein are examples of those who have discovered Stoicism within the context of Schopenhauer's philosophical system. We considered three sustained examinations of Stoicism written at various stages in Schopenhauer's philosophical career, and found a continued theme of a defence of the true spirit of Stoicism, and the criticism of certain Stoics and those who have written on Stoicism who have both misrepresented or distorted Stoicism in some way. We also saw the idealised figure of the Stoic sage as being perhaps one of the most significant figures in Schopenhauer's system, unmistakably reflecting the kind of figure who will at least come close to absolute will-denial, if not absolutely achieving that perfect state of self-knowledge.

In addition, I have attempted to reinforce my case by reflecting, albeit briefly, on the wider picture of Schopenhauer's philosophical therapy, and have visited some recent work on Schopenhauer that attempts to deflate some of the more speculative metaphysical elements of his system, such that he may not be as far from Stoicism as he seems on the surface. So, what is the significance of this? Certainly, it means that we need to continue probing into the details of Schopenhauer's philosophical therapy, and investigating the parallels that the philosopher himself sees between his work and ancient Greek thought about how to live the 'good life'. Does this mean anything, perhaps, for our understanding of Nietzsche in his 'middle period'? I will certainly not venture any definite answers to that question at this moment, but I think it is an interesting avenue of research to approach these texts as standing within something that is still recognisably a Schopenhauerian framework, something that has certainly not been done in the past, as far as I'm aware, because of the

traditional view of Nietzsche turning away from his 'Educator' at this point in his career. What the results of such an investigation would suggest, I am not sure – perhaps we need to delineate what we might mean by a 'Schopenhauerian framework' even more before we attempt it. Nevertheless, I am certain that some light would be shed on the 'middle period' works in this way.³⁶

³⁶ Research undertaken for this paper was funded by Keele University and the APRA Foundation Berlin. My thanks to an audience at the University of Warwick and anonymous reviewers from this journal for their insightful comments on an earlier draft of this paper.

Cultivating What Self? Philosophy as Therapy in the *Genealogy of Morals* and Hellenistic Ethics

LISA HICKS

*In this paper, I argue that the *Genealogy of Morals* is, in part, a work of philosophical therapy. First, I provide an account of philosophical therapy by turning to the Hellenistics, for whom philosophical therapy begins with the diagnosis of some widespread cultural problem. I then turn in more detail to Nietzsche, arguing that the *Genealogy* does therapeutic work similar to the work of the Hellenistics. In particular, I examine Nietzsche's claim that modern thinking has fallen prey to what he calls the 'ascetic ideal'; I interpret this claim as diagnosis, and I interpret the work of *Essay Three* as providing therapy for that diagnosis. The rest of the paper considers how this therapy unfolds for the three major 'types' that Nietzsche identifies in *Essay Three*: the artist, the philosopher, and the priest. Finally, I return to the Hellenistics to re-evaluate both their therapeutic projects and Nietzsche's in light of the notion of self-cultivation.*

In this paper, I argue that the *Genealogy of Morals* is, among other things, a work of philosophical therapy. First, I provide an account of philosophical therapy by turning to the Hellenistics, for whom philosophical therapy begins with the diagnosis of some widespread cultural problem—a problem that systematically impinges on the flourishing of individuals within the culture. I briefly examine the Hellenistics to see how this cultural diagnosis works and what sorts of cures or solutions the Hellenistics offer, and then I turn in more detail to Nietzsche. I argue that the *Genealogy* performs therapeutic work similar to the work of the Hellenistics. In particular, I use the Hellenistic account of philosophical therapy as a lens for examining Nietzsche's claim that modern thinking—

and particularly modern ethical thinking—has fallen prey to what he calls the ‘ascetic ideal’. I interpret this claim as the diagnosis of a common pitfall that impinges on the flourishing of individuals in Nietzsche’s modern Western culture, and I interpret the work of Essay Three as providing therapy for that diagnosis. The major portion of the paper considers how this therapy unfolds for the three major ‘types’ that Nietzsche identifies in Essay Three: the artist, the philosopher, and the priest. Finally, I return to the Hellenistics to re-evaluate both their therapeutic projects and Nietzsche’s in light of the notion of self-cultivation.

Under some descriptions, all philosophy is therapy: the philosopher says, ‘You, my reader, have false beliefs, and I, the philosopher, will try to correct them by giving you new information’. But that description does not offer a very fine-grained sense of either philosophy or therapy. The kinds of philosophy that offer therapy deal with a particular sort of false beliefs. In order to determine the relevant type of false beliefs, I turn now to the Hellenistics, the most famous practitioners of philosophical therapy.

I imagine that, in many cases, adherents of a particular Hellenistic school were inspired to engage with that school in the first place for the same reason that people go to therapy today: because they were unhappy. Patients begin a course of therapy because they do not like the way their lives are progressing, and they want to change things. Just as modern patients find different therapeutic approaches from, for instance, a Freudian and a cognitive behaviourist, Hellenistic patients found very different explanations for their unhappiness in each different Hellenistic school. Today, some therapeutic schools may focus on cultural influences and assumptions that play into the patient’s unhappiness, but not all forms of modern therapy concern themselves with culture. For the Hellenistics, though, a patient’s unhappiness was almost always a product of his culture, and all of their different diagnoses and solutions for individual unhappiness were intimately linked with cultural critique.¹ The Cynic said, ‘You are unhappy because your culture has taught you to value convention over nature. To be happy, you must eradicate your merely conventional desires so that you are left with only the natural ones’.² The

1 For an in-depth account of Hellenistic diagnosis and therapy, see Martha Nussbaum, *The Therapy of Desire: Theory and Practice in Hellenistic Ethics* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994).

2 See the account of Diogenes the Cynic in Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of the Eminent Philosophers, Volume II*, trans. by R.D. Hicks (Cambridge, MA: Harvard

Epicurean said, ‘You are unhappy because your culture has acclimated you to the wrong sorts of pleasures—the sorts that bring pains along with them. To be happy, cultivate the right sorts of pleasures—the simple ones that do not bring pains in their wake’.³ And the Stoic said, ‘You are unhappy because your culture has trained you to get emotionally invested in things that are outside your control. To be happy, stop placing value in things that make you a hostage to fortune’.⁴ The schools offer very different sorts of answers, but those answers share a common theme of being based in a belief that individual problems stem from cultural norms. Further, they share a belief that culturally-imposed values become quite deeply rooted in individual selves. Cultural values and beliefs come to drive our basic, everyday actions. These beliefs are fundamental and often unexamined; they are the beliefs that affect how we relate to other people, or how we choose to spend our time, or what we take to be valuable—beliefs about ourselves and our place in the world. These basic, fundamental, self-constituting beliefs are the ones upon which philosophical therapy works.

All this talk of fundamental, self-constituting beliefs can sound rather far removed from Nietzsche’s work in general and from the *Genealogy* in particular. Many readings of *Genealogy* focus on its politics—the just-so story about the origins of society, the bits about class resentment, and, in short, the parts about people as groups.⁵ But I am less interested—

University Press, 2000), §§ 20-81 (§37: ‘he claimed that [...] he could oppose [...] to convention nature[...]’).

- 3 See Epicurus, ‘Epicurus’s Letter to Menoeceus: Diogenes Laertius 10:121-135’, in *Hellenistic Philosophy*, ed. and trans. by Brad Inwood and L.P. Gerson (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1988), pp. 23-25 (p. 25: ‘becoming accustomed to simple, not extravagant, ways of life makes one completely healthy, makes man unhesitant in the face of life’s necessary duties, puts us in a better condition for the times of extravagance which occasionally come along, and makes us fearless in the face of chance’).
- 4 See Diogenes Laertius, ‘Ethics: 7.84-131’, in *Hellenistic Philosophy*, ed. and trans. by Brad Inwood and L.P. Gerson (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1988), pp. 136-145 (p. 139: ‘neither good nor bad are those things which neither benefit nor harm, such as life, health, pleasure, beauty, strength, wealth, good reputation, noble birth, and their opposites [...]. For these things are not good, but things indifferent in the category of preferred things’.)
- 5 Primary-source-based textbooks in political philosophy frequently include selections from the *Genealogy*—see, for example, David Wootton, *Modern Political Thought: Readings from Machiavelli to Nietzsche* (Indianapolis: Hackett, 2008), 2nd ed, pp. 858-903—and an edition of the *Genealogy* is included in the series *Cambridge Texts in the History of Political Thought*. For purposes of modern

and I think Nietzsche himself is less interested—in the groups themselves and more interested in the individuals who make up those groups. My reading of the *Genealogy* is less concerned with politics and more concerned with psychology.

For Nietzsche as for the Hellenistics, the move from politics to psychology, from the group to the individual, comes through cultural diagnosis. Nietzsche's most fundamental cultural diagnosis concerns value.⁶ Modern Western culture, Nietzsche thinks, inculcates its members with beliefs that render them unable to develop a healthy and functional sense of how to value anything. The twin roots of Platonism and Christianity undergird a very common view of value as something that comes from a world other than this one—the world of the Forms for Platonism and heaven for Christianity. Nietzsche thinks that his contemporary modern Westerners, though for the most part no longer Platonists or Christians, remain infected with a sense that this world cannot be a genuine source of value.

This inability to see the everyday world as valuable plays out in individuals in very destructive ways. In the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche tracks some of those destructive ways in order to tell us a story about the development of the modern self. More specifically, he tells us about what we might call 'pathologies of the self', or ways that the modern self goes wrong. Each essay of the *Genealogy* centres around a different pathology of the self: *ressentiment* in Essay 1, 'bad conscience' in Essay 2, and attraction to the ascetic ideal in Essay 3. In this paper, I focus on the last of these pathologies, attraction to the ascetic ideal.

In order to render plausible my claim that the *Genealogy* is a work of philosophical therapy, I must show not only how the ascetic ideal works but also how attraction to the ascetic ideal can be overcome. If Nietzsche merely shows us that we go in for self-undermining patterns of

publication, then, the *Genealogy* seems to be considered a political work. For an in-depth treatment of Nietzsche's political philosophy, see Keith Ansell-Pearson, *An Introduction to Nietzsche as Political Thinker* (Cambridge: Cambridge, 1994), esp. pp. 121-146. See also Lawrence Hatab, *Nietzsche's On the Genealogy of Morality: An Introduction* (New York: Cambridge, 2008), esp. pp. 243-273.

6 For an exemplary extended treatment of Nietzsche on the problem of valuing, see Bernard Reginster, *The Affirmation of Life: Nietzsche on Overcoming Nihilism* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2006). The account of the will to power that I adopt in this paper has deep roots in Reginster's view.

behaviour, then he is not doing therapy: he is only doing diagnosis. Many contemporary interpreters of Nietzsche would, I think, claim that Nietzsche's project is purely diagnostic; such a claim would sit well with a view that Bernard Reginster describes as 'almost a commonplace in the scholarly literature of the past twenty-five years': namely, the view 'that Nietzsche's philosophy, particularly his ethical thought, is mainly negative and critical, and that he has little to offer in the way of positive substantive ethical proposal'.⁷ In order to argue that Nietzsche's aims are therapeutic as well as diagnostic, I rely on three key concepts: the self, the will to power, and the ascetic ideal.

The first of these terms, 'self' (*Selbst*) is not one that Nietzsche uses very frequently, and he is famously dismissive of related notions like 'subject' and 'soul'.⁸ Thus, to claim that he has view of 'the self' at all is a bit controversial. However, I believe that 'self', though not his chosen term, captures a concept about which he has reasonably coherent views.

What, then, is a self? In my view, the self—not just for Nietzsche, but in general—is composed of a person's defining and constitutive characteristics. These are the characteristics that really matter—the characteristics that make me *me*. This claim carries with it an implied claim that other characteristics that I happen to have might *not* really matter—that those other characteristics *do not* play an important role in making me who I am. In my view, Nietzsche's most important contribution to discussions of the self is to challenge that implied claim: Nietzsche's view of what counts as the self is much more inclusive than nearly all previous

7 Reginster, p. 7. Notions of therapy and diagnosis are not traditional idioms in the secondary literature, so we must extrapolate a bit to determine scholarly attitudes toward the question of whether Nietzsche's aims are merely diagnostic or also therapeutic. I take it that most political readings of the *Genealogy* tend to see his aims as diagnostic; the point of his political narratives is, on these readings, to tell us how modern Western societies came to be as they are, not to tell us how individuals in those societies might learn to be happier. Views that emphasize Nietzsche's 'critical' project over his 'positive' project would probably also tend to see his aims as more diagnostic than therapeutic. Such views include Alasdair MacIntyre in *After Virtue* (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 2007, 3rd ed.), Bernard Williams in *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (Abingdon: Routledge, 2011), and most readers in the post-modernist tradition.

8 For dismissiveness about traditional notions of the subject, see Friedrich Nietzsche, *On the Genealogy of Morals*, trans. by Walter Kaufmann and R.J. Hollingdale (New York: Random House, 1967) (hereafter GM), I.13.

views, particularly in German philosophy.⁹ For Kant, the self is a unity: a single part—the intellect—constitutes the self proper. Schopenhauer challenges the Kantian picture by envisioning the self as a duality: the intellect plays *a* constitutive role in the Schopenhauerian self, but it no longer plays *the* constitutive role; it is joined by a second part, the will, which also plays a constitutive role. The Schopenhauerian self is composed of two elements that stand in constant tension, and Schopenhauer does not allow us to resolve that tension by claiming that only one of the elements genuinely counts as part of the self. Schopenhauer insists that both elements together constitute the self.

Enter Nietzsche, who builds on Schopenhauer's idea that the self might be constituted by more than one component. Where the Kantian self is a unity and the Schopenhauerian self is a duality, the Nietzschean self is a multiplicity composed of many pieces. The Nietzschean self includes drives, impulses, tendencies, desires, bodily attributes—in short, all of the physical and psychological aspects that make up a person. Nietzsche does not allow us to rule elements out of our notion of selfhood. The Kantian view (and, to a lesser extent, the Schopenhauerian one as well) allows us to reject inconvenient aspects of our personalities as not really part of the self; Nietzsche's view does not allow us this move. If we take Nietzsche's view seriously, we can no longer say of some element of our personality, 'That piece isn't *really* part of the self. It's not really *me*'. Nietzsche thinks that *all* of the elements are really me. His inclusive account of the self pushes us to accept all of the messy, irrational, troublesome aspects of our physical and psychological make-up as full-fledged parts of the self.

If we grant that the self might have more than one element, we then introduce a new complication: namely, the need to explain how all of the elements relate to each other. A self composed of only one element has an obvious relationship to itself (i.e. identity). However, in a self made of multiple elements, the relations between the parts must be explained.

This need for explanation brings us to the next key term, 'will to power'. The will to power plays many roles in Nietzsche's philosophy, and I focus here on just one of those roles: its place as the central piece in

9 See Christopher Janaway, 'Nietzsche, the Self, and Schopenhauer', in *Nietzsche and Modern German Thought*, ed. by Keith Ansell-Pearson (New York: Routledge 1991), pp. 119-142.

the manifold self. The will to power is the part that we might see as the nucleus of the cell, or the star that anchors the planets. The will to power, on my reading, can be understood as the will to effectiveness in the world. It is a particular kind of second-order desire. As Harry Frankfurt explains, a first-order desire takes as its object a particular thing in the world, and a second-order desire takes as its object a first-order desire.¹⁰ If I want, for instance, wealth, then I have a first-order desire for wealth. But I might have desires about how I obtain that wealth; I want to get it by becoming a world-famous philosopher and not by robbing a bank. Those desires about *how* I obtain the object of my first-order desire are second-order desires. Second-order desires say, ‘I want that thing, but I want to achieve it in this way and not in that way’.

The will to power, then, is a second-order desire that says, ‘I want the objects of my first-order desires, but I want to feel like I worked for them. I want to feel like I got them under my own steam rather than like they dropped into my lap by happy accident’. If I get the things that I want just by luck or chance, then that acquisition will satisfy my first-order desires, but my will to power will remain unsatisfied, for I will not feel like I am an effective person—a person who has what it takes to get the things that I want.

Now, if I come to see myself as ineffective—as someone who is not very good at getting things under her own steam, as someone whose will to power is frequently thwarted—then I may develop pathologies of the self. These pathologies serve as defensive strategies that help compensate for my feeling of ineffectiveness or let me repress those feelings or hide them from myself.

The ascetic ideal is one such pathology of the self. On my account, the ascetic ideal is the belief that this life and this world are valueless, that genuine value comes from some source outside or beyond this world, and that accessing this extra-worldly source of value requires living a life of self-denial. The ascetic ideal is asceticism for its own sake, not asceticism undertaken to achieve some end in this world.

In Essay Three of the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche talks in detail about three character types who tend to be attracted to the ascetic ideal: the

¹⁰ Harry Frankfurt, ‘Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person’, in *The Importance of What We Care About* (New York: Cambridge, 1998), pp. 11-25.

artist, the philosopher, and the priest. Each type is attracted to the ascetic ideal for different reasons; thus, each type requires different therapeutic strategies for breaking the grip of attraction to the ascetic ideal. We turn now to the first type, the artist, to discover the reasons for his attraction to the ascetic ideal and the relevant strategies for overcoming that attraction.

Nietzsche says that the artist is attracted to the ascetic ideal because the artist he has a problem with reality. He experiences himself as ‘to all eternity separated from the ‘real’, the actual [...]’.¹¹ He sees himself as ineffective in the world, and that feeling of ineffectiveness leads to a feeling of unreality—a feeling that he is less of a full and successful participant in the world than other people are. This feeling of unreality combines with a belief in a ‘true world’—a world outside and beyond the world of everyday appearances. Various forms of religious afterlife, such as the Christian notion of heaven, would count as instances of a ‘true world’ of the sort that Nietzsche has in view here, as would Plato’s realm of the Forms and Kant’s ‘noumenal world’. In all of these ‘true worlds’, the other realm is the realm in which value or reality resides, and the ‘merely apparent’ everyday world is at best a pale copy.

For the an artist who is beset by this feeling of unreality, believing in a ‘true world’ can seem like a good strategic move: the artist feels unreal in this world, so he decides that this world is not the world that matters. What matters is the ‘true world’. Furthermore, he, the artist, is one of the few people clever enough to realize that the everyday world does not matter. If a true world beyond this one exists and serves as the place where reality and value reside, then the artist’s feeling of unreality is correct: insofar as he exists in this world, he *is* unreal, and so is everyone else. The others are simply not clever enough to notice their own unreality. By believing in the true world, the artist turns his feeling of unreality from a *problem* into an *insight*.

This revaluation of the feeling of unreality might seem like the sort of move of which Nietzsche would approve. He himself reevaluates concepts quite often. However, in this instance, Nietzsche thinks that the artist’s revaluation of his own feeling of unreality is pathological. And Nietzsche sees this move as a pathology because it makes the artist even more unable to engage successfully in this world. It makes the artist feel even more ineffective, and thus it renders the artist’s will to power even

¹¹ GM III.4.

less capable of obtaining its constitutive desire: that is, the desire to feel effective. Simply telling oneself a different story about one's feelings of ineffectiveness does not make those feelings go away, and it does not change what the will to power wants. The root problems are feelings of unreality and ineffectiveness, and those still remain even after the attempted revaluation.

How, then, can the artist eradicate those feelings? He must first realize that everything begins with self-perceptions. He, the artist, feels unreal; he experiences and perceives himself as unreal. That perception may or may not be accurate, and the accuracy of it is usually irrelevant; what matters, for purposes of fixing pathologies of the self, is how one sees oneself. And Nietzsche believes that we are frequently quite oblivious to how we see ourselves. Much of self-perception happens unconsciously, and the conscious stories that we tell ourselves about who we are and how we see ourselves may be more pleasant and flattering than the unconscious picture. We often suppress our negative self-perceptions. In many cases, the artist is engaging in such suppression. Thus, the artist's first step toward getting free of the ascetic ideal is becoming more self-aware, becoming more attentive to suppressed, unconscious self-perceptions. Only by becoming aware of his self-perceptions can the artist identify the ones that are causing problems.

Once he has found the problematic self-perceptions, the next step is to attempt to change them. If the artist can stop seeing himself as ineffective in the world, he will stop feeling unreal, and he will stop needing the prop of a belief in a 'true world'. He will be able to see this world, the everyday world, as valuable and worthy of engagement. This process takes work and self-reflection and luck; overcoming pathologies is difficult. But I think that Nietzsche believes that at least some of us can accomplish it, and thus I think that he has hope for the artist.

The priest, on the other hand, may be a hopeless case. The priest is difficult for me because I cannot see a way for him to get better. I cannot see a way for Nietzschean therapy to help him. He has what Nietzsche calls 'life-denying instincts', and those instincts seem to run too deep to be rooted out.¹² To understand what those life-denying instincts are, we need to return again to Schopenhauer and to Nietzsche's engagement with him.

12 GM III.13

Schopenhauer believes that life is essentially characterized by suffering and that happiness is impossible, and he offers a metaphysical explanation for these beliefs. This explanation relies on two features: first, his definition of happiness and, second, the structure of human desire. Schopenhauer defines happiness as the absence of suffering, and he believes that the structure of human desire renders happiness impossible. According to Schopenhauer, suffering occurs when our desires (or some of our desires) are not satisfied. To put an end to suffering, then, would be to bring about a once-and-for-all satisfaction of all of our desires.

Now, even a cursory consideration of some of our desires—hunger, for instance—lets us know that the once-and-for-all satisfaction of all our desires is impossible. Since we are the kind of beings that we are, some of our desires (such as hunger or thirst) cannot be satisfied once and for all because they are cyclical.

Given counter-examples like hunger and thirst—what we might call naturally cyclical desires—the Schopenhauerian argument that suffering is an ineradicable part of life could stop at that point. Happiness is absence of suffering, absence of suffering requires once-and-for-all satisfaction of desires, and once-and-for-all satisfaction of desires is impossible, so happiness is impossible. But Schopenhauer goes further, arguing that, even if it were possible to satisfy the naturally cyclical desires once and for all, doing so would still not eliminate suffering. Why not? Because he thinks we have another desire—a special kind of desire—that would remain unsatisfied. He means the desire to have something to do—the desire that is frustrated when we feel boredom.

What is my problem when I am bored? That nothing captures my interest. Nothing engages my will. I have no inclination or desire to do anything. Boredom is desire that lacks an object. It is the desire to desire.

According to Schopenhauer's picture, if I stop being bored because something engages my will, then I pursue that desired object. Once I obtain it, though, it stops engaging my will. I am caught by the structure of my will: I have a first-order desire to acquire some particular thing and a second-order desire that the particular thing should keep eluding me so that I still have something to do. And the satisfaction of the desires at one

order means the frustration of the desires at the other. In *The World as Will and Representation*, Schopenhauer says that, since both kinds of desire can never be satisfied at the same time, human life ‘swings like a pendulum to and fro between pain and boredom’.¹³

Nietzsche thinks that Schopenhauer’s account of the structure of human desire is correct. He eventually rejects some parts of Schopenhauer’s metaphysics, but he keeps Schopenhauer’s metaphysics of the human will. And that metaphysics of the will becomes relevant for the priest, for it means that, when the priest says, ‘Suffering is ineradicable from human life’, the priest is correct. In fact, he is more correct than he realizes. The priest probably thinks of his own argument simply as a complaint against the world: the world is inhospitable to us, and we suffer because of that inhospitality, so we should reject this world in favour of some other one. But Nietzsche, following Schopenhauer, notes that the world is not the problem. We are the problem. Merely changing our external circumstances would not change the kinds of creatures that we are. If we were removed from this inhospitable world and placed in another world, we would still have the same two-tiered desire structure. We would still be prisoners to Schopenhauer’s pendulum. That’s not the world; that’s us.

