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NIETZSCHE AND LIBERATION:
THE PRELUDE TO A PHILOSOPHY
OF THE FUTURE*

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Nietzsche begins *Beyond Good and Evil* by asserting that philosophic dogmatism has decisively obstructed the philosophic quest for truth.¹ The fact that all philosophy until now has been dogmatic in some fundamental sense is, however, nothing more than a sign of the youthfulness of the philosophic enterprise (*Beyond*, Preface, I, 11, II, 31). Nietzsche strives to bring philosophy to its maturity, thereby to prepare the way for a philosophy of the future. Because the new philosophy is to be distinguished from all past philosophy by its liberation from, or mature transcendence of, dogmatism, it is actually the first genuine philosophy. Never before has the authentically philosophic dedication to a comprehensive examination of opinion and faith, i.e., to an openness which admits of an ascent to the realm of the highest problems, been possible.²

This essay examines the nature of the philosophic liberation which Nietzsche seeks and the means by which it is to be attained.³ Nietzsche did not consider himself the first man to seek a state "beyond good and evil" for the sake of wisdom; the "three great religions" also regard such a state as the "liberation from all illusion" (*Gen.*, III. 17). Nietzsche distinguishes himself from his mystic predecessors by insisting upon self-glorification rather than self-effacement as the way to wisdom and by replacing, as the sign of freedom, "the hypnotic

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¹ I wish to thank Joseph Cropsey for his helpful comments on the draft.
³ I have relied primarily upon *Beyond Good and Evil* (1886) but have made considerable use of *On the Genealogy of Morals* (1887), which Nietzsche prepared as a clarifying supplement to *Beyond Good and Evil*, and of Book V of *The Gay Science* (1882), which Nietzsche added to the original edition in 1887 and to which he refers his readers in the third essay of the *Genealogy*. For the relationship between *Beyond Good and Evil* and the *Genealogy* to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, see Nietzsche's letters to Jakob Burckhardt (1886) and to Karl Knorrz (1888) in *Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. and trans. Christopher Tolkien (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1969), pp. 255, 298, and *Ecce Homo*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage Books, 1969), pp. 310–13; the latter hereafter cited as *E.H.*
muttering of the capacity to feel pain” with the intense desire to create, and then to endure, distress.

Nietzsche argues that philosophers have never succeeded in transcending the realm of popular opinion (Beyond, I, 2, 16, 19). The philosophic quest has remained imprisoned within the boundaries of political life, which requires belief in unconditional moral opposites or dogma for its maintenance (G.S., III, 116). Nietzsche’s criticism is directed toward the more tenacious, because more subtle, forms of dogmatism which remain influential after Christianity has been destroyed “as a dogma” (Beyond, Preface; Gen., III. 24, 27; G.S., V. 357, 358). Christian dogma is the exoteric manifestation of the ascetic ideal, which has dominated human life until now (Gen., III. 13, 23, 25, 28). Nietzsche is most concerned, however, with the esoteric aspect of the ascetic ideal, i.e., with platonism in both its original and its modern form, which is equivalent to the hatred not specifically of sensuality, but of spirituality or philosophy (Gen., III. 12, 25, 28). The defeat of religious piety itself brings forth Nietzsche’s criticism. The unconditional devotion to truth, upon which contemporary atheism rests, is revealed, in the further development of truthfulness, as itself a kind of piety or dogmatism (G.S., V. 343–44). Behind the theoretical opposition of truth and error or appearance is an unquestioned trust in the moral opposition of good and evil (Beyond, I. 2; II. 24, 34).

In Beyond Good and Evil, the problems associated with the preparation for a new era in philosophic thinking are resolved almost immediately into problems associated with the cultivation of a new type of philosophic man. The resolution of one type of problem into the other is mediated by a demonstration in Section I of the characteristic inability of philosophers to give an account of themselves and their activity (aphorisms 2, 3, 5, 7, 8, 9, 11). The accusation that, of all men, philosophers have been “fooled best on earth” is most serious: philosophers have typically founded the belief in their superiority to non-philosophic men precisely upon the claim that they alone could give a clear and comprehensive account of themselves (Beyond, I. 5; II. 34).4

Philosophers have never really engaged in a proper self-examination; they have not justified their activity. The esoteric form of dogmatism has obstructed the philosophic quest by preventing the fundamental question about philosophy from being raised—the question of the value of the will to truth (Beyond, I, 1, 2; Gen., Preface, 3, 6; III. 27). Since philosophers have never raised the most important question about themselves, they have never been able to see themselves clearly. The piety of philosophy has engendered a superficial psychology which praises self-denial as the prerequisite for wisdom (Gen., III. 10). Nietzsche argues, however, that this psychological misperception obstructs cultivation of the genuine philosophic virtues, which depend

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4 See Plato Apology 21d, Ion 530c, 538b, Meno 96b.
upon self-love. His analysis simultaneously liberates the potentially philosophic man from inhibitive psychological errors and philosophy from its dogmatic assumptions. Exposure of the ingenuous dissembling at the root of past philosophy is the one way to banish the infectious moral taint from the philosophic quest.

Nietzsche's new psychology amounts to an attempt to substitute a tenable hypothesis about the origins of philosophizing for an untenable one. The "typical" moral prejudice of philosophers, belief in the opposition of good and evil, leads them to a misunderstanding about the origin of their desire for truth. It is on the basis of this misunderstanding that philosophers have posited the independence of reason (Beyond, I. 2). Although Plato's invention of the pure mind is the original formulation of this error (Beyond, Preface), it persists in the modern scientific quest for objectivity⁵ and in any psychology which posits the ego as being (Beyond, I. 16, 17).

The judgment that the truth is absolutely good and appearance, error, or ignorance is absolutely evil requires that one believe in the self-subsistent and eternally separate existence of the realm of the true and the realm of the untrue. Philosophers have therefore believed that the desire for truth originates in the wish to be free of any contact with evil. A psychological conviction ensues to the effect that the vehicle for human apprehension of the Good, identified as conscious reason, must itself be entirely independent of and in principle opposed to everything else, everything lesser, in man—specifically, his physical impulses. In so far as the bodily drives obstruct or distort the reasoning activity, they are evil. Further, the presumed harmony between the absolutely true and the independent mind has led the philosopher to believe that through philosophy he can escape the bodily self; he can become good.

This trust in a possible ascent from the realm of the bodily,—specifically, from the decaying,—to the realm of eternal being (Gen., III. 24) has animated the philosopher's judgments. Until now he has accorded them a life of their own and worshiped them as the bridge between his own mortality and the eternal. In the end, according to Nietzsche, all philosophers have submitted themselves to the tyranny of a perspective of their own making: "But this is an ancient, eternal, story: what formerly happened with the Stoics happens today, too, as soon as any philosophy begins to believe in itself" (Beyond, I. 9). Nietzsche, for his part, intends to transfigure philosophy's relation to belief and thereby to liberate the philosophic individual. He seeks to cultivate a philosophy that does not believe in itself and a philosophic self that does (Gen., III. 10).

⁵ See Friedrich Nietzsche, "Vom Nutzen und Nachteil der Historie für das Leben," in Gesammelte Werke (Munich: Musarion Verlag, 1920–29), Vol. 6, pp. 273–84; Beyond, VI. 207–8; Gen., III. 12, 24.
Nietzsche's understanding of the origins of philosophizing is equivalent to a skepticism about opposites. He utilizes the insight that good and evil things are interconnected and interdependent; most forcefully stated, he believes that "good" impulses are derived from "evil" ones (Beyond, I, 23). He doubts that consciousness and instinct are opposed (Beyond, I, 3; Gen., III. 7; G.S., IV. 333, V. 372). He studies the structure of the whole self and its mode of assertion, which is in every case some manifestation of the comprehensive life activity, the will to power (Beyond, I, 13, II. 36, IX. 259; Gen., II. 12). The psychologist cannot, in fact, accurately distinguish the mental from the bodily—the will describes a series of instinctive processes which are themselves thoughtful (Beyond, I, 16, 19; G.S., III. 126)—nor can he distinguish the self from what the self does. The will is active as well as thoughtful; no independent agent is required to do the "willing". Nietzsche's obliteration of the distinction between the self and the assertions of the self is self-affirming. Life as willing means that life is self-assertion (Gen., I. 13). The assertions of the philosophic self originate, according to Nietzsche, in the "evil" lust to rule or to dominate. Philosophy is the prideful attempt to infuse meaning and order into the commotion of human perceptions (Beyond, I, 2, 9, VI. 211; Gen., II. 13; G.S., IV. 307).

The self or will is a complex of obeying and commanding instincts or affects and their respective thoughts. Thinking is "merely a relation of these drives to each other" (Beyond, II. 36; G.S., IV. 333, V. 352). The affective element in philosophy must be recognized and liberated. Objective or clear-sighted vision into what is (Beyond, II. 39) cannot be attained by reason alone; rather, a proper affective basis for theorizing supports the intellect (Gen., III. 12). If it were possible for consciousness to proceed independently of instinct, the naked intellect, its powers only bred into man at a late stage of his development, would be powerless in a confrontation with the instincts, the fundamental animators of the self. The philosophic praise of conscious reason has led philosophers to overestimate the power of conscious thinking in relation to the instincts and thus has made them susceptible to continual deception (Beyond, I. 3, 6, 8, 11; G.S., I. 11, V. 354, 357).

The understanding of philosophy as an expression of the will to power destroys the belief in the opposition of instinct and consciousness. Even more fundamentally, however, it weakens the basis for the belief in the opposition of truth and untruth. Philosophy does not eventuate in the discovery of unadorned nature, free of an admixture of the merely human or conventional (Beyond, I. 14, 16, 21, 22; G.S., I. 54). The philosophic quest to know, to be objective, is equivalent to the impulse to interpret or make known. Philosophic exertions of will are the highest expression of "the active and interpreting forces through which alone seeing becomes seeing something" (Gen., III. 12). All knowing, all perception, by dint of its origin in willing, is ultimately inter-
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pretive; interpretation is inseparable from evaluation. The philosophic quest for objectivity is, then, moral (Beyond, I. 6, 19; G.S., III. 114). The evaluative scheme implied in every philosophic perspective constitutes its most vital element: it expresses the philosopher’s own life, what he loves and what he needs. The psychologist addresses himself to the evaluations of the philosopher in order to infer from them what he is (Beyond, I. 6, II. 32, VI. 187, IX. 268; G.S., V. 370).

Nietzsche’s understanding of the character of philosophy attests to the potency of man, who, for the sake of mastery, engages in interpretive activity. But he seeks to make us aware of man’s bondage to himself as well. Man as man is barred from complete union with the text of the world outside himself, with nature (G.S., III. 109, V. 354, 374). He cannot perceive that world as it actually is, undifferentiated and continually shifting. To be sure, the development of science represents for Nietzsche an increasingly successful effort to isolate elements of natural processes which are perceived (G.S., III. 112, V. 355); however, scientific description of processes which exist independently of man is not explanation. The evaluative world, the world of greatest concern to man (Beyond, II. 34), appears to possess a different cognitive status: man can apprehend directly that which he makes (G.S., III. 246).

Nietzsche’s psychology rests upon the notion of “perspectivity.” Philosophy must be understood as both a conditioned and a conditioning activity (Beyond, Preface, I. 4, V. 188). Liberation of the human mind apparently requires loving acknowledgment of the dependence of the intellectual upon the passionate; the liberation of philosophy from conventional orthodoxy requires acceptance of philosophy as a conventional structuring of the natural. The foundation of philosophy upon an insight into the fact of human bondage is not, however, an affirmation of convention simply. Just as the species structuring of the outside world is, at any moment in history; elicited by its needs, so the philosophic vision is inevitably compelled to be what it is by nature (Beyond, I. 11, 20, 21, VII. 231, IX. 264; Gen. I. 13; G.S., V. 347). All theorizing is rooted in the unfathomable particular, the subrational and unique constellation of drives and values represented by the philosopher himself. Philosophizing possesses the character of a spontaneous effusion born of an unperceived inner necessity (Beyond, V. 188, 192, VI. 213); the genuine philosophic modality is inspiration, or something closely akin to it. That theorizing has an identifiable natural or psychological origin suggests that the errors of past philosophy may be overcome by the creation of a new type of philosophic man (Beyond, VI. 203; Gen., II. 24). The refutation of a narrow or superficial phi-

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6 Beyond, I. 5, 6, IX. 292; E.H., p. 218, Section III; cf. Plato Apology 22c, Ion 534a–e, Meno 99c–e, 100b.
losophy can occur only by subduing that which is irrefutable in it—the philosopher himself.\footnote{7}{See both of Nietzsche's prefaces to "Die Philosophie im Tragischen Zeit-

The philosophers of the future must, according to Nietzsche, solve the "problem of value"; they must establish a system of ranks and orders through which all things will be understood in terms of their moral relations to other things.\footnote{8}{Genealogy, note attached to Essay I; Gen., III. 24.} Philosophy rightfully eventuates in the most spiritual exercise of justice and hence in the highest form of command or rule (Beyond, VII. 211, 213, 219; G.S., IV. 289). A new psychology is a necessary first step toward genuine philosophizing and is "the path to the fundamental problems" (Beyond, I. 23). That psychology will begin by taking the value of philosophy as problematic, and will proceed to liberate the instincts from inhibitive moral judgments (Beyond, V. 186; Gen., Preface, 6; G.S., V. 345). Thus it will prepare the philosophic man for his responsibility.

The psychologist can judge the relative value of a philosophic perspective in terms of its apprehension of what is. He makes this judgment, however, by way of an assessment of the philosopher himself: the vitality or health of the philosopher, says Nietzsche, appears to determine the justice of his reflections (Gen., I. 5, 10, II. 11). While liberation of the instincts and, hence, of the will is crucial to the philosophic enterprise, instinctual freedom does not necessarily culminate in health or in philosophy. Nietzsche carefully delineates the meaning of instinctive health and its relationship to the philosophic task; he is not an advocate of instinctive liberation however understood.

The liberation of philosophic willing is an exceptional liberation. Nietzsche must disentangle the proper affective basis for theorizing from what he calls the normal operations of life. The fundamental obstacle to philosophy and the ultimate cause of its continued innocence and narrowness is human life itself. His phrase life as will to power means that intellectual life is the search for that measure of understanding which will increase power or render it secure (Beyond, VII. 230). The act of interpreting expresses the desire to overcome the alien or new, which in most cases means the desire to assimilate the new into the old and familiar (Beyond, V. 192). The "basic will of the spirit" does not seek the truth; rather, it is satisfied with any interpretation, however superficial, which allows it to flourish. The philosopher's ignorance of the importance of the instincts in theorizing has inadvertently encouraged man's natural tendency to surrender to the mere feeling of increased power. Unless the impulse to know itself becomes instinctive—becomes the animating impulse in a human being—it will not be a reliable and resolute check upon the basic will to power (G.S., I. 3, 11, III. 123, 249).
The affective or passionate origin of all theorizing, from the highest to the lowest variety, deprives reason of its place as the natural ruler of man. However, the affects from which theorizing derives describe a sediment in man which does not normally strive to express anything other than its own settledness (Beyond, I. 6, 8, VII. 229, IX. 284). Nietzsche says that "even in the 'simplest' processes of sensation the affects dominate, such as fear, love, hatred, including the passive affects of laziness" (Beyond, V. 192). The sheer power of the affects will not assure that the desire for knowledge will overmaster the others, so that some hierarchy of ruling and ruled elements within the self is indispensable to philosophy. Nietzsche argues in general terms that the well-ordered self is the only truly healthy or vitalized self. He defines physio-psychological corruption as "the expression of a threatening anarchy among the instincts and of the fact that the foundation of the affects, which is called 'life,' has been shaken" (Beyond, IX. 258).

The well-ordered self is fundamentally aristocratic; while all the instincts are firm or strong, a ruling instinct exists which controls and coordinates the others for its own ends (Beyond, V. 190–91; Gen., I. 10). The concept of instinctual vitality is incomprehensible without acknowledgment that the capacity for self-rule, i.e., a kind of moderation, is its basis (Gen., III. 7, 8, 22). The aristocratically organized self is a mark of genuine nobility (die Vornehmheit). Nietzsche seeks to cultivate a nobility in whom the philosophic impulse for objectivity or justice has become the fundamental need or predominating instinct. Such a nobility could resist the distortions of the will's desire for power without corroding or repressing that desire (Gen., III. 8, 12).

Nietzsche's attempt to liberate the philosophic impulses cannot simply lead to praise of self-assertion; a doctrine of liberation, which is divorced from the insistence upon self-rule as its precondition, is for Nietzsche a prelude to the most slavish of submissions. The exceptional liberation of the philosophic self deserves to be called the only genuine liberation of the self. Self-assertion typically inclines toward an abject surrender to the self, i.e., to the merely personal. This tendency, which is inherent in man as a willing being, is hostile to philosophy.

The fundamental human strivings for dominion represent to Nietzsche the primacy of the search for individual significance and meaning. The most powerful human impulses oppose philosophy precisely because they express a pervasive self-interest which distorts or narrows vision. In its normal operation, the will to power allows life to flourish by imprisoning the self within the confines of personal need. All theorizing, as an expression of life, therefore has an essential liability to become the more or less magnificent generalization of idio-

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syncratic characteristics (*Beyond*, Preface, I. 5, 6). In Nietzsche's view, intellectual life has heretofore been directed by an unperceived calculus of utility, which has resulted in a clear surrender to the merely personal. Nietzsche seeks the means whereby philosophy can be truly an ascent from the self. The liberation implied in the attainment of philosophic objectivity requires a radical detachment from the self—a detachment that appears as selflessness or humility (*Beyond*, VI. 205, 210, IX. 260; *Gen.*, Preface, i, 2, I. 2, III. 8; *G.S.*, Preface, 2, 3).

The assertions of the will to power which are most common derive from the reactive affects, the most malignant of the self-serving passions (*Gen.*, I. 11, 13, III. 13, 14). Nietzsche's discovery that philosophy has too often been merely a generalization of the personal indicates its reliance upon the reactive affects (*G.S.*, V. 370). The philosophic exercise of moderation aims at mastery of fundamental human strivings; it must, therefore, be specifically directed toward the reactive affects. The most famous such affect discussed by Nietzsche, *ressentiment*, or revenge, is the most inhibitive of clear-sighted vision into what is. *Ressentiment* signifies an inability to transcend an intense preoccupation with oneself, e.g., with one's misery, or one's oppressors, or the correctness of one's own views (*Beyond*, II. 25, IX. 260; *Gen.*, I. 7, 10, 11; *G.S.*, V. 359). Nietzsche calls *ressentiment* typical of men who, because they cannot rule themselves, require formidable rulers. They are insufficiently powerful to release themselves from the bonds which both oppress and preserve them. Their impotence and their "senseless raging" against their rulers mark them as entirely dependent beings (*Gen.*, II. 11). In this light, genuine nobility indicates that degree of vitality which, by enabling man to conquer the reactive affects, also enables him to rise above the merely personal (*Beyond*, IX. 260). The man who is independent of the spontaneous inclinations of the will in this sense, and who is hence master of himself, is capable of objectivity (*Beyond*, II. 39). True objectivity is so extraordinary a phenomenon because of the pervasiveness of enervated rather than healthy or noble life (*Gen.*, I. 11, II. 11); the power of *ressentiment* in human perception or willing expresses the general ignobility of man.

The peculiar physio-psychological deficiency which philosophers have shared in common with "the people" is thus revealed as a lack of independence or autonomy (*Beyond*, V. 199, 202; *Gen.*, I. 9, 16). The ignoble man, according to Nietzsche, is painfully aware of his dependence; he despises himself because of it (*Gen.*, III. 14). Ignoble self-interestedness or self-love is inseparable from self-contempt or shame (*Beyond*, VI. 222; *Gen.*, I. 10, 14, III. 18). The ignoble man cannot revere himself except insofar as he is attached to something more powerful and hence more secure than he is. Dogma is his solace and his weapon against rulers. The Jews' passion for revenge against Rome, for example, culminated, according to Nietzsche, in the development of Christian dogma (*Gen.*, I. 8, III. 11). In both its exoteric
and esoteric forms, dogmatism transforms shame into self-love. The prevalence of dogmatism reveals the power of man's passion for individual significance, a passion which seeks sanctification of individual existence by way of universally applicable and eternally true doctrine (Gen., III. 14, 22). The will to power expresses the human inclination to universalize personal need. Heretofore the assertions of the will originated in the needs of a species which was not yet capable of self-love. Thus Nietzsche interprets the conventional tyranny over man implied in any willing of unconditional morality, including the faith in truth, as an expression of natural necessity with reference to the norm (Beyond, V. 188, 199; Gen., II. 7). In the psychological studies of the Genealogy, Nietzsche defends ascetic morality as a tyranny which has been inextricably conjoined with the nature of the human species because it has satisfied the passionate human longing for significance (Gen., III, 11, 13, 16-18; G.S., I. 1, III. 117).

Philosophic dogmatism ultimately derives from the character of life. It appears as a form of the distorting egoism of base or dependent men. Its implied piety is vanity; its praise of self-denial or disinterestedness is a subtly disguised expression of the most all-encompassing form of self-preoccupation that exists. As the most subtle form of dogmatism, the philosophic love of truth manifests the most subtle form of revenge; that revenge is, however, directed against life itself (Gen., III. 25). Philosophy, despite its own beliefs, has been intolerant of truth. In order to overcome those human inclinations which have proved stronger than philosophic impulses, it is necessary to overcome man's self-contempt. Nietzsche envisions a genuine self-love which grows out of the capacity for self-rule (Gen., II. 9). Philosophic dogmatism is to be conquered by that noble being who can transcend the merely personal by means of an authentic selfhood. Philosophizing which emanates from a love of what is masterful in oneself will be at once candid and just to life. Moreover, mastery of the basic will to power frees philosophy from its alliance, hitherto unnoticed, with the non-philosophic realm.

The noble man has always been able to effect some measure of independence from the realm of dogma. Nietzsche teaches the potentially philosophic man to adopt the attitude of noble men of past times toward those who are not noble. He reveals the conjunction between noble independence and genuine philosophy by ascribing the character of anti-philosophic movements to historical instances of popular rebellion against a noble ruling class. The original Christian conquest of Rome, the attack upon the Catholic Church by Luther, and the French Revolution are three archetypal expressions of the needs of the people which succeeded at the expense of philosophic characteristics.

Nietzsche argues that "original" Christianity sought to destroy a thriving skepticism and impartiality, the "noble and frivolous toler-
The sense of independence and pride which informed the aristocracy had enabled it to withstand the seductions of faith: the Romans had overwhelmed seriousness and hence, piety with laughter and arrogant skepticism. Just these characteristics must be recaptured to insure philosophic openness, says Nietzsche. The proud disdain of faith opposes the ingenuousness and superficiality of the common man’s mode of self-assertion through dogma (Beyond, VIII. 252; Gen., III. 14). Luther, a man of the people, naturally interpreted the effects of nobility on faith, when he found them in the church of his day, as corruption. He “misunderstood the noble skepticism, that luxury of skepticism and tolerance which every triumphant self-assured power permits itself” (G.S., V. 358). Insofar as the pious substitution of revelation for reason eventuates in the creation of nobility, it is not absolutely opposed to philosophy: in fact, the skepticism of the ruling church encouraged a suspicion about man’s nature which accommodated psychological realism (G.S., V. 350, 358).

Skepticism regarding faith and the needs that issue in faith is promoted by aristocratically organized ruling structures, among which Nietzsche includes the church as the most noble example (Beyond, III. 61; Gen., I. 10, III. 23). The aristocratic regime minimizes the influence of the realm of faith on the higher man. Ultimately, the security of a new nobility depends upon a new aristocratic regime (Beyond, III. 61–62, VIII. 251, 256; G.S., IV. 283). Nietzsche’s task is, then, inherently political. His consideration of politics is evidently utilitarian: he regards the sovereignty of the individual as the hidden promise or goal of aristocracy, and as the sole justification for aristocracy (Beyond, IX. 257; Gen., II. 1, 2; G.S., I. 23). Of all regimes, democracy is the most hostile to philosophy. Nietzsche’s analysis is thoroughly anti-democratic because he conceives democracy to be the most powerful form which the non-philosophic realm can take. Considering the species as a whole, democracy may be understood as the most natural regime: it glorifies the assertions of average life. Aristocracy may fulfill the very real need of average men for leaders; democracy satisfies the fundamental desire for individual recognition and significance by its egalitarian animus (Beyond, VII. 219, IX. 261; Gen., III. 14). Because it expresses the will to power as that will is expressed in the mass of men, democratic orthodoxy possesses a solid and imposing foundation in the species life. The democratic order manifests the common man’s clear-sighted grasp of the conditions which are

10 Aristocratic regimes are, according to Nietzsche, the effect of dangerous circumstances, a hostile external environment (Beyond, IX. 262); democratic regimes are born in generally peaceable circumstances (Beyond, V. 201; Gen. II. 10). One can infer, therefore, that Nietzsche intended to assist the establishment of that sort of environment which gives rise to aristocracy (Beyond, VI. 208).
favorable to his existence, i.e., his innate prudence (*Beyond*, V. 197-99, VII. 221, 228; *Gen.*, II. 15, III. 18; G.S., V. 352).

Democratic orthodoxy sanctifies the submersion into an awe-inspiring collectivity of individual men who could not otherwise respect themselves (*Beyond*, VI. 202-3; *Gen.*, III. 18). Nietzsche regards the goal toward which the modern democratic order is progressing, the "autonomous herd," as the final glorification of democratic organization; it represents a loss of individuality so complete that coercion and hence government is no longer necessary (*Beyond*, V. 202). Democracy aims at nothing other than its own organization. An aristocratic organization of society is itself, however, an exceptional condition. The vitality from which it derives and which it supports, i.e., the will to overcome, supplant, and reconstruct, constantly resists the inhibition implicit in organization (*Beyond*, IX. 259; *Gen.*, II. 11, III. 17-18). Aristocracy tends to foster something greater than itself (*Beyond*, IX. 257, 262; *Gen.*, II. 10). The orthodoxy of aristocratic regimes is more precariously established than democratic orthodoxy (*Beyond*, V. 202). Aristocracies always possess, therefore, at least the potential (which becomes greater as the society approaches maturity) for philosophy.

Aristocratic orthodoxy tends to overcome itself as a necessary result of its attempt to tie man irrevocably to the past and the future (*Gen.*, II. 10, III. 27). Initially, it links past, present, and future together at the expense of individuality. The aristocratic reverence for lineage and tradition makes the establishment of firm institutions and mores possible; the individual is integrated into a whole which is supremely confident of itself, i.e., a culture.\textsuperscript{11} That culture abhors novelty and strives to preserve its institutions for future generations. Eventually, the pride and self-confidence which have been cultivated by the faith in tradition, especially within the ruling class, will no longer endure the oppressive weight of tradition (*Beyond*, IX. 262; *Gen.*, I. 10); the aristocratic culture matures and the sovereign individual emerges.

The mature aristocratic society, like that of Rome immediately before Christ, is skeptical and, therefore, diverse: the culture gives way to the sect (G.S., III. 149).\textsuperscript{12} The individual experiences a tension between the sacred laws of the past and the freedom which might derive from their destruction. His attachment to a glorious tradition has trained him to a self-discipline and a self-love which now stand him in good stead. He is able to help himself; he creates new laws for himself (*Beyond*, IX. 262; *Gen.*, II. 2).

While democratic regimes are founded upon a similar disrespect for tradition, they do not sever man from his past because of a masterful

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law-giving or institution-creating power.\textsuperscript{13} They break the spell of custom, but in the face of the openness they have created, they merely waver (\textit{Beyond}, VII. 238–39). Because of its origin in enervated life, Nietzsche regards democracy as infirm, confused, and restless (\textit{Beyond}, VI. 208, VII. 223–24; \textit{G.S.}, V. 356); as such, the democratic order provokes a pervasive doubt and uneasiness about life which can be assuaged only by the creation of an all-encompassing political orthodoxy. Democratic orthodoxy owes its immense power and durability precisely to the defects of the democratic order. Men in a democracy are inclined to submit themselves to a political ideology because they dare not recognize what they are. The cult of the state, and, thus, of the masses, necessarily replaces the ordered cultural whole and its successor, the specialized sect. Democratic political orthodoxy is distinguished from the two sorts of organization of belief found in aristocracies because it does not compel men to aspire by teaching them to imitate the old or to create the new. The regime which makes the most vigorous claims on behalf of the individual tends to obliterate individuality; the regime which suppresses the past is compelled to ignore the future.

Only aristocratic regimes cultivate that sort of individuality which admits of a development into philosophy; they establish moral judgments which are not unconditional, but which acknowledge an order of rank among men (\textit{Beyond}, V. 198, VII. 221, 228). The aristocratic apportionment of higher duties and more extensive privileges according to class or rank alone leads to the “craving for an ever-widening of distances within the soul itself, the development of an ever higher, more remote, further-stretching, more comprehensive states” (\textit{Beyond}, IX. 257). Without an acute awareness of one’s exceptionality, the desire and need for new problems and tasks, the impetus to extraordinary activity, cannot exist. Neither a skeptical attitude toward orthodoxy nor the sense of autonomy necessary to maintain it is possible without love of oneself as something rare (\textit{G.S.}, V. 351). The pervasive leveling that occurs in democratic society impedes the rare man’s confidence in his own exceptionality (\textit{Beyond}, V. 119; \textit{G.S.}, III. 117). For the sake of freeing philosophy from the influence of democratic political life, Nietzsche seeks to instill in the potential philosopher a penetrating awareness of the distance between higher and lower men, what he calls “the pathos of distance” (\textit{Beyond}, II. 30, VI. 212; \textit{Gen.}, I. 2), and a malicious conscience (\textit{Beyond}, II. 32; \textit{G.S.}, I. 2, 3, 19, 55). Nietzsche intends the pathos of distance to eventuate in a passion for solitude or standing alone which requires atheism.\textsuperscript{14} The malicious conscience, as a psychologist’s weapon, is directed at the tendency of previous theo-


rizing toward dogmatism;¹⁵ as the ability for self-mockery, it is turned against the self (Beyond, II. 26). Nietzsche seeks to encourage a critical attitude toward philosophizing, a kind of self-inflicted cruelty which teaches the philosphic man to resist a seductive moralizing (Beyond, V. 192, VII. 227, 229–30). These characteristics encourage the philosopher's independence from the people and teach self-control; thus they support the passion for knowledge. Together they comprise free-spiritedness.

The elucidation of free-spirited independence is the theme of Section II of Beyond Good and Evil, "The Free Spirit." The preconditions for genuine philosophizing appear to be, on the one hand, a thoroughgoing atheism, and, on the other, the capacity to take lightly all that has hitherto been taken seriously (Beyond, II. 27, 28). In this section Nietzsche counsels against "the lures of dependence that lie hidden in honors, or money, or offices, or enthusiasms of the senses," i.e., in the interests of the "great majority" (aphorism 44) and the lures of dependence that lie hidden in the unexamined praise of philosophic pursuits (aphorisms 25, 26, 31, 33, 41, 43). In addition, he emphasizes the differences between the "higher type of man," the "seeker after knowledge in the great and exceptional sense" (aphorism 26), and the rest of men, especially the contemporary variety of "free-thinkers" (aphs., 26, 29, 40–44). As men "without solitude," they are not independent, but rather are continually susceptible to the orthodoxy of democracy; they are the vanguard of the masses, mere levelers (Gen., I. 9).

Nietzsche does not treat his encouragement of philosophic independence from the people, however subtle their influence, as something entirely new. Because of the age in which he lives, he says, he finds it necessary to reaffirm what noble men of the past have known from experience. A serious examination of the preconditions for genuine philosophy cannot ignore the decisive defects of contemporary intellectual life.

Reference to the common piety which informs both philosophic dogmatism in its original formulation and contemporary philosophy does not suffice to give a proper understanding of either mode of reflection. Nietzsche considers the modern faith in truth to be emphatically anti-philosophic (Beyond, VI. 204; Gen., III. 24); the original or classical faith in truth, however, more completely accommodated the typical characteristics of genuine philosophy—its openness, its fullness, its height. Nietzsche directs his most vigorous attack in Beyond Good and Evil (Section VI) at that dogmatism which is specifically modern.¹⁶ His prelude to a new philosophizing is as much a recovery of something lost, of which Plato is a typical representative (Beyond,

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¹⁵ Beyond, II. 27, 28, 32, 33, 34, 35, 39, VII. 227; G.S., Preface, 3, V. 346.
¹⁶ E.H., p. 310, Section II.
VI. 204, 213), as it is the eradication of the remnants of Plato's influence.

Nietzsche seeks a reaffirmation of the venerable, secret, and exalted character of philosophy (Beyond, VI. 213). The true philosophic eros is noble; it expresses a desire to be distinguished from other men (Beyond, VI. 212, IX. 270–72; Gen., III. 8; G.S., III. 123, 129). Philosophy's abandonment of belief in its exceptional character is sufficient to turn extraordinary men away from it (Beyond, VI. 204; G.S., IV. 294).\footnote{See Plato Republic 495c.} In turn, the presumed accessibility of philosophic reflection to ordinary men necessarily causes philosophy to degenerate into reflections of which ordinary men are capable. This abuse, "the wretchedness of the most recent philosophy itself," leads to a disdain for philosophy in general. The attitude of the modern age toward philosophy cultivates "unbelief in the masterly task and masterfulness of philosophy" (Beyond, VI. 204). The noble instinct for the singular and high which Nietzsche seeks to encourage can find its proper satisfaction in philosophy only if philosophy itself can be made worthy again, i.e., can be made the expression of command or rule (Beyond, VI. 211).