Thus, when the priest rejects the possibility that a life that includes suffering could be a valuable life, a life worth living, he is really rejecting all possible varieties of human life. The priest wants a life that contains value without containing suffering; that desire is, for Nietzsche, conceptually incoherent. The priest wants not just a practical impossibility but an actual contradiction. This self-contradictory desire is so deeply rooted in the priest’s psychological make-up that he cannot form a coherent identity or a coherent self-conception. Therapy for the priest cannot get started because therapy can only work on a reasonably coherent self, and the priest does not have one. Nietzschean therapy has, in effect, nothing to say to the priest.

We might wonder, then, what the priest does to my story about Nietzschean philosophy as therapeutic. The entire case of the priest looks, after all, like pure diagnosis. The case contains neither therapy nor the conceptual possibility of therapy. However, I maintain that the priest is

¹³ Arthur Schopenhauer, *The World as Will and Representation*, trans. by E.F.J. Payne (New York: Dover, 1969), p. 312.

useful to Nietzsche's larger therapeutic project. Nietzschean therapy cannot help the priest, but it may be able to help people whose beliefs overlap partially with the priest's beliefs. For instance, many people share the priest's belief that suffering is bad, that eradicating suffering from our lives is the royal road to happiness. As we have seen, Nietzsche thinks that this belief is deeply misguided; I believe he also hopes that, for people who are not the priest, this belief might be malleable. For people other than the priest, this belief might be less deeply rooted, less fundamental to their psychological make-up. And Nietzsche has things to say to those people about the right way to understand suffering.

What, then, is the right way to understand suffering? I noted above that Nietzsche keeps Schopenhauer's metaphysics of the will. However, although he keeps the metaphysics, he rejects the ethics. He believes that Schopenhauer is right about the structure of things but wrong about what that structure means. We noted that Schopenhauerian pessimism has two parts: the structure of the will and the definition of happiness. Nietzsche agrees with the claims about the structure of the will, but he disagrees with the definition of happiness. In Nietzsche's view, Schopenhauer is correct when he says that suffering is an ineradicable part of human life but incorrect when he says that this fact about suffering makes happiness impossible. Nietzsche agrees that suffering is a necessary condition of life, but he argues that this fact should not be deplored. Suffering, rather than making happiness impossible, is actually a necessary ingredient for happiness.

To understand what Nietzsche means by this strange and surprising claim that suffering is necessary for happiness, we need to return to the will to power. The will to power, somewhat paradoxically, wills resistance. When I have a first-order desire for something, the will to power says, 'I want that thing, but I want to feel like I got it under my own steam, like I was the effective agent in acquiring it'. In part, the desire to feel like I got something under my own steam is the desire for the thing not to come too easily. I want to have to work to obtain the object of my desire. I want to overcome resistance to achieving my desire. In short, I want to suffer—not forever, and not pointlessly, but I want to suffer some. If I never suffer, then I will never feel like I am effective, like I am the driving force in getting the things that I want. Without having to overcome resistance in the process of obtaining the objects of my first-order desires, I will feel like those things are just dropping into my lap, and my

will to power will remain unsatisfied. Only through suffering—through having to overcome resistance to obtain the objects of my desires—can I ever satisfy my will to power. So suffering, rather than being a barrier to happiness, is a necessary ingredient in achieving happiness.

Nietzsche finds this revaluation of suffering compelling, but he does not believe that it provides a view that the priest could ever accept. The priest is a hopeless case. However, even though the priest is a hopeless case, he might share some features—such as this self-destructive belief about the role of suffering—with other types who are not hopeless cases.

One such non-hopeless case is the philosopher. The philosopher is a strange case for Nietzsche because she does not originally sign on to the ascetic ideal due to a problem in her will power. She signs on to the ascetic ideal because it looks like the belief system that gives her will to power its fullest scope. The ascetic ideal says that worldly desires are bad; in part, being ‘the philosopher’ means being instinctively suspicious of worldly desires. Thus, the philosopher correctly identifies the ascetic ideal as a view that upholds her instincts.¹⁴ The ascetic ideal tells the philosopher that her suspicion of worldly desires is right. Further, by giving her permission not to focus on worldly desires, the ascetic ideal allows her to pursue other desires that fit better with her instincts. The ascetic ideal, then, looks like a reasonable system for the philosopher to endorse.

Since the philosopher endorses the ascetic ideal because she correctly recognizes that it meshes well with her instincts, we might wonder why her endorsement of the ascetic ideal counts as a pathology. After all, her reasons for signing on are not a sign of a weak sense of self or of a sense that she is ineffective in the world. However, Nietzsche believes that it is practically impossible to endorse only the healthy and neutral parts of the ascetic ideal. The ascetic ideal tends to be a package deal, and it tends to carry a lot of baggage—baggage such as belief in a ‘true world’ beyond and outside this one, a realm where genuine value comes from. And Nietzsche thinks that philosophers, like artists, are very susceptible to ‘true world’ views. Once someone starts to believe in a ‘true world’ where the value really lies, she becomes unable to see *this*

14 GM III.8: ‘the philosopher sees in [the ascetic ideal] the optimum condition for the highest and boldest spirituality and smiles’.

world as valuable. And the inability to see value in this world leads to an inability to engage successfully with this world. Belief in a ‘true world’ will, for Nietzsche, almost always lead to a sense of ineffectiveness in the everyday world.

Thus, the philosopher’s commitment to the ascetic ideal will, Nietzsche thinks, erode even an originally healthy will to power, and this erosion of her will to power constitutes one serious problem with this commitment. Another problem with this commitment has to do with the history of the ascetic ideal among philosophers.¹⁵ Nietzsche thinks that, in the early days of philosophy, the philosopher had to pretend to be the priest. The accepted model for contemplative types in a place like ancient Mesopotamia was the priest; thus, people who wanted to be contemplative types even in a new way would take on the trappings of the old way. The familiar trappings made them look like an acknowledged and accepted type, which prevented their fellow citizens from deciding that they were dangerous radicals who needed to be cast out or killed. As self-protection, early philosophers acted like priests, and part of acting like priests meant signing on to the ascetic ideal.

But the philosopher is its own accepted type now. Philosophers no longer have to pretend to be priests in order not to get cast out or killed by their fellow citizens. And Nietzsche thinks that the philosopher as a character type has not yet fully grasped that she does not have to pretend to be the priest anymore. He says that early philosophers had to wear the cloak of a priest and ‘creep about’ like ‘caterpillars’ in that cloak.¹⁶ And the implication of that metaphor, I think, is that the time has come for the philosopher to stop being a caterpillar and start being a butterfly—to shed the chrysalis of the priest and become entirely her own type. And one of the components to be shed is the priestly commitment to the ascetic ideal.

How, then, to go about getting rid of that commitment? As in the case of the artist, it will start with more thorough self-awareness. The philosopher will need to learn to see herself as something other than a

¹⁵ GM III.10.

¹⁶ GM III.10: ‘the *ascetic priest* provided until the most modern times the repulsive and gloomy caterpillar form in which alone the philosopher could live and creep about.

‘Has all this really *altered*? Has that many-coloured and dangerous winged creature, the ‘spirit’ which this caterpillar concealed, really been unfettered at last and released into the light [...]?’

copy of the priest. To do so, she will need to examine her previously-unexamined beliefs and drives to determine which ones are really hers. Once she has examined her beliefs and drives, she will probably find that some of them conflict with each other, in which case she will need to give up some of the beliefs and re-direct some of the drives.

The above way of describing work on the self, with its focus on self-examination, rooting out beliefs, and re-directing drives, sounds a little un-Nietzschean in (at least) two ways. First, it sounds a bit too conscious and cognitive. Nietzsche is always keenly aware that many of the components that comprise the manifold self remain below the level of consciousness. But I think he believes that we can sometimes catch sight of some of those components or discover them by examining their consequences. Self-knowledge, for Nietzsche, can never be complete, but it can always become *more* complete. Nietzsche tends to emphasize the first half of this claim, i.e. that self-knowledge can never be complete, as a useful corrective to the ‘overestimation of consciousness’ that he sees as pervasive of philosophical and moral psychological views of his time.¹⁷ But the second half of the claim matters, too. Nietzsche would not, I think, wish for us to use the mere fact of having unconscious drives as an excuse for avoiding self-examination. In his view, clear-eyed self-evaluation remains an important goal—and a goal that is perfectly consistent with acknowledging the role of unconscious aspects of the self.

The foregoing paragraph will, I hope, prevent my account of Nietzschean work on the self from sounding over-focussed on consciousness. I wish also to prevent it from sounding too easy. Nietzsche is at pains to note that candid self-reflection, the rooting out of conflicting beliefs, and the re-direction of recalcitrant drives are all very difficult activities that carry no guarantee of success. Work on the self is *hard*. Many people will try it and fail, and many more will not even try in the first place. But I think Nietzsche believes that some people can do productive work on the self and that this work will help them to engage more successfully with the world.

I return now to the Hellenistics and their notion of therapy to flesh out this notion of ‘productive work on the self’. The Hellenistics’ diagnoses, like Nietzsche’s, usually started at the level of culture or soci-

¹⁷ Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. by Walter Kaufmann (New York: Random House, 1974), I.11.

ety, but their therapy was always addressed at individuals. Seneca and Epictetus—Hellenistics in temperament and orientation even if not in geography—provide very different examples of how this focus on individuals works for the Stoics, and Diogenes provides a striking case from the Cynics. All three cases involve thinkers engaged in the daily practice of philosophical therapy, demonstrating both how therapeutic philosophy engages with others and how it asks each practitioner to work on himself. And, in all three cases, we see particularizing strategies that draw our attention to the individual nature of philosophical therapy.

Seneca's *Letters From a Stoic* address a particular interlocutor, a (probably fictional) young man named Lucilius.¹⁸ In the letters, Seneca offers Lucilius advice on a wide variety of topics—including how to study,¹⁹ how to choose one's friends,²⁰ how to face disappointing events,²¹ and myriad other matters—and that advice, though intended for a wide audience, is framed in terms that address the concrete circumstances of Lucilius's and Seneca's lives. Letter LXII offers condolences on the death of one of Lucilius's friends, and Seneca mentions that friend, Flaccus, by name; its advice on grief applies to a broad class of cases, but the occasion for the advice is Lucilius's particular grief for Flaccus.²² The advice of Letter CXXIII, which stresses the importance of equanimity, could apply to countless cases in which someone must bear with inconveniences, but the occasion for that advice is Seneca's own encounter with a specific set of inconveniences that arises when, in traveling from one of his houses to another, he arrives before the staff has had time to prepare his accommodations.²³ The details that Seneca provides—the name of the town, Alba, in which the house is located, the fact that he is in bed recovering from the rigours of his trip, the list of people from whom he can borrow bread if his baker cannot supply it today—give us the texture of an individual life and remind us that, though therapeutic advice is general, each person who engages in therapy is particular. The letter's therapeutic advice to recall 'how nothing is burdensome if taken lightly, and how nothing need arouse one's irritation so long as one doesn't make it bigger than it is by getting irritated' is not advice dispensed from any

18 Seneca, *Letters from a Stoic*, trans. by Robin Campbell (New York: Penguin, 1969).

19 Letter II, p. 33-34.

20 Letter III, p. 34-36.

21 Letter CVII, p. 197-200.

22 p. 113-117.

23 p. 226-230.

one human to any other, or even from any Stoic to any other, but from Seneca to Lucilius—two individuals whose particularities are interwoven into the letters.²⁴ This work vividly represents the individual aspects of giving and receiving therapeutic advice.

The works of Epictetus—or, more properly, the aphorisms collected by Epictetus's student Arrian—also focus on the individual and particular, but in a different way from Seneca. Seneca wrote; his medium was text. Epictetus, in contrast, wrote nothing; his medium was conversation. A.A. Long notes that '[t]aking account of this auditory context, which quite often focuses on a single, generally anonymous individual, is indispensable [...]. Epictetus is typically addressing precisely the people—young men—who have opted to study with him'.²⁵ That focus on a single individual is reflected in the *Handbook* through point of view: the text is cast in the second-person singular. Most sentences are imperatives, and they frequently exhort readers/listeners to 'remember': 'So remember, if you think that things naturally enslaved are free or that things not your own are your own, you will be thwarted, miserable, and upset, and will blame both gods and men.'²⁶ The imperatives, the exhortations to remember, and the frequent use of 'you' all make the text feel directed at the individual reader; each reader is made to feel like the particular 'you' to whom the advice is directed.

The *Discourses*, like the *Handbook*, make frequent use of second-person singular sentences and of imperatives, and to those individualizing and particularizing strategies they add the frequent use of examples and anecdotes. The *Discourses* are filled with stories (both mythological and historical) that refer to characters, individuals, and groups by name; the opening chapter, in a span of less than four pages, refers by name to Zeus, Aeolus, Lateranus, Nero, Epaphroditus, Thraseas, Rufus, Agrippinus, the town of Aricia, and Epictetus himself.²⁷ This frequent use of proper names grounds the *Discourses* in the particularities of Epictetus's world and draws our attention to the roles that those particularities play in shaping his therapeutic practices. As with Seneca, though the advice is

24 p.226.

25 Long, A.A., *Epictetus: A Stoic and Socratic Guide to Life* (New York: Oxford UP, 2002), p. 4.

26 Epictetus, *Handbook of Epictetus*, trans. by Nicholas White (Indianapolis: Hackett, 1983), p. 11.

27 Epictetus, *Discourses and Enchiridion*, trans. by Thomas Wentworth Higginson (Roslyn, NY: Walter J. Black, Inc., 1944), p. 3-7.

general, the context within which each reader or listener engages with the advice is always specific, and Epictetus's methods remind us of that individual specificity.

Individualism works a bit differently in the case of Diogenes the Cynic, for, rather than focusing on individuated others, Diogenes flaunts his own individuality. Like Epictetus, Diogenes produced no writings, instead developing a style centred as much around performance as around pedagogy. We cannot talk about Diogenes's Cynicism without talking about Diogenes himself. The statement 'Diogenes believed that social conventions tended to oppose nature' is accurate but skeletal. For flesh, we need the anecdotes. Laertius tells us that, one day when Diogenes was sitting in the sun, he asked Alexander the Great to stand out of his light.²⁸ Diogenes constantly antagonized the wealthy and the comfortable (including Plato), making puns on their names and comparing them to animals and foods.²⁹ He once masturbated in the marketplace, saying that 'he wished it were as easy to relieve hunger by rubbing an empty stomach.'³⁰ In short, Diogenes flouted social convention at every turn. By setting himself in opposition to the usual rules of society, he insisted on his own individuality. In a full picture of Diogenes's philosophy, the stories about him carry more meaning than the doctrine, and that story-focused, individualizing aspect of his case sharply emphasizes the individual nature of therapeutic exercises.

In the *Genealogy*, Nietzsche uses some of the same individualizing strategies as the Hellenistics. Like Seneca, he focuses on the particularities of his own life and of the psychologies of his readers. The opening of the *Genealogy* identifies Nietzsche's ideal readers as 'men of knowledge' and provides a vivid picture of the mental focus and distance from the everyday that often characterize the intellectual life.³¹ In setting up this picture, Nietzsche identifies his patients and shows his familiarity with the circumstances of their lives. Like Epictetus, he targets individual readers through grammatical choices; Nietzsche sometimes uses Epictetus's second-person singular,³² but he more frequently uses the first-

²⁸ Diogenes Laertius, §37.

²⁹ §§ 44-51, §60, and §61.

³⁰ §46.

³¹ GM P.1.

³² See, for instance, GM P.8: 'But you do not comprehend this [i.e. the victory of the 'slave revolt in morality']? You are incapable of seeing something that required two thousand years to achieve victory?'

person plural, turning himself and each reader into a pair—a ‘we’. Also like Epictetus, Nietzsche uses anecdotes and proper names; see, for instance, his discussion of Schopenhauer in the section that analyses philosophers and the ascetic ideal and his discussion of Wagner in the section on artists and the ascetic ideal.³³ That discussion of Wagner, with its tone of disapproval and disagreement, also highlights Nietzsche’s polemical tendencies—tendencies that he shares with Diogenes. He also shares with both Diogenes and Seneca a habit of including details about his own life, such as the story of his first philosophical writings, composed when he was thirteen, on the origins of good and evil³⁴ and his aside on the place that was, for him, the most useful ‘desert’ spot for balancing immersion in society with a philosopher’s distance from it.³⁵ For Nietzsche as for the Hellenistics, these individualizing moves remind us of the individual character of philosophical therapy.

To all of these individualizing moves, the Hellenistics add a tendency to write in a wide variety of styles and genres. I take this stylistic diversity to be another feature of their wish to reach many different individuals. Epicurus wrote his famous lists of maxims, but the fragmentary evidence indicates that he also wrote essays and scientific treatises. Seneca wrote in many styles and genres including letters, plays, and treatises. For the Hellenistics, offering different styles of texts meant offering different therapeutic opportunities.

Nietzsche’s stylistic quirks are meant, in my view, in part to serve the same purpose. He gives his readers many conceptual and argumentative pieces, but he leaves it up to us to put those pieces together. Leaving it up to us is part of his therapeutic project, for philosophical therapy, like other therapy, is not all about the therapist: it is also, crucially, about each individual patient. It parallels the old light-bulb joke:

Q: How many therapists does it take to change a light bulb?

A: Just one, but the light bulb has to *want* to change.

Therapy requires the patient to do work, and this work is the work of self-

33 Schopenhauer discussion at GM III.8; Wagner discussion at GM III.2-4.

34 GM P.3.

35 GM III.109: ‘Perhaps we *do not* lack [such ‘deserts’]: I just recall my most beautiful study—the Piazza di San Marco, in spring of course, and morning also, the time between ten and twelve.’

cultivation. This self-cultivating work may vary significantly from patient to patient, but, just as a broad range of self-cultivating activities could all count as, for instance, Stoic therapy, I believe that a similarly broad range of self-cultivating activities can count as genuinely Nietzschean therapy. In this paper, I hope to have offered some plausible accounts of what Nietzschean therapy might look like and a compelling case for reading the *Genealogy* as a text of philosophical therapy.

'The City of Sages' and the 'Life of Virtue': Foucault and the Politics of Self-Cultivation in the Spartan Ideal

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Several historians of thought such as Malcolm Schofield and Pierre Hadot have noted the affinities and interactions between idealized depictions of the Spartan way of life in the classical world and Cynic and Stoic schools of thought. Yet this remains a curious relationship: the Spartan ideal demands a complete obedience to its laws from its citizenry and expresses a particular vision of political life. This vision appears to be almost the direct opposite of the uniquely antinomian and cosmopolitan character of the Cynic attitude. This study identifies the Cynic movement and Spartan ideal as projects that take the salient relationship between ethics and politics in ancient thought, to two opposite logical extremes. Both the Cynic movement and the Spartan ideal agree that the only true political association is one achieved wholly through the practice of a virtuous and self-sufficient life. However, in their idealized forms, for the Cynic, any place he can practice virtue is home, for the Spartan anything the city-state demands is part of the virtuous life. Drawing from classical texts, Foucault's 1982-1984 lectures in Collège de France and the work of English and French scholars, I interpret the Cynic movement and the Spartan ideal as two projects that take the practice of ethics and self-sufficiency to its extremes, while bringing about a new understanding of politics. I maintain that such an endeavour promises insights, not only into ancient political thought but also into the political significance of modern revivals of Greek ethics, particularly in the work of Michel Foucault.

The utopian image of Sparta in Greek and Roman sources paints a fascinating picture of the relationship between a virtuous life and an ideal city. The austere lifestyle of the Spartan citizen and the related idealization of the city's laws inspired both popular imagination and philosoph-

ical reflection in the ancient world. It is often suggested that philosophers such as Plato and Zeno were influenced by a utopian image of the Spartan city-state in their discussions of their own visions of an ideal polity and of a virtuous life.¹ Although individual lines of influence among schools of thought are open to dispute, Laconophilia – the idealization of Sparta – certainly has a definitive place in Greco-Roman thought. However, modern revivals of Greco-Roman ethics have often downplayed or wholly ignored this phenomenon.

One thinker who has been crucial in bringing renewed attention to the theme of a virtuous life within Greco-Roman ethics is Michel Foucault, who, in his late work, sought to carry out a genealogy of the processes through which individuals realized themselves as subjects. Moreover, in a series of interviews and lectures he delivered in the same period, Foucault also expressed hopes that such a genealogical account of the different modes of subjectivity throughout Western thought could open the door to a 'politics of ourselves', that is, a politics of the different technologies through which we have constituted ourselves as subjects.² It is therefore interesting that within Foucault's history of Greco-Roman ethics, as well as in the secondary literature about Foucault's later work, there is no systematic engagement with the phenomenon of Laconophilia. This lack of attention is understandable, given the vast historical period Foucault's work covers. Yet a detailed investigation of Laconophilia could yield interesting results, given that for ancient philosophers the Spartan way of life had an organic relationship with the ideal of the Spartan city-state as a strong and independent polity.

Laconophilia was popular among the Athenian aristocracy of the 5th century BC. Partly because of the long lasting Peloponnesian war (431-404 BC) during the time that Socrates and Plato are thought to have lived, a large section of young Athenian aristocrats had come to idealize Spartan culture.³ Beyond influencing residents of Athens, the Spartan way of life also left a significant mark throughout classical thought,⁴ particularly on many of the figures and movements that Foucault himself dealt

1 See: Malcolm Schofield, *Stoic Idea of the City*, (London: Cambridge University Press, 1991); Glenn R. Morrow, *Plato's Cretan City: A Historical Interpretation of the Laws*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1993).

2 Michel Foucault. (1993) 'About the Beginnings of the Hermeneutics of the Self: Two Lectures at Dartmouth', *Political Theory* 21(2): pp.222–223.