Genuine philosophy is, in the first place, the legitimate ruler of the sciences. The contemporary age seeks to destroy this order of ruling and ruled by destroying the distinction between scientific men and philosophers. The philosophic exercise of command is ultimately superordinate to a concern with the rank of science; the philosopher "demands of himself a judgement, a Yes or No, not about the sciences but about life and the value of life" (Beyond, VI. 205; G.S., V. 381). The comprehensiveness of the philosophic rule over life, however, secures the legitimacy of philosophic rule over scientific pursuits. The scientific man as such cannot approach the fundamental problems of value; he is ignoble (Beyond, VI. 206, 207, 211, 213; G.S., V. 373). The philosopher is distinguished from him by nature, "by the height and power of his spirituality" (Beyond, VI. 213). Classical philosophy did orient itself around problems of evaluation, and thus it reveals its origins in noble rather than impoverished life (Beyond, VI. 212; cf. Gen., III. 25). It began with an intimation about the possibility of human wisdom concerning the eternal natural order or hierarchy. Nietzsche does not deny that philosophy must be based on some insight into the possibility of wisdom, nor does he oppose classical philosophy by suggesting that this insight must be tempered by a sober reflection, derived from experience, about the probability of the attainment of wisdom. A candid and devoted attachment to philosophy as a way of life must rest upon a thoroughly modest claim about its achievements.\footnote{Strauss, "Restatement," pp. 115–16.}

According to Nietzsche, the philosopher's modesty bespeaks his abil-
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ity to endure the problematic, to desire questions and questionable
ness more than certainty (G.S., IV. 296, 328, V. 343, 347, 374–75).
Nietzsche understands philosophy as the constant, unflating ap-
proach to the greatest questions (G.S., V. 345, 351). Philosophizing
requires an exceptional self-sufficiency for which there is no con-
temporary model. It rightfully proceeds from the noble synthesis of mod-
esty and self-affirming pride. Nietzsche says, “It was modesty that in-
vented the word ‘philosopher’ in Greece and left the magnificent over-
weening presumption in calling oneself wise to the actors of the spirit
—the modesty of such monsters of pride and sovereignty as Pythago-
ras, as Plato” (G.S., V. 351; cf. Beyond, I. 7). Only that theorizing
which is founded upon self-rule or autonomy is intrepid and pen-
etrating (G.S., V. 359, 375). The noble man’s disdain for the opinions
held by lesser men can develop into and systain a philosophic sense of
wonder, “the taste of reverence” for everything that lies beyond the
horizons of ordinary men (G.S., V. 373; Beyond, IX. 263, 265). Modern
dogmatism truncates philosophic inquiry more seriously than classical
dogmatism because, as a child of the democratic order, it knows no
modesty (Beyond, III. 58–59, IX. 263, 272; Gen., I. 9, III. 22; G.S.,
V. 358).

Modern philosophers, beginning with Kant, have obscured the true
meaning of philosophy as the ascent to the task of comprehensive
evaluation. The philosophic attachment to truth has undergone an
change, which Nietzsche considers to have been necessary, from the
belief in an eternal hierarchy of evaluations to the absolute rejection
of evaluative interpretation. Contemporary philosophy is a form of
skepticism which, one way or another, deprives evaluative questions
of a philosophic hearing (Beyond, III. 54, VI. 204, 207, 208); it is a
peculiarly modern synthesis of hubris and shame. Both major trends
within contemporary philosophy, as Nietzsche portrays them, (Beyond,
I. 10) are entirely subject to the realm of orthodoxy because they are
themselves manifestations of ignobility.

The “philosophers of reality” or positivists lay claim not to the
possibility of wisdom but to its possession, “the maddest and most
immodest of all claims” (G.S., V. 359). They believe in the com-
tence of natural science to establish the limits of knowledge: the quest
for philosophic wisdom is replaced by mathematical physics. The rel-
ative reliability of sense data, when examined in light of philosophic
standards of cognitive validity, leads to an unprecedented inflation of
the value of a mechanical or conceptual rendering of the operations of
nature (Gen., III. 9). Positivism seeks “‘a world of truth’ that can be
mastered completely and forever with the aid of our square little
reason” (G.S., V. 373; Gen., III. 23–24). The scientific demand for
some measure of certainty represents to Nietzsche the vanity and lack
of vitality of modern man. Modern science is ignoble because it cannot
tolerate openess (G.S., II. 76, IV. 296, V. 347). There is from the
outset, then, an alliance between modern science and democracy. That alliance is strengthened by the fact that the impulse for certainty will only permit a low order of problems to be revealed. Inquiry is closed before the question of the value of democracy, for instance, is approached. What modern science has ignored will eventually compel it to support the whole closed realm of orthodoxy as opposed to philosophy.

The more radical modern skepticism, which rejects belief in the reliability of sense data, is merely a more extreme version of the modern cowardice about evaluation—a "feast of noble abstinence" for the mind, generated from a mortal fear that the pursuit of knowledge will end in a confrontation with the problems of evaluation (Beyond, VI. 208). Radical skepticism cannot dilute the potency of democratic orthodoxy; as an innocently conceived soporific which allays confusion, it inadvertently promotes the continuance of the democratic order. Radical skepticism, like that which it claims to oppose, expresses the lack of vitality of the democratic age, this time, however, in its character as psychic disorder or confusion. It originates in enervated or "less natural" nature; the self is unsure, doubtful, full of "internal mistrust," and, consequently, feeble. Physiological decay or disorder intensifies a confusion about standards of evaluation which makes man unable to consider real issues. The willingness to judge, and hence a strong will, is indispensable for an illumination of those issues (Beyond, VII. 233, 238). The pervasive shame or self-contempt of modern man, which arises from an intimation about the tenuousness of his innermost impulses, precludes resolute inquiry while disguising itself as objectivity.

In Nietzsche's judgment, modern intellectual life is a denial of truly philosophic impulses which derives from a denial of true sensuality or instinctive health; it is, therefore, ascetic to the highest degree (Beyond, III. 49; Gen., II. 23, III. 24-25). Modern asceticism, which conquered Platonic asceticism, now prevents the additional philosophic strength acquired in the fight against Plato's errors from coming to fruition (Beyond, Preface, VI. 209). Both the hubris and the shame of modern asceticism are a permanently attached to Christian-democratic values (Beyond, VI. 202-3; Gen. II. 24). They can be overcome by a revaluation of values which is based on an understanding of the significance of classical asceticism for philosophy. The liberation of the philosophic self seems to depend, then, upon a successful struggle against the timely (G.S., V. 380).

Nietzsche suggests that the philosopher as such has a necessarily hostile relation to his times: he arises out of decadence in order to combat it. As "the bad conscience of their time," philosophers see what those around them do not see, i.e., that the honored things, the virtues of their time, have been "outlived" (Beyond, VI. 212, IX. 262). Nietzsche's critique of the timely is exceptional, however, precisely
because it rests upon this new insight into the significance of all philosophy for its time. Thus his prelude to a new philosophy is actuated by an awareness of the unprecedented opportunity for the philosophic man in the contemporary age. The liberation of the philosopher from that which typically resists philosophy in man, or from “modern ideas,” is itself a prelude to the cultivation of a radically novel philosophy. The possibility for genuine philosophy is the highest legacy of the latest age. The age must, therefore, contain within itself the potentiality for a transcendence of the limitations of its philosophy. A genuinely philosophic virtue, Nietzsche’s “virtue” does exist at the peak of modern intellectual life—Redlichkeit, intellectual integrity or candor, i.e., the ruthless scientific conscience (Beyond, V. 192, VII. 214, 227). Nietzsche concerns himself primarily with the extension of the scientific conscience into the “unnatural” sciences, psychology and the self-critique of consciousness (G.S., V. 355; Gen., III. 25), which, in contrast to the natural sciences, must be made historical or developmental in order to become profound. The unique characteristics of the new philosophy derive from its basis in historical psychology. The rare but timely scientific conscience must ally itself with the other timely virtue of which Nietzsche speaks in Section VII of Beyond Good and Evil, the historical sense (aphorism 224). Nietzsche owes his own insight into the relationship between philosophy and its age to the modern historical consciousness.

The historical sense is necessarily of modern, i.e., decadent, origin. It represents to Nietzsche a “submissive plebeian curiosity” about the new, exotic, and alien, which as such opposes the resolute taste and intolerant conventions of aristocratic cultures (G.S., IV. 337). Nietzsche defines the historical sense as the capacity to psychologize about the past, with particular reference to morality as the vehicle for human development. It is “the capacity for quickly guessing the order of rank of the valuations according to which a people, a society, a human being has lived; the ‘divinatory instinct’ for the relations of these valuations, for the relation of the authority of values to the authority of active forces” (Beyond, VII. 224). Historical psychology reveals the conjunction between morality and life. It regards morality as “a sign language of the affects” (Beyond, V. 187), and therefore leads to an analysis of the value of various moralities for various levels of life. A proper developmental psychology reveals the variety of human relations to things and the needs that govern those relations (Beyond, V. 186; Gen., Preface, 3–6, I, endnote).

Nietzsche suggests that the absence of a historical awareness, which underlies the quest for nature, has prevented past philosophers from discovering the problem of man and thus from attaining a clear understanding of philosophy’s function with regard to human life (Gen., I. 1). Man has not yet been endowed with a nature; he is “the as yet undetermined animal” (Beyond, III. 62). That previous moralities
have been overcome or outlived attests to the indeterminacy of the human species, its malleability. Human malleability derives from physio-psychological decay (Gen., I. 5, II. 16–18). Past philosophers discovered neither the extent of man’s capacity to change himself nor the inevitability of the changing for an indeterminate or “sick” being (Gen., III. 13). They sought, rather, to disclose man's nature; specifically, they glorified his reason because of a perceived openness of reason to the natural order. Thus, philosophy never seriously addressed itself to the source of man’s variability, his instincntual disorder or decay. In Nietzsche's understanding, then, philosophy as a whole has evaded responsibility for man’s future, which is, however, its legitimate duty and privilege (Beyond, VI. 213).

Because man had no fixed nature, i.e., no sufficiently “calculable, regular and necessary” instincntual core, he could not turn out well, except rarely, by chance. Philosophy has fostered the “gruesome dominion of nonsense and chance” over human life and thereby has assisted the overall degeneration of man (Beyond, VI. 203). The higher men have suffered most from philosophy’s errors; the exceptionally complex calculus which must precede the establishment of conditions favorable to their existence, in contrast to conditions favorable to average life, has been missing (Beyond, IX. 269, 270, 274). “The accidental, the law of absurdity in the whole economy of mankind, manifests itself most horribly in its destructive effects on the higher man” (Beyond, VI. 203). Human life, a unique instance of the will to power, expends its energy in pursuit of a goal (Gen., III. 1, 23; G.S., I. 1). That goal or ideal, however primitive, must be posited by morality. Human life needs morality because, in contrast to animal life, it aspires. The low aspirations of ordinary men, because they are far more common, are both more insistent upon satisfaction by evaluations favorable to them and more easily satisfied (Beyond, IX. 268). Nietzsche considered himself to be the first philosopher to have discovered the cause of the fragility of human aspiration: the highest human aspirations have been corrupted, i.e., inhibited, by unconditional moral judgments made from the perspective of average life (Beyond, VII. 218–19).

The philosophers of the future will accept the responsibility for the overall development of man (Beyond, III. 61, VIII. 251). They will make man a determinate being; they will understand that the existence of a human nature is dependent upon human will (Beyond, VI. 203, IX. 274). Thus they will be saved from the singular defect of all past philosophy—its ineffectiveness against the assertions of average life to the detriment of extraordinary life. Knowledge of the lawful in

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19 Because of psychology's superficiality, the “original problem regarding man” is, in a more comprehensive form, the modern problem regarding man as well (Gen., II. 1).
human development permits proper attention to be given to the needs of the higher man and thus gives rise to a new prudence (Beyond, II. 44; G.S., III. 113, V. 379). The philosophic project of determining nature is equivalent to the attempt to secure aspiration or willing as a fundamental human need and thus to orient man permanently toward the future (Gen., II. 16; G.S. 143, V. 365). The philosophic exercise of justice must, therefore, be directed toward the cultivation of vitality or nobility, the source of resolute, far-reaching, and high human willing (Beyond, IX. 260, 265; Gen., II. 2). The new philosophy, unlike past philosophy, will not unconsciously strive to make itself unnecessary by its narrowness, i.e., by its inability to comprehend and secure the higher aspirations of man or, conversely, its inability to prevent higher visions than its own from arising.

The philosophic activity envisioned by Nietzsche enhances life itself. Life, understood as will to power, knows nothing higher than its own highest expressions (Beyond, VI. 207). The aspiring man cannot be taught to evaluate himself in terms of a naturally ordained hierarchy; such a demand would not only be based on a falsehood but would inhibit or distort willing. Human life can only be evaluated in terms of its own highest acts of will (Gen., III. 14). Philosophy itself is justifiable only as the highest expression of life.

The philosophic responsibility, that compulsion to liberate man from the vulnerability associated with his freedom to become, is fully discharged by the revaluation of values (Beyond, VI. 210-11, 213; G.S., I. 44, II. 58). If it is successful, the philosophic project will represent an unprecedented beneficence to life. In its concern for the higher man it will not disdain severity; unlike the Christian expression of love for man, which underlies the modern orthodoxy (Beyond, V. 202), it will not refrain from condemning what ought to perish (Beyond, III. 62, VII. 238). Still, Nietzsche's project for the future seems to retain a crucial relationship with his own age, i.e., an indebtedness to Christianity and democracy. Human malleability, which has a specific historical origin (Gen., II. 16-19), increases with instinctual decay: a sick organism cannot resist change. Because of the unparalleled degree of instinctual degeneration which modern man represents (Beyond, VI. 208), he is particularly ripe for the most comprehensive project of cultivation and education ever devised by man (Beyond, III. 61).

The intensity of the modern need heightens the opportunity for the philosophic man but is no guarantee that he will in fact appear (Beyond, VI. 203). On the contrary, the philosophic man must, by extending the historical sense, extend the disease of modernity and, in consequence, subject himself continually to his own potential corruption.20 The unique character of the new philosophy presents the most formidable

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obstacles to its appearance. The advance of the historical sense precipitates a crisis for man which the modern ignoble orthodoxy resists. The historical sense, like everything that originates in degenerate life, is ineffectual: it can neither devise a remedy for the modern defects nor properly diagnose them because it cannot truly comprehend the past. The feebleness or effeminacy of the historical sense, however, defends the modern age from the most extreme of physio-psychological decay—pessimism or the weariness of life (Gen., I. 11, III. 14). Where it appears, the historical sense is most often a restless, dispirited impulse for change which is easily mastered by the coordinate but more massive impulse of the age to remain convinced of the superiority of Christian-democratic values. The advance of the scientific conscience in its historical mode, and thus the advance of modernity toward pessimism (Gen., III. 25), requires an untimeliness which is, in itself, noble.\textsuperscript{21} Noble affects at once permit the invigoration or virilification of the timely virtues and ensure the possibility of their eventual destruction.\textsuperscript{22}

The noble capacity for self-rule allows man to withstand the power of orthodoxy. The necessity for self-rule is reinforced, however, by the comprehensive nature of the philosopher's candor. Self-rule signifies instinctual health or vitality and, as such, is applicable to all levels of nobility; the philosophic man of the future requires a novel vitality, which Nietzsche calls the "great health" (Gen., II. 24–25). A full confrontation with man's past renders philosophy more precarious than it has ever been. The philosopher must possess the "great health" as a defense against the potentially corrupting influence of truth, i.e., of "that existence which is knowable by us (G.S., V. 346). The philosophic exercise of will is threatened by the insights into human life disclosed by historical psychology. Contempt for man's general mendaciousness, evidenced by the power of false moral judgments over his life, and pity for man's tendency toward self-belittlement may lead the philosopher to turn away from man (Gen., Preface, 6, I. 11, 12). Nietzsche never denies that the training or education of the poten-

\textsuperscript{21} While Nietzsche ultimately prefers the aristocratic regime in order to secure human aspiring, in the modern age hatred of the timely, of dissolution, appears to replace the disrespect for tradition which characterizes the late stage of the aristocracy. The modern noble man is described as a being in tension with himself; what is timely within him provides the animus for self-mastery and, thus, for noble action: something formidable exists for him to oppose (Beyond, V. 200, VI. 209, VII. 225, VIII. 242; Gen., I. 16).

\textsuperscript{22} Modern psychology has remained unhistorical and hence superficial because it does not possess the aristocratic reverence for lineage or age upon which the disclosure of origins or history depends (Beyond, V. 186; Gen. I. 4; G.S., I. 34). As the servant of the democratic order, modern psychology must deceive man, for the sake of his self-love, about the past (Beyond, IX. 264; Gen., II. 7). Nietzsche argues, however, that a proper genealogy of man's moral past is not shameful; it reveals the aristocratic origin of moral judgements as such and the activity or potency of man (Gen., I. 2, 4–6, II. 12, III. 4).
tially philosophic man is a dangerous enterprise; its risk to the philosopher is intended to constitute its appeal. Nietzsche’s books “call the bravest to their courage” (Beyond, II. 30). The “great health” signifies the capacity to recover from illness; it therefore encourages a confrontation with illness, i.e., with the corruptibility of man (G.S., V. 382). It allows the passionate seeker after knowledge to tyrannize himself for the sake of his own ideal (Beyond, VI. 220; G.S., IV. 290). The self-love which is possible to one who follows his own ideal may preserve the love of man, “of what might yet be made of man” (Beyond, VI. 203), in the philosopher.

In order to prepare himself for the task of evaluation on behalf of man, the philosopher must become aware of “the whole history of the soul so far” (Beyond, III. 45), a task which demands that he himself undergo innumerable alterations, that he live through “the range of inner human experience reached so far” (Beyond, III. 45; Gen., III. 6). The new philosopher must, therefore, be versatile. He would, by extension, praise versatility. He would “be compelled to find the greatness of man, the concept of ‘greatness,’ precisely in his range and multiplicity, in his wholeness in manifoldness” (Beyond, VI. 212). The prefaces which Nietzsche attached to his published works attest to the extraordinary importance of the philosopher’s personal experiences with man. They suggest as well that only a deeply felt sympathy for human life makes an authentic experience of its various forms possible and seduces the philosopher to transform his life into an experimental laboratory where man in his manifoldness can be observed. Nietzsche describes his own life as an experiment devoted to knowledge (G.S., Preface, 3, IV. 324). The principle “life as a means to knowledge,” is the great “liberator” of man from a blinding interest in himself: the goal is everything. In order to approach this goal, the philosopher-psychologist must constantly risk his own well-being; he must experience the corruption or final illness of all higher men in the past. In order to turn the higher man’s inability to find the way to his true needs into a new prudence, the psychologist must at once endanger himself and systematically observe the causes of his own vulnerability (Beyond, III. 45). If the truths about human development are to be known at all, they must be borne or suffered by the psychologist. Psychology is, then, equivalent to introspection (G.S., IV. 335, 337). Introspection is the only source of knowledge upon which the highest task of genuine philosophy can establish itself (Beyond, VI. 211).

Nietzsche’s remarks about the orientation of the psychologist toward the past serve to distinguish the “queen of the sciences” (Beyond, I. 23) from genuine philosophy. Previous philosophy saw at least a harmony between psychology, the study of human nature, and the quest for nature simply which does not exist. The historical condition of man, his variability, dictates that psychology must detach itself
from the quest for nature, being merely its precondition (Beyond, VI. 211). Nietzsche implies that there is no inherent harmony between psychology, which examines the past and, hence, the dormancy of nature, and the genuinely philosophic quest for nature, which affects the future.23 Notwithstanding the fact that psychology can never seek the self whose order best reflects the eternal order of nature and is lovable for that reason,24 psychology cannot simply seek the well-ordered self. It cannot, therefore, define man; psychology is compelled to be radically individualistic (G.S., III. 120). Insofar as the fundamental natural phenomenon, i.e., the will to power, is visible to psychology at all, it is fragmented into an infinite variety of particulars. The task of discovery about man is confined to an elucidation of actual selves, the unique and personal natures. The psychologist as such is limited to an authentic experience of historical data; his introspection is circumscribed by the realm of human history (G.S., IV. 337).

Insofar as psychology reveals general necessary relations, e.g., the effect of physiological inhibition upon thinking (G.S., Preface, 2), it studies what is lawful and necessary for the sake of individual potentiality. Psychology is useful to the philosopher because it frees man from that morality which has crushed the will to power by generally praising instinctual repression. It is a "critical science"; it negates (Beyond, VI. 210).25 The new psychology counsels men to become what they are, i.e., to aspire or will (G.S., IV. 335). Amor fati, which expression Nietzsche associates with the highest act of will,26 can also be understood as the tempting practical dictum of the new psychology, the intention of which is to liberate human willing. Psychology cannot, however, guide or secure human willing; it must condemn evaluation. Since psychology is confined to that which can be known about man, albeit by introspection, it cannot ascend beyond itself. Moreover, the criticism of man’s moral past extends the devotion to truth which is the esoteric “kernel” of the ascetic ideal. Psychology, therefore, extends the contempt for man, whose enhancement depends upon philosophic loyalty to something higher than the truth, i.e., upon evaluative interpretation (Beyond, VI. 205, VII. 230). Psychology threatens the


26 Ibid., n. 617; E.H., subtitle, pp. 258, 324; G.S., IV. 276; Löwith, From Hegel to Nietzsche, pp. 192–94.
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The task of definition and evaluation and is a dangerous necessity to the philosophic man. Psychology opposes philosophy fundamentally because psychology glorifies the love of truth at the expense of the love of man. Psychology can be transcended only by a human being, whose acts of will possess the character of a leap. The only point of contact between the task of legislation, the "closed system of will, goal, and interpretation," which supports and orders human aspiration (Gen., III. 23), and psychology, which simply strives for openness, is in the philosopher himself. He represents the union of universal vision and particular knowledge, which otherwise would remain asunder.

The philosopher of the future must be able to devote himself more entirely to the cause of truth than has ever before been done while overcoming his aversion to untruth. Nietzsche tempts potentially philosophic men to test the possibility that philosophy can become a way of life. Philosophic dogmatism posited a theoretical harmony between life and philosophy. Accordingly, it established the quest for knowledge as a principle of life which directs man toward the Good (G.S., III. 110). Science and philosophy have been promoted under the persistent influence of this erroneous assumption (Beyond, II. 24). Heretofore, because of their superficiality, they have, in fact, enhanced life. Nietzsche's psychology, on the other hand, exposes the fundamental divergence of truth and life, i.e., the necessity of narrow perspectives, or evaluations and esteemings, to life. He characterizes the contemporary thinker as "that being in whom the impulse for truth and those life-preserving errors clash for their first fight" (G.S., III. 110). The possibility of a philosophy beyond good and evil depends upon the actualization of a human being who can endure this tension. The potentially philosophic man will not realize his opportunity if he represses the philosophic impulse for truth or if he considers the human need for narrow perspectives to be a sign of the defectiveness of human existence. Rather, he must, by means of a life experiment, test the possibility that the will to truth can itself become a human need or condition of life, and thus a genuine enhancement of life, i.e., protective of the will. The question which Nietzsche raises about the value of the will to truth can only be answered experimentally, through experience. "To what extent can the truth endure incorporation? That is the question; that is the experiment" (G.S., III. 110; Beyond, II. 42; E.H., p. 218). The necessity of philosophy to the regeneration of man demands that this experiment be made.

Heretofore, philosophy has fostered the security of human inquiry at the expense of what Nietzsche calls a monstrous injustice to life; since philosophy was rooted in shame, it could affirm itself only by condemning untruth, the sensual, and becoming. Nietzsche asks, in favor of life, whether philosophic impulses can be cultivated without this singular devotion to truth as their basis (Beyond, I. 4). The nature of the experimentalism to which he alludes assures that, should a new
philosophy come forth from it, that philosophy would necessarily represent a conquest of the revenge on life which has dominated all philosophizing to date. The new philosophy would be a demonstration that the genuine liberation of the philosophic self had been attained—that liberation depends upon the creation of a human being who loves himself more than his virtues.

The philosopher of the future envisioned by Nietzsche represents the first nobility founded upon candor and suffering rather than upon piety. The decisive characteristic of nobility remains its fundamental certainty about itself: "The noble soul has reverence for itself" (*Beyond*, IX. 287). Heretofore, however, such sublime self-love has been unattainable without piety (*Beyond*, IX. 260, 265; *Gen.*, III. 10). In spite of the tremendous ennoblement or elevation of man for which Nietzsche believes piety in every sense to have been responsible (*Beyond*, III. 59, 60), his ultimate judgment is negative. Piety masks human shame and is, therefore, a disguised intolerance of human sovereignty. The pious man finds the human world lovable only insofar as it admits of contact with a more beautiful realm. Piety, as it has hitherto been understood, is no longer necessary or appropriate for the noble man.

Nietzsche elucidates the meaning of nobility in the last section of *Beyond Good and Evil*, "What Is Noble?" (*Vornehm*). He begins by locating the origins of every aristocratic regime in acts of barbarous domination (aphorism 257) and proceeds to reveal the way in which nobility can be spiritualized, i.e., made philosophic. The transition from the earliest nobility to the new nobility is made by way of a series of aphorisms which allude to the vulnerability of the psychologist who studies higher men (aphorisms 269–82, 289, 290). There is apparently only one sure means by which the philosopher-psychologist can be protected from his peculiar vulnerability. The "great health" includes, as its peak, the capacity for mockery (*G.S.*, V. 382). Mockery signifies that self-love, detached from a reliance upon tradition or piety, actually is the source of action. Further, a philosophic mockery of man must supersede the hatred of the timely out of which the philosophic *eros* develops (*G.S.*, V. 379). Because of its origin in decadence, the philosophic *eros* might culminate in pessimism or some irenic resignation akin to piety; mockery rather than hatred invigorates that *eros* and makes it effective.\(^{27}\) The penultimate aphorism of *Beyond Good and Evil* affirms mockery as an attribute, the divine attribute, of philosophic nobility (295; see 294). Apparently, the philosophic nobility is also pious. Speaking as the "last disciple and initiate of the god Dionysus," Nietzsche reveals, first of all, that Dionysus philosophizes. His intimations about Dionysus are intended to tempt others to follow "the genius of the heart" whom Nietzsche himself has been

\(^{27}\) *Beyond*, VII. 216, 228; *Gen.*, I. 10; *G.S.*, V. 379–80; "On Reading and Writing," *Zarathustra*, p. 153.
tempted to follow. The “daring integrity, truthfulness, and love of wisdom” which characterize the philosopher Dionysus are equivalent to divine mockery. He laughs “in a superhuman and new way” at the expense of all serious things. He deprives of their seriousness the ideals around which human aspiring has been oriented. Dionysus possesses in divine or perfect form all that is potentially philosophic in previous manifestations of nobility: the arrogant skepticism of the Romans; the mocking scorn of the timely to be found in Aristophanes, Petronius, or Machiavelli (Beyond, II. 28); the disgust for the vanity of modern science present in Pascal;28 Plato’s contempt for “wise” men (G.S., V. 379).29

Nietzsche imitates Dionysus. In Section III of Beyond Good and Evil (aphorism 57), he presents a Dionysian speculation about the meaning of human inquiry.30 He suggests that inquiry has value because it makes man profound. The desire to know broadens and deepens the nature of man’s concerns: “ever new riddles and images become visible for him.” Nietzsche does not despise the human idealization of wisdom; rather, he mocks the seriousness with which the development of human profundity has hitherto been regarded: “Perhaps everything on which the spirit’s eye has exercised its acuteness and thoughtfulness was nothing but an occasion for this exercise, a playful matter, something for children and those who are childish.” Philosophizing turns man inward and changes him; man cannot, however, escape from himself through philosophy. Dionysus tempts man to apotheosize his introspectiveness and his bondage to himself. Man does not return from him “blessed and oppressed by alien goods” but rather “richer in himself, newer to himself than before” (Beyond, IX. 295). Philosophizing, it appears, is to be pursued for its effect upon man: it makes man more interesting (Gen., I. 7). By teaching man a sense of wonder about himself, philosophy instills in him the intrepid will to question ever further.31 Philosophizing in this sense establishes a genuine need for the problematic, a need which knows how to

28 Pascal, who typifies the genuine noble religious man, faced the problem of “knowing and conscience.” That Nietzsche to a certain extent shared this problem (G.S., V. 382) may indicate why it is the first problem to which he refers in Beyond Good and Evil (III. 45) when designating the tasks of the “born psychologist” and why he expresses particular compassion for the sufferings of Pascal.


30 This aphorism immediately follows Nietzsche’s single allusion in Beyond Good and Evil to the doctrine of the eternal return of the same (aphorism 56) and immediately precedes a series of aphorisms (58–61) which associate piety and nobility. Its placement suggests that man as “an eternal child” is to supersede or evolve from the “most world-affirming human being” and that a new innocence which shares something in common with the old innocence or piety is, in the end, the intended result of the liberation from dogmatism. See also G.S., Preface, 4. V. 377.

31 Beyond, II. 40, 43, VII. 230, IX. 282–89; Gen., III. 9; G.S., Preface 3.
preserve itself. If philosophy can be honored as man's opportunity to make himself profound, i.e., as an opportunity to aspire to profundity, it will have overcome all aspects of its aversion to untruth.

The philosopher of the future is to be a "spirit who plays naively—that is, not deliberately, but from overflowing power and abundance—with all that was hitherto called holy, good, untouchable, divine" (G.S., V. 382; Beyond, VII. 223). He must extend his parody of ideals to himself to maintain and test his power and self-confidence (Beyond, I. 5, VII. 227; Gen., III. 3; G.S., V. 382). The philosopher who can parody himself is not likely to submit to the personalism which can develop into dogma (Beyond, II. 25–26). Most important, however, self-mockery combats the philosophic liability to shame. By means of an iconoclasm distinguished by its comprehensiveness, the philosopher deliberately undermines the foundation for all instinctive health which has hitherto existed, the pious belief in ideals (G.S., IV. 325). Self-mockery generates a feeling of individual irresponsibility in the man with the weightiest responsibility and, thereby, protects self-love. What might otherwise become an overwhelming sense of one's evilness, i.e., guilt, becomes, in the mocking emphasis of one's own unimportance in the whole economy of the species, a joyful affirmation of one's necessity (G.S., I. 1, 4, IV. 311).

Self-mockery is a philosophic impulse which Dionysus possesses because he is free of shame; he does not love his virtues more than himself. Nietzsche imitates Dionysus' self-mockery by parodying the truth. He does not suppose truth to be God, but a woman, who has good reasons to hide herself from man: her seductiveness depends upon her secretiveness (Beyond, Preface, VII. 232; G.S., Preface, 4). Nietzsche seems to intend this form of self-mockery to liberate the will to interpret, the affect of command; if the criticism of the will to truth becomes an integral part of the philosopher's life, he may come to revere man as the evaluating being (G.S., II. 107).32 Thus that which maintains itself by parody is capable of becoming something other than parody. The supreme reverence for the self takes man beyond the liberation from dogmatism, beyond free-spiritedness (Beyond, IV. 153; G.S., V. 377–78). Sovereign independence, because it rests upon reverence, endows man with a new innocence.

Nietzsche associates innocence and maturity (Beyond, IV. 94; Gen., II. 20). In the very aphorism in which he parodies the quest for wisdom, he speaks of man as an "eternal child" who may discover a new playfulness after he has outgrown the toys or ideals of his first childhood. Mature innocence is necessary for the solution of the problem of value; the philosopher must establish a new ideal for man. The clear-sighted quest for uniquely individual introspective wisdom (Beyond, II. 43) is neither a denial of the self nor a rejection of life; thus it

32 G.S., II. 107; "On the Thousand and One Goals," Zarathustra, p. 171.
commits the philosopher to the future in a way in which the ascetic ideal implied in the quest for wisdom of the whole cannot. The noble philosopher's self-love enables him to approach self-knowledge (G.S., IV. 335) and to determine the future. The genuinely noble man unifies psychology and the quest for nature; he transforms historical psychology into a mode of self-examination and self-transformation which is not merely a study of the past. The genuine philosopher is more than contemplative; he is active (Gen., I. 10). Philosophy becomes beneficent to life. It is, therefore, the singular mode of self-assertion which need not acknowledge anything higher than self-assertion. The philosopher serves life by serving nothing higher than himself.

The noble philosopher experiences no opposition between consciousness and instinct, between freedom and necessity, between truth and untruth. He reveres himself for his mastery of himself and has, therefore, earned the right to heed the demands of his physis (G.S., I. 39, IV. 294; Beyond, IX. 266). His self-love transfigures itself into projections that seek to characterize the order of things, beginning with the characterization of his way of life, his aspirations, as good (G.S., Preface, 3). He cannot resist self-idealization (G.S., IV. 301, V. 360). He shares, therefore, in the characteristics of all noble authors of morality: "The noble type of man experiences itself as determining values; it does not need approval; it judges, 'What is harmful to me is harmful in itself'; it knows itself to be that which accords honor to things; it is value-creating. Everything it knows as part of itself it honors. Such a morality is self-glorification" (Beyond, IX. 260; Gen., I. 5, II. 2). Since human sovereignty must express self-love by the establishment of morality, the philosophic government is founded in nature. Moreover, the foundation for the philosophic legislation of values in the vitalized or liberated self is a sufficient guarantee that it will be secure, perhaps eternal. The assertions of a healthy being are neither arbitrary nor changeable by education or by chance (Beyond, VII. 231, 239). Rather, they are imperturbably solid precisely because they are necessary emanations from the self which cannot be transcended.