3 Glenn R. Morrow, *Plato's Cretan City: A Historical Interpretation of the Laws*, (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press,) 1993, p.40.

with. According to Pierre Hadot: 'the philosophers' cloak, made of coarse cloth... was none other than the Spartan cloak, that had been adopted by Socrates, Antisthenes, Diogenes and the philosophers of the Cynic and Stoic tradition,' and the model of the Spartan style of life had been 'strongly idealized by the philosophers, especially Cynics and Stoics.'⁵

Yet Hadot is also quick to note the paradoxical nature of this association. Sparta was praised and criticized for being a city with rigid laws and customs, encouraging its citizens to live a life of endurance in order to create obedient and 'docile instruments of its will.'⁶ The image of the dutiful Spartan is best summed up by Herodotus in a speech attributed to the Spartan King Demaratus, 'The Lacedaemonians... are free, yet not wholly free: law is their master, whom they fear... Whatever the law commands, they do.'⁷ While the ascetic practices associated with the Spartan way of life resonate with the practices we find centuries later in the work of a Stoic thinker such as Epictetus, the obedient citizens Sparta aimed to create are almost diametrically opposed to the notion of an 'aesthetics of existence' Foucault uses in his reading of this same thinker.⁸ In this sense, although many thinkers praise the frugal life adopted by Spartans, to what extent the Spartan vision of an ideal city of sages influenced Cynic and Stoic ideas remains disputed.⁹ In fact the Cynic idea of the city of sages heightens the contrast one step further: whereas the Spartans valorised obedience to the laws of their city, on the contrary the Cynic city of sages has been likened to an 'anarchist utopia' where 'all

4 See: N. Tigerstedt, *The Legend of Sparta in Classical Antiquity*, 2 Vols., (Stockholm, 1965-1973); Malcolm Schofield, 'Zeno and Sparta' in *Saving the City: Philosophers-Kings and Other Classical Paradigms*, (Routledge, 1999); Malcolm Schofield, *Stoic Idea of the City*, (Cambridge University Press, 1991); Pierre Hadot, *The Inner Citadel: The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*, (Harvard University Press), 1998, pp.7-8.

5 Pierre Hadot, *The Inner Citadel: The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius*, (Harvard University Press, 1998), pp.7-8.

6 *Ibid.*

7 Herodotus, Hist. 7.104.4

8 Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Vol III: Care of the Self*, New York: Pantheon Books, 1988.

9 For two different interpretations, especially of the influence Sparta may have had on Zeno of Citium's *Republic*, see: Malcolm Schofield, 'Zeno and Sparta' in *Saving the City: Philosophers-Kings and Other Classical Paradigms*, (Routledge, 1999) and John Sellars, 'Stoic Cosmopolitanism and Zeno's Republic,' *History of Political Thought*, Vol. 18:1, 2007

existing traditional States and laws would become irrelevant.¹⁰ Why is it that on the one hand the Spartan way of life is closely similar to that of the Cynics or Stoics, and on the other their visions of politics so different? Moreover, what does this divergence of political vision imply for Foucault's suggestion of carrying out a 'politics of ourselves?' What can this partial idealization of Sparta by thinkers of the Stoic and Cynic traditions tell us about the relationship between governing one's own life and governing the lives of others?

Writing about the historical experience of Sparta is often difficult because of the limited availability of sources.¹¹ However, contrasting the positive idealization of Sparta in Greek and Roman sources with Foucault's genealogy of ethics can nevertheless prove to be a useful endeavour. Specifically, comparing Foucault's description of the idea of 'care of the self' and the Spartan virtues of discipline, obedience and courage, can yield new perspectives on the social and political implications of self-practices. In the concluding section, using this historical account of Sparta I will call into question Foucault's distinction between technologies of domination and technologies of the self. Throughout his later thought, Foucault uses the concept of 'domination' as a unique type of relation where power instead of being variable and alterable, is 'firmly set and congealed.'¹² He further contrasts this both with power relations that are essentially reversible and mobile and with the relations one enters with oneself, i.e. technologies of the self. This paper will argue that the Spartan ideal tests the limits of these analytical categories. Aside from this theoretical point, Foucault had famously described the historical period starting with classical Greece to late Roman antiquity as a 'kind of golden age in the cultivation of the self.'¹³ I also hope to show in this article that the idealization of Sparta as an egalitarian as well as controlling society demonstrates a side to the historical period Foucault engages with which is nevertheless different from the picture he paints.

This paper does not attempt to 'solve' the relationship between

10 John Sellars, 'Stoic Cosmopolitanism and Zeno's Republic,' *History of Political Thought*, Vol. 18:1, 2007.

11 Paul Cartledge, *Spartan Reflections*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), p.56.

12 Michel Foucault, 'Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom,' in Foucault, Michel, and Paul Rabinow. *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*. (New York: New Press, 1997), p.283.

13 Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality, Vol III: Care of the Self*, p.43.

Sparta, Stoics and Cynics but rather highlight their similarities and differences, to reveal the possible political consequences of an ethics based on self-cultivation. In order to do so, I borrow Foucault's conceptual analysis, what he calls a 'grill d'analyse' that distinguishes between four aspects of ethics: a) '*ethical substance*, the part of the individual that is problematised as the prime material of his moral conduct,' b) '*mode of subjectivation*: the way in which one recognises the rules and bring himself to put it to practice,' c) '*ethical work*: the conduct one performs on oneself to comply to the rule,' and finally d) '*telos*: the mode of being the individual seeks to attain through this action.'¹⁴ Using these terms, with regards to the ethical substance and ethical work, the Spartan way of life is only a radical example of practices that are ubiquitous in the classical world. Ascetic control of one's sexual practice or diet is an ordinary theme in ancient sources. What makes the Spartan ideal unique is how these rules are put into practice (the mode of subjectivation) and the final aims they uphold (*telos*). I therefore propose that within the same historical era, addressed by Foucault, it is possible to observe the emergence of the ideal of Sparta alongside the care of the self as an alternative answer to a similar problem of governing oneself and others. Whereas the Spartan ideal of a utopian city presented by Greek authors such as Xenophon and Plutarch shares with the Cynics and Stoics an understanding of concepts such as *autarkies* (independence/self sufficiency) and *askesis* (training/self work) there are nevertheless differences, in terms of the political ends these concepts serve.

Care of the Self and the Foucauldian *Grill D'Analyse*

In their origin, ascetic practices and the political functions they served were inseparable from one another in the Greek world. There existed 'a continuity between dominating and governing one's pleasures, one's house and one's status in the city as a free man.'¹⁵ However, for different historical reasons, in time these practices developed an 'independent status and autonomy of their own,'¹⁶ and were redeployed in expressing ethical and aesthetic ideas. One clear example is how, in classical Greece, the practices of 'truth telling' and 'care of the self' transformed from serving political and social functions to more ethical ones.¹⁷

14 Michel Foucault, 1985, (*History of Sexuality, Vol II: The Use of Pleasure*, New York: Pantheon Books) pp. 25-27

15 Ibid. p.76.

16 Ibid. p.77.

17 See: Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*.

Especially with the figure of Socrates, the practice of self-care was related to questions regarding what type of a life one should lead and how one should train in order to lead a virtuous life. This attention and care afforded to one's life gave a structure to one's existence, which was not immediately connected to any political institution.¹⁸ The care of the self was not regulated by any judicial discourse. Appropriately, the criteria with which one takes care of oneself were not dictated by rules but rather to be discovered through testing and trial. In his reading of Laches for example, Foucault notes¹⁹ that the agreed criteria for testing one's life is the harmony between one's mode of living and one's words.

A second important transformation the theme of care undergoes is that it is no longer merely a pedagogic tool. Rather, the practice of self-care is exercised continually even by Socrates himself. Similarly, care of the self is no longer viewed instrumentally for the attaining of some office. It is now understood as an ethical practice, that is pursued for its own sake, 'in order to give one's life a form' that answers to some aesthetic or ethical criteria.²⁰ Socrates gives form to his existence through the act of caring for himself and reminding others to do the same, a theme that continues to have a growing significance in the centuries that follow among thinkers such as the Roman Stoic philosopher Epictetus. Nevertheless, the concern for the other has not ended in this picture. Rather it now exists alongside care of the self, as an ethical concern: in the form of the relationship I enter into with a pupil or friend asking me for guidance.

The basic characteristics of self-care in classical Athens that are relevant to my study can be summed up following Foucault. First, the *mode of subjectivation*, that is, the way in which one recognized the rules of moral conduct, didn't involve the establishing of a code that would prescribe and determine moral acts. It was not a question of what one was forbidden or allowed to do, but rather involved strategies such as testing, trying, 'calculating, reflecting on, redistributing and controlling one's own desires and acts.'²¹

Second the *telos* that self-care sought in each case was the attain-

18 Michel Foucault, 'Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom,' in Foucault, Michel, and Paul Rabinow. *Ethics: Subjectivity and Truth*. (New York: New Press, 1997), pp.281-302.

19 Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth*, p.128.

20 Michel Foucault, 1985, *History of Sexuality, Vol II: The Use of Pleasure*,) pp. 27.

21 Ibid. p.54.

ment of an autonomous existence. Although there are variations, in general terms the *telos* that Greco-Roman ethics sought can be summed up as attaining, ἀτάρκεις [independence] and εὐδαιμονία [happiness], to 'keep from being carried away by the appetites and pleasures, to maintain a mastery and superiority over them, to keep his senses in a state of tranquility, to remain free from interior bondage to the passions, and to achieve a mode of being that could be defined by the full enjoyment of oneself, the perfect supremacy of oneself over oneself.'²² These two characteristics are especially important for the contrast they provide with Sparta.

Sparta and the Foucauldian Grill D'Analyse

'Manly courage,' or *andreia*, is the virtue most closely associated with the Spartan way of life. As Powell argues, most Greeks 'were convinced of the exceptional bravery of the Spartans,'²³ mainly because of their acts in battle. For ancient Greeks *andreia* was a claim that rested on 'what one has done rather than on who one is'²⁴ and therefore demonstrated continuities with Socratic ideals of subjecting one's life to tests. Nevertheless, if the care of the self increasingly represented a fracturing of the relationship between the political function of asceticism and its ethical connotations, the Spartan ideal represents a radical correspondence between the two. The ascetic practice of the Spartan citizen becomes the cornerstone of Sparta's military might and endurance. What is peculiar in the Spartan ideal is the image of the Spartan *polis* as an ideal, egalitarian, and controlling city. The city's laws are a constant presence in the lives of its citizens and shape their lives in a number of ways. Put differently, considering the mode of subjectivation, the Spartan ideal substitutes the economy of desires/pleasures with a strict adherence to the city's laws as the means of recognizing and practicing moral conduct. Additionally, the final aim moral conduct seeks is also different. The interlocutors of Socrates or the disciples of Epictetus wished to gain mastery over themselves either in order to further their own social and political status, or simply as a means of giving an aesthetic shape to their lives. In Sparta, however, this self-mastery was regulated by and served a higher purpose

22 Ibid. p.31.

23 Paul, Cartledge, *The Spartans: The World of the Warrior-heroes of Ancient Greece, from Utopia to Crisis and Collapse*, (Woodstock, N.Y.: Overlook Press, 2003), p.70.

24 David, Whitehead, "Cardinal virtues: the language of public approbation in democratic Athens" *Classica et Mediaevalia*, 1993, Vol. 44, p.48.

of obeying the city's laws and securing the independence of the Spartan city-state from outside forces. However, this obedience was not an unwilling submission. If anything, in the Spartan ideal, men and women of Sparta took great pride in the superiority of their own way of life as well as that of their city. Even influential men 'took pride in their obedience to the officials, whereas in all other cities such men thought it beneath their dignity to have any fear of those in office.'²⁵

How (through which mode of subjectivation) do citizens, in this ideal conception of Sparta, recognize the criteria of their moral conduct? The most important technology in this regard is the myth of Lycurgus, as a lawgiver who authors the *Great Rhetra*, which functions as the constitution of Sparta. Lycurgus is clearly a mythologized figure who was applauded for his moral superiority. Second, as we will see below, the moral excellence of Lycurgus himself is clearly a tool that sets an example to all Spartans. Plutarch, writing several centuries later, takes things one step further, and claims that Lycurgus's 'theory of government was adopted by Plato, Diogenes (of Sinope), Zeno (of Citium) and all those who are praised for their attempts to make some statement about these matters, even though they left only paper theories.'²⁶ Here Plutarch considers that the government and happiness of both the city and the individual's life are achieved through the prevalence of virtue within the city's borders. Lycurgus's aim therefore is to bring this about by promoting independence and self-sufficiency. In the Spartan myth, before Lycurgus lays down his constitution, Sparta is considered one of the worst governed cities amongst the Hellenes.²⁷ Therefore Lycurgus presents a founding figure who, 'at a moment of deep crisis'²⁸ is able to lay down a new moral code that ties the individual's life with the state.

Giving an account of this moral code had become a standard practice for thinkers 'in the 4th century B.C. and throughout the Hellenistic period.' Unfortunately few of these survived.²⁹ Ancient writers often trace

25 Anton Powell, *Athens and Sparta: Constructing Greek Political and Social History from 478BC*, (London:Routledge Publishing, 2001) p. 242.

26 Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus*, para.31.

27 Herodotus, *Histories*.1.65.1.

28 Paul Cartledge, *The Spartans: The World of the Warrior-heroes of Ancient Greece, from Utopia to Crisis and Collapse*, (Woodstock, N.Y.: Overlook Press, 2003), p.32.

29 Nigel Kennell, *Gymnasium of Virtue: Education and Culture in Ancient Sparta*, (NY: North Carolina University Press, 1997), p. 17.

these reforms directly to Lycurgus, although of course this is highly unlikely. What are the reported features of the *Great Rhetra* that supposedly changed Sparta's fortunes? The *Rhetra* touches every aspect of life, from childbirth to clothing and diet. Yet arguably the most critical reforms are in the areas of education and distribution of land.

Education and technologies of domination

The first reform that Lycurgus is renowned for is the education of the youth through an extensive training system called the *agoge*. Spartan education is often described as a physically demanding process that attempts to instil in the children the virtues of courage and obedience. This moral education is 'at the heart of Spartan ideology and practice',³⁰ to such an extent that it functions as a rite of passage to becoming a full citizen.³¹ The brutal practices often employed as part of the *agoge* drew praise as well as criticism from ancient writers. The ascetic practices that form the *agoge* do call into mind similar Cynic and early Stoic practices: walking bare feet, wearing the same cloak throughout the year, being accustomed to hunger.³² Some have even suggested that Sphaerus, an advisor to the Spartan king Cleomenes and a student of Zeno of Citium, could have been the inventor of the famous Spartan *agoge*.³³

Yet once again the unique features of the Spartan ideal are important to note. The first aspect of the *agoge* that ancient writers draw attention to is that education in Sparta was mandatory and exercised collectively by the city, rather than being at the discretion of the parents.³⁴ According to Xenophon, children were separated from their parents at an early age and were put in the supervision of an older Spartan selected by the elders, called *paidonomos* (literally boy-herder).³⁵ As a result, Xenophon claims, 'respect and obedience are to be found in a high-degree in

30 Jean Ducat, 'Perspectives on Spartan education in the Classical Period', ed. S. Hodkinson & A. Powell, *Sparta: New Perspectives*, London: (Duckworth, 1999), p. 43.

31 Paul Cartledge, *The Spartans*, 2003, p.93.

32 Nigel Kennell, *Gymnasium of Virtue: Education and Culture in Ancient Sparta*, (NY: North Carolina University Press, 1997), p. 18.

33 Ibid. Ch. 5.

34 Xenophon *Const. Lac.* 2.1

35 Anton Powell, 'Spartan Education', in *A Companion to Ancient Education*, ed. Martin Bloomer, (Oxford: Wiley Blackwell, 2015), p.99.

Sparta.³⁶ It is particularly interesting to observe that the obedience and respect is primarily owed not to the parents, but to the *paidonomos* and to the moral code. The second prominent aspect of the *agoge*, the isolation of the youth from their family and their segregation into different age groups, reinforces the importance of fraternal ties among citizens. The education system is therefore a part of Sparta's moral code and is of an obligatory and uniform character, forming the condition of citizenship and reinforcing the egalitarian and controlling ideal of Sparta.

The Spartan education is not only a disciplining process. The final purpose of this education system 'is to transform the child into a member belonging to... a political society, and what the child must be transformed into is either a citizen, or the future mother of citizens.'³⁷ Remember that Foucault had emphasized in his reading of Laches the idea of philosophy as 'a test of life, a test of existence.'³⁸ This same theme of submitting oneself to a series of tests appears in the Spartan *agoge*. According to the various myths surrounding the *agoge*, Spartan children were submitted to physical combat, were provoked by adults into fighting,³⁹ and were even subject to whipping contests to see who could endure pain in silence for the longest periods of time.⁴⁰ At each step then, the Spartan education tested the endurance and resourcefulness of the children. 'The *agoge* thus presented... a permanent trial.'⁴¹ Therefore, the Spartan *agoge* has strong affinities with the theme of self-transformation. In a sense Spartan children do leave the *agoge*, presumably as a new type of political subject. It is not by accident that Epictetus praises the Spartan education system in his *Discourses*.⁴² Despite this similarity, however, the city's laws and

36 Xenophon *Const. Lac.* 2.1

37 Jean Ducat, 'Perspectives on Spartan education in the Classical Period', ed. S. Hodkinson & A. Powell, *Sparta: New Perspectives*, (London: Duckworth, 1999), p.53.

38 Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth (the Government of Self and Others II): Lectures at the Collège De France, 1983-1984*, (Houndmills, Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p.128.

39 Jean Ducat, 'Perspectives on Spartan education in the Classical Period,' 1999, p.59.

40 Plutarch writes how he has witnessed many boys die this way (Plutarch, *Lycurgus*:18.2) Kennell provides a comprehensive list of the Classical sources that refer to the whipping contests: Nigel Kennell, *Gymnasium of Virtue: Education and Culture in Ancient Sparta*, 1997, pp. 149-161.

41 Jean Ducat, 'Perspectives on Spartan education in the Classical Period,' 1999, p.60.

42 'From such principles as these have grown our well constituted states; by these was Sparta founded: Lycurgus fixed these opinions in the Spartans by his laws and education.' Epictetus, *Discourses*, 2.20.

institutions mediate and monitor every aspect of this transformation, leading to a totalising experience.

Thus the *agoge* can be described as a technology of domination in Foucault's sense of the term, as it does not leave much room for negotiation and produces a distinct type of subject, the Spartan citizen. The *agoge* reminds us that an institution, which relies heavily on self-practices can nevertheless produce relations of domination. This once again brings into light a theme Foucault touches upon in his earlier work. In his analyses of the function of confessions in judicial and psychiatric institutions, Foucault had observed how even in the midst of a well-controlled environment such as a psychiatric clinic, the nominal cooperation of the patient was critical. Describing the tactics employed by a 19th century French psychiatrist Dr. Leuret, Foucault observed that obtaining confessions formed an indispensable part of Leuret's psychiatric practice. 'To ground his practice, establish his therapeutic intervention, and open up the possibility of healing, the doctor needed the patient to formulate a discourse of truth about himself.'⁴³

The subject's own self-recognition constitutes an irreducible element that technologies of domination have to co-opt. In a similar vein, beyond the political institutions of the city-state it is crucial for the citizens to recognize themselves as subjects of the law for the Spartan ideal to work. The fact that Spartan citizens were not passive participants in the political system but took pride in their obedience strengthens this conclusion. It is in this sense that the training at the *agoge* is indispensable for the functioning of the laws.

Equality and Violence

The Spartan ideal also includes a sense of egalitarianism among disciplined citizens. Therefore, the second noteworthy aspect of Lycurgus's moral code is the redistribution of land. Lycurgus 'persuaded his fellow-citizens to make one parcel of all their territory and divide it up anew, and to live with one another on a basis of entire uniformity and equality in the means of subsistence, seeking pre-eminence through virtue alone.'⁴⁴ According to Xenophon, Lycurgus's moral code also ensures

43 Michel Foucault, *Wrong-Doing, Truth-Telling: The Function of Avoval in Justice*, (Boston: University of Chicago Press, 2014), pp. 14-15.

44 Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus*. 8.1-2

equality, by forbidding 'citizens to have anything to do with business affairs.'⁴⁵ Spartans did not farm nor produce artefacts but were mostly soldiers. This egalitarian bond forged by the moral code is as strong as the one based on kinship; the whole of Laconia after the land reform is likened to a single estate newly inherited and distributed among brothers.⁴⁶ 'The upshot of this system was to create an intense collective unity among the Spartiates, who proudly designated themselves *hoi homoioi* – the 'Equals.'⁴⁷

Of course the flip-side of this strong equality among citizens is the violence exhibited to those who were not citizens, especially in the form of political and economic exploitation of slaves. The large number of Messenian population subject to Spartan rule meant slave labor was ubiquitous, which 'relieved the citizenry of any direct role in production at all, allowing it to train on a full-time basis. The result was to produce a body of perhaps some 8-9000 Spartan citizens, economically self sufficient and politically enfranchised.'⁴⁸ Thus, slavery was a definitive institution that helped secure equality among citizens. Moreover, due to the sheer number of the slave population (known as helots), Spartans lived in fear of a revolt. In order to quell possible revolts before they took place, they adopted a policy of terrorizing helots and driving them to 'political abjectness'⁴⁹ by subjecting them to routine exploitation and ritual violence. Many different classical sources describe how young Spartans, equipped with daggers and food, would attack and kill random helots they had caught at night.⁵⁰ In short, far from being a personal choice, moral practice in Sparta required a strict adherence to a code. In return Sparta promised equality to its citizens and violence to its enemies and slaves.

The Body Politic

What was the *telos*, or, the final purpose of this training? As hinted above these practices sought to base the city's salvation on the personal resilience of its members. For the individual this implies making the well-

45 Xenophon, *Const. Lac.*7

46 Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus.*8.4

47 Perry Anderson, *Passages from Antiquity to Feudalism*, (London:Verso, 1996) p.34.

48 Ibid., p.35.

49 Anton Powell, *Athens and Sparta: Constructing Greek Political and Social History from 478BC*, p. 254.

50 Ibid.

being of the city the basis of one's existence, through following Lycurgus. For women this consisted of formal exercise and training, so as to be able to give birth to strong children.⁵¹ For men it meant fighting and dying for the city. As a result, only women who died in childbirth and men who died in battle had marked graves.⁵² Plutarch also presents an interesting use of the word 'care', *epimeleia*, that forms Foucault's famous *epimeleia heautou*, care of the self. Asked why the Spartans do not cultivate their own fields but leave this job to their slaves, the Spartan king reportedly answers that it is 'not by taking care of the fields, but by taking care of ourselves (ἐπιμελέομαι) we have conquered these fields.'⁵³ In Sparta, 'care' is a collective activity that serves a collective purpose.

The idea of Sparta as an enduring state is reflected in Thucydides, who explains that Sparta has never had a tyrant, and that for almost four centuries it has had the same constitution.⁵⁴ The political stability and military might of Sparta is connected to the endurance of the moral code. When Sparta does decline after having conquered Athens, it is because its citizens have deviated from a key aspect of Lycurgus's code and revoked the equal distribution of land.⁵⁵ What survives through the deployment of this taxing life style, idealized by the thinkers discussed here, is the image of Sparta as a just, powerful and enduring city. Plutarch explains this powerful image by writing that, for as long as Lycurgus's code remained intact, Sparta led the life 'not of a city under a constitution but of an individual man under askesis and leading a full life of wisdom. (ἀλλ' ἀνδρὸς ἀσκητοῦ καὶ σοφοῦ βίον ἔχουσα)⁵⁶ The *telos* of the individual is intimately bound up with the final aim and purpose of the city, so much so that the whole body politic is likened to a single man practicing virtue. Therefore the concern afforded to the self is not only mediated through political institutions, but also has political purposes.