Nietzsche sought to bring forth on earth a supernal being who would deliver man, newly formed and resplendent, to the future. He envisions the actualization of that which is taught by Plato in the Republic to exist only in speech, i.e., the literal rule of philosophy over man (G.S., V. 362, 377). Nietzsche does not advocate the philosophic rule for the sake of non-philosophic men but for the sake of justifying life. Nonetheless, according to both Plato and Nietzsche, the non-philosophic realm does pose a problem for philosophy. It must, without knowing it, be organized in such a way as to support the highest human aspiration; those who serve philosophy require orthodoxy and therefore oppose philosophy (Beyond, III. 61). In contrast to Plato, Nietzsche deals with the problem of the political-moral
realm by circumventing that realm. That he can do this at all is evidence that his project is a modern one (G.S., V. 377, 379). Out of a zealous devotion to the needs of the higher man, he shuns the needs of lower men, notwithstanding the fact that he wishes to found philosophy upon a new prudence which is to include a clear and full regard for those forces, both more virulent and lower than philosophy, which threaten to assail or smother it. He considers the political-moral realm thematically only insofar as it serves, by means of a stark contrast, to illumine that which it opposes. His neglect of the regime amplifies the one element of realism he claims to have inherited from religious mysticism: for "the man of knowledge there are no duties" (Gen., III. 17).

Nietzsche writes openly for the noble man, the supra-moral man, the gentleman, "taking this concept in a more spiritual and radical sense than has ever been done" (E.H., p. 310; Beyond, VII. 214, 219). One can infer, however, that he intended his books to convey to the non-philosophic reader a respect for that of which he can never have experience and, hence, that which he will never know.33 Since Nietzsche's writings have often had the opposite effect,34 a question arises as to whether they are entirely faithful to their purpose, and whether the dignity of philosophy might not be better preserved by giving a fuller attention to the demands of the political-moral realm. This question would be no less urgent if one suspected that Nietzsche's victory over the ultimate narrowness of Plato, by means of a candid historical consciousness, was itself a surrender to a new form of narrowness. In that case, the attempt to cultivate a being who could transcend the untoward effects of historicism and rescue philosophy from moribundity by an act of will would be, in some sense, deluded. It would be more than pitiable if Nietzsche himself had obscured his most frequently recurring and perhaps his most instructive lesson, albeit not his most original one, on behalf of the practice of genuine philosophy in the modern age: "In the end it remains as it is and always has been, great things remain for the great, abysses for the profound, nuances and shudders for the refined, and, in brief, all that is rare for the rare" (Beyond, II. 43).

33 G.S., V. 381; see letters 145, 152, and 154 in Selected Letters of Friedrich Nietzsche.
In his survey of contemporary theories of democracy M. Rejai observes that “the nexus between the classical and contemporary theories of democracy is a tenuous one.”¹ The basic assumptions and premises of the classical theories, which “rest upon a series of norms and ideals lacking systematic reference to political reality,” have been abandoned by recent democratic theorists in favor of the “identification and isolation of observable variables in political life. The attempt is to describe and explain rather than idealize.”² Though itself cast in the empirical-behavioral mold, this summary of the situation is accurate. Contemporary theory seeks to define democracy not in terms of what it ought to be but in terms of the features democratic states exhibit in the real world. Such a definition, however, is possible only by suppressing normative judgments or, conversely, by assuming them without attempting to justify them.

One of the more popular descriptive definitions of democracy identifies it with the control of decisionmakers by the people through elections. According to H. B. Mayo, for example, “A political system is democratic to the extent that the decisionmakers are under effective popular control.” Robert A. Dahl declares that “democratic theory is concerned with processes by which ordinary citizens exert a relatively high degree of control over leaders,” and his conditions for “polyarchy” are defined largely in electoral terms. C. W. Cassinelli considers “representative government,” which depends on uncoerced, periodic elections, to be the central feature of democracy. And Joseph A. Schumpeter defines the democratic method as “that institutional arrangement for arriving at political decisions in which individuals acquire the power to decide by means of a competitive struggle for the people’s vote.”³ This first postulate is then usually expanded and developed by deduction and empirical evidence from the operation of contemporary democratic governments. Mayo, for example, derives the principles of equality, freedom, and majority rule from the thesis

² Ibid., p. 31; see also pp. 307–11.
of popular control. 4 And Cassinelli argues that ‘like the ‘positive’ part of democratic policy, the guaranteeing of welfare, . . . tolerance of civil liberties is a direct result of the periodic uncoerced elections used to select the officials ultimately in charge of all public policy.’ He even goes so far as to assert that ‘in brief, the dynamics of the democratic electoral system make it impossible for civil liberties to be denied to any group within the democratic system.’ 5

This type of Schumpeterian definition of democracy has been highly influential in American political science, but its difficulties are numerous. 6 First, periodic elections may be an outgrowth of the value placed upon freedom, equality, and majority rule, rather than the converse. Second, without an examination of the nature of government itself and a definition in normative as well as descriptive terms, such a definition of democracy is arbitrary. It may be true, as Mayo argues, that only those who believe in democracy’s values will find in them a cogent argument for democracy; yet a firm theoretical grounding of democracy must be found in a philosophical examination of the principles involved. 7 Most important, the definition of democracy in terms of a process tends to leave open the question of the goals to be served by the process, a fundamental flaw in any theoretical analysis. Speaking about law, Yves R. Simon postulated three questions which it always makes sense to ask about positive law. 8 There seem to be analogous questions which can be asked about a simple descriptive definition of democracy. Is democracy a just or unjust system of government? Should a democratic system ever be altered to make it less or more democratic? Why should the laws of a democratic government be obeyed? These questions suggest that more is needed than a descriptive definition of democracy. A consideration of democratic theory must also include an analysis of the philosophy of government generally and an exploration of normative questions.

Yves R. Simon, in his Philosophy of Democratic Government, devoted himself to such a philosophical consideration of democratic theory. Simon’s formal definition of democracy is much the same as that of

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4 Ibid., pp. 60–70 and chs. 5–8.
5 Politics of Freedom, pp. 50, 61.
7 Introduction to Democratic Theory, pp. 218, 242.
other theorists: "In direct democracy there is no distinct governing personnel; the people governs by majority rule. In representative or indirect democracy the governing personnel is subjected to the control of the people through the procedure of periodical elections." The difference, however, is that Simon explores the foundations of government and attempts to distinguish those features of government which are essential to all government from those which are peculiar to democracy alone. Thus an examination of Simon's democratic theory uncovers some fundamental issues in a theoretical analysis of democracy and points the way to their resolution. Specifically, it should describe the status of freedom and authority in democracy and facilitate a rigorous evaluation of democracy as a form of government.

I

The distinguishing feature of democracy, according to Simon, is freedom, the particular freedom of the people to govern itself. But before we can understand the relation of freedom to democracy, we must understand its relation to authority. Simon's development of the theory of authority is probably his most significant contribution to political philosophy. Simon recognizes that in the modern world authority has a bad name; it seems to conflict with freedom. The growth of liberty is said to imply the decay of authority. Simon argues that this bad name comes from the prevailing "deficiency theory of government." This theory holds that only the deficiencies (moral, educational or otherwise) in men make government and authority necessary. As education and better institutions overcome such deficiencies, authority should have less and less of a role in politics. Simon, however, believes that authority is not a result of accidental deficiencies, but rather that it is essential in the ordering of human affairs.

10 Ibid., pp. 76, 142.
12 PDG, pp. 4-6 and ch. 1 passim.
Simon roots his theory of authority as, indeed, his entire democratic philosophy in the idea of the common good and in the concept of community. Community and common good are intimately related, community being defined as a society relative to a common good. Society does not exist to serve individual needs alone: society allows men to create and share common material goods, common values, common experiences. It makes this sharing possible over an extended period of time, a span longer than the individual’s life, and more various and diverse than would be possible if individuals were fulfilling only their own particular desires and needs. There are, according to Simon, two types of societies: the community and the partnership, and, correspondingly, two kinds of social goods. The common good of a community calls forth a “common life of desire and action.” The good of a partnership does not. The good of a community consists in a common life of desire and action, a “unity in knowing and loving or hating,” for “the most important part of community takes place in the heart of man.” Community is a form of relationship “characterized by a high degree of personal intimacy, emotional depth, moral commitment, social cohesion, and continuity in time,” to use the formulation of Robert A. Nisbet. A partnership, on the other hand, is characterized by ties of mutual self-interest and does not necessarily contain any deep personal commitments. Its good is simply a “common interest,” a sum of particular, private interests which happen to be interdependent.

Authority, as Simon points out, is not needed in partnership arrangements (contracts) unless there is some deficiency present (such as failure by one of the parties to fulfill his contractual obligations). Therefore, if society were a partnership, the deficiency theory of authority would hold. But, for Simon, political society is not a partnership but a community. He utterly rejects the contract theory of government. Since common action is essential to a community, authority is essential. The causation of common action in pursuit of the common good is the function of authority: “The power in charge of unifying common action through rules binding for all is what everyone calls authority.” Authority thus depends upon and creates commu-

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15 See CGCA, pp. 206–7; TNL, pp. 88–89.

16 PDG, p. 49; see also “CGCA,” pp. 208–10, and FC, pp. 103–9.

17 TNL, pp. 95–96; see also GTA, pp. 125–26.


20 Ibid., p. 221.
ty and common good. They are mutually creating and reinforcing. Authority has three principal functions in unifying common actions. First, since men are often selfish or ignorant, they put their particular goods before the common good. Authority, then, must direct the proper ordering of goods and unify the community behind the common good. This function of authority Simon calls "parental," and acknowledges that it is rooted in deficiencies. The second function of authority, however, is essential and would be needed even if men had no deficiencies of intelligence, information, or virtue. Authority in this case unifies action when there is more than one proper and beneficial means to the common good. It selects one course of action from a variety of worthy possibilities. The third function of authority is what Simon calls its most essential function. Here authority unifies action in the determination of the matter of the common good itself, the determination of the actual goods to be pursued by the society. Such a function is necessary if diversity and freedom are to be preserved for individual members of society while common action in the pursuit of the welfare of the community is guaranteed. Therefore, "considered in its essential functions authority is neither a necessary evil nor a lesser good nor a lesser evil nor the consequence of any evil or deficiency—it is, like nature and society, unqualifiedly good." The nature of man and human society, not their imperfections, requires authority.

II

After examining authority, Simon is in a position to define its relation to liberty and autonomy. It is important to recognize, however, that the kind of liberty which Simon identifies with autonomy is "terminal" liberty, that is, liberty which is the power of choosing the good alone and which consists in the interiorization of the moral law. Freedom is the "superdetermination" which enables a man to choose the proper means to his ends from the variety available to him. It depends upon the possession of virtue and strength of character, which allows him to reject false ends and false means and to keep what is good and good for him clearly in view. It is not "initial" liberty, or the sheer power of choosing either the good or the evil. Nor is it the spontaneity, lack of determination, openness, and self-expression so exalted in some recent theory. Initial liberty of choice is a means,
and is provided by the very fact of man’s rational nature. Terminal
liberty is an end and a perfection, and must be acquired.24 The basic
idea here is the ancient one of self-control. The image is that of the
prudent man who has chosen well his life’s goals and has achieved
mastery over the fears, desires, and temptations which would deflect
him from their pursuit. The growth of terminal liberty, therefore, im-
plies the decay of any false authority which would attempt to keep
mind and character in perpetual subjection. It implies the substitution
of persuasion for coercion and the decay of parental authority.

The progress of liberty does not, however, imply the decay of the
essential functions of authority.25 Indeed, Simon rightly points out
that some obstacles to freedom are internal to the person; hence, obe-
dience to authority, if it works to remove those obstacles, may pro-
mote freedom. Authority, even in its coercive aspects, may actually
increase freedom. Moreover, the same perfections which increase free-
dom also make the essential functions of authority necessary by in-
creasing the variety of possible means to and matter for the common
good.26 The more persons come to achieve autonomy, the sooner the
social deficiencies springing from their lack of autonomy will dis-
appear. The removal of deficiencies opens more routes to the common
good and more possibilities for shared life, experience, and commu-
nity.

Simon’s contention, then, is that authority does not conflict with
liberty. Let us examine this contention and its social dimensions more
closely.27 Autonomy is related to the transcendent good of an individ-
ual considered as a person, that is, as a whole, and not simply as a
member of a particular society. Since the common good of a society

24 FC, passim., esp. ch. 1 and pp. 36–46, 95–101; NFA, pp. 43–44; “CGCA,”
p. 244. In Freedom of Choice, ed. Peter Wolff (New York: Fordham University
Press, 1969), Simon provides the foundation for this conception of freedom. For
25 NFA, pp. 45–46. For a similar analysis of the nature of freedom and its
relation to authority, see John H. Hallowell, The Moral Foundation of Democ-
ocracy (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1954), pp. 112–19; Giovanni Sartori,
Hannah Arendt, “What Is Authority?” in Between Past and Future
authority and autonomy are contradictory, has one of its most effective spokes-
man in Robert Paul Wolff, In Defense of Anarchism (New York: Harper & Row,
1970). Wolff’s position has been strongly criticized by Lisa H. Perkins, “On
Reconciling Autonomy and Authority,” Ethics 82 (1972): 114–23; by Harry G.
405–14; and by Jeffrey H. Reiman, In Defense of Political Philosophy (New
27 This discussion draws on “CGCA,” pp. 235–43; PDG, pp. 70–71; and FC,
pp. 46–60 and chs. 3–4. For a fuller discussion of the relationship between
personal and particular goods, see Jacques Maritain, The Person and the Common
must be a good shared by the members of the society (thus not a good external to men), it must promote the personal goods (such as integrity, virtue, relation to God) of its members. In addition to these personal goods to which autonomy is essentially related, each person has particular goods (such as wealth, health, interests) which contribute to his development. Because it is related to the personal good of each member of society, the common good takes precedence over the particular goods of any member. Thus authority may direct the possession and use of particular goods toward the common good. On the other hand, the autonomous individual uses his particular goods as means to his transcendent (personal) good. How can internal direction by the autonomous man be compatible with external direction by authority? Simon solves this dilemma by reference to two principles. First, the autonomous man, because he accepts the precedence of the common good over his particular goods, interiorizes the authority which directs the use of these goods. Thus, for such a man, the tax laws do not stand as external commands and sanctions, but as embodiments of his moral obligation to support the common good. Second, the proper functioning of authority requires that the promotion of particular goods compatible with the common good be left to the care of individuals or to the smallest associations possible. The common good of the community thus requires both the principle of authority and the principle of autonomy. The former asserts that "wherever the welfare of the community requires common action, the unity of that common action must be assured by the higher organs of that community". The latter asserts that "wherever a task can be satisfactorily achieved by the initiative of the individual or that of smaller social units, the fulfillment of that task must be left to the initiative of the individual or to that of small social units."  

Because both society and the individual interiorize these principles, authority and autonomy are compatible: "Familiar contrasts are transcended, authority and autonomy do not conflict with each other and do not restrict each other. They cause and guarantee one another." By advancing wholeheartedly his particular goods, and yet deferring to authority when it is determined that his goods must yield to the common good, the free man promotes both the common good and his own personal good. Moreover, the social pluralism implied in this theory of the relationship between authority and freedom is different from and more adequate than the "interest-group pluralism" which is alternately praised and damned in the literature of American political science. Such pluralism does, it is true, ac-

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29 NFA, p. 47; see also PDG, p. 140.
knowledge common values and individual and group initiative. Yet
the common values are most often simply rules for fairness in the
pursuit of particular (private) interests, and the value of individual
and group initiative is measured only in terms of the promotion of
freedom. Simon's pluralism is oriented to the common good and the
personal good as well as to freedom and particular interests. It is the
absence of a sound notion of the common good which lies at the heart
of the failure of interest-group liberalism.32

Because the order of the common good is an order which must con-
tain both freedom and authority, the simplistic notion that democ-

racy must balance freedom and order is transcended, for "freedom,
correctly understood, is the most ordered thing in the world. It causes
order to descend into the depths of the human will."33 Thus freedom,
liberty, and autonomy are guaranteed by and guarantee essential au-
thority. This holds true in any legitimate form of government, but a
special relationship between freedom and authority obtains in a de-
mocracy.

III

Following Aristotle, Simon designates as a "political system" any
government in which the governed possess a legally defined and in-
stitutionally organized power of resistance to arbitrary government.34
Such a regime may be thoroughly non-democratic; yet its citizens may
still possess autonomy.35 Democracy, however, has its own ways of
preventing abuse and of guaranteeing freedom; that is, of procuring
the political condition. As Simon puts it:

This it does or attempts to do by either of two methods or by a combination of
the two. In direct democracy there is no district governing personnel; the people
governs by majority rule. In representative or indirect democracy the governing
personnel is subjected to the control of the people through the procedure of periodical
elections.