The Virtuous life and City of Sages: Cynics and Spartans

As explained in the introduction, the Cynic movement more than

51 Another dramatic rendering of this is Leonidas who before going to war with the Persians is said to have instructed his wife Gorgo to 'marry good men and bear good children.' Plutarch, *Apophthegmata Laconica*, Leonidas.2.

52 Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus*.27.2.

53 Plutarch, *Apophthegmata Laconica*.10.3.

54 Thucydides 1.18.

55 Plutarch, Agis.3.4

56 Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus*.30.2.

any other school of thought presents a political attitude that appears diametrically opposed to that of the Spartan ideal. Yet at the same time the extreme ascetic exercises the Cynic philosophers practice resemble those promoted in the Spartan ideal more than any other school in the ancient world. Now that we have a better grasp of the Spartan ideal, let us compare it with the Cynic movement to understand how exactly they differ. The argument I seek to advance here is that the Cynic movement and Spartan ideal take the relationship between the life of the individual (*bios*) and that of the city (*polis*) in two opposite directions. Both are agreed that the only true political association is one achieved wholly through the practice of a virtuous and self-sufficient life. However, for the Cynic, any place he can practice virtue is home, for the Spartan anything the city-state demands is part of the virtuous life. There are five interesting ways in which the categories of *bios* and *polis* are intertwined in the Spartan ideal and the Cynic movement.

a. The Great Sage

Both in the Spartan ideal and in the Cynic movement there exists the idea of great leader or sage undergoing a radical personal transformation that in turn connects with transforming the outside world. The recurring figure of a Spartan leader, who rejects a life of luxury to make an example out of his *bios* and bring order to the *polis*, is the perfect manifestation of this theme. For the Spartans this would be Lycurgus, a mythologized figure who is compared to a god.⁵⁷ Several Stoic sources note Lycurgus's self-mastery. The Roman Stoic Musonius Rufus credits Lycurgus with 'driving out extravagance from Sparta, preferring a life of deprivation and courage, banishing luxury as a corrupting influence, considering personal resilience as the city's salvation.'⁵⁸ According to Rufus, the *askesis* and restraint set by Lycurgus does not only ensure *his* political influence but is the *salvation of the city*. Lycurgus's personal *askesis* is carried to its extreme point when he tells fellow Spartans to obey the city's laws until he returns. After telling this he visits the Delphic Oracle and practically starves himself to death there, 'considering that even the death of a statesman should be of service to the state..._ the end of life would actually be a consummation of his good fortune and happiness; and as for his fellow-citizens, he would make his death the(ir)

⁵⁷ Herodotus, *Histories*. 1.65.2

⁵⁸ Musonius Rufus, *On Furnishings*, Lecture XX

guardian'.⁵⁹ Even in his death Lycurgus teaches Spartans to learn to 'choose an honourable death in preference to a disgraceful life.'⁶⁰ In this way Lycurgus becomes a model for all future Spartan leaders. After Sparta's decline at the aftermath of the Peloponnesian War, we see a perpetuation of the theme of the Spartan king rejecting a life of luxury and grace, and by his plain life setting an example to the rest of his citizens, 'in order to restore the ancient laws and discipline.'⁶¹

The Cynic too, just like the Spartan soldier, walks around bare-foot, with nothing but an old cloak. Once again the figure of Diogenes is clearly a mythologized one, Dio-genes literally meaning 'born of God.' All Cynics are continuously referred to as 'friends of the gods,' and 'the only true kings.'⁶² The Cynic also has a mission, this time of transforming the cosmos as a whole. Diogenes is meant to have been 'sent to human beings by Zeus as a messenger, to show them that they are wholly mistaken with regard to what is good and what is bad.' He is a 'physician of men's souls.'⁶³ The Cynic transforms the universe by keeping 'watch over all human beings, so far as they can, observing what they do and how they feel and how they pass their life.'⁶⁴ On this point, 'Diogenes (is) in agreement with Lycurgus that happiness is dependent upon self sufficiency.'⁶⁵ The Cynic endures and deprives himself in order to become a walking manifestation of the virtuous life.⁶⁶ By leading a self-sufficient and virtuous life himself, the Cynic is also able to demonstrate to others the self-contradictory lives they lead under the laws of the city. Both for the Spartan ideal and for the Cynics then, there is a strong connection between an individual's transformation and the government of the outside world. For the Spartans the boundaries of this outside world are strongly limited. The transformation experienced by the Spartan is solely for the purposes of his city and secures the happiness of *bios* and *polis* alike. For the Cynics on the other hand, the boundaries of this 'outside world' are

59 Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus*, 29.5

60 Xenophon, *Const. Lac.* 9.1

61 Plutarch, *Agis*.3.4; Plutarch, *Cleomenes*.3.13

62 Diogenes Laertius, *Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, 6.37

63 Epictetus, *Discourses*. 3.22

64 *Ibid.*

65 John Sellars, 'Stoic Cosmopolitanism and Zeno's Republic,' *History of Political Thought*, Vol. 18:1, 2007, p. 12.

66 Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth (the Government of Self and Others II): Lectures at the Collège De France, 1983-1984*, (Houndmills, Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p. 172.

less clear. Rather, the Cynic is indifferent to the city and takes part in 'the government of the universe.'⁶⁷

b. A Different Type of Politics

The personal transformation of the Spartan or the Cynic brings about a new type of association that is different from the ordinary definition of the city-state. Let us briefly recall the classic definition Aristotle makes of politics. According to Aristotle man is by nature a social being⁶⁸ and the association that most fully realizes this sociability is the city-state. In other words, man is more self-sufficient and more able to rule himself, not when he is living as an individual nor even in his kingly rule of his household (although mastery in the first two cases may be necessary precursors to political life), but rather is living as a freeman inside a city-state.⁶⁹ The highest form of self-sufficiency is not that of an isolated individual but that of an active citizen, ruling and being ruled in turn.

This is precisely the type of life neither the Cynics nor the Spartan ideal promoted. Sparta of course had a monarchical form of government and, perhaps equally importantly, is often likened to a family or a large estate. In the Spartan mind, Aristotle's distinctions would sound superfluous. The true life of virtue demands not 'ruling and being ruled' but obedience to the laws of the city. Hence this is a different type of polity than Aristotle's classical definition implies. Similarly the Cynics famously reject the laws of the city to those of nature. Aristotle himself had argued that 'whatever is incapable of participating in the association we call the state, a dumb animal for example, and equally whatever is perfectly self-sufficient and has no need to, a god, is not a part of the state at all.'⁷⁰ As Barker and others observe,⁷¹ Cynics themselves adopted these titles. On the one hand they fully embraced being called 'dogs' as the very word

67 Ibid., p.303.

68 Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 1097b.

69 Aristotle, *Politics*, 1261b10-15.

70 Ibid., 1253a1-30.

71 Ernest Barker, *Political Thought of Plato and Aristotle*, (NY: Russell & Russell, 1959); Andre Roslen, 'Civic virtue: citizenship, ostracism, and war' in ed. Deslauriers, Marguerite & Montréal Pierre Destrée, *Cambridge Companion to Aristotle's Politics*, (Cambridge University Press, UK, 2013), pp.140; Michel Foucault, *The Courage of Truth (the Government of Self and Others II): Lectures at the Collège De France, 1983-1984*, (Houndmills, Hampshire, UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p.57-60.

'kunikos' indicates and on the other they claimed to rule the cosmos alongside Zeus. Although the Cynics were not members of any existing city, they claimed to be a member of a higher city, a citizen of a cosmic city of sages that transcends boundaries. Cynics are not just apolites (without a city) but also kosmopolites (citizens of the universe), following the cosmic laws of nature, rather than the laws of individual cities.

c. The City of Sages: the Criteria for Membership

In order to be a member of the Cynic city of sages, or the idealized city of Sparta, one must first learn to govern one's own desires. The criteria for membership is wholly dependent on this. As argued above, the ascetic exercises of Spartans do not only shape the lives of the individuals practicing them, but also give form to the city, ensuring its self-sufficiency and autonomy. As one scholar expresses, 'in Sparta alone is the pursuit of *kalokagathia* (moral excellence) a wholly public matter, with heavy penalties for those who fail to do so.'⁷² To repeat the passage by Plutarch, 'the happiness of an entire city, like that of a single individual, depended on the prevalence of virtue and concord within its own borders. The aim therefore, of all (Lycurgus's) arrangements was to make his people free-minded, self-sufficient and moderate in all their ways... (Lycurgus) brought into the light of day, not paper theories but a functioning constitution, which is quite unmatched. He has exhibited his whole city practicing philosophy, (πόλιν φιλοσοφοῦσα).'⁷³ In Sparta, practicing philosophy, that is to say leading a life of virtue and self-sufficiency is both what secures the well being of the city and is what enables one access to citizenship. The very constitution of the city is not a paper doctrine, but is manifested in the way of life of its citizens.

Similarly, becoming a member of the Cynic city of sages is conditioned solely on the self-sufficiency one is able to achieve. Material wealth, as well as marriages and titles would only burden the life of a Cynic. The whole Aristotelian idea of a polis has been inverted here: The idea of a pre-political mastery over one's household that makes politics possible has been turned into a mastery over oneself that makes membership to the Cynic brotherhood possible. The Cynic virtue doesn't discrim-

72 Stephen Hodkinson, 'The imaginary Spartan politeia', in M.H. Hansen (ed.), *The Imaginary Polis, Acts of the Copenhagen Polis Centre*, vol. 7, Copenhagen, 2005, p.248.

73 Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus*, 31.

inate based on 'sex, birth, rank, race or education.'⁷⁴ We hear the Cynic philosopher claiming: 'Take notice of me, that I am without a country, without a house, without an estate, without a servant; I lie on the ground; have no wife, no children, no coat; but have only earth and heaven and one poor cloak. And what need I? Am not I without sorrow, without fear? Am not I free? ... Who that sees me does not think that he sees his own king and master?'⁷⁵ Moreover, because the criteria for citizenship is virtue, the Cynics could claim to be brothers in poverty, regardless of geographical location, without the need for legal or political institutions uniting them. Thus they could claim to be living in the same *polis*, no matter where they went.

d. Aversion to Doctrine

Both the Spartan ideal and the Cynic movement are agreed that the government of one's life as well as the lives of others should not be through long and complicated doctrines. Whereas the laws of other cities are long and complicated, the laws of the Spartan city-state are simple and prepare the Spartan hoplite for every contingency, thus promoting both his and the city's self-sufficiency. Similarly whereas a life according to the laws of the city, *nomos*, is self-contradictory, arbitrary, and full of unnecessary embellishments, the laws of the cosmos, *phusis*, are straightforward and prepare one for a self-sufficient life. Simplicity rules both the life of the individual and that of the city.

This mistrust of complicated doctrines is best illustrated by their attitudes towards the currency of money, speech and conventions.⁷⁶ For example, Lycurgus is thought to have withdrawn all gold and silver currency and replaced it with iron that has a very low value. Since Spartan coin was very low in value, it was very difficult to transport large amounts of it. Therefore, 'no merchant-seamen brought freight into (Sparta's) harbours; no rhetoric teacher set food on Laconian soil, no vagabond soothsayer, no keeper of harlots, no gold or silver smith, since there was no money there.'⁷⁷ The idea of revaluing money has the effect of keeping out those that would corrupt and ornament speech, rhetoric

74 John L. Moles, 'Cynic Cosmopolitanism,' *The Cynics: The Cynic Movement in Antiquity and its Legacy*, (London:University of California, 1999), p. 106-107.

75 Epictetus, Discourses, 3.22

76 It is important to note the etymological link between the word monetary currency, *nomisma* and the word law or convention, *nomos*, in ancient Greek.

77 Plutarch, *Life of Lycurgus*, 9.3

teachers and soothsayers, as well as those that would corrupt beauty, harlots and silversmiths. Keeping out rhetoricians has both political and moral consequences since complicated doctrines threaten moral and political education alike. As Plutarch explains, 'When an Athenian orator declares that the Spartans had no education in doctrines, the Spartan king replied, 'True, we are indeed the only Greeks to have learned no evil from you.'⁷⁸

A similar theme of revaluing speech is also present in what is known as laconic remarks. Spartans were well known for their short, biting retorts and aversion to long speech. Referring to Spartans' ability to deliver pithy remarks in argumentation, Socrates says that their 'cult is much more the pursuit of wisdom than of athletics; for they know that a man's ability to utter such remarks is to be ascribed to his perfect education.'⁷⁹ One can observe that Socrates praises Spartans as pursuers of wisdom, not because they engaged in rhetoric or had developed extensive doctrines but because they refrain from doing so.

Cynics also criticized complicated doctrines through this double imagery of currency of speech and money. The Cynics were famous for their slogan 'deface of the currency.'⁸⁰ This meant a symbolic attack on the city's laws and conventions for being self-contradictory, complicated and against the cosmic order. The act of defacing the currency in fact implies that 'starting from a certain coin which carries a certain effigy, eras[ing] that effigy and replac[ing] it with another which will enable this coin to circulate with its true value.'⁸¹ This exercise is carried out to reveal the currency's true and unalloyed value. Similarly, aversion to long doctrines is yet another favourite theme of the Cynics.⁸² In fact, some argue that the Cynics were 'developing collections of Spartan sayings, which continued to enjoy a wide popularity for centuries.'⁸³ Therefore, Cynics are equally known for their short and biting remarks, which were often likened to the 'barking' of a dog because of their sharp and blunt nature. One rather fitting extract claims: 'Being asked where in Greece he saw good men,

78 Plutarch, *Life of Lysurgus*, 20.4

79 Plato, *Protagoras*, 342e

80 Diogenes Laertius. 6.20

81 Michel Foucault, *Courage of Truth*, 2011, p. 227.

82 Ibid., p. 178

83 Richard Talbort, 'Introduction' in Plutarch, ed. Richard J.A. Talbort, *Plutarch on Sparta*, (Penguin Classics, 1988), p. 106.

(Diogenes) replied, 'Good men nowhere, but good boys at Sparta.'⁸⁴

e. An Exclusive Utopia

Cynic sages are brothers in poverty and, regardless of whether they are dispersed or gathered together in one place, live as fellow citizens of the cosmos.⁸⁵ Yet it is not entirely clear whether the Cynic utopia of sages is open to everyone. Noting the emphasis on virtue,⁸⁶ H. C. Baldry makes the interesting observation that the Cynic '*politeia* of men of wisdom is nothing like an all-embracing society of all mankind. If it can be described as a state at all, it is a super-state outside all states, the members of which are cut off from the mass of humanity. Although the Cynic wise man ... ignores the traditional barriers that make female inferior to male, slave to master, foreigner to Greek... The Cynic conception does not unite the human race, but draws a single great dividing line across it, separating the few wise men from the many fools'. Far from extending membership to everyone, the Cynic utopia rather imagines an exclusive community of sages, who no longer have the need for boundaries, laws or institutions.

However the Spartan could also be thought of as an exclusive utopian project with one important difference. Whereas the Cynic sages have no need for the laws, for the Spartan citizen the laws themselves already promise to bring about a self-sufficient life. The criteria for citizenship in the Spartan utopia therefore are not the laws of nature but rather the ideal laws of the constitution. In this sense, Sparta and Cynicism can be thought of as two extreme outcomes, two poles that both end up trying to resolve the tension between the *bios* and *polis*, either through completely working against the laws of the city and applying to a higher principle, in the case of the Cynics, or through formulating a perfect constitution that already promotes self-sufficiency in *bios* and *polis* alike, in the case of Sparta.

Conclusions: Power, Domination and Sparta

84 Diogenes Laertius. 6.22

85 Ibid. p. 11.

86 H.C. Baldry, *The Unity of Mankind in Greek Thought*, (Cambridge University Press, London, 2009), p.110.

Having conducted a thorough historical analysis of the Spartan way of life, we can now draw conclusions regarding its implications for Foucault's thought. Let us begin by sketching some of Foucault's ideas. Foucault's genealogy of ethics is supported by a distinction he makes between technologies of domination 'which determine the conduct of individuals and submit them to certain ends', and technologies of the self 'which permit individuals to effect by their own means or with the help of others a certain number of operations on their own bodies, thoughts, conduct and way of being, so as to transform themselves in order to attain a certain state of happiness, purity, wisdom...' ⁸⁷ The difference between these two technologies is important to stress, as they are both concerned with governing individuals. Technologies of domination outline how certain power relations, 'such as enclosure, surveillance, reward, punishment' ⁸⁸ work to incite, suggest and direct persons to certain modes of subjectivity. The technologies of the self, considered exclusively, focus on how an individual conducts his own practices, through a work performed 'on the self, by the self.' ⁸⁹ Moreover, the bulk of Foucault's work related to power and governmentality can be seen as historical analyses of the points of convergence, overlap and friction between 'the technologies of domination...and those of the self.' ⁹⁰

How does Foucault get to this notion? As Deleuze ⁹¹ explains in an illuminating passage,

Foucault felt he was getting locked into the play of forces..it's all very well invoking foci of resistance to power relations, but where are such foci to be found? ...Whereas power was a relation of force to other forces, the self is a relation of force to itself, a fold of force. Establishing different ways of existing, depending on how you fold the line of forces, or inventing possibilities of life, existing not as a subject but as a work of art.

⁸⁷ Michel Foucault, *Technologies of the Self: A Seminar with Michel Foucault*, (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 1988), p.18.

⁸⁸ Michel Foucault, 'Subject and Power', Afterword to Hubert L. Dreyfus and Paul Rabinow, *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, (NY:Chicago University Press, 1982), p.219.

⁸⁹ Michel Foucault, *Technologies of the Self*, p.19.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p.19.

⁹¹ Gilles Deleuze, 'Life as a Work of Art.' in *Negotiations 1972-1990*, trans. Martin Joughin. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), pp.100-101.

Thus technologies of the self imply an interesting power relation where a force acts upon and transforms itself. Through this transformation, Deleuze seems to be arguing, technologies of the self can act as sources of resistance and change. Technologies of the self are therefore irreducible to relations of domination but at the same time necessary for their operation. Foucault himself makes a similar point about the relationship between moral codes and ethical practices. It is important to remember that, for Foucault, ethics implies not simply the contents of a moral code, nor the actions that are tolerated or punished in relation to this moral code, but rather the 'manner in which (one recognizes) oneself acting in reference to the prescriptive elements that make up (a) moral code.'⁹² In other words, all codified moralities presuppose not only certain rules and regulations but also the practices and means with which we recognize ourselves as being bound by those rules and subject to those laws, without which ethical practice becomes impossible.⁹³

However, this equally means that in practice, even domination requires the exercise of an irreducible self-recognition and freedom. Explaining domination, Foucault writes that it is senseless to talk of power relations where one person can exercise 'an infinite and unlimited violence' on another.⁹⁴ Yet although he uses the concept of states of domination to describe situations where power relations are perpetually asymmetric and 'the marginal of freedom extremely limited,'⁹⁵ in practice Foucault never proposes a total state of domination where all resistance has been eliminated. We can advance this line of thought and claim that in the right conditions, technologies of the self act not only as a source of resistance and change as Deleuze hinted, but equally carry the potential to reinforce and tighten situations of domination. Consider the example of confession provided above. The practice of recognizing oneself as the subject of a discourse of truth, when exercised under the strict and calculated environment of a courtroom, can be crucial in the continuation of a certain mode of domination.

Isn't this precisely what the experience of Sparta illustrates? It is simple to observe that in Sparta self-practices serve relations of domination. However, could one not argue that there is a certain ethic or a certain

92 Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality Vol II: The Use of Pleasure*, p.26.

93 Beatrice Han, *Foucault's Critical Project*, trans. Edward Pile, (NY: Stanford University Press, 2002), p.161.

94 Michel Foucault, 'Ethics of the Concern for Self as a Practice of Freedom,' p.283.

95 Ibid.

mode of becoming in the Spartan warrior too? Let us return to the Spartan children in training. Although we do not know enough about the *agoge*, there is no doubt that Spartan children are under a certain relationship of domination, with well-calculated outcomes, rewards and punishments. Commentators on Foucault's work have accused him of overstating the aesthetic and ethical aspects of self-practices at the expense of its political connotations especially in the context of classical Greece.⁹⁶ The perpetuation of the Spartan ideal throughout the Greco-Roman period suggests that the political functions of self-practices were never wholly defunct. Yet beyond its political functions, isn't there a certain ethic and even an aesthetic associated with the training provided at the *agoge*? Why couldn't key aspects of the Spartan education such as the promotion of laconic retorts, the significant role of music and dance,⁹⁷ the valorisation of masculinity, be interpreted from an aesthetic framework? Of course, the margin for negotiating and reflecting on one's practices is limited in the context of the *agoge*, since superior military officers routinely monitored the children. Yet how clearly can we separate the relations of domination and the practices of freedom in this educational system, given that the Spartans were so proud of it?

Perhaps the lack of historical accounts of Sparta by Spartans holds us back from making more definitive claims. Suffice it to say that it is not so easy to delineate the analytical opposition between technologies of domination and the self in the Spartan ideal. A clearer conclusion to be drawn from this line of thought, is that, taken in isolation, there isn't anything inherently political to self-practices. The very same practices that are used by Stoic thinkers such as Marcus Aurelius and Seneca to advance cosmopolitan arguments can be used by Spartan warriors to promote almost diametrically opposed political projects. Therefore it is appropriate to envision the political significance of self-practices only in their entanglement with other technologies of power, communication and production, to use Foucault's terms.

That so many thinkers such as Socrates, the Cynics, Zeno and Epictetus carry affinities with Sparta seems counterintuitive to the contemporary reader, given Sparta's image as a controlling city. The fact that this image does exist can be interpreted as further evidence for some-

96 See: Timothy O'Leary, *Foucault and the Art of Ethics*, (London:Continuum, 2002).

97 A.J. Holladay, *Spartan Austerity*, *The Classical Quarterly*, Vol. 27, No. 1 (1977), p. 117.

thing Foucault admits; despite our ideas about classical Greece, this was nevertheless 'a virile society, (built on) dissymmetry and exclusion of the other.'⁹⁸ Some have suggested that ethical self-constitution is in fact always 'bought at the cost of a host of other constraints, codifications, regulations and encumbrances that may have been just as deplorable.'⁹⁹ While this may not be true at all times, at least in classical Greece, aristocratic culture and slavery went hand in hand with ethical self-constitution. Sparta is an extreme example in this regard.

The Spartan example further corroborates doubts others have raised about Foucault's reading of the history of Western politics, which presents an implicit discontinuity and sharp distinction between modern biopolitics and an ancient ethics of self-cultivation.¹⁰⁰ As we have seen, the golden age of self-practices in Greek and Roman antiquity did not only give rise to a culture of care of the self. Rather, alongside the practices of self-care there existed a Spartan ideal based on obedience, respect and courage. The influence that Sparta exerted over Cynic and Stoic writers indicates some overlap between the Spartan ideal and care of the self. How strong is the connection between these two visions? Is the Spartan ideal merely an anomaly, a relic of the archaic past from which Classical Greece had emerged? Or, on the contrary, could there be something about the idea of self-transformation beyond the Greco-Roman experience that lends itself easily to disciplinary and controlling visions of society? Of course there isn't enough evidence to make such a claim within the confines of this study. Perhaps leading a cross-cultural analysis of self-practices, including the evidence from Sparta, may help us better understand whether this may be the case. While this study doesn't pretend to answer such questions, it can at least help us ask them.