Democracy, however, attempts to go further than mere prevention of
abuse by government:

When the political idea assumes the democratic form, the people asserts, over
and above its freedom from abusive power, its freedom to govern itself. Keeping

32 I have developed this argument more extensively in "Political Science and
33 FC, p. 19; for typical examples of comments on "balancing" freedom and
order, see Robert Y. Fluno, The Democratic Community (New York: Dodd,
Mead, 1971), esp. chs. 1–3; Ithiel de Sola Pool, "The Public and the Polity," in
34 PDG, pp. 72–73 and n. 1.
35 Ibid., pp. 74–75.
the government confined within a certain field is no longer held sufficient; the
government has been taken over by the people. Such is democratic freedom,
the defining feature of democracy.36

If the people are to control the government and if, in addition, their
freedom to govern is the defining principle of the democratic state,
then the relation of authority to democracy must be considered. Au-
thority and coercion, Simon observes, are often confused; yet coer-
cion is merely an instrument of authority. Authority uses both coer-
cion and persuasion, and, in fact, the frequent use of coercion signifies
weakness of authority. Persuasion is a moral process and implies the
operation of free choice, while coercion conflicts with free choice
(though, as we have seen, ultimately it may facilitate "terminal"
liberty). Although it is often not easy to tell them apart, especially
when coercion is psychic, the distinction is crucial.37 For Simon, coer-
cion is not the essence of the state, although it results from that es-
sense and presupposes it. Coercion is only an essential property of the
state, the essence of which is the completeness of the common good
it pursues.38 Here again Simon differs from other contemporary de-
ocratic theorists in whose work the identification of the state with
coercion is almost a commonplace.39

According to Simon, democracy is no different from any other form
of government in possessing the right to use coercion, yet democracy
always strives to use the form of authority that is persuasion. Simon
outlines the relation of democracy to persuasion in three principles:

1. As a lawful and political regime, democracy systematically prefers persua-
sion to coercion and endlessly struggles to extend the domain of government by
persuasion... .
2. As an elective regime, democracy rules that persuasion plays a decisive role
in the designation of the governing personnel.
3. As democracy, it rules that attempts at persuading the voter take place in
open and public discussion.40

This requirement for open expression in democracy implies freedom
of expression, though Simon seems to feel that the basic principles of
society should be exempt from the discussion and debate which sur-
rounds the choice of means to implement those principles.41 Democ-

36 Ibid., pp. 75-76 (emphasis in original).
38 Ibid., pp. 109-10, 134-35.
39 See, for example, Cassinelli, Politics of Freedom, pp. 6-7; Mayo, Introduc-
tion to Democratic Theory, pp. 277-78; and Dahl, Preface to Democratic Theory,
p. 79, n. 16.
40 PDG, pp. 118-19.
41 Ibid., pp. 122-24. This topic is too complex to be discussed here. Although
Simon recognizes that in practice deliberations over means and ends may be
difficult to distinguish, he nonetheless contends that to preserve community,
principles must be above deliberation. For opposing arguments, see Reinhold
Niebuhr, The Children of Light and the Children of Darkness (New York: Charles
racy implies not only the freedom of the people to govern itself, thus requiring freedom of expression; it also demands other freedoms, for it is an illusion that democracy will perfect the state. No internal structure will guarantee the safety of society from state absolutism, which is a constant temptation to men in power; therefore, outside checks are needed. Freedom of the church and freedom of the press are the most important outside institutions. These are closely followed by private institutions, such as the private school, the independent labor union, the autonomous cooperative, private ownership, and free enterprise.\textsuperscript{42} Democracy demands pluralism. Since the freedom of these institutions also follows from the twin principles of autonomy and authority, Simon again finds that authority and liberty do not oppose, but rather that they support each other.\textsuperscript{43} Both democracy and authority imply freedom. What, then, is the relationship between democracy and authority?

Simon's discussion of sovereignty sheds some light on this question. Authority implies obedience, for "the primacy of the common good demands that those in charge of the particular goods should obey those in charge of the common good."\textsuperscript{44} The theory of sovereignty is designed to provide the foundation for the claim of some men to have the right to be obeyed, and to account for the obvious fact that men do obey other men. Simon rejects one popular theory of sovereignty, which he terms the "Coach-Driver Theory" and which is often called "sovereignty of the people."\textsuperscript{45} This theory, whose influence Simon traces to Rousseau, resolves the paradox of free men being bound to obey other men by declaring that it does not exist. It argues that officials have no authority; only the people do, and the people obey only themselves in a democratic state. Public officials simply drive the people where they want to go. According to this theory, the "obedience of man to man ... is mere illusion and violence, ... the citizen ought to obey himself alone."\textsuperscript{46} Simon argues that this is not really a theory of sovereignty at all, but a theory of anarchy, for if its necessary implications were drawn, the citizen would be bound to obey only when he was in the majority on any issue: "The artifice calculated to do away with obedience threatens directly the princi-

\textsuperscript{42} PDG, pp. 135–38.
\textsuperscript{43} Ibid., pp. 139–41.
\textsuperscript{44} Ibid., p. 57.
\textsuperscript{45} Ibid., pp. 146–54. For a similar treatment of this subject, see Sartori, Democratic Theory, chs. 5–6.
\textsuperscript{46} PDG, p. 147. One might be tempted to attribute this position to Wolff (Anarchism), but Wolff, while accepting its basic premises, realizes their implications and draws the necessary conclusion. Legitimate authority, he argues, can be found only in a unanimous direct democracy. His conclusion is convincing evidence for Simon's argument that anarchy is the only position consistent with the assumptions of the "Coach-Driver Theory."
people of authority in its most essential function.” In obeying laws we obey other men, not ourselves, as Rousseau would have it. To explain this fact, Simon argues that only God can grant the power of binding consciences:

There is something paradoxical about one man’s having the power to bind the conscience of another man. Of course, a man cannot do such a thing. God alone can. This he did by the creation of the human species, which is naturally social and political; for the necessity of government and obedience follows from the nature of community life.47

Authority and sovereignty, then, flow from the nature of political society, and the first possessor of sovereignty and authority is the community, the people as a whole. Sovereignty, Simon seems to be saying, is the right to exercise authority, and the correct theory of sovereignty is what Simon calls the “transmission” theory.48 The transmission theory holds that God has given the people the right to exercise the authority which follows from the necessity of government. The people may or may not transmit this authority to distinct governing personnel. If they choose not to transmit it, then the form of government is a direct democracy. In this case the individual obeys not himself, but the community decision. The normal situation, however, is for authority to be transmitted to distinct governing personnel. As Simon puts it, “whenever there is a distinct governing personnel, men have done two things . . .: They have designated the ruling person, and they have transmitted to him the power given by God to the people.”49 It is important to recognize that this theory is not necessarily democratic. Simon argues that “it [the transmission theory] implies that the governed consent to the government which is theirs, but it does not imply that this consent is necessarily exercised in the democratic procedure of election.”50 In fact, “government by the consent of the governed” has at least seven meanings, only a few of which are peculiar to democracy.51

The transmission theory, then, is not necessarily democratic, but it favors the promotion of democracy. It was mentioned above that non-transmission of authority means direct democracy. This fact provides the clue for recognizing the relationship between democracy and sovereignty (authority), for “what characterizes the democratic condition is that, in a democracy, sovereignty is never completely transmitted.”52 Any act of genuine transmission suspends the exercise of the people’s

47 PDG, p. 145; also GTA, pp. 165, 167.
48 The discussion below follows PDG, pp. 158–94.
49 Ibid., p. 158 (emphasis in original).
50 Ibid., p. 178. Cassinelli makes the same point (Politics of Freedom, pp. 92, 98–100), but his interpretation differs from Simon’s when he applies the theory of consent to democracy. See below.
51 PDG, pp. 191–94.
52 Ibid., p. 181.
authority, but it does not remove that authority (though it can be exercised only in extraordinary situations). But “democracy never transmits the whole of the transmissible powers. Every democracy remains, in varying degree, a direct democracy.”53 The powers of election, of referendum, and of public opinion are among the powers retained by the people. Something like this relationship between indirect and direct democracy seems to be what Giovanni Sartori means when he says, “The point is that although we are governed we are governed democratically; and this is so because of the value pressure, because the is of a governed democracy is molded by the ought of a governing democracy.”54 Clearly the idea of direct democracy remains normative for both Sartori and Simon, though both argue that it cannot be implemented in existing polities. Simon is careful to emphasize that the transmission of authority which takes place in a democracy is real and genuine. If it is not, if, for example, public opinion is designed to control and not merely to inform the governing officials, then the “Coach-Driver Theory” is implied. “Such practices mean rebellion and treachery established at the core of political life. They tend to corrupt political life into a competitive system where all moral idea is absent.”55

If the circumstances demand transmission of authority to distinct governing personnel, it must be real and genuine transmission. “Non-transmission of authority does not destroy the essence of government; but ungenuine transmission does.”56

IV

We are now in a position to unfold the relationships between authority, freedom, and democracy in the thought of Yves Simon. Sartori implies that authority, by which he means power based on “persuasion, prestige, deference,” is particularly characteristic of democracy:

Democracy is the political system which is built on the mode of exercising power that is called authority, in the sense that the typical feature of democracy is that it tends to transform power into authority, a vis coactiva into a vis directiva. Far from being repugnant to democracy, authority is its power formula par excellence.57

53 Ibid., p. 184.
54 Democratic Theory, p. 85.
55 PDG, p. 187; see also pp. 185–90 for the proper place of public opinion in a representative democracy. Simon’s ideas here are quite similar to those expressed by Edmund Burke in his well-known “Speech to the Electors of Bristol.”
56 Ibid., pp. 186–87. Jacques Maritain has argued that the concept of sovereignty has no place in a democracy (Man and the State [Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951], ch. 2). Maritain, however, uses the term in a very restricted sense, while Simon means by it the right to exercise authority. Maritain’s argument, therefore, poses no problems for Simon’s discussion.
57 Democratic Theory, p. 138. Note that this understanding of authority is different from Simon’s.
Simon would not disagree that authority is characteristic of democracy, but he does not tie it so closely to democracy. All lawful governments possess authority: in fact, possession of authority is that which makes them lawful. What is unique about democracy is not authority, but the fact that not all authority is transmitted to the governing personnel. The people retain the powers of election, often of referendum, and of influencing their governors. Cassinelli argues that democracy must possess "fuller" authority than other kinds of government in that it must possess a substantial portion of legitimacy or consent (belief in the moral right to rule). Simon, however, argues that all lawful governments possess consent, authority, and legitimacy. Again, the only difference is that in granting consent, the people in a democracy retain a portion of sovereignty. Simon's careful philosophic analysis allows him to distinguish clearly and precisely those factors which characterize democracy as one form of lawful government. Democracy is not the only legitimate form of government, and its great value cannot be correctly perceived when too much is claimed for it.

These observations have important implications for the concept of freedom. As we have seen, Simon feels that democracy implies not only freedom of the people from arbitrary power of government but also freedom of the people to govern themselves. This follows from the fact that in a democracy the people retain a portion of authority, which is by nature an active principle directing action to the common good; therefore, democratic freedom for Simon is the ability of the people to choose their common good. "The more definitely a community is directed toward its common good and protected from disunity in its common action, the more perfect and the more free it is."

Democracy is not often considered to be an end in itself, but there is an extensive debate over the ends which it is to serve. The basic question is over the determinate or indeterminate nature of these ends. If democracy is a means, then we must ask, "to what?" The position that the ends of democracy are indeterminate has often been taken. It is argued that since the people are to govern themselves, only they can determine their political goals. Mayo is very forceful in supporting this position:

Democracy sets up no scientifically ascertained 'end' for man, has no all-consuming purpose, no Form of the Good, no final ultimate to serve. It has its operating principles and their values; and it has the values inherent in the system; and it has a typical character which it both presupposes and promotes. Within these limits a democracy may be used to pursue aims which change from time to time... The realm of political and social purposes in a democracy is open and indeterminate, unless they are very general and thus permit political dispute over policies.

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59 PDG, p. 141.
60 Introduction to Democratic Theory, pp. 277–78; also p. 309. Thorson argues along similar lines (Logic of Democracy, pp. 138–41).
The logical upshot of this perspective is the theory which identifies democracy as a process of compromise between conflicting interests, so long as the process meets certain standards of freedom and equality: "Democracy is a method of taking political decisions, of compromising and reconciling conflicting interests. The method is more important, more formative of the resulting social order, than the disputes so resolved."61 These theories have been effectively criticized by John H. Hallowell, who asks, "How is it possible to mediate differences, to make compromises, without some standards of justice, the public interest, and the common good?" Compromises dictated by strength are inherently unstable: "A minority will agree to temporary rule by the majority, not simply because the minority cherishes the hope of someday becoming the majority, but because certain common interests transcend partisan interests."62 Simon's philosophy of democracy is a reaffirmation of this principle and a strong attack on the idea of politics as conflict and resolution of private interests. As a form of legitimate government directed by authority, the end of democracy is determinate, that is, the common good of the community, the people as a whole. The common good is more than simply an agreement on some common values as "rules of the game." Simon's concept of the common good refers primarily to the purpose of the game. Yet the end is also indeterminate, for the matter of the common good cannot be specified a priori; it is a question for determination by the authorities in light of the contingent circumstances within which a particular democratic society exists. The unique feature of the democratic state is the active role taken by the people, in their public capacity and in cooperation with the distinct governing personnel, in determining the nature of their common goal and the means to its realization. It must be remembered that the common good is an ethical quality and cannot receive any matter which the people and the government wish to determine for it. Authority is bound by ethical reason and the requirement that it try to lead by persuasion rather than by coercion. Simon's theory of democracy, then, reaffirms the ethical nature of government and establishes normative standards against which actual democracies may be measured.

Yet the greatest deficiency in Simon's democratic theory concerns

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61 E. F. M. Durbin, in Rejai, Democracy, p. 94. See also the selections from E. E. Schattschneider and Seymour M. Lipset in the same volume, pp. 116–21 and 122–23. The idea of democracy as the compromise of interests or, more broadly, as a process for resolving interest conflicts is widespread in contemporary writings on democracy and in modern political science generally. For substantiation of this contention and a critique of the idea of democracy simply as a process of interest conflict, see Cochran, "The Politics of Interest," ch. 4, and "The Politics of Interest: Philosophy and the Limitations of the Science of Politics," American Journal of Political Science 17 (1973): 745–66.

62 Moral Foundation, pp. 34, 36, also pp. 27–47; Cassinelli, Politics of Freedom, pp. 135–38.
the role of the people in determining their common good. If the people in a democracy take a direct hand in this, then they must be regarded in two aspects, as private persons and as public persons. For autonomy requires that individuals have the freedom to promote their private goods (see section II above). It also follows that the citizen will have two functions corresponding to these two aspects of his citizenship. As a private person he must will the common good formally and must will his own particular good materially. As a public person he must be concerned with both the form and the matter of the common good. It is easy to see that these two roles may often come into conflict, and we need not look too far in existing democracies to find examples of such conflict.

Simon does take note of the difficulties and tensions which these roles may create for the conscientious man, but he does not consider the problem in the context of democracy and gives little guidance for its resolution.\textsuperscript{63} How far can the individual go in promoting his particular good? Might not too effective a promotion of it prevent decisions furthering the common good? If an individual or subsidiary group acts in the political process to promote its private good, does it thereby cease to be a private person and become a public person? If so, then it must advocate the public and not the private good. Simon's discussion of the need for political parties to be open to the public and of the role of public opinion are not helpful in the resolution of this problem, for he does not make it clear whether the people in these situations are expressing their particular interests or their opinions of the common good.\textsuperscript{64} The importance of the autonomy of the individual and of small units is the ground for Simon's idea of pluralism. Here again, the relationship between the plural units and the institutionalization of this relationship needs elaboration if the relation of the common good to private goods is to be fully considered.\textsuperscript{65}

The conflict between the private and the common good seems particularly acute in a democracy, in which each man must promote both. Ultimately, the tension may be incapable of resolution except by the virtuous man. The problem of the common good in a democracy may resolve itself into the problem of creating a virtuous citizenry. In other words, the problem of political education, with which Plato, Aristotle, and Tocqueville were so vitally concerned, is brought to the forefront of our attention by Simon's theory of democracy.\textsuperscript{66}

\textsuperscript{63} PDG, pp. 43-47.

\textsuperscript{64} Ibid., pp. 104, 185-90.

\textsuperscript{65} Simon discusses the autonomy of small units throughout PDG and attends to some specific considerations in chs. 4-5, but the discussion is not systematic enough to solve the problem raised.