98 Michel Foucault, 'On the Genealogy of Ethics', p.258.

99 James I. Porter, 'Foucault's Ascetic Ancients,' *Phoenix*, Vol. 59:2, 2005, p. 125.

100 Jacques Derrida, *The Beast & the Sovereign: Volume 1*, (London: University of Chicago Press, 2009), pp. 305-334.

The Political Aim of Self-Cultivation in Foucault

IRENE DAL POZ

The recent emergence of the care of the self as a topic of discussion in contemporary philosophy has raised a variety of issues, all related to the different aspects and fields involved in its development. One of the main issues is to investigate the political implications for self-cultivation. In order to pursue this research, I will specifically consider the work of Foucault and his turn towards the care of the self. There are two main reasons behind the choice of focusing on the French philosopher. First, Foucault's late interest in the care of the self and in the subject is apparently at odds to his preceding reflection, especially to the study of power. Second, Foucault's work has been enormously influential and has inspired a multiplicity of research projects, including many in political and social studies. According to this framework, in this paper I will try to demonstrate both how self-cultivation i) has a political dimension and ii) is coherently framed within his previous reflection. Furthermore, I will attempt to highlight what I believe to be some weak areas of Foucault's proposal.

Foreword

This article focuses on the analysis of how and why self-cultivation in Foucault could have political meaning and effectiveness. To support the political aim of the care of self, it will be necessary to prove the *continuist* hypothesis, which supposes coherence and continuity between Foucault's writings and lectures. According to this aim, the paper will be structured in three sections. The first concentrates on the category of power, by recalling its development in the lectures at Collège de France in the late 1970s. Regarding the study of power, particular attention will be paid to the comparison instituted by Foucault between his innovative conception of power and the currently accepted one. The second part will focus on the dimension of the care of self as it emerges from

Foucault's late works, the key point being the care of self in ancient philosophy. In this sense, the main interest, rather than being the analysis of specific cases and examples, will be the understanding of his new engagement with antiquity. Finally, whereas the first two sections briefly rebuild Foucault's research project, the last part of this essay will try to call certain aspects of this investigation into question. As a matter of fact, the final part will be the occasion for introducing some critical remarks about the limits of the political dimension of the care of self.

In line with this orientating purpose, attention will particularly be focused on a circumscribed period of time of Foucauldian reflection, from 1976 to 1984. Even though many of the involved concepts had been developed before, it is likely that from 1976 until his death Foucault wove them together in a coherent and structured project. In fact, all the separate studies undertaken in this period could be subsumed into the two general axes of power and of ethics¹. These two macro categories then share the same interest about the way we organize our conducts and our behaviours, looked at from different perspectives. As it will be demonstrated, this concern has been developed in both the possible directions: on the one side the way a subject is shaped and conduced (power axis) and on the other the techniques of the self-constitution (ethics axis).² For this reason, the concept of *govern*, with all its different shades, could be marked as a distinctive sign of Foucault's thought and it will be the backdrop of all the essay.

Connected to the framework based on axes, another relevant characteristic emerges: the paradox of *continuity* through *discontinuity*. As stated by Revel³, it seems that Foucault has elaborated a *thought of discontinuity*, which embraces in his philosophical project ruptures, changes of perspectives and radical breaks. According to this hypothesis, to fully examine the political aim of self-cultivation in Foucault we should draw a representation of terms that are intrinsically and circularly connected, but linearly and, apparently, separately presented. In this sense, the initial analysis of power implies the problematisation of subjectivity, which leads to the discovery of ancient philosophy as a

1 This division in axes is clarified in the first lecture (05.01.1983) given at the Collège de France in 1983, collected in *The Government of Self and of Others*, ed. by Arnold I. Davidson, (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

2 *Foucault au Collège de France : un itinéraire*, sous la direction de G. Le Blanc et J. Terrel (Bordeaux : Presses Universitaires de Bordeaux, 2003) , pp. 16-17.

3 J. Revel, *Foucault, une pensée du discontinu* (Paris : Mille et une nuits, 2010).

laboratory for experimenting with alternative ways of shaping the self.

However, the paradox of continuity and the question of how Foucault's reflection has been affected by ruptures allow another remark, which will lead to the first section of this essay. This observation is historical, so as to shed light on the *milieu*, the philosophical and political background, where Foucault lived. The key to the contextual interpretation is the dissatisfaction towards current political theories and the purpose of rethinking the political categories according to what has been defined *la deuxième gauche*, 'the second left', in 1977 at a Socialist congress in Nantes. From this point of view, two related dynamics take place. On the one hand the polemics with the orthodox Marxism. On the other hand the endorsement of the movements and of the spontaneous, heterogeneous *praxis* typical of the 1960s-1970s (such as, for example, the feminist movement, the anti-psychiatric movement, the LGBT movement...).⁴

1. Power as a Struggle of Forces

So, all these general observations lead us to the analysis of power and to the effort of developing a new interpretation, through the deconstruction of the classical model. As previously anticipated, this examination will follow a specific group of works, namely the research held at the *Collège de France* in the late 1970s and collected in three writings: *Society must be defended* (1976); *Security, Territory, Population* (1978) and *The birth of Biopolitics* (1979). Considering that in 1977 Foucault had a sabbatical year, this could be defined as the triangulation of writings where Foucault has promoted a new analysis of power, with a specific antagonist model in his mind.

To begin our analysis with *Society must be defended* (1976), this first group of lectures is particularly interesting because it lays the basis of a new grid of intelligibility of power. This preliminary function is then performed in two related ways: i) by giving reasons of how and why Foucault refuses the traditional representation and ii) by showing the research of an alternative conceptualization, embodied in the notion of

4 M. Senellart in M. Foucault, *Sécurité, territoire, population*, édition établie sous la direction de François Ewald et Alessandro Fontana, par Michel Senellart (Paris : Gallimard, 2004), p. 383 e L. Bernini, *Le pecore e i pastore Critica, politica, etica nel pensiero di Michel Foucault* (Napoli : Liguori, 2008), chapter 1, *Apologia di Foucault*, p. 5 and ff.

biopower. Thus, if the dissatisfaction towards the classical political theories is specular and parallel to the formulation of the alternative ones, they also have to be analysed together. The first two lectures⁵ elucidate this shift of paradigms, by underlining the contraposition between the ancient schema, identified by sovereignty, to the new one, called *Nietzsche's hypothesis*. Therefore, the difference between the two interpretations could be expressed in terms of a reification or hypostatization of power in the first theory and of a fluidification of it in the second one. On the one side, in the horizon of sovereignty, power is conceived as something that can be given, exchanged, conquered or possessed: power is an institutionalized substance, certified by a contract, whose model is the Leviathan. On the other side, in *Nietzsche's hypothesis*, power is considered as something that is exercised and that exists only in action: power is a relationship of forces that could be described by the war metaphor. For this reason, Foucault asserts that

If power is indeed the implementation and deployment of a relationship of forces, rather than analysing it in terms of surrender, contract, and alienation, or rather than analysing it in functional terms as the reproduction of the relations of production, shouldn't we be analysing it first and foremost in terms of conflict, confrontation, and war? That would give us an alternative to the first hypothesis – which is that the mechanism of power is basically or essentially repression – or a second hypothesis: Power is war, the continuation of war by other means. At this point, we can invert Clausewitz's proposition and say that politics is the continuation of war by other means.⁶

From this quote two relevant ruptures take place. First, in the sovereignty schema Foucault includes not only Contractualism (*in terms of surrender, contract, and alienation*), but also Marxism (*reproduction of the relations of production*). As a result, Marxism can be legitimately ascribed to the conception of power Foucault wants to overcome. Second, if power is a collision between force fields, it is impossible to acknowledge a specific centre of power. In fact, as long as power is a relationship of forces, it is everything and everywhere, it is capillary and omnipresent. Again, Foucault claims that

5 M. Foucault, *Society Must Be Defended*, trans. by David Macey, (New York: Picador, 2003), lectures of 07.01.1977 and 14.01.1977.

6 *Ivi*, p. 37, lecture of 07.01.1977.

Power must, I think, be analysed as something that circulates, or rather as something that functions only when it is part of a chain. It is never localized here or there, it is never in the hands of some, and it is never appropriated in the way that wealth or a commodity can be appropriated. Power functions.⁷

Therefore, the change in the status of power implies also a modification in its deployment. But Foucault goes further. In fact, if the aim is to study power outside the model of the Leviathan, to abandon the field delineated by sovereignty,⁸ it is compulsory to refuse also the juridical formulation of the subject. In fact, Foucault challenges the sovereignty schema also fundamentally undermining the correlative view of an *a priori* subject, as owner of natural and original rights that can be guaranteed and implemented through the acceptance of a social contract. Since power circulates, individuals are not an elementary nucleus, a target opposed to power. They are one of power's first effects and they can both submit and exercise power.⁹ And as a result, thanks to the definition of subject as power-effect, also the idea of nature, of an essential and constitutive nature, is compromised.¹⁰ The subject itself is not a substance, but a relationship. And neither is the power. So power and subject rather than establishing an opposition, exist only in their relationship; they exist only as temporary junction, an intersection of a game of forces.

7 *Ivi*, p. 51, lecture of 14.01.1977.

8 *Ivi*, p. 56: 'In short, we have to abandon the model of Leviathan, that model of an artificial man who is at once an automaton, a fabricated man, but also a unitary man who contains all real individual, whose body is made up of citizens but whose soul is sovereignty. We have to study power outside the model of Leviathan, outside the field delineated by juridical sovereignty and the institution of the State'.

9 'Power is exercised through networks, and individuals do not simply circulate in those networks: they are in a position to both submit to and exercise this power. They are never the inert or consenting targets of power; they are always its relays. In other words, power passes through individuals. It is not applied to them. It is therefore, I think, a mistake to think of individual as a sort of elementary nucleus (...) The individual is not, in other words, power's opposite number: the individual is one of power's first effects. The individual is in fact a power-effect, and at the same time, and to the extent that he is a power-effect, the individual is a relay: power passes through the individuals it has constituted' *Ivi*, pp. 51-52.

10 For this reason, J. Revel claims that the concept of nature has been undermined by Foucault's work, since the French philosopher has refused both the idea of an original fundament and of its political implications. About that, see *Identità, natura, vita: tre decostruzioni politiche*, in M. Galzigna (a cura di), *Foucault oggi*, (Milano: Feltrinelli, 2008), pp. 141-142.

From this point of view, two remarks could be made:

- i. Contrarily to the juridical and negative or repressive interpretation, power is a productive relationship of forces and subject is one of the first power-effects;
- ii. We should talk of a dyad (power and individual), not simply of power. Talking of power implies talking of individual, and vice-versa. What Foucault describes is a continuative struggle between power and subject, a dialectic without synthesis, always creating new forms, combinations and reactions.

As a consequence, still in an embryonic way, the focus of this essay has already been highlighted: the possible declinations of the creative and productive interaction between power and subject.

But, at the moment, the concept of power is still unclear. To enlarge the analysis, the problem of biopower, as results from the last lecture of *Society must be defended* (14.03.1976), has to be assessed.¹¹ Here biopower is defined as the *power's hold on life*.¹² To explain this notion, Foucault again opposes the model of sovereignty to biopower, and the ancient right to *take life or let live* to the new one: the right to *make live or let die*.¹³ So, given that both are concerned by the problem of life, what changes is how to deal with it. According to Foucault's analysis, while sovereignty could be thought in terms of limitation and negation, biopower takes in charge the government of life in order to secure and produce it: from a negative to a positive conception.

Also in this case, Foucault does not restrict the analysis to the concept of power, but he enlarges it to the necessary correlative term, opening to the dialectic of the relationship of forces. In fact, this creative power upon life needs to be applied to a new historical subject, the man-as-living-being/man-as-species: population becomes the correlative term of biopolitics. As a consequence, power has to secure, govern and take

11 *Society Must Be Defended* is not the only place where Foucault starts to develop the concept of biopower. As a matter of fact, in the same year (1976), Foucault opens to the problematic of the power upon life also in the *Will to Knowledge*.

12 *Society Must Be Defended*, p. 271, lecture of 14.03.1977.

13 *Ivi*, p. 275. While sovereignty exercised the right of sword: to take life or let live (pp. 274-275).

care of the life of this unique global mass,¹⁴ in order to establish a homeostatic balance, that is to say an internal equilibrium of the entire population, and to optimize a state of life.¹⁵

At this point, Foucault has already set the basis for the new grid of intelligibility of power, composed of the network of govern-life-population: the government upon life addressed to a population. This framework is then broadened and specified in the two above-cited groups of lectures: *Security, Territory, Population* (1978) and *The birth of Biopolitics* (1979). The central concept here becomes the one of *governmentality*, since both these writings focus on the different means and evolutions the *power upon life* has had. Drawing a kind of conceptual and genealogical climax, Foucault first retraces its origins in the pastoral power (*Security, Territory, Population*), and then he opens to the analysis (that won't be concluded in 1979 lectures, *The Birth of Biopolitics*) of neoliberalism as the new technology of power upon life.

Let me now focus on pastoral power. Hence, the concept of *pastorate* is introduced in *Security, Territory, Population*, when Foucault is trying to rebuild the genealogy of biopower. As a matter of fact, Foucault wants to demonstrate that the pastoral concept does not belong to Greco-Roman world, where population was governed only indirectly.¹⁶ Instead, the roots of *pastorate* should be sought in the East, where the shepherd exercised his beneficent power over the flock with the explicit purpose of assuring its salvation.¹⁷ Nevertheless, the reference to the shepherd and to the shepherd-flock relationship is interesting not only in a genealogical perspective. Indeed, this reconstruction of government over people leads us to make some fundamental considerations.

First, power upon life is paradoxically totalitarian and individual-

14 In fact, Foucault defines population as 'a global mass that is affected by overall processes characteristic of birth, death, production, illness and so on', *ivi*, pp. 242-243.

15 *Ivi*, p. 280: 'And most important of all, regulatory mechanism must be established to establish an equilibrium, maintain an average, establish a sort of homeostasis and compensate for variation within this general population and its aleatory field. In a word, security mechanism has to be installed around the random element inherent in a population of living beings so as to optimize a state of life'.

16 *Security, Territory, Population*, trans. by G. Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), lecture of 08.02.1978, p. 168.

17 *Ivi*, pp. 171-172.

ising. In other words, power is *omnes et singulatim*, simultaneously addressed to population and to individuals.¹⁸ In fact, the shepherd gathers together, guides, and leads his flock, in order to ensure its salvation; but this salvation always implies an individual attention. So, at the same time the shepherd creates a community and shapes individuals. From this point of view, the relationship between the mechanism of discipline, that is to say addressed to man-as-body, and the mechanism of security, in other words addressed to man-as-species, should be rethought. Thus, their interconnection can be understood as an articulation in different levels, and not as a dichotomy. Since they do not exist at the same level, biopower (conceived as the series population-biological processes-regulatory mechanisms-state) includes in itself the disciplinary series (body-organism-discipline-institution)¹⁹.

Second, studying biopower and governmentality means studying the objectivation of the subject, that is governed, conducted, shaped, and formed through these relationships. But these relationships are not necessarily negative or oppressive (e.g. the paradigmatic positive case of the relationship between a teacher and a scholar). As a consequence, Foucault refutes a stigmatized conception of power in favour of a new one that is well synthesized by the sentence *power is not an evil, power is a game of strategies*.²⁰ Foucault goes even further, claiming that power relationships are neither negatively connoted, nor eternal. Therefore, if they are not hypostatized, they are always reversible, changeable and unstable: they can modify themselves. This constant reversibility and fluidity in power relationship finds its reasons in the role played by freedom. In fact, although power is this totalitarian and individualizing relationship, it is never absolute and it always requires freedom as its main condition. As Foucault states,

Power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as

18 *Ivi*, 'and it is here that we come to the famous paradox of the shepherd, which takes two forms. On the one hand the shepherd must keep his eye on all and on each, *Omnes and singulatim*' p. 173.

19 About this co-implication of levels, see *Society must be defended*, pp. 284-285, lecture of 7.04.1976, and *Omnes et Singulatim: Towards a Criticism of Political Reason*, In *The Tanner Lectures on Human Values*, ed. by Sterling McMurrin, pp. 225-254, Vol. II. (Salt Lake City: Univ. of Utah Press, 1981).

20 As Foucault affirms in *The Ethics of the Concern for self as a Practice of Freedom*, in *Ethics, Subjectivity and Truth, The essential works of Michel Foucault 1954-1984 Vol. 1*, ed. by P. Rabinow, transl. by R. Hurley and others, pp. 281-301 (London: Allen Lane and Penguin Press, 1997), p. 298.

they are free. (...) Where the determining factors saturate the whole, there is no relationship of power; slavery is not a power relationship when man is in chains²¹.

So, not only is freedom always implied in any game of forces, but it is also the ontological condition of power. In this way, by posing freedom as essential requirement of power, Foucault can leave room to the possibility of resisting it or changing the equilibrium in the game of forces. If where there is power, freedom is always present, so where there is power, resistance is always possible. Thus, Foucault changes a typical proposition: i) *you see power everywhere, hence there is no place for liberty* into ii) *since you see power everywhere, there is always place for liberty and resistance*. Consequently, instead of having a reciprocal exclusion between freedom and power, there is also a sort of agonism, mutual incitation and struggle, a permanent provocation. Thus, this conception of resistance, developed in parallel with the interpretation of power, entails two consequences. First, Foucault, as he did with power, calls an institutionalized idea of resistance into question. In this sense, it is impossible to identify a specific resistance field or topic. For this reason, we should think of a disseminated representation also for resistance. And this is my second observation: since points of resistance comprise the other side of the power relationship, they exist concomitantly with the network of power.

To sum up briefly, Foucault first introduced a new study of power, directly opposed to the sovereignty paradigm, and then he specified its peculiarities through a genealogical analysis. In this new perspective, power is characterized by i) being a dynamic and magmatic game of forces; ii) being constantly in tension with the specular term, freedom, and iii) being always exposed to possibility of resistance. Moreover, as demonstrated, the analysis of power unavoidably introduces also the problem of subject, which needs to be directly approached now.

2. Reaction and Resistance in the Relationship of Forces

So, the second part of this essay wants to study the dialectic between the analytics of power and the individual strategies to react and

²¹ *The Subject and Power*, in *Michel Foucault: Beyond Structuralism and Hermeneutics*, ed. by H. Dreyfus and P. Rabinow, pp. 208-226. 2nd ed. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1983), p. 215.

subvert the passivity of being governed, subjected. In fact, thought the subject has always been present, Foucault's interest until now has been directed towards governmentality, conceived as the government over people. But once the role of freedom and of resistance has been delineated, Foucault directs his interest towards the study of how the subject can constitute and govern itself. So, even if there is a turn of perspective or, in other words, the introduction of discontinuity, the theme is always *governing*, in other words, how forces are displayed. According to this interpretation, we can already make one consideration: Foucault's concern for the subject is neither a contradiction nor an aporetic achievement in his philosophical itinerary. Instead, it is its consequential implementation.²²

Nevertheless, to enlighten the passage from the axis of power to the one of subject, rather than advancing immediately towards his later discovery of ancient philosophy, it is useful to consider *The Will to Knowledge* and *The Use of Pleasure*, the first and the second volume of the *History of Sexuality*. In this sense, *The Will to Knowledge* is particularly interesting since it functions as junction between the introduced analytics of power²³ and the research of how a subject can constitute itself in the relationship with its own sexuality. Foucault himself, in the introduction to the Italian edition²⁴, affirms that sexuality is only an example of a more general problem, that has been developed in the previous years and is at the base of the majority of his works. Indeed, in this work Foucault demonstrates both how sexuality is actually an outcome produced by the 'polymorphous techniques of power'²⁵ (against the repressive hypothesis²⁶ and resulting from the dual attitude, individualizing and totalitarian) and how the individual can research the govern-

22 That is one of the fundamental ideas expressed in F. Gros, *Foucault* (Paris: Puf, 2010), p. 93 and in *Foucault au Collège de France : un itinéraire*, p. 24.

23 *The Will to Knowledge* was written in the same year of *Society Must Be Defended* and both provide a theory of power. To compare the study made in *The Will to Knowledge*, *The History of Sexuality, Volume 1: an Introduction*, trans. by R. Hurley, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1978), with the one made in *Society Must Be Defended*, see part four, *The Deployment of Sexuality*, and, particularly, second section, *Method*, p. 92, ff. and part five, *Right of Death and Power over Life*, p. 133, ff. In these pages Foucault also elucidates very clearly the relationship between power and resistance; about that see also pp. 95-96.

24 *La volontà di sapere. Storia della sessualità I* (Milano: Feltrinelli, 2011), pp. 7-8.

25 *The will to knowledge. Volume 1: an introduction*, p.11.

26 *The will to knowledge. Volume 1: an introduction*, part two, *The repressive hypothesis*, p. 15 and ff.

ment of itself through the same device. In fact, the body could be the field of passive objectivation and, at the same time, of an autonomous government, of a creative relationship with itself. Nonetheless, if the *Will to Knowledge* seems to be still imbalanced towards the analytics of power, the second volume of *History of sexuality, The use of pleasure*, not only reiterates the continuist claim, but it also opens to the technologies of the self. In fact, in the introduction it is immediately declared that what was 'planned, therefore, was a history of the experience of sexuality, where experience is understood as the correlation between fields of knowledge, types of normativity and forms of subjectivity in a particular culture'.²⁷ Consequently, Foucault announces that he had to

Undertake a third shift, in order to analyse what is termed 'the subject'. It seemed appropriate to look for the forms and modalities of the relation to self by which the individual constitutes and recognizes himself *qua* subject. (...) I felt obliged to study the games of truth in relationship of self with self and forming of oneself as a subject, taking as my domain of reference and field of investigation what might be called 'the history of desiring men'.²⁸

In agreement with Foucault's statement, the history of desiring men and of sexuality could be defined as the vehicle for exploring the other possible pole contained in the category of power, that means the productive relationship of the self with the self. But this is possible only because sexuality itself, since it's a field of relationships, is nothing but a network. The type of network then depends on what kind of forces are displayed: it is a struggle where the subject can be objectivated, categorized and marked or where it opens spaces for a new and free relationship with itself. As a result, sexuality gives evidence of the two possibilities, always interweaved, contained in the concept of governing: on the one side, being governed and, on the other, governing yourself. So, from the passive subject to the politically active subject. Thus, the specific aim of this radical turn imposes a needed rupture and discontinuity, without breaking the rhythm of the previous investigation.

²⁷ *The Use of Pleasure. Volume 2 of History of Sexuality*, trans. by R. Hurley, (New York: Vintage Books, 1990), *Introduction*, p. 4. In these and in the following lines Foucault connects together the three axes of his reflection: knowledge, power and subjectivity.

²⁸ *Ivi*, p. 6.

Therefore, the research of the technologies of the self addresses Foucault's reflection to the unexpected historical turn we can finally examine. The function of gateway to ancient philosophy is displayed again by *The Use of Pleasure*. As a matter of fact, in this second book Foucault decides to direct his attention to antiquity and to a particular aspect of it, the aesthetics of existence. What the philosopher was looking for in Greek and Greco-Roman culture was a mapping of all those 'intentional and voluntary actions by which men not only set themselves rules of conduct, but also seek to transform themselves, to change themselves in their singular being, and to make their life an oeuvre that carries certain aesthetic values and meets certain stylistic criteria'.²⁹

So, after having briefly rebuilt the exchange between the axes of power and the subject, we are already allowed to affirm that sexuality and the reference to ancient philosophy are part of a wider project, about the 'techniques of the self',³⁰ and both should be reallocated as a subset of this major domain. Moreover, the problem of the technologies of the self and of subjectivity finds its own meaning only if thought in relation to the question of power. According to these considerations, two questions should lead the forthcoming analysis:

- i. How is this project about the techniques of the self developed? And in which terms?;
- ii. Is this a satisfactory and reliable answer, according to its aims? In other words, does the ethics of the care of self correspond to the political demand?

The answers to these questions will occupy the last part of this paper. First, I will present Foucault's interpretation of antiquity; second, I will present some problematising aspects of this work.

Hence, as we said above, the theme of the relationship of the self with the self engages the last part of Foucault's reflection, approached from a completely new perspective: the problem of the care of self (*epimeleia heautou*) in ancient philosophy. The key to the interpretation of Foucault's operation is *The hermeneutics of the subject*, a group of

²⁹ *Ivi*, pp. 10-11.

³⁰ In any case, it seemed to me that the study of the problematization of sexual behavior in antiquity could be regarded as a chapter - one of the first chapter - of that general history of the *techniques of the self* *Ivi*, p. 11.

lectures held at the Collège de France in 1981–82. Here Foucault explains the general framework of his exploration of the subject formation in ancient philosophy. In this sense, the first lecture is essential, since it is a declaration of Foucault's intention: the purpose of the lectures is to study the forms of the relationship between the subject and the truth. This historical research finds its coordinates in the relationship between two principles, the *epimeleia heautou*, identified by the care of the self, and the *gnothi seauton*, represented by the Delphic precept of knowing yourself. In particular, Foucault wants to prove that in the Greco-Roman culture these two principles were always connected. Their union, Foucault suggests, has lasted till the Cartesian moment,³¹ which 'was led to put all the emphasis on the *gnothi seauton*, and so to forget, to leave in the dark, and to marginalize somewhat, this question of the care of the self'.³² But the *dynamic entanglement*³³ between *epimeleia heautou* and *gnothi seauton* has a concrete implication, that is to say the access to truth requires some practices that have to transform the self and these experiences can be called the 'techniques of the self'. For this reason, the French philosopher affirms that 'an act of knowledge could never give access to the truth unless it was prepared, accompanied, doubled and completed by a certain transformation of the subject; not of the individual, but of the subject himself in being as a subject'.³⁴ As a consequence, the question of truth requires a transformation of the subject and this auto-formation engages nothing but the constitutive process of himself as subject.

Therefore, Foucault's analysis of ancient forms of subjectivation in *The Hermeneutics of the subject* permits a couple of specifications, about the meaning of governing and the boundaries of the subject. Regarding 'governing', what results from Foucault's study of the care of the self is that the fundamental individual assignment is a process of *ethos-poiesis*³⁵

31 The only rupture in this coherent horizon is Aristotle, that Foucault defines as the exception in ancient philosophy, in the first lecture of *The Hermeneutics of the subject*, trans. by G. Burchell (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), 06.01.1982, and in the lecture of the 03.02.1982, when Foucault returns on the Cartesian moment and on its precursor, Aristotle indeed.

32 *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, p. 68.

33 *Ivi*, p. 69, 'there is a dynamic entanglement, reciprocal call for the *gnothi seauton* and for the *epimeleia heautou* (knowledge of the self and care of the self)'.

34 *Ivi*, p. 16.

35 The clarification of what Foucault intends with the expression of *ethospoiesis* is in the lecture of the 10.02.1982, where the philosopher quotes Plutarch and his use of the semantic areas of *ethos* and *poiein*. About that, see p. 237.

of the subject based on freedom. As a result, the active connotation of governing entail that the individual has to constitute himself as a 'subject', a category that discovers its historicity and contingency. Thereafter, the emphasis on this task supports the challenge, promoted also in the analysis of power, to a substantial interpretation of the subject, by denying that it is possible to achieve an essential nature.

In this sense, the turn to subjectivity inaugurated with *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* appears as a radicalisation of problematics already present in an embryonic way. Ancient philosophy is a laboratory where Foucault investigates all the possible declinations of the technologies of the self, by also contemplating some consistent differences between them.³⁶ Nevertheless, in order to give a stronger support to this continuist theory, we have to recall some later interviews and conferences (*The Subject and Power* and *The Ethic of the Concern for the Self as a Practice of Freedom*). Several years later, Foucault returns to these themes and specifies the continuity between the research of new forms of individuality, the cultivation of self, the analysis of power, and the role of freedom. From this point of view, what is particularly interesting in these lectures is that Foucault was trying to reorder his itinerary by making clear how and why certain concepts are connected. Some fundamental points emerge and they can be summarized in this way:

- i. Paradoxically, the permanent goal has always been the subject.³⁷ This general theme has then solicited the analysis of power since the subject is always involved in power relationships, which are nothing but a way in which certain actions modify others;
- ii. This goal also includes the task of promoting, thinking of new

36 In fact, even though *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* has got a common heuristic vector, which is the research of the dynamics implemented to transform the self, it does not flatten all these practices together and it does not assume that they respond to the same demands. It is emblematic, for example, the difference between Marcus Aurelius and Seneca (analyzed in the lecture of 24.02.1982).

37 'I would like to say, first of all, what has been the goal of my work during the last twenty years. It has not been to analyze the phenomena of power, nor to elaborate the foundations of such an analysis. My objective, instead, has been to create a history of the different modes by which, in our culture, human beings are made subjects. My work has dealt with three modes of objectification which transform human beings into subject (...) Thus, it is not power but the subject which is the general theme of my research. It is true that I became quite involved with the question of power' *The subject and the power*, p. 208.

forms of subjectivity. This aim is possible because of the agonism existing between power and freedom. If *where there is power, there is resistance*,³⁸ when we are modified by certain actions we can at the same time intervene and become active agents of modification;

- iii. The study of the care of self has been a change of perspective, not of a theme.³⁹ What Foucault was looking for was how a subject could constitute itself in an active, creative, and aesthetic way. But this research is completely historical, since these practices themselves belong to cultural and historical patterns. For this reason, Foucault asserts that,

If I am now interested in how the subject constitutes itself in an active fashion through practices of the self, these practices are nevertheless not something invented by the individual himself. They are models that he finds in his culture and are proposed, suggested, imposed upon him by his culture, his society, and his social group.⁴⁰

In this sense, Foucault is well aware of the contingency of the care of self: if it aims at being effective, it has to be actualized. This implies that we should understand how self-cultivation could be a form of resistance in a specific games of forces, neoliberalism, as it is described in *The Birth of Biopolitics*. As a consequence, Foucault's analysis of ancient philosophy is addressed to a contemporary urgency: the aim is always the present and the study of ancient philosophy is the occasion of opening again, rethinking of the space of possibilities, that are always existing in power relationships. So, as both Lorenzini⁴¹ and Chignola⁴² emphasise, the political dimension of a new critical philosophy lays in the research of conditions and possibilities for the transformation of the subject, in the refusal of a given and fixed power relationship. Not simply of the power relationship itself, but of its absolutisation.

But the acknowledgement of the political dimension of self-cultiva-

38 *The will to knowledge*, p.95.

39 About that, see especially *The Ethics of the Concern for self as a Practice of Freedom*.

40 *Ivi*, p. 291.

41 In the *Introduction to L'origine de l'herméneutique de soi, Conférences prononcées à Dartmouth College*, 1980 (Paris : Vrin, 2013), p. 25.

42 In *Foucault oltre Foucault. Una politica della filosofia* (Roma: Labirinti, 2014).

tion leads us now to the conclusion of the essay, that will try to answer to the second question I posed above. Here the attempt will be to throw light on some possible weak spots of Foucauldian proposal.

3. Political Limits of Self-Cultivation

Before approaching these controversial points, I would like to summarize what we have already achieved. First, I exposed the pervasive and dynamic conception of power, as strategic games of forces. In parallel, I unraveled the correlative view of the subject, of both an objectivated conduct and a creative and autonomous governing involved in these relationships. These two interweaving lines have then conduced to the recognition of the political dimension of the care of self, conceived as the *praxis* of a self-cultivation that shapes the subject.

But this apparently coherent horizon leaves room for some problematical voices and I would like to recollect two of them. The first significant objection has been advanced by J. Butler in the essay *can one lead a good life in a bad life?* with the problem of vulnerability.⁴³ In this lecture Butler reformulates the problem, posed by Adorno, of pursuing a good life if we live in a context structured by inequality. In particular, she calls attention to the problem of leading a good life in an explicit perspective of biopower,⁴⁴ when we cannot take for granted that our life is 'worthy' to be protected, economically and socially supported, not worthy of being recognized and valued. At the extent that my life is dispensable, exposed to precarity, excluded from political support and abandoned, how can I pursue the care of self? Does it make sense to talk about care of self when life is not assured, given that the task of biopower it to assure life, take the problem of life in charge? This topic then could be dichotomized: either self-cultivation is a reliable political answer in case of extreme situations (for instance civil conflicts or the recent migration flows) or it is practicable only for those who are already in the position of pursuing it.

The second significant objection is what Bernini has called the

43 J. Butler, *Can one lead a good life in a bad life?*, in *Radical Philosophy*. Adorno Prize Lecture, September 11, 2012.

44 *Ivi*, 'by Biopolitics, I mean those powers that organize life, even the powers that differentially dispose lives to precarity as a part of a broader management of populations through governmental and non-governmental means, and that establish a set of measure for the differential valuation of life itself', p. 10.

*irremediable solitude*⁴⁵ of the subject. Once the care of self is conceived as the personal, specific, and always particular *praxis* of a beautiful life-style, based on freedom and autonomy, is there any space for intersubjectivity or does this 'exceptionality' exclude any major engagement?⁴⁶ Is an isolated individuality the inescapable condition and price for the reliability, the effectiveness of the care of self? As a matter of fact, even though the care of self requires always the others, for instance, in the relationship with a master, a guide, a friend, or in the dimension of school, does this *ethos-poiesis* involve also a collective-*ethospoiesis*? Giving the analysis of biopower in general and neoliberalism in particular, we could say that a specific life-style has been imposed. This general and totalitarian framework is then composed of *praxis*, involving, for instance, urbanization, health-care, educational system but also desires (*where there is desire, the power relationship is already present*⁴⁷). What is at stake is understanding if self-cultivation aims to modify this framework (and provides the instruments for doing it) or wants to be always a specific and particular reaction, concerning myself as individual.

To conclude, to face these issues, we should bear in mind Foucault's evasive answer given in 1984 (the year of his death) to a very specific question about the care of self

Q.: Could the problematic of the care of the self be at the heart of a new way of thinking about politics, of a form of politics different from what we know today?

A.: I admit that I have not got very far in this direction, and I would very much like to come back to more contemporary questions to try to see what can be made of all this in the context of the current political problematic (...) On the other hand, it seems to me that contemporary political thought allows very little room for the question of the ethical subject. I don't like to reply to questions I haven't studied.⁴⁸

45 *Le pecore e i pastore Critica, politica, etica nel pensiero di Michel Foucault*, Chapter *Conclusioni*, *Un politeismo a tre valori*, p. 257 and ff.

46 *Ivi*, Chapter *Critica e Illuminismo*, part *Una freccia nel cuore del presente Foucault e Habermas*, p. 223 and ff.

47 *The will to knowledge*, p. 81.

48 *The Ethics of the Concern for self as a Practice of Freedom*, p. 294.

As a result, the question of the political dimension of self-cultivation in a Foucauldian perspective could be considered to be an open question, still an open field of research: we have the bases, the grid of intelligibility, built on the dialectic without synthesis between power and subject, but we also have some highly controversial points.

Towards a History of Philosophical Practices in Michel Foucault and Pierre Hadot

FEDERICO TESTA

This paper approaches the idea of philosophy that could be extracted from the reception of Hellenistic philosophical schools in Michel Foucault and Pierre Hadot. Stressing the idea of 'way of life', as well as the importance of 'spiritual exercises' and 'ascetic practices' to philosophical activity, I outline similarities between the two French philosophers, in order to explore the possibility of a history of philosophy written from the concrete perspective of the technologies of the self and of spiritual practices. I present Foucault and Hadot's analyses of concrete practices and modes of engagement with life as a perspective that redefines philosophy, as well as a hermeneutical tool in the study of ancient philosophy. In order to highlight the collective aspects of the history of philosophy as a history of practices, I discuss Hadot and Foucault's perspectives on the phenomenon of the ancient philosophical schools.

Introduction

In this paper I analyse the notion of philosophy as a way of life in the works of Pierre Hadot and Michel Foucault. Adopting different perspectives and methodologies, both authors are critical of a certain 'modern' notion of philosophy characterised by a systematic, abstract, and discursive form. Through historical research, Foucault and Hadot show the origins and the contingency of this notion of philosophy, pointing to alternatives, to traditions that were marginalised in the history of Western thought, which, nevertheless, continued to operate and re-emerge in this history.

What is the idea of philosophy delineated by Foucault and Hadot in their studies of antiquity? If it is the case that they share a conception

of philosophical activity, it is important to explicitly articulate this convergence. In addition to the specific philosophical tasks that the two authors set in their reading of ancient philosophy, is there a possible outcome in what concerns the consideration of the history and historiography of ancient philosophy? Is there a certain methodological attitude or a conceptual framework that could be relevant to the way we write the history of philosophy more generally? Considering their critical aims, does their image of philosophy presuppose an actual or possible alternative history of philosophy?

As Orazio Irrera¹ points out, the notion of ‘practice’ is very important to Hadot and Foucault. However, they interpret this notion differently, placing it in different historical-philosophical frameworks. By analysing Hadot’s criticism to Foucault, Irrera shows the different notions of ‘practice’ entailed by the two scholars’ philosophical and historiographical approaches.² My attempt is to emphasise a certain convergence concerning their conception of the practice of philosophy.³ The

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- 1 O. Irrera. 'Pleasure and Transcendence of the Self: Notes on a 'Dialogue too soon Interrupted' between Michel Foucault and Pierre Hadot', *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, v.36(9) (2010), 995-1017.
 - 2 Irrera analyses in detail one of Hadot’s criticisms to Foucault: Foucault’s allegedly misunderstanding of the difference between ‘joy’ (*gaudium*) and ‘pleasure’ (*voluptas*) in the ancient schools, especially in the Stoics. Irrera ('Pleasure and Transcendence of the Self...', p.996-997) shows that the distinction is acknowledged by Foucault (when he differentiates two forms of pleasure, relating them to the ancient concepts of *gaudium* and *voluptas*). Irrera, then, shows the insufficient differentiation of these two concepts in different texts by Hadot ('Pleasure and Transcendence of the Self...', p.1008). He also explains that, even if Foucault notes the ‘historical-doctrinal’ difference between ‘joy’ and ‘pleasure’, this distinction is not relevant to the purpose of his genealogy. Irrera shows that there is also a fundamental difference in the conception of spiritual practice in Hadot and Foucault, making explicit some of Hadot’s philosophical presuppositions in the analysis of ancient philosophy, namely, in Hadot, the ‘performativity of a practice (or spiritual exercise)’ as ‘intimately tied to a universal which transcends the individual self’ (Ibid., p.995). According to Irrera, Hadot’s taxonomic activity as historian can be performed only starting from the ‘choice of a determined theoretical paradigm’, namely ‘a theory of transcendence’, which is absent in Foucault (Ibid., p.1008).
 - 3 This was done by Moreno Montanari, who argues that Foucault and Hadot developed their research in the 1980s in ‘complete autonomy’, reaching surprisingly similar conclusions. M. Montanari. 'La filosofia antica come esercizio spirituale e cura di sé nelle interpretazioni di Pierre Hadot e Michel Foucault'. *Studi Urbinati, B – Scienze umane e sociali*. v. 80 (2010), p.343. I am not working with this hypothesis, but rather with the one that asserts or emphasises the

working hypothesis here is that Hadot and Foucault share a concrete, pragmatic, and performative conception of philosophy.

By analysing the notion of philosophy as a way of life, spiritual practice or technique of the self, as endorsed by the two philosophers, my attempt is to investigate the possibility of a history of philosophy as a history of concrete practices in their works. In order to do this, I examine the technologies of the self that articulate the relationship between ‘subjectivity’ and ‘truth’ in Foucault’s concept of spirituality, as well as Hadot’s conception of philosophy as spiritual exercises and its crystallisation in the ancient schools, as tools to read and understand the historical practices of philosophy.

My scope here is limited to an inquiry on the work of Foucault and Hadot, and this paper is situated within the reconstruction of this ‘dialogue too soon interrupted’⁴ between the two authors. However, where the dialogue did not occur,⁵ there is still a series of convergences and divergences to be analysed. The two French philosophers began this

communication between the two authors, presupposing some degree of mutual influence, clearly noting Foucault’s statements regarding his reading of Hadot as influential to his research. See F. Testa. ‘A filosofia como modo de vida: Michel Foucault e Pierre Hadot’. *Cultura e Fé*, v. 136 (2012), 63-79. I frame this encounter as a dialogue ‘too soon interrupted’. See Irrera, ‘Pleasure and Transcendence of the Self...’ and Hadot, *Philosophy as a Way of Life*. (Malden: Blackwell, 1995); also, *Exercices Spirituels et Philosophie Antique*. (Paris: Albin Michel, 2002).

- 4 As Hadot says: ‘*Malheureusement sa mort prématurée, qui a bouleversé tous ses amis, a interrompu un dialogue que ne faisait que commencer, et dans lequel nous aurions pu sans doute profiter mutuellement de nos accords, mais aussi et surtout de nos désaccords*’. P. Hadot. *Exercices Spirituels et Philosophie Antique*. (Paris: Albin Michel, 2002), p.305. Irrera uses Hadot’s expression as the title of his paper. See O. Irrera, ‘Pleasure and Transcendence of the Self: Notes on a ‘Dialogue too soon Interrupted’ between Michel Foucault and Pierre Hadot’.
- 5 According to Flynn, they ‘never met until Foucault invited Hadot to accept candidacy for election to the Collège’ (T. Flynn. ‘Philosophy as a Way of Life: Foucault and Hadot’. *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, v.31(5-6) (2005), 609-622, p.614). As Hadot says, that happened in the autumn of 1980. Hadot says he did not know Foucault’s work in depth at the time (P. Hadot. *Exercices Spirituels et Philosophie Antique*, p.305), whereas Foucault told him that he was an ‘attentive reader’ of Hadot’s texts. Foucault attended Hadot’s inaugural lecture. Hadot states they did not have much contact and exchange (‘unfortunately rare conversations’), because Foucault died soon after that. P. Hadot. *La Philosophie comme manière de vivre. Entretiens avec Jeannie Carlier et Arnold I. Davidson* (Paris: Albin Michel, 2001), p.215, English translation P. Hadot. *The Present Alone is our Happiness* (California: Stanford, 2011).

work of comparison and this inventory of differences. For instance, Foucault mentions Hadot's work several times in the *Hermeneutics of the Subject*, analysing his positions, stressing the importance of Hadot's texts to his own work, but also pointing to their different philosophical choices.⁶ He also quotes Hadot in the introduction to *The Use of Pleasure*,⁷ as well as in *The Care of the Self*.⁸ Hadot also worked on this comparison, starting with the text 'Reflections on the Notion of 'Cultivation of the Self''⁹ in which he severely criticised Foucault, acknowledging, nevertheless, a certain philosophical proximity despite the methodological distance between them.¹⁰

It is difficult to engage in the reconstruction of this dialogue without considering Foucault's and Hadot's critical and philosophical aims, as well as the notion of philosophy that can be derived from the parallel reading of their works. If this reading can operate a critique or a

6 We could take the discussion about the notion of 'conversion' as an example. Foucault says: 'I have done all this preparation and taken all these precautions with regard to the analysis of this notion of conversion, between *epistrophē* and *metanoia*, with reference, of course, to a basic text written by Pierre Hadot twenty years ago now'. M. Foucault. *The Hermeneutics of the Subject* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005), p.216.

7 'I have benefited greatly from the works of Peter Brown and those of Pierre Hadot, and I have been helped more than once by the conversations we have had and the views they have expressed'. M. Foucault. *The History of Sexuality, Volume Two: The Use of Pleasure*. (New York, Vintage Books, 1990), p.8.

8 See Foucault's definition of 'the cultivation of the self' [*culture de soi*] as art of existence, in which Hadot appears as a reference. See M. Foucault. *The History of Sexuality, Volume Three: The Care of the Self*. (New York: Pantheon Books, 1986), p.43.

9 This text was first publicised in the conference 'Foucault philosophe'. See P. Hadot. *Philosophy as a Way of Life*. (Malden: Blackwell, 1995), p.206. See also P. Hadot. *Exercices Spirituels et Philosophie Antique*. (Paris: Albin Michel, 2002), p.323.

10 In this text, Hadot criticism is articulated in three main axes: 1) Foucault focused too much on the 'self', articulating an kind of individualistic ethics, without considering the idea of a 'transcendent self'; 2) He fails to clearly distinguish 'joy' (*gaudium; eupatheia*) and 'pleasure' (*voluptas; hedone*) in ancient philosophy, especially in Stoicism; 3) Foucault does not recognise or emphasise the transcendent non-individual aspects of the practices of the self, namely: 'human community' and the 'cosmic whole' or 'universal nature'. Hadot also criticises Foucault's idea of the 'writing of the self'. Hadot claims that the Foucauldian idea of a 'culture of the self' is 'tacit attempt to offer contemporary mankind a model of life' and an 'aesthetics of existence', which is 'too aesthetic' and 'may be a new form of Dandysm'. See P. Hadot. *Philosophy as a Way of Life*. (Malden: Blackwell, 1995), pp.207-211.

transformation of our understanding of philosophical activity, it is possible to ask if it could also contribute to a reflection on the way we understand and practice the history of philosophy. What could be the relevance of such investigation to the history of philosophy as such?