\textsuperscript{66} Simon's notion of the "perfective" functions of authority, which he does not develop in detail, is quite suggestive in this connection. See FC, pp. 51 and 55; PDG, pp. 60-61. n. 23. Michael Oakeshott considers political education in his essays "Political Education" and "The Study of 'Politics' in a University,"
One question still remains in our exposition of Simon's democratic theory. Why is democracy to be preferred to other forms of government if the conditions allowing its establishment are present? The answer to this question is implicit in what has gone before and needs only to be clearly articulated. The first factor to be noted is that democracy promotes freedom, though not, of course, because it does away with authority. As we have seen, any regime which possesses genuine authority promotes freedom because freedom and authority are complementary. Democracy, however, has a special role in promoting freedom. First, it demands that risks be accepted in ending all forms of paternal (substitutional) authority of the few over the many, of the "aristocrats" over the "common man." "It ... favors the early granting of autonomy in all domains of paternal authority." Since this process involves the dangers of misuse of autonomy, democracy demands heroism; it is not an easy form of government.68 Second, democracy as a political form of government attempts to guarantee the people freedom from arbitrary rule; as democracy it leaves the people free to govern themselves. Recent theorists of democracy have placed much emphasis on the benefits which democratic participation—through voting, public discussion, petition, and political action—provides for the full development of a citizen's human potential.68 While Simon undoubtedly disagrees with these theorists on important points, clearly he would find the results of these activities, which derive from the freedom of the people to govern themselves, important for human development. Democracy adds to the other freedoms which a man may have the freedom to participate in determining the content of the common good.

But how effective is democracy in eliminating the substitutional function of authority, in promoting its essential functions, and in advancing the common good? This is a second factor to be considered in evaluating democracy. Space does not allow a detailed examination of Simon's answer to this question. Suffice it to say that he considers an inflated optimism concerning the ability of the people to govern themselves and to promote the common good to be dangerous. Nevertheless, the people do have special skills which can promote the common good. While they may not always be able to place good men in posi-

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67 See PDG, pp. 15-18. The passage quoted is on p. 17.

68 See, for example, Kariel, Open Systems; Wolff, Anarchism; Peter Bachrach, The Theory of Democratic Elitism (Boston: Little, Brown, 1967); and Baskin, American Pluralist Democracy, esp. ch. 8. Of special importance is Hannah Arendt, The Human Condition (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1959).
tions of authority, they do seem to avoid placing bad men in them. The people also have a special skill in deliberating about policy. Moreover, a distribution of power to the many is necessary to protect the people from the mistakes, blindnesses, or evils of elitist governments.69

One of Simon's greatest virtues as a theorist of democracy is his ability to distinguish clearly between those goods which are the responsibility of all just government and those which are peculiar to democracy. The refusal of many contemporary theorists, Mayo, for example, and even Cassinelli, to some extent, to consider democracy and government in normative terms seems to result in their requiring of democracy outcomes which are in fact the responsibility of any just government. If these results are not forthcoming, a "disillusioned optimism" may be the result. It is dangerous to expect too much from any form of government or from imperfect men in an imperfect world. The true value of democracy can only be appreciated from the perspective of what Reinhold Neibuhr has termed "political realism."70 It is this kind of realism which informs and elevates Yves Simon's democratic theory.

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69 This paragraph summarizes PDG, pp. 77–99.
Reinhold Niebuhr's conception of politics is not based on a comprehensive and coherent overall theory, nor is it a systematic approach to social systems or political behavior. Indeed, there is an air of self-mockery in his description of his approach as "bastardized theology" — and, by implication, "bastardized political theory." He was concrete in his thinking, intent on understanding reality, and wedded to political history. His stance was often polemical, bent on demolishing a questionable viewpoint, exposing hypocrisy, or laying bare illusions, but he was as relentless in pursuing his own illusions as those of others.

There was movement to Niebuhr's thought and, as June Bingham has shown, the ability to change his views, yet those views were still firmly based on principles too simple for some, too illusive for others, and too provisionally stated to satisfy those who seek for "hard theories." He was skeptical of rigid and rationalistic modes and approaches which did not correspond to historical reality, and his principles did not fit readily and simply into the conventional categories and groupings of political thought. He struggled to take hold of reality, not to force it prematurely into any ready-made ideological mold.

The New Left and the New Theologues have pictured him as an establishment thinker and apologist for the status quo. Does this fit the founding editor of Radical Religion? His style of political analysis, with its emphasis on the complexities and ambiguities of political choice, is said to lead to political passivity and indifference to the needs of the city. How many of his critics have run for Congress, as he did (he was a Socialist candidate in 1930), were founders of such organizations as Americans for Democratic Action, and fought for their goals over the years?

Some conservatives condemn Niebuhr as an unreconstructed liberal. Have they read his critique of liberalism? He was for peace but against pacifism; for dialogue across ideological and national boundaries but skeptical of UNESCO because he questioned Huxley's scientific rationalism as a universal answer to world peace; for war against Nazism but for accommodation with the Soviet Union; and for containment in Europe but not in Southeast Asia.

How quaint and far-removed he seems from almost every one of the approaches popular in the last decade: positive thinking, problem-solving, giving the system one more chance, banning the bomb, ending the war, black power, law and order, the "conquest" of hunger or disease, "elimination" of waste, "resolution" of conflict. He strove to
solve problems, to root out evil, and to extend opportunity and justice, but neither his personal nor his public philosophy allowed him to strut and pose as a savior of mankind. He never saw himself as a leader sent to eradicate evil, for he found too much frailty in all men, beginning with himself (although his humility was never self-conscious or pompous, as it is with those who make a display of their limitations). His self-awareness and identity-seeking was a personal matter, not something sold for a price at a lecture or literary fashion show. It was man's predicament and man's possibilities, not Reinhold Niebuhr's, which stimulated the articles and sermons and books that he published in torrents almost until his death.

Niebuhr's concepts and principles were based on experience, not meditation in solitude. He moved from the pulpit of a contentious Detroit parish to the cockpit of social and religious controversy in New York, then the world's largest city. Two forces in particular repeatedly drew him out into society and drew him away from systematic thought. He was impatient with what he considered the irrelevance of philosophical systems, on one hand, and with society's stubborn resistance to change and its sanctification of the status quo on the other hand. He could not avoid the political maelstrom, though he early learned that problems were never solved once and for all. He might have agreed with the words of Walt Whitman: "it is provided in the very essence of things that from any fruition of success, no matter what, shall come forth something to make a greater struggle necessary."

Niebuhr entered the political arena not as a political actor but as a political thinker, with all the burdens and constraints this entailed. If theologians and philosophers questioned the seriousness of his pursuit of theology or philosophy, politicians and diplomatists doubted that he was one of them, and they were right. They were uneasy in his presence—a favorite comment was "I don't understand what he's talking about." I know of at least two Secretaries of State whose most costly blunders occurred from their failure to consider Niebuhr's admonition on the limits of power. His one attempt to gain political office ended in failure in 1930: he lived in two worlds, that of politics and that of the mind, never fully at home in either. Perhaps this is why he understood inhabitants of both worlds better than they understood themselves, including their self-deceptions and pretensions, their interests and illusions, although his skepticism and self-critical attitude with respect to principles and policies may have cost him friends and allies. In the 1920s and 1930s, when he was affiliated with followers of the social gospel, he questioned whether Christians were a likely source of social reform, given the religious complacency of Detroit, and quoted with approval the words of the Episcopal bishop Charles Williams that on matters of social justice there were only two Christians in Detroit, and they were both Jews. His indignation focused on
the role of Henry Ford I and the mighty leaders of the new mass production auto industry, and in challenging them he was defying the most influential and powerful people in that city. He continued along this path even when his acceptance by influential leaders grew and he did not hesitate to challenge the illusions of John Foster Dulles, Henry Luce or Billy Graham. Niebuhr’s social criticism, however, was criticism with a difference. To achieve his ends he needed the support of those who held power, but quest for influence and power can tie the hands and restrict the freedom of social thinkers, especially those who would be both thinkers and doers; thinkers who make no pretense of influencing the powerful are immune, for all out social critics and muckrakers have no designs on decision-makers nor are they dependent upon them.

Niebuhr, by contrast, carried his thinking into the marketplace. He numbered among a few close friends and many acquaintances the powerful and the mighty in government, business, education, and the mass media, yet from his first denunciation of social injustices in Detroit to his rather shrill debates with Henry Luce and John Foster Dulles over America’s role in the world, he never flinched from meeting the powerful head on. He criticized the notion of “house theologian,” as he saw in the late 1960’s the relationship of Billy Graham to the White House, not only as an abridgement of the historic American separation of church and state but, more important, as raising, like every form of subservience to holders of power, the specter of the social observer abandoning his independence as critic and interpreter. He retained, however, his commitment to both thinking and doing, and thus his conception of politics evolved.

THREE CONCEPTS IN A THEORY OF POLITICS

Niebuhr’s thinking evolved into a more or less coherent outlook on political problems. As an alternative to system-building in the social sciences, he proposed the study of history, which, he believed, remained more open to empirical data, and he did evolve a theory of ethics and politics which provided a basis for a serious dialogue with ethicists (whom he criticized for being too utopian) and political realists (whom he sometimes found too cynical).

Niebuhr’s conception of United States and world politics rested essentially on three working principles which he applied consistently in most of his political writings. These concepts are power, community, and practical morality.
Niebuhr’s Conception of Politics in the United States and the World  127

Power

“The contest of power . . . is the heart of political life.”¹ Niebuhr wrote: “To understand politics is to recognize the elements of power which underlie all social structure . . . which may be obscured or submerged, but which cannot be eliminated.”² Whatever the ultimate goals or claims men and nations pursue, the means to both their immediate ends and their ultimate ends is power. Indeed, “there has never been a scheme of justice in history which did not have a balance of power at its foundation.”³

Power for Niebuhr was both an inevitable component of politics and an inescapable source of corruption. Anxiety and insecurity are at the roots of the quest for power and of the excuses men make for their aggressions on the basis of morality every day of their lives. Man who is dependent upon God but seeks to make himself self-sufficient and independent must inevitably be anxious. To end this anxiety, he seeks influence, recognition, and power, thereby threatening others and bringing anxiety into their lives. One man’s power is another man’s powerlessness, one man’s security another’s insecurity. The existence of power and powerlessness, security and insecurity, is not openly nor plainly stated but is cloaked in the language of right and wrong, justice and injustice, and “reasons of state.” Rivalries such as these among nations are also played out in microcosm, Niebuhr writes, as when “my little five-year-old boy comes to me with the tale of an attack made upon him by his year-old sister. This tale is concocted to escape parental judgment for being too rough in playing with his sister. One is reminded of Germany’s claim that Poland was the aggressor and the similar Russian charge against Finland [in World War II].”⁴

Community

As men struggle for identity and security in their relationships, they also join together out of convergent interests and common purposes. Community exists at almost every level, from the most intimate and enduring units such as the family to ever larger groupings of states. Community precedes government, and government cannot be established where community is not present, as we have seen in the attempts toward world government. Community was approximated when

³ Ibid., p. 104.
⁴ Ibid., p. 14.
the states of western Europe and the United States discovered the basis for common action in a convergence of political and moral interests following World War II. This convergence of interests was lacking in the Cold War, partly because the East did not share the moral consensus prevailing in Europe and the United States, and partly because (at least in Niebuhr's time) the political interests of East and West did not converge.

Community, then, involves a modicum of shared values and some minimal agreement on political means and ends. It is the framework within which the give and take of politics and accommodation is possible. When society is based primarily on fear, nations huddle together on the most tentative and provisional basis in the face of the threat, say, of a thermonuclear holocaust. Community provides the cement for at least limited cooperation among states, as the power/security dilemma leads to rivalry for influence and prestige. It may be too simple to juxtapose power and community in these terms, yet for Niebuhr the two were interconnected and provide the fulcrum of his thought.

American political life has gone on within a framework of shared values which is at least partly the heritage of a common European tradition. The Founding Fathers wrote of forming not a political union of states but a more perfect union, implying the existence of a prior moral and political community. World politics is plagued by the absence of such a community: only for limited periods and in limited geographical areas is community approximated on this wider basis. Relations between nations more often resemble proceedings in the course of an armistice among contending states than they do a discussion of common interests.

Practical Morality

A final concept which reached fruition in the later stages of Niebuhr's work was the argument that practical morality may be the highest possible attainment in national and international politics. Moral and political choices involve discrimination among many goods; they are concrete choices, not abstract ones. Men seek to do the right, but what is right? It is hard to perceive the correct solution for a problem or the right course to take in a given situation, but it is equally hard to perceive the interests and moral positions of others. Fear, insecurity, and the quest for power as a means of security and identity further compound the problem. To these must be added ignorance, the uncertainties of predicting the consequences of every moral choice, the hazards of premature moral judgments and the self-righteousness of individuals and groups.

At the national level, Niebuhr believed, these problems are further complicated by the human tendency to project upon the state un-
fulfilled personal ambitions and aspirations, a prime cause for the crusading nature of contemporary nationalism: the more insecure and anxious men feel in their personal lives, he said, the more they turn to national achievements for personal satisfactions. Added to all this is the fact that moral choices are made more difficult because of the complexities of modern life. The ancient and enduring moral codes were drawn up for rather simple societies and ways of life (as Chester Barnard wrote, they come from a time of sheep and shepherds), for societies marked by a considerable degree of moral consensus which no longer exists. Given all these complexities and problems, those who offer moral guidance tend to take one of five positions.

The Moralists

The moralists would make every question, however limited and practical (for example, whether to grant a travel visa or not), a pure moral issue. Confronted with the complex and ambiguous choices of statecraft, they defer true moral choice to the millenium. Morality becomes a matter of declaring or awaiting a perfectionist goal, not a matter of making choices among lesser evils or of the least imperfect good among available moral choices. Moralists tend to scorn those who make present choices. Niebuhr throughout his career attacked this approach and appears for contemporary societies at least to reject it outright.

The Cynics

The opposite of moralism is cynicism, which maintains, in effect, that moral choice is impossible, that men cover their acts with moral and ideological rationalizations when ambition and self-interest are in fact the true determinants. Thus cynics call for recognizing what is, not what ought to be. Niebuhr believed that cynicism had little to commend it as a positive and constructive approach to moral decisions.

The Pragmatists

Pragmatism appeals to those who are impatient with broad and general moral viewpoints. The pragmatist grapples with reality solely on a case-by-case basis: each decision has to be made as if it were unique, and the effective policy-maker cannot afford to see it in relation to other decisions. James Reston criticized President Nixon for such an approach—for looking at every issue as if it were isolated from every other one, and Presidents Kennedy and Johnson have been similarly criticized. In fact, says Niebuhr, every issue and problem is interconnected, and there is often a better chance of making the right moral
choice if decisions are viewed in this way. However, although pragmatism is an advance over cynicism, it remains for Niebuhr a plausible but inadequate approach.

THE POLITICAL REALISTS AND PRACTICAL MORALISTS

Two other traditions have respected histories, political realism and practical morality. Niebuhr moved back and forth between the two throughout his writings and speeches. Realism has its place because moral choices in politics can never be made in isolation from practical interests. Practical morality is relevant because political choices which would be moral must consider competing moral claims. Both realism and prudence are essential to moral choice, the one in evaluating competing political claims and the other in evaluating moral claims.

Some may say these are distinctions without a difference, and that what counts in practice are those frequent decisions which are made with seemingly little influence from underlying philosophies. Yet the success of our foreign policy over the next five or ten years may well depend upon whether policy-makers substitute realism or prudence for pragmatism or cynicism. Pragmatism looks to what is possible and practical in a single isolated case, while prudence seeks to balance what is politically possible with what is conceived of as being at least morally right and subjects political decisions to some kind of hierarchy of values. While neither principles nor circumstances alone can tell us what is right, they do make up the fabric of moral choice. General principles, which seldom (if ever) decide concrete cases, do provide a framework for moral reasoning, and circumstances influence priorities among values, especially as we leave an era of plenty (one set of circumstances) and enter an era of scarcity (another circumstance).

A nation cannot do everything; its leaders must choose. One choice must be to select methods of assuring national and international security. Most of the energy of the Nixon administration (and perhaps of the Johnson administration) was dedicated to this task. If collective security is dead, what are we to put in its place? Because of excessive pragmatism, both these administrations were more effective in coping with individual crises as they developed than in dealing with the larger general question. However, pragmatists suffer most by comparison with practical moralists with respect to the problems of the developing world. Here neither charity nor crash programs are the answer, nor is the massive transfer of capital or people. Western policies toward so-called Third World problems are likely to remain peripheral to the central issues of negotiating with the Russians and the Chinese for some time, and those who espouse economic and social development programs as panaceas for world peace need to be reminded that their concerns are not yet at the center of world atten-
tion. Yet somehow future policy-makers who would be both realistic and prudent must help to move these issues somewhat closer to the center of the action. From the standpoint of practical morality, there is something obscene about worrying over Great-Power problems 99 percent of the time while paying homage to a new structure of peace only once or twice a year at the United Nations when the leaders of nations' gather in New York for the opening of the General Assembly.