In order to illustrate very briefly the relevance of this question – and of Foucault and Hadot – to the historiography of philosophy,¹¹ it is possible to situate their positions according to Ian Hunter's account of the historiographical debate in intellectual history in the Anglophone scholarship. Hunter explains:

Since the 1980s we have been told that the history of philosophy and intellectual history more broadly are characterised by a fundamental impasse, between the genre of *historical contextualisation* that views philosophies as empirical activities and the genre of *rational reconstruction* that assesses their contribution to philosophical truth.¹²

He explains that one of the solutions to this impasse was provided by what he calls a 'dialectical method', which synthesises the two genres.¹³ Hunter argues that the dialectical method is insufficient,¹⁴ because it risks subsuming the historical, empirical aspects of philosophies in a philosophical narrative. He proposes, then, to replace the philosophical commitments of the dialectical method 'with concepts capable of approaching philosophies as empirical activities taking place under

11 This justification is not the scope of this paper. What I intend to do here is merely to point to an ongoing historical debate in which categories close to those of Hadot or Foucault are analysed from the point of view of historiography.

12 I. Hunter. 'The History of Philosophy and the Persona of the Philosopher'. *Modern Intellectual History*, v.4(3), (2007), 571-600, p.572.

13 Hunter analyses Rorty, Schneewind and Skinner's book *Philosophy in History*. This book articulates the two genres mentioned above in dialectical opposition and complementarity. An example of this approach is Charles Taylor. He conceives philosophy as a social practice, presupposing, however, a *telos* and an idea of good that would allow this philosophy to be judged in terms of philosophical truth and falsity. Following Hunter's exposition, this rational truth does not seem to be historical or historicised and, at the same time, seems to function as a kind of transcendent or external criterion to assess a certain philosophy. I. Hunter. 'The History of Philosophy and the Persona of the Philosopher', p.578.

14 'This dialectical presentation of the two genres makes it impossible to approach the key problem - regarding the divergence between philosophy as object and as method of intellectual history'. (Ibid., p.574).

specifiable historical circumstances'.¹⁵ Hunter views the Cambridge school of history of political thought as an alternative to the dialectical method.¹⁶ His position, however, differs from this historiographical line.¹⁷ Hunter's alternative is that of a history of philosophy considering the constitution of the philosophers' self or 'persona', emphasising the contingent, 'performative character of ethico-cognitive ensembles'.¹⁸ The concept of persona 'extends the reach of the history of philosophy' because of the 'account it offers of the relation between the acquisition of philosophical knowledge and the *cultivation of a special self*'.¹⁹

This idea of 'persona' constitutes a perspective, close to that of Foucault and Hadot,²⁰ which is as a positive alternative in the historiographical debate. From this perspective, the starting point of philosophical activity emerge within the

...regimen of philosophical self-problematisation designed to motivate cultivation of the particular philosophical persona that it makes desirable. Such regimens transmit what Foucault char-

15 Ibid, p.574.

16 'The Cambridge School writers have indeed provided an approach to intellectual history in which past forms of thought, philosophies included, can be constituted as objects of empirical historical interpretation and explanation. By viewing philosophies as speech acts, Skinner in particular has sought to suspend their truth-claims and to interpret them in terms of their mode of acting on and within particular cultural, religious and political contexts'. Hunter emphasises Skinner's non-dialectical, 'conflictual conception of intellectual history' (Ibid, p.575).

17 Hunter is sympathetic to the Cambridge school's empirical history of philosophy, against a dialectical mode of history of thought and philosophical reconstruction of truth. However, he sees a residual 'structuralism' in the Cambridge school (Ibid., p.583).

18 Ibid., p.583.

19 'The philosopher's self is usually viewed as a purely formal point of reflexive self-awareness, for example the 'cogito' of Descartes's sceptical reduction [...] Through the concept of philosophical persona, though, we learn to see this self as something that the apprentice philosopher cultivates (...) thereby imbuing a particular ensemble of intellectual arts with the unity and dynamism of a culturally valorised and intensely desired 'higher self' (Ibid., p.587).

20 Hadot is appears in one of the notes in this passage as an example of the group of writers that emphasised the regimes 'associated with the cultivation of a particular persona' (I. Hunter. 'The History of Philosophy and the Persona of the Philosopher', p.587). Hunter quotes Hadot's book *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, supporting his claim according to which 'the history of philosophical pedagogy and psychology should form an integral part of the history of philosophy' (Ibid., p.587).

acterises as ‘models proposed for setting up and developing relationships with the self, for self-reflection, self-knowledge, self-examination, for the decipherment of the self by oneself, for the transformations that one seeks to accomplish with oneself as object’.²¹

Even if Foucault and Hadot seem to occupy an important place in Hunter’s proposition of the history of philosophy as a history of ensembles of intellectual arts – ‘speech acts, but also doctrines, modes of proof, logico-rhetorical techniques, ethico-cognitive exercises, and experimental apparatus’ – that are tied to ‘a specific sense and kind of self’,²² it is important to consider certain particularities, especially in Foucault’s case.

Between History of Sexuality, Genealogy of Subjectivity and History of Philosophy

When analysing Foucault’s reading of ancient philosophies, it is important to stress that he is not explicitly writing a history of philosophy. According to Ortega, Foucault’s project is that of the ‘elaboration of a history of subjectivity starting from different technologies of the self’.²³ If we analyse diachronically his studies on antiquity, we note that it begins as part of the project of a history of sexuality. His research starts as an investigation of sexual practices, the problematisation of behaviours, and the sexual ethics of the ancients – a chapter of a broader genealogy of the subject. This research, however, is gradually re-centred on the ‘techniques of the self’ – on the relation to oneself as an ethical work of ascesis.

It is also important to remember that Foucault’s research on ethics is an inquiry on the forms of resistance to power and subjection. Foucault’s goal is the ‘study of different practices that allow the individual to establish a relationship with itself, constituting different points of resistance to subjectivising power’.²⁴ Foucault investigates the possibility of a subject that is not informed by exterior governmentalities, a subject able to constitute, by means of regular exercises, a relationship to the self. As he states in *The Hermeneutics*, this relation to the self seems

21 Ibid., p.587.

22 Ibid., p.583.

23 F. Ortega. *Amizade e Estética da Existência em Foucault*. (São Paulo: Graal, 1999), p.60.

24 F. Ortega. *Amizade e Estética da Existência em Foucault*, p.60.

to be the only possible ground of resistance to power.²⁵ From the perspective of ethics and resistance, then, philosophy seems to play an important role as a positive set of critical practices mobilised by the subject.

As Timothy O'Leary suggests, philosophy is a practice in Foucault's ethics, and not only an object of historical investigation.²⁶ If, in 1978, Foucault said that he was not doing philosophy, nor 'suggesting to others not to do it',²⁷ in his 1980s research, philosophy appears as a useful tool for the transformation of the self. Analysing the introduction of *The Use of Pleasure*, O'Leary claims that, for Foucault, philosophy could participate in a project of self-transformation: 'Philosophy could again be a critical reflective practice whose aim is to transform and de-subjectivise the individual'.²⁸ In this sense, Foucault's historical research 're-encounters a philosophical tradition with which he could identify his ethics of self-transformation – the ancient tradition of philosophy as a 'way of life' or 'spiritual exercise'.'²⁹

When recovering the trajectory of Foucault's research on ethics and subjectivation, it is important to ask: (a) is it possible to find the elements for a redefinition of philosophy, a positive concept of philosophical activity, as O'Leary, Ortega and others seem to suggest? (b) Is it possible to find the elements of an alternative history of philosophy in Foucault's history of subjectivity?

I believe it is pertinent to ask whether Foucault provides the tools to constitute a different historiographical perspective. Indeed, he seems to acknowledge that philosophy gradually acquires centrality in his historical project. As he says, in 1984, in the *Courage of the Truth*, 'Maybe I will try to pursue this history of the arts of living, of philosophy as a form of life, of asceticism in its relation to truth, after ancient philosophy, in Christianity'.³⁰ This statement suggests a shift concerning the possibility of a history of philosophy in his work.

25 'There is no first or final point of resistance to political power other than the relationship one has to oneself' (M. Foucault. *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, p.251).

26 T. O'Leary. *Foucault and the Art of Ethics*. (London and New York: Continuum, 2002), p.140.

27 Ibid., p.141.

28 Ibid., p.142.

29 Ibid., pp.143-144.

I intend to show how this Foucauldian perspective converges, to a certain extent, with the one Hadot presents. I believe the consideration, by these two authors, of the ancient schools – as the intertwining of a collective art of existence with intellectual or spiritual exercises that one operates on oneself – is a way to establish concrete individual and social practices as a point of reference to understand the history of ancient philosophy.

History of philosophical ways of life and Hadot's critical aim

Differently from Foucault, Hadot articulates his conception of philosophy in relation to his explicit project of history of philosophy. Hadot thinks that, by recovering the 'ancient' spiritual conception of philosophy we can uncover a history of fundamental philosophical attitudes and existential choices. According to Hadot, historiography of philosophy should also include the 'study of philosophical modes of life'.³¹ His project focuses on the task of writing a history that could integrate this lived, existential dimension to the study of the doctrines, to a reconstruction of philosophical discourse. This historical enterprise is connected to his critical aim, that of offering another possible concept of philosophy in our days, by recovering this idea of philosophy as a lived activity, 'more formative than informative',³² which touches the core of our life and *ethos*. Hadot seeks to revive the tradition in which philosophy is defined by spiritual exercises and forms of life.

In *What is Ancient Philosophy?* the idea of 'school' plays a key role in the definition of ancient philosophy. Hadot employs this notion to explain the relation between a fundamental choice of a way of life and discourse, including a dimension of alterity and inter-human relations in the core of ancient philosophical practices. The ancient school seems to be a privileged locus of intersection of (a) philosophical doctrines (or theoretical discourse as a practice), (b) modes of being, ways of living (which presupposes the relationship with others), and (c) pedagogy (the practices and concrete circumstances through which certain groups learn

30 M. Foucault. *The Courage of the Truth (The Government of Self and Others II)*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2011), p.316.

31 P. Hadot. *What is Ancient Philosophy?* (Cambridge and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), p.1.

32 T. Flynn. 'Philosophy as a Way of Life: Foucault and Hadot'. *Philosophy & Social Criticism*, v.31(5-6), 2005, 609-622, p.610.

how to reflect on themselves, problematise certain aspects of themselves, and undertake various exercises on the self).³³

Let us analyse the perspectives of the two authors and discuss their complementarity. We begin with Foucault's analysis of the care of the self as an event in the history of thought and its implications to philosophical activity.

The care of the self as an event in the history of thought

The Hermeneutics of the Subject could be characterised as a 'history of the care of the self'.³⁴ This history is a particular case of a broader inquiry on the technologies of the self,³⁵ in which different practices on the self configure different forms of subjectivation.

The history of the care of the self is structured in three axes: (1) the emergence of this principle as a cultural experience and as a philosophical concept; (2) the articulation of a specific subject-truth relation based on the care of the self, which Foucault calls 'spirituality'; (3) the discrediting of the care of the self,³⁶ a re-qualification of the knowledge of the self – and, consequently, the exclusion of the requirements of spirituality for the subject-truth relation.

33 This definition of pedagogy in the context of a philosophical school was suggested by Ian Hunter.

34 S. Muchail. *Foucault, Mestre do Cuidado: Textos sobre a Hermêutica do Sujeito*. (São Paulo: Loyola, 2011), p.44.

35 Foucault will integrate the investigations on medical and philosophical practices of the self within the category of 'pragmatics of the self'. He also mentions other practices, ritual and magical practices that he includes in the field of a 'historical ethnology of ascetics' (M. Foucault. *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, p.417). According to the editors of *The Hermeneutics*, 'The history of the techniques of the self in Ancient Greece was broadly investigated before Foucault's studies of the eighties', they provide a list of authors and studies (Ibid., p.61).

36 'Why did Western thought and philosophy neglect the notion of *epimeleia heautou* (...) in its reconstruction of its own history?'. How did it come about, asks Foucault, 'that we accorded so much privilege, value, and intensity to the 'know yourself' and omitted, or, at least, left in the shadow, this notion of care of the self that (...) seems to have framed the principle of 'know yourself' from the start and to have supported an extremely rich and dense set of notions, practices, ways of being, forms of existence? Why does the *gnothi seauton* have this privileged status for us, to the detriment of the care of oneself?' (M. Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, p.12).

According to Foucault, the care of the self was a traditional principle in Greek culture. It is with the figure of Socrates that both the imperative of ‘knowing oneself’ and that of ‘taking care of oneself’ emerge as philosophical precepts. Foucault claims that the imperative of ‘knowing oneself’ emerges within that of ‘taking care of oneself’, understanding the latter as an underlying structure to ancient philosophy.³⁷ According to Arnold Davidson, Foucault ‘aims to unsettle a dominant way of understanding the history of ancient philosophy. Foucault insists that (...) the rule ‘know yourself’ should be understood (...) in a kind of subordination to the precept of the care of the self’.³⁸

By individuating the history of the practices and techniques that defined the care of the self, Foucault’s genealogy makes it possible to establish different conditions of intelligibility of knowledge of the self related to it. The constitution of the subject and the possibility of knowing oneself can be understood through the history of the concrete practices of the care of the self.³⁹

According to Ortega, one of the theoretical outcomes of Foucault’s historical-genealogical enterprise regarding antiquity (beyond the particular historical practices he analyses) is a ‘processual notion of subjectivity’, which differs from a philosophy of the subject or a ‘return of the subject’. Subjectivity is historicised and depends on the different

37 Differently from Hadot, who generalises the model of philosophy as a way of life to the whole of ancient philosophy, Foucault makes clear that there is the exceptional figure of Aristotle for whom philosophy is a purely theoretical activity.

38 Davidson. ‘Introduction’, in M. Foucault. *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, p.xx.

39 Hunter’s concept of ‘the persona of the philosopher’ is ‘introduced in opposition to the philosophical concept of subject of knowledge’ (‘The History of Philosophy and the Persona of the Philosopher’, p.584). This is also one of the consequences of Foucault’s genealogy. Starting from the care of the self means to avoid the assumption of a theory of the subject, and to emphasise the way a particular kind of self is constituted. The cultivation of a persona expresses a case of composition or constitution of the self. From a Foucauldian perspective, the persona of the philosopher – engendered by a certain set of practices of cultivation and formation – is an example of alternative modes of subjectivation in history. It is possible to say that, like in Foucault’s analyses of the constitution of the self, Hunter’s historiographical reflection on the concept of persona does not presuppose a universal structure of subjectivity, or a fixed subject of knowledge. Hunter suggests us to treat the ‘philosopher as a self cultivated to bear specialised ensembles of such [intellectual] arts, in institutions dedicated to the transmission of particular philosophical traditions’. His concept is the application of a consistent method to the study of different periods in history of philosophy, not only to antiquity.

technologies that constitute it: ‘there is no subject *as such* (a universal, a-historical subject), but rather a history of subjectivity [...] and of the different technologies of the self’.⁴⁰ As Davidson explains, by refusing a universal theory of the subject, Foucault understands ‘*the subject* himself as constituted by the form of reflexivity specific to this or that form of care of the self’.⁴¹

Foucault shows the different ways in which the constitution of the subject took place in history according to different practices and techniques of the self. As Davidson explains, by identifying the priority of the care of the self in ancient philosophy, Foucault’s genealogy dismantles a possible theory of the subject implied in assuming the knowledge of the self as a starting point.⁴²

If we take the care of the self as a key notion in the history of philosophy, it is possible to say that Foucault’s approach includes within the sphere of this history, a series of concrete practices, activities and exercises (tests, memorisation, writing, meditation, etc.). This emphasis leads Foucault to a differentiation between ancient philosophy, and a modern – theoretical, abstract and systematic conception of philosophy.⁴³ Foucault characterises the processes, requirements and the subject-truth relation active in ancient, and, especially, Hellenistic, philosophy, as spir-

40 F. Ortega. *Amizade e Estética da Existência em Foucault*, p.60.

41 M. Foucault. *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, p.xxii.

42 Foucault’s history cannot take the ‘subject’ as something universal, eternal, fixed or essential. It has to consider it as a variable (and empty) form that has different historical constitutions. As Davidson puts it, to depart from the ‘knowledge of the self’, ‘installing a factious history that would display a sort of continuous development of the knowledge of the self’ would be to allow ‘an explicit or implicit, but anyway underdeveloped theory of the subject to infiltrate the analysis’ (Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, p.xxi). Foucault shows that the *gnōthi seauton* does not have the same form or function within the history of the *care of the self*, and, in addition, that the ‘self’ is constituted.

43 This qualitative difference between ‘ancient’ and ‘modern’ philosophy is also fundamental in Hadot’s approach. Nevertheless, I believe it is important to question this distinction. If we consider Hunter’s approach, modern philosophy is still related to the constitution of a philosophical persona (that is to say it is still connected to empirical historical practices of self cultivation, connected to institutions and ethico-cognitive exercise. In Foucault’s work, however, the distinction between ‘ancient’ and ‘modern’ is more fluid. Foucault situates a series of philosophical examples of the articulation of philosophy as a way of life in modernity, from Spinoza to Nietzsche, Marx, Stirner, anarchist thought, etc.

ity.⁴⁴

From the perspective of the historiography of philosophy, this distinction corresponds to a re-evaluation of the decisive moments in the history of thought. Once we highlight the care of the self, there would be a history of the singular event of ‘spirituality’, seen through the lens of *long durée*, as long-standing body of cultural practices, pedagogical institutions, modes of cultivating the self. There would also be a history of the relative effacing of spirituality, marked by the event that Foucault calls, with a certain ambiguity, ‘Cartesian moment’.⁴⁵ Nevertheless, Foucault believes that spirituality is never completely excluded from philosophy. Integrating this structure of spirituality, beyond antiquity, the ‘alternative’ history of philosophy would have to investigate these examples.⁴⁶

Philosophy, Spirituality and Techniques of the Self

According to Foucault, the care of the self structures a subject-truth relation called ‘spirituality’, which has three main aspects. First, spirituality is a mode of relation between subject and truth in which these terms are not connected by means of a transparent, direct relation. The subject is conceived as deprived of truth. As Foucault explains: ‘Spirituality postulates that the truth is never given to the subject by right’.⁴⁷ The conditions of possibility of knowledge and access to truth are neither

44 ‘A distinction without which’ – according to Davidson – ‘the modern relation between the subject and the truth, taken as if universal, would cover over the singularity of the Hellenistic event of meditation and its constitution of the subject of truth’ (Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, p.xxiii).

45 A series of processes in the history of thought, especially in the history of the subject-truth relation, that separate philosophy from the exigencies of spirituality and disqualifies the care of the self. I discuss the ‘Cartesian moment’ in papers published previously (See F. Testa. ‘Michel Foucault e o helenismo: subjetivação e cuidado de si’. *Intuitio*, v. 4 (2011), 3-14. See also F. Testa. ‘A filosofia como modo de vida: Michel Foucault e Pierre Hadot’. *Cultura e Fé* (2012), v. 136, 63-79). The ‘Cartesian moment’ is an ambiguous historical concept, because it does not mark a definitive dissociation or rupture between spirituality and philosophy.

46 As he explains, ‘I think Montaigne should be reread in this perspective [...]. We could also take up the history of 19th century thought a bit in this perspective [...]. If you take, for example, Stirner, Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, Dandysm, Baudelaire, anarchy, anarchist thought, etc’. He also mentions Spinoza, Goethe, Marx, Lacan and other examples from the early-modern and modern period. M. Foucault. *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, p.251.

47 M. Foucault. *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, p.15.

immanent to the subject's cognitive structures, nor assured by an objective method.⁴⁸

Second, spirituality does not disqualify the truth or the possibility of truth. The subject has to operate a self-transformation in order to have access to the truth, through a conversion to and a work on the self, which Foucault calls *askesis*. The second attribute of spirituality is the need of a conversion,⁴⁹ a movement of opening up of the access to truth. As Foucault says, 'There can be no truth without a conversion or a transformation of the subject', which is conditioned by 'a work of the self on the self [...] a progressive transformation of the self [...] in a long labour of ascesis (*askesis*)'.⁵⁰ This work is the key to understand the concrete forms acquired by the care of the self in ancient philosophy.⁵¹

In modern philosophy, the subject can access truth without self-transformation. According to Foucault, in the modern moment of the history of truth and subjectivity, truth and subject are autonomous in relation to each other, but the relations between them are assured *a priori*, by the subject's very structure, and by the structure of truth. The mediation between these two instances is a certain objective method and not spiritual requirements. In spirituality knowledge is connected to the ethical or affective status of the subject. The caesura between subject and truth, before conversion and *askesis*, is reflected in his condition of suffering and bondage to the passions. This means that the relation to the truth has important ethical implications, and the access to truth is also capable of saving⁵² the subject. This is why, in spirituality, access to the truth has also therapeutic aspect. We might recall, as an example, the Epicurean idea according to which the discourse of a philosopher that does not act upon the passions of the soul, as a physician would act upon the body, is in vain.⁵³

48 Ibid., p.15.

49 Ibid., Lecture eleven.

50 Ibid., p.16.

51 'In short [...] in and of itself an act of knowledge could never give access to the truth unless it was prepared, accompanied, doubled, and completed by a certain transformation of the subject; not of the individual, but of the subject himself in his being as subject' (Ibid., p.16).

52 For an analysis of the notion of salvation, see M. Foucault *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, p.23, pp.120-21, p.127, pp.180-85.

53 See Foucault (*The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, p.21), note 29: 'The centre of gravity of this theme is Epicurus' phrase: 'The discourse of the philosopher who does not treat any human affection is empty. Just as a doctor who does not get rid

This is the third key feature of the access to truth in spirituality: its effects of rebound on the subject.⁵⁴ The subject does not merely come to know the truth in a cumulative process, but this truth is a ‘quasi-subject’ that installs itself within the subject’s being, reacting upon his way of being and affective condition.⁵⁵ We can suppose that, starting from Foucault’s subjectivity-truth framework, there would be a concrete history of the different effects of truth on the subject operated by different philosophies. There would be a history of the experimentations that different forms of *askesis* propose, as well as a history of practical effects of philosophy in the structure of the subject and the formation of the self.

What is the image of the history of philosophy that could emerge from this perspective? (1) History of philosophy should consider the different relations subject-truth oriented by the care of the self, understood concrete arts and intellectual work on the self. Consequently, the history of philosophy would be a history of the concrete practices and technologies of the self.⁵⁶ Different philosophies propose different tech-

of bodily illness is useless, so also is a philosophy if it does not get rid of the affection of the soul”. Foucault’s quotation is from A.-J. Voelke (*La philosophie comme therapie de l’âme*). Epicurus is very important for the discussion of a therapeutic model in *The Hermeneutics*. See the analysis of the uses of the word *therapeuein* in Epicurus’ *Letter to Menoeceus* (*The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, p.9)

54 As Foucault explains: ‘...once access to the truth has really been opened up, it produces effects that are, of course, the consequence of the spiritual approach taken in order to achieve this, but which at the same time are something quite different and much more: effects which I call ‘rebound’ (*de retour*), effects of the truth on the subject’ (Ibid., p.16).

55 ‘For spirituality, the truth is not just what is given to the subject, as reward for the act of knowledge as it were, and to fulfil the act of knowledge. The truth enlightens the subject; the truth gives beatitude to the subject; the truth gives the subject tranquillity of the soul’ (Ibid., p.16).

56 This history would suspend truth claims of past philosophies (similarly to Hunter’s description Skinner’s method, and of his own history of ‘persona’), replacing it by an empirical approach to the practices that each philosophy considered necessary to reach the truth. The truth in the Foucauldian perspective of ‘spirituality’ and ‘ascesis’ seems to be this historical formal structure – and not a substantive reality or attribute of philosophies. Practices of asserting the truth, knowing the truth, thinking the truth, pragmatic and performative effects of the truth occupy a central role, but there is not an evaluation of past philosophies and practices in terms of truth or falsity (as we could find in what Hunter calls ‘dialectical method’ or ‘rational reconstruction’).

niques and exercises, as well as different models of the self. (2) This history of philosophy should consider the history of the effects of the truth on the subject, and the different effects of truth aimed by each philosophy – which could be also called a history of different ‘therapies of the truth’. (3) History of philosophy would analyse the different ways of life that configure the progress and the aims of the *askesis* of each school, as well as the *ethos* in which truth can emerge or be accessed by the subject.

Considering these conclusions, there is still an important question to be discussed, regarding the collective aspects and conditions of the consideration of the care of the self in the history of philosophy. Is it possible to take care of oneself in isolation? Is the care of the self and the conception of philosophical activity derived from it deprived of a collective character, of an axis of otherness and sociality? We will discuss this question through Hadot’s perspective on philosophy as a way of life and the philosophical schools.

Hadot and the ancient philosophical schools

For Hadot, philosophy is fundamentally a radical choice of a way of life. Hadot thinks that philosophy is not the same as ‘theoretical discourses and philosopher’s systems’.⁵⁷ In what concerns the possibility of an alternative history of philosophy, he claims that, ‘in addition to this histories of ideas, theories and systems, there would be room for the study of a history of philosophical practices, attitudes and ways of life’.⁵⁸

The choice of a way of life is never made in solitude. As Hadot argues, ‘there can never be philosophy or philosopher outside a group, a community – in a word, a philosophical ‘school’’.⁵⁹ Despite his emphasis on the ‘self’, Foucault also analyses the ‘question of the other’ in the care of the self.⁶⁰ stating that ‘the other is indispensable for the practice of the self’.⁶¹ He explains:

In Greek, Hellenistic, and Roman culture, care of the self

57 P. Hadot. *What is Ancient Philosophy?* (Cambridge and London: Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2002), p.1.

58 Ibid., p.1.

59 Ibid., p.3.

60 ‘The care of the self consequently requires, as you can see, the other’s presence, insertion, and intervention’ (M. Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, p.134).

61 M. Foucault, *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, p.127.

always took shape within quite distinct practices, institutions, and groups, which were often closed to each other [...]. Care of the self is linked to practices or organisations of fraternity, brotherhood, school, and sect'.⁶²

According to Hadot, this inter-human relation is a condition to conceive history of 'philosophy as way of life'. In order to understand the theories and doctrines of ancient philosophers, it is not enough to consider them from an exegetical perspective. One has to consider them according to a 'concrete perspective'.⁶³ To situate the doctrines presented in the texts and understand them properly one must consider: (1) the spiritual exercises, the concrete practices and activities in which these doctrines were actualised and experienced; (2) the schools, the collective dimensions and a complex set of social relations that organised philosophical life. Hadot thinks that 'understanding a work of antiquity requires placing it in the group from which it emanates'.⁶⁴ The relation to others, the belonging to a certain group, and a collective experience were also the conditions of philosophy as self-transformation.

The historian of philosophy should consider the 'existential attitudes underlying the dogmatic edifices' being analysed, because 'they are products of a *school*, in the most concrete sense of the term, in which a master forms his disciples, trying to guide them to self-transformation'.⁶⁵ This concrete perspective of the school adds to our investigation on the possibility of an alternative history of philosophy a necessary collective dimension without which, according to Hadot, we cannot understand philosophical practice.

It is by understanding the school as concrete and collective instantiation of philosophical life that we can understand the texts and the particular contents of the different philosophical doctrines. Hadot's concept of 'school' could guide us in a history of concrete philosophical practices. That said, I would like individuate some of its key meanings.

Hadot links the concept of 'school' to, on the one hand, *schole*, designating an 'institution or a doctrinal tendency'⁶⁶ and, on the other

62 Ibid., p. 113.

63 P. Hadot. *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, p.104.

64 Ibid., p.64.

65 Ibid., p.104.

66 P. Hadot. *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, p.295.

hand, to *hairesis*, designating ‘attitudes of thought and life’.⁶⁷ The school as an institution and a doctrinal tendency can be seen as the collective organisation of a certain *hairesis*.

In *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, Hadot explains⁶⁸ that a school is the connection between (1) a fundamental inner attitude, (2) a manner of speaking (discourses or doctrines); (3) a set of specific exercises to ensure spiritual progress, (4) the ‘application of a medical cure’, and (5) a conception of wisdom, a ‘norm of wisdom’,⁶⁹ and thus a conception of the sage or the wise man (as a regulatory image or ideal, as an ‘exemplar’, or an ideal of a ‘higher’ self). The articulation of these elements configures ‘cultural’ institutions that organise, guide, and cultivate different ways of life. The different ways of articulating these items create different global attitudes, instantiated in agonistic, or competing, social-political structures.

A different characterisation is presented in *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, where Hadot stresses the intersection between three elements: a ‘fundamental experience’, a ‘radical choice’ and an ‘existential attitude’. For example, he presents the Epicurean fundamental experience as that of the ‘flesh’⁷⁰ – ‘the voice of the flesh: not to be hungry, not to be thirsty, not to be cold’, and its choice is to ‘deliver the flesh from its suffering and thus allow it to experience pleasure’.⁷¹ It is by considering this experience and this choice that Epicurean doctrine and way of life will be grounded, justified, practiced.

Hadot argues that the different schools proposed different remedies to human suffering, or different therapies.⁷² Each school conceives

67 P. Hadot. *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, p.101.

68 P. Hadot. *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, p.59.

69 Ibid., p.57.

70 Jean-Marie Guyau, in his *La Morale d'Épicure*, also defines the fundamental experience of Epicureanism as that of the ‘flesh’ (*chair*). I quote from my translation: ‘Pure thought, thought without flesh [*chair*] is, for the Epicureans, just a distant and uncoloured image, an effaced picture in which we can only glimpse vague and irresolute lines’. See J.-M. Guyau. *La morale d'Épicure et ses Rapports avec les Doctrines Contemporaines*. (Paris: Félix Alcan, 1927).

71 P. Hadot. *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, pp.114-115.

72 When I presented this paper in Prato, I emphasised the importance of a medical model of philosophy, as described by Foucault in *The Care of the Self* and *The Hermeneutics*, by quoting his analysis of Plutarch’s idea according to which philosophy and medicine share a same field, *mia khora*, that is to say that of

human experience, individuating ‘mankind’s principal causes of suffering’. Each school proposes a specific choice in order to deliver the subject from his suffering, offering distinct therapeutics of the passions, and a ‘particular therapeutic method’.⁷³ For example, in what he calls ‘dogmatic schools’,⁷⁴ ‘therapeutics consisted in transforming value judgements’.⁷⁵

In this sense, ancient schools are, more than just a pedagogical institution, a kind of philosophical ‘clinic’. This is also important for Foucault, when analysing the care of the self within the collective structure of the school:

There is the appearance of the idea of a group of people joining together to practice the care of the self, or of a school of philosophy established in reality as a clinic for the soul [...]. You come [...] to be treated for the evils and passions from which you suffer. This is exactly what Epictetus says about his school. He conceives of it as a hospital or clinic of the soul.⁷⁶

Foucault explains:

You should remember that you are basically here to be cured. Before you throw yourself into learning syllogisms, "cure your

passions and affects.

73 P. Hadot. *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, p.82.

74 Hadot differentiates two types of schools. He calls 'dogmatic' schools those like Stoicism and Epicureanism, which sustained the possibility of knowledge, theoretical truth, and the formulation doctrines in a coherent nucleus. They are ‘dogmatic’ because they conceive the practice of a way of life as presupposing the ‘adhesion to numerous dogmas mutually coherent’ (P. Hadot. *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, p.101), reduced to fundamental maxims that must be kept ‘at hand’ in order to operate in the dynamics of life and passions. There are also schools that are non-dogmatic, but still propose a way of life oriented by a rational principle (even if not committed to dogmas, or robust metaphysical claims, as Cynicism and Scepticism).

75 P. Hadot. *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, p.103. See Epictetus, *Enchiridion*, Ch.5 (p.223). Hadot explains that ‘evil is not to be found in things’, but in the way we interact with them – as he says, In the value judgements which people bring upon things. People can therefore be cured of their ills only if they are persuaded to change their value judgements [...]. In order to change our value judgements, however, we must make a radical choice to change our entire way of thinking and way of being’ (*What is Ancient Philosophy?*, p.102).

76 M. Foucault. *The Hermeneutics of the Subject*, p.99.

wounds, stop the flow of your humours, and calm your mind. Again, in discourse 23 in book III, he [Epictetus] says even more clearly: What is a philosophy school? A philosophy school is an *iatreion* (a clinic) . You should not walk out of the philosophy school in pleasure, but in pain.⁷⁷

The concept of school, for Hadot, however, is not only connected to the historical phenomenon of organisation of philosophy as a way of life in the ancient world. If the school is such an important concept for Hadot's conception of philosophy, it is because it has also a more robust, speculative and general sense – perhaps referring to a philosophical anthropology or an idea of the structure of the human experience or human reason.

The schools are, he says, 'models of life', 'fundamental forms in accordance with which *reason* may be applied to human existence, and [are] *archetypes* for wisdom'.⁷⁸ In this sense, schools could correspond to fundamental coordinates of the human spirit, in such a way that we could suppose that philosophical experience as a whole is developed within a cartography that the attitudes of the ancient schools succeeded to synthesise, conceptualise, and organise. As Davidson explains:

The permanence of the existential aspects of ancient philosophy has been highlighted by Hadot [...] as 'fundamental and universal attitudes of the human being when he searches for wisdom'.⁷⁹

Davidson says that Hadot uncovered, for each singular school, the correspondence to 'a permanent possibility of the human spirit'.⁸⁰ This is not only a proposition on the historical aspects of ancient philosophy, but might be seen as a constitutive aspect of philosophy itself. Hadot says that each school, each fundamental philosophical choice 'must correspond to an innate human tendency'.⁸¹ In this sense, to study ancient schools is to understand how certain attributes and tendencies of the human mind, certain archetypical attitudes towards life which were form-

77 Ibid, p.99.

78 P. Hadot. *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, p.273.

79 Davidson. 'Introduction: Pierre Hadot and the Spiritual Phenomenon of Ancient Philosophy', In P. Hadot. *Philosophy as a Way of Life*, p.34.

80 Ibid., p.34.

81 P. Hadot. *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, p.103.

alised by ancient philosophy.

With this strong claim – the schools as universal ‘archetypes of human wisdom’, and as synthesis of ‘innate human tendencies’ – Hadot grounds the historical phenomenon of the schools on a deeper philosophical structure, implying that this phenomenon is not only socially and culturally constitutive of philosophy. There seems to be an implicit philosophy of the schools that extrapolates historical description in Hadot’s work, according to which the historical experience of the schools is based in the structure of the human reason. In this sense, the value and the exemplarity of ancient schools transcend the temporality in which they were conceived.

Hadot’s thesis of the analogy existing between social, cultural-political practices that characterised the schools, and the structure of fundamental – universal – attitudes of the human spirit, can be problematised, for operating what Hunter calls a ‘philosophical history of philosophy’. Through this thesis, Hadot sets his own philosophical categories as both a metaphysical structure and a historical practice. Historical practices are not just the object of an empirical or pragmatic analysis, but express philosophical or metaphysical truth-claims, risking to ‘draw its account directly from the nature of human reason itself’.⁸²

In *What is Ancient Philosophy?*, it seems to be left unclear how the individual existential decision is made without supposing the existence of actual schools to which the individual can adhere, or the previous contact with philosophical discourse that converts him to a school. In Hadot’s ‘philosophy of the schools’ we could find a way to justify the possibility of beginning philosophical activity with an ‘existential decision’, in itself extra-philosophical or pre-philosophical. There would be a connection between the individual decision and the actual historical schools, because this decision reproduces or corresponds to ‘archetypes of human wisdom’ and ‘innate human tendencies’. Then, our existential attitude structurally connects us to one existing school (that expresses these ‘archetypes’ and ‘tendencies’ historically), and is not necessarily produced within the existing group. In this sense, Hadot replaces the empirical history of philosophy by a philosophical structure, in a way analogous to what Hunter characterises as the Kantian procedure in the history of philosophy.

82 I. Hunter. 'The History of Philosophy and the Persona of the Philosopher', p.592.

According to Hunter,⁸³ Kant's approach is a 'philosophical history of philosophy' that, although establishing 'facts of reason, it (...) does not borrow these from the narration of history but draws them from the nature of human reason in the form of a philosophical archaeology'. Is Hadot mobilising a similar practice himself? If the 'schools' are not just a historical phenomenon, but also describe and correspond somehow to human nature, do they function as a kind of transcendental for the history of philosophy?

If that is the case, Hadot's philosophical framework presupposes strong metaphysical claims underlying his history of philosophical practices. This kind of move seems to be absent in Foucault's analysis of the ancient schools, and of the historical framework that he employs to analyse philosophical practices. The kind of history that could be derived from Foucault's account does not focus on the truth claims of each philosophical doctrine *per se*, or on the historico-doctrinal reconstruction of each philosophical system. It is as a history of the philosophical self and its cultural, social and political implications. Foucault's historical method could be characterised as suspending claims about human nature and its underlying structures, and as a way to challenge these concepts. Differently from Hadot's discrete reconstruction of universals regarding human mind and existential attitudes, Foucault's method is characterised as a historical nominalism.

Conclusions

We can already draw a more complete picture of what a history of philosophy written considering the conceptions of Foucault and Hadot could look like. On the one hand, this possibility was affirmed by the consideration of the 'care of the self' as an event in the history of philosophy that allowed to describe philosophical practices from the perspective of a pragmatics of the self. The care of the self brings to light a tradition that emphasises the fundamental implication between philosophy and form of life. The concept of spirituality showed us the performative aspect philosophy, offering the possibility of writing a history of philosophy which is a history of practices, techniques and experiences. The focus on the idea of way of life pointed to the transformations that the ascetic relation to truth provoked on the subject.

83 Ibid., p.592.

The concrete perspective highlighted by Hadot leads us to emphasise the ancient philosophical schools as way to introduce an axis of collectivity and sociality in this history of philosophical practices. If it is possible to note a complementarity between Foucault's notion of technologies of the self, in the individual level, and Hadot's collective emphasis on the 'schools' as a concrete condition to spiritual exercises and philosophy in antiquity, we must not suppose that the dimension of sociality and is absent in Foucault's thought.

Although, there are similar possible ways to think of the history of philosophy in Foucault and Hadot, we must remember that this theoretical encounter is a 'dialogue too soon interrupted'. Besides this discontinuation of the dialogue, Foucault and Hadot approach ancient philosophies with very different perspectives and objectives, but both authors seek to re-actualise a powerful alternative model for philosophical activity.

Matthew Sharpe's *Camus, Philosophe?*

SHAUN STEVENSON

Arguably, few academics within philosophy are unfamiliar with at least some of Albert Camus' work, fewer still are unaware of his relationship with Sartre, and yet within philosophy there is precious little serious work on Camus focussed on approaching him not as an author or playwright, but as a philosopher. Sharpe outlines the situation Camus' work is in in the opening to his book *Camus, Philosophe?*, offering his understanding as to why the scepticism around Camus as a worthwhile contributor to philosophy has surfaced. Sharpe's book initially takes us on a brief journey through the development of Camus' reception in academia so that we might observe just how and why the writer's work has been taken away from philosophy over the decades, especially in Anglo-American institutions. Sharpe's task in his book is to make the first step towards revealing the relevancy of Camus' work to that of contemporary philosophy. For the most part, Camus' work has often been scrutinised in a number of disciplines including, but not limited to, literary criticism, modern languages and, to a lesser degree, theology. Sharpe looks to accurately describe Camus' 'philosophical discourse'¹ by drawing a through-line of philosophical thought within the range of Camus' works. The task seems a difficult one, but it is one that hopefully, once achieved, as I believe it is in Sharpe's text, will make Camus' philosophical importance clearer and his work's use in philosophy not only encouraged but made more tenable.

Camus, Philosophe? draws a number of ideas out of Camus' corpus to create a portfolio of motivations, concepts and ideas which Sharpe works into a coherent philosophy presentable to academia. The methods Sharpe uses for this are threefold, including a large investment in thorough and effective exegesis to expose philosophical elements of Camus'

¹ Matthew Sharpe, *Camus, Philosophe* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), p.22.

work; revealing Camusian paradigms reflected in the work of a number of philosophers (for example Foucault and Levinas); and illustrating, with the philosophy brought out in exegesis and comparison, the major philosophical themes with which Camus is wrestling in his writing, and how his philosophy could impact upon those topics in a way beneficial to contemporary academic philosophical work. Camus' philosophy is often applied to political concerns pertinent to him and arguably to contemporary society, theological concerns, especially questions of the problem of evil, and ways to address and even rebel against totalitarianism of both metaphysical and political sorts.

Once Sharpe has introduced the problem which has inspired his work and the ways he aims to resolve this, or at least substantially impact upon it, Sharpe enters into Part 1. The first part to the book, titled *Cave & Critique*, is centred heavily around the effect on Camus' work from his experience of totalitarianism during and after the Second World War. Sharpe is very successful, in this first part, at drawing the critique of totalitarianism out of Camus' works, especially *The Plague* and *The State of Siege*. The use of texts and plays not normally characterised as 'philosophical essays' to reveal Camus' philosophical assertions is one of many profound moves taken in Sharpe's work to demonstrate the importance of Camus' writing as a holistic effort at articulating philosophy not confined to a single literary mode of expression. Referring to the work later developed by Foucault and the close links between works such as *The History of Sexuality* and *Discipline and Punish*, Sharpe draws Camus into more modern discussions by threading his work into something of a genealogy of power and revolt. The following sections draw the discussion toward Camus' motivations towards his 'metaphysical rebellion'. Sharpe talks through Camus' interaction with Christianity and Christian theodicies, lighting the route to the exploration of what this metaphysical rebellion would consist of and its relations to Camus' work in *The Rebel* when trying to disclose a philosophical solution to societal and political fascism; a metaphysical revolt and a historical revolt, as Sharpe describes them. To outline this, Sharpe offers a breakdown of Camus' *The Rebel* to show in clearer detail how Camus has laid out his argument's progression leading to the assertion for two major forms of revolutionary nihilism, both of which Camus is opposed to: absolute negation and absolute affirmation.² Immediately following the claim made by Sharpe that this pattern in Camus' text *The Rebel*, also given previous discussions in the

2 Matthew Sharpe, *Camus, Philosophe* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), p.133.

chapter, is philosophy Camus is committed to, there is a breakdown of *The Rebel*, to further illustrate Sharpe's point.

Sharpe points out in the introduction that Camus is resistant to categorisation, both in person and in his work, due to his resistance to any 'all or nothing' commitments. Such an attitude toward absolutes is a reflection of his being an artist interested in rebellion and creation. The difficulty is to then approach Camus with the intention of establishing a 'master argument'³ out of Camus' corpus without sacrificing too much of the artistry that the writer employs. Why is this important? Whilst Sharpe does excellent work at achieving a clear and defined breakdown of Camus' argument, it is questionable how much of Camus is indeed left once the analysis and exegesis has taken place. Sharpe does great work at articulating how Camus' thoughts are very much situated in his historical and political context. Camus' chosen form of expressing these ideas is through texts not usually associated with philosophical discourse – and yet, arguably, one of the reasons Camus wrote in ways considerably more ambiguous was to better convey the message that Sharpe draws out in his work. Therefore, given that Sharpe does appear to achieve the deliberation of Camus' master argument, I wonder if it is not at the expense of something of Camus himself. What Sharpe accomplishes is no mean feat, yet it would seem that the main concern that Camus does not escape scepticism from within philosophy is not resolved entirely by presenting Camus' philosophy in a way suggesting he was a philosopher. Rather, what would seem to better establish Camus as contributing to philosophy would surely be to have him contribute without exegetics stripping the creativity from him. Can Camus remain an artist with a coherent philosophy, and not a philosopher who fell prey to art? The wealth of intricacy developed into Camus' arguments throughout his work seem to be stripped away in an effort to show that Camus has a contribution to make to contemporary philosophy. I do not doubt that Sharpe's intention is for Camus to remain an artist and be accepted as such, only the extent of the work done does, I believe, risk that.

To some degree the integration of both geography and philosophical heritage in Camus and his philosophical master argument, counters this issue, as they are raised and discussed in Part 3: *Going Back Down*, as only Sharpe can, in a way that appeals not for the need to simply include or impose these influences on Camus post exegesis, but recognise

3 Matthew Sharpe, *Camus, Philosophe* (Leiden: Brill, 2015), p.24.

their ever present permeation in all areas of Camus' work, teased apart or not. On reading Part 3, concerns over the necessity of Camus leaving his art in order to become a philosopher seem impossible, and yet there is a definite demystification of Camus that threatens to pull his work too far apart. Perhaps it can be considered a necessary evil that, in order to dispel any ambiguity in Camus' work, Sharpe has had to cut away much of what makes Camus distinct as an artist in order to better accomplish what he has set out to do in the introduction and show him as being a distinct philosopher, too. Perhaps, in the future work of others, Sharpe's efforts can be built upon to introduce more elements of Camus' work and continue to build confidence in Camus as a philosopher from the philosophical bones exposed by Sharpe's rigorous and thorough work. An artist with a philosophy is perhaps something academic philosophy is not quite prepared to handle yet, better, I imagine, to begin with or introduce an artistic philosopher.

Sharpe's text has a depth to it which tells of the wealth of time, energy and research that has been poured into it. The work is one of very few attempting to lead Camus into academic discourses in philosophy as an artist with a distinct and important philosophy to offer. Much of Camus' work is laced with themes discussed frequently in contemporary academia, themes Sharpe is glad to expose here, and were Camus' work discussed in a less sceptical way then arguably such discussions would be all the better for it. Such is the assertion of Sharpe's book and it is executed masterfully and, with minor misfortunes with regards to Camus' creativity that are no doubt unavoidable in this project, successfully accomplishes what Sharpe works to achieve. As a text it is an extensive and highly detailed odyssey into the life, ideas, philosophy, theology and world of Camus, mapping out his effect on philosophy and putting forward a strong case for his considered inclusion in the serious discourses of academic philosophy today. Sharpe's work will hopefully be sought after for its superb insights and the contextual, strikingly geographical and genealogical account of Camus' work enable it to be seen in a new light, as it is taken up by and expressed through other philosophers in their own work, and help Camus' work gain the potential, revealed by Sharpe, to remain applicable and relevant to contemporary Anglo-American and Australasian academic philosophy.