To be more specific, critics of the Nixon-Kissinger strategy, perpetuated by Mr. Nixon's successor, note a seeming obliviousness to the more intangible aspects of foreign policy. The United States, these critics say, has been both ruthless and short-sighted in abandoning its friends Japan, India, and Taiwan. It has used its power with little magnanimity or grace. Kissinger and his allies seem to have lacked the personal self-confidence and security necessary to establish and maintain individual relations of intimacy and trust with Europeans and Asians. Their pragmatism has been so relentless and cold-blooded that their intentions have been suspect even (and especially) among those one might expect to be most trusting of Americans, namely, the Europeans.

The trouble with pragmatism is that, much like every other foreign policy pattern, it can be expanded into a religion. Where human vanity plays a controlling role, limited political precepts and tactics can be transformed into absolutes—and there has been plenty of vanity in the Nixon-Kissinger approach. Secrecy becomes not a means for accomplishing certain ends but an end in itself, justified not by doctrine or words but by a sense of omniscience and self-righteousness which is impervious to alternatives. Such pragmatism, though less offensive than the florid public moralism of John Foster Dulles, is nonetheless all-pervasive in its effects. It leads to isolation from other views, ruthlessness in dealing with those who differ, and unwillingness to acknowledge that one may be wrong. Those whose acts spring from self-righteousness, even though they do not speak in its language, may be the most self-righteous of all.

We can assume that Niebuhr would have reflected upon the present-day conduct of foreign policy in terms of practical morality, although the thoughts on pragmatism just outlined cannot, obviously, be attributed to him. Likewise, it is fair to suppose he would have approached the Soviet-American efforts toward detente with an awareness of the importance of community and moral consensus—or lack thereof. It is also unlikely that he would have approached any problem without careful consideration of the problem of power. His legacy is not that of a pundit or prophet, however, but it is rather his concepts and their usefulness in studying those issues which as a basis for study and thought remain the unfinished business of American political and international life.
THE CHOICE BETWEEN PERFECTIONISM AND RAWLSIAN CONTRACTARIANISM

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It is Rawls’ claim that when we compare his conception of justice with its rivals (average utility, classical utility, and the different kinds of perfectionist theories) that his theory at least appears (a) “to match our common sense convictions more accurately” and (b) more adequately extrapolates to previously unsettled cases1 (p. 332). While Rawls takes utilitarian accounts to be his most serious rivals, I want here to examine whether Rawls has demonstrated or even made convincing 1) his claim that his principles give a more adequate conceptualization of the basis of justice and morality than does perfectionism and 2) his further and related claim that there is “no basis for acknowledging a principle of perfection as a standard of social justice” (p. 330).

I shall argue that Rawls has not made a compelling case here. If I am not mistaken in the essentials of my argument, and if some reconstruction of Rawls’ critique of perfectionism cannot be made which will show such a critique to be essentially sound or at least more compelling than it now appears to be, then his overall theory will be rather considerably weakened, for part of its plausibility turns on his ability to show that rival accounts are inadequate or at least suffer from even greater difficulties than does his own account.

Rawls begins his examination of what he calls “the principle of perfection” by pointing out that there are two variants of the principle (p. 325). In the first—let us call it “extreme perfectionism”—the principle of perfection is the sole principle of a teleological theory which directs “society to arrange institutions and to define the duties and obligations of individuals so as to maximize the achievement of human excellence in art, science and culture” (p. 325). The following quotation from Nietzsche’s Schopenhauer as Educator illustrates this posture: “man-kind must work continually to produce individual great human beings—this and nothing else is the task—for the question is this: how can your life, the individual life, retain the highest value, the deepest significance? ... Only by your living for the good of the rarest and most valuable specimens.”2 Whether the greatest

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1 A Theory of Justice (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1971). References to A Theory of Justice are given in the text. There are important remarks about his appeal to considered judgments and the rationale for extrapolation from them on pp. 316–320 of the book. I have critically examined this matter in my “On Philosophic Method,” International Philosophical Quarterly, (September, 1976).
2 Quoted in ibid., p. 325.
number are made happy or not, whether equal liberty is furthered or not, whether all men are taken to be of equal concern or not, the cultural achievements of humankind must be preserved. If, for example, slavery was necessary to attain and preserve the achievements of the Greeks in philosophy, science, and art, then slavery was morally justified in those circumstances.

A second form of perfectionism—let us call it “moderate perfectionism”—is a form of intuitionism in which the principle of perfection is accepted as only one (though a very crucial one) of several irreducible ultimate standards. Such a view can be more or less perfectionist depending on the weight given to the claims of excellence and culture. Applied moderately and reasonably, as a kind of moral basis for conservativism, perfectionists, as a counterpoint to the egalitarianism advocated by Rawls, could argue against the difference principle for a limit to the redistribution of wealth and income once the subsistence needs or the most basic needs of people—including, of course, the least favored stratum of society—have been met. Such a redistribution should be halted when subsistence needs have been met and where such a redistribution tends to undermine the preservation of cultural values; that is to say, instead of using the expenditures in such a situation to enhance the happiness and relieve the suffering and alienation of the more unfortunate strata of society, one should use it to preserve and to add to the flourishing of the arts, sciences, and cultural amenities of life.

Let us consider Rawls’ arguments against this moderate form of perfectionism. (In doing this I shall consider some of his criticisms of extreme perfectionism as well, for he believes, and rightly, that they apply to both variants.) Many of his criticisms depend on an appeal to what would be chosen in the original position. Persons in the original position do not “share a common conception of the good by reference to which the fruition of their powers or even the satisfaction of their desires can be evaluated,” so they can hardly “have an agreed-on criterion of perfection that can be used as a principle for choosing between institutions” (p. 327). Such a conception would be utterly empty and inapplicable for them. But this would not be so for rational, impartial people in everyday life capable of a sense of justice, and, if the methodological device of the original position has the effect of excluding consideration of such a substantive theory simply on those grounds, i.e., that “O.P.’s (people in the original position) cannot understand or assess such conceptions, then we have in that very fact good grounds for rejecting or at least seriously questioning the use of that methodological device. What we need to know is whether rational and impartial persons in normal circumstances would have good grounds for adopting Rawls’ principles of justice rather than either extreme or moderate perfectionism. To say, at least of extreme perfectionism, that a rational person would not adopt such a principle because it might lead
to some curtailment of his own liberties and indeed even to a loss of freedom altogether is not yet to make a non-question-begging criticism of perfectionism, for we have to be given a reason why rational, impartial human beings might not adopt the teleological ideal-regarding principles of perfectionism, principles which commit them to the claim that in certain circumstances some personal liberties (including, perhaps, their own) may “fall before the higher social goal of maximizing perfection,” of raising or maintaining the level of culture (p. 327).

Only if we were justified in claiming that a man acts rationally not if, but only if, he seeks to maximize that which is in his self-interest will such a claim undermine perfectionism. But such a claim about rationality is quite arbitrary; if Rawls is committed to such a conception of rationality, then so much the worse for his conception of rationality.3 If, alternatively, Rawls is saying that, as a simplifying device, we will stipulate that rational persons will take no interest in one another’s interests, then so much the worse for such simplification. There are no sufficient reasons for believing that all or even most rational and impartial persons in everyday life operate in accordance with that simplifying device. To set it up so that they must do so, and then to point out that such people will opt for the principle of greatest liberty rather than the principle of perfection, is too obvious a gerrymandering to require further comment. Where is it written or established that no rational man can risk his freedom to further or protect the sciences and the arts?

Rawls—moving to a different kind of objection—cannot, without radically changing his own position, reject perfectionism on the grounds that it is a doctrine which captures nothing which is even tolerably clear, for he avers that “comparisons of intrinsic value can obviously be made” and that, as he puts it, “clearly there are standards in the arts and sciences for appraising creative efforts, at least within particular styles and traditions of thought. Very often it is beyond question that the work of one person is superior to that of another. Indeed, as he points out himself, the freedom and well-being of individuals, when measured by the excellence of their activities and works, is vastly different in value (p. 328). He agrees that the judgments we make here are not so vague that they must fail on that account as a basis for assigning rights.

To point out, as Rawls does, that justice as fairness “allows that in a well-ordered society the values of excellence are recognized” and that “human perfections are to be pursued within the limits of the principle of free association” is not to the point, for the question is one of priority. Even moderate perfectionism must generally give greater

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3 I have argued against such a conception of rationality in my “Principles of Rationality,” Philosophical Papers 69 (1972), and in “Rationality and Egoism,” Studi internazionali di filosofia, (1975).
weight to principles of perfection than to the Rawlsian principles of
justice.

Rawls rightly argues that the principle of perfection provides an
insecure foundation for equal liberties and would depart widely from
the difference principle. A criterion of perfection will be such that
rights in the basic structure are to be assigned so as to maximize the
total intrinsic value. And even the moderate perfectionist and the
Rawlsian contractarian will not find a basis for a lower-level agree-
ment in a mutual commitment to the indispensability of human equal-
ity, for the equality of rights does not follow from the equal capacity
of individuals for the higher forms of life. It may well not even be true
that we have such equal capacities, but even if we do, that by itself
would not commit a perfectionist who accepted it to a Rawlsian doc-
trine of equal rights as well. From the fact (if it is a fact) that im-
partial rational agents would commit themselves to a principle of per-
fection it does not follow that they would be, if they are consistent,
committed to a conception of right which would in turn commit them
to the principle of equal liberty. Maximization of the total of intrinsic
value (defined in perfectionist terms) may or may not be compatible
with a principle of equal liberty. Whether it is or not will depend on
particular circumstances. Thus in a perfectionist account there is no
secure foundation for a key pillar of justice as fairness, namely, the
principle of equal liberty.

However, against Rawls, it could be responded, "So what?" Per-
haps it is more reasonable and, morally speaking, better to stick with
a principle of perfection with different principles of justice subordinate
to that principle. Why must it be the case, and indeed is it the case,
that rational and impartial people with a capacity for a sense of justice
must opt for the priority of a principle of equal liberty rather than the
priority of a principle of perfection when the two are in conflict? As
far as I can see, Rawls has done nothing to show that they must or
even that they should.

It would be reasonable for Rawls to respond that in arguing about
morals and in arguing morally, it should be evident that at "some
point we cannot avoid relying upon our intuitive judgments" (p. 320).
In the above argument we were forgetting that in comparing the ade-
quacy of these rival moral postures, we must at some point appeal to
our considered convictions (p. 318). He might add that we need, as well,
to develop more fully the consequences of these principles; indeed, we
need to develop them in detail and see where they lead (p. 319). In
particular, we need to see whether they have consequences that con-

cflict with our considered convictions. Some of these considered con-
victions, Rawls reminds us, "are fixed points . . . that we seem un-
willing to revise under any foreseeable circumstances" (p. 318). The
point, Rawls could claim, is that justice as fairness harmonizes better
with our considered convictions, including those deepest convictions
which are fixed points we are not willing, except purely in theory, to revise (pp. 381–20).

We must, however, be careful with the use of ‘‘we’’ and ‘‘our’’ here. Rawls has not succeeded in drawing implications from the perfectionist principle which clash with any such considered convictions of mine. I am not trying, as Hare and Singer do, to challenge such an appeal to considered convictions; I am only remarking (accepting at least for this discussion, the legitimacy of such an appeal) that in appealing to such considered convictions, Rawls has not, as far as I can see, given us grounds for opting for justice as fairness over perfectionism.4

It may be the case that Rawls’ considered convictions, including his most fixed considered convictions, differ rather radically from mine. If that is so, and if we are both rather representative of different groups of people, then Rawls’ account is in deep trouble. Why should we accept as normative for humankind the considered convictions of his particular group? If, as I think more likely, Rawls’ considered convictions and mine are not very different, then Rawls is also in deep trouble, for he has not been able to achieve a reflective equilibrium between, on the one hand, principles, rational beliefs, the facts in the case and, on the other, our considered convictions which will register against perfectionism and for justice as fairness. In either case he has not shown why rational, informed, impartial men with a sense of justice (a moral understanding) should opt for his two principles rather than the traditional teleological principles of perfectionism.

Where we accept a moderate perfectionism and do not insist on any claim that the principle of perfection provides the sole ultimate criterion for what we are to do, Rawls is particularly vulnerable. Moderate perfectionists argue that we are to balance fundamental moral principles, including the principle of perfection and Rawls’s two principles of justice, much as W. D. Ross argued that we should balance what he called prima facie duties, sometimes shifting in favor of one weighting of the principles and sometimes another. Through engaging in this activity, we come to appreciate in a particular circumstance what is suitable to the situation. The moderate perfectionist, like a pluralist such as Ross, is contending that we cannot reasonably generalize beyond this. (Indeed, it seems to me that such a perfectionist is a rather distinctive kind of pluralist.)

Rawls tells us that so construed the principle of perfection, as distinct from his principles, will not provide us with a single standard of social justice. ‘‘Criteria of excellence,’’ he claims, are too ‘‘imprecise as political principles and their application to public questions is bound to be unsettled and idiosyncratic’’ (p. 330). Presumably, his

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remarks about their public ascertainability made two pages earlier
and at least seemingly in conflict with this last remark, were meant as
part of some narrower tradition and community of thought. The claim
is that we can, using Rawls' account, determine rather more exactly
than can the perfectionist what we are to do. We know on Rawls' ac-
count rather exactly when liberty or freedom can be restricted, name-
ly when it violates some obligation or natural duty or interferes with
the basic liberties of others. And, as the least favored stratum can be
identified by its index of primary goods, we can apply the difference
principle fairly precisely, for we can ascertain in a rather straightfor-
ward manner "what things will advance the interests of the least fa-
voured" (p. 320).

Indeed, as Rawls recognizes, ethical principles are, as we have
known at least since Aristotle, vague, but, he continues, "they are not
all equally imprecise, and the two principles of justice have an ad-
antage in the greater clarity of their demands and in what needs to
be done to satisfy them" (p. 321). Perfectionist principles, he claims,
are less determinate: with them there is less general agreement. The
consensus model would not work nearly as well for perfectionism, for
over such matters "we are likely to be influenced by subtle aesthetic
preferences and personal feelings of propriety; and individual, class
and group differences are often sharp and irreconcilable" (p. 331).

Surely, if there actually is such a comparative non-vagueness, it
counts in favor of the principles of justice as fairness over the prin-
ciple of perfectionism. Yet how decisive this is is far from evident. Mat-
ters such as personal feelings of propriety can, at least in theory, be
eliminated. Moreover—to take a distinct consideration—perhaps the
Rawlsian doctrine in counterdistinction to perfectionism does not
leave enough scope for ideal-regarding considerations? In defending
perfectionism one might argue against Rawls, as Stuart Hampshire
has, that Rawls' account suffers from a one-sided emphasis in ex-
plaining "the virtue of justice, and even more the other essential vir-
tues, as rational consequences of planned cooperation in a rational
social setting."5 Hampshire queries whether this is the most funda-
mental role of justice or of morality, and goes on to claim that "to
adopt the moral point of view ... is to think what kind of character
and aims men should have, or try to have, and what kind of life they
should lead."6 To have a moral point of view is among other things,
but still quite centrally, to have a conception, vague though it may be,
"of the wholly admirable man, and of the entirely desirable and ad-
mirable way of life."7 But this is—or so it seems—to commit oneself

18, No. 3 (1972), p. 38.
6 Ibid.
7 Ibid.
to a form of perfectionism as a still more fundamental feature of morality than anything to which Rawls appeals.

Rawls admits that such perfectionist conceptions are involved in morality but denies that they are as fundamental as are his principles of justice in thinking about the necessary bases of rational cooperation for a well-ordered society. However, as Hampshire points out, where such a postion is taken, it is not obvious how the issue can be rationally settled as to the comparative adequacy of Rawlsian contractarianism and moderate perfectionism. Hampshire further remarks plausibly, as Nowell-Smith has as well, that this indecisiveness is inescapable in moral philosophy. But Hampshire, admittedly indecisively, offers as “evidence” for perfectionism the following “considerations capable of determining the intellect”—considerations of the same order of rigor as the ones to which Rawls feels that he can legitimately appeal (p. 125). The “evidence” in question is from the history of reflective moral opinions and from the psychology of moral sentiments, respectively.

The kind of reflective moral opinion Hampshire is appealing to centers around the claim, reflected in the moral beliefs of many intelligentsia, that it is not the justice of the prevailing practices and institutions which are at the center of moral concern but a conception of what kind of person to become and of what kind of relations are ideally to obtain among people. Such an argument from the psychology of moral sentiments stresses that the virtue of justice is more “associated with the conceptions of guilt and innocence, of law and due procedures of law, of separation, of impartiality in judgment,” and is less centrally associated “with the rational distribution of goods in society.” On Rawls’ own positive account just the opposite is the case.

To this I think Rawls could and should respond, particularly to the point about the psychology of moral sentiments, that although genetically and historically speaking these ideas have had a very considerable role and indeed that an understanding of their origins should not be lost, yet when one reconstructs the basis—the rational foundation—of morality, the conceptions Rawls refers to and utilizes are more central, for without a basis of rational cooperation—a basis for adjudicating conflicting claims, aims, and interests and for setting out the grounds of human cooperation—the other moral considerations referred to by Hampshire would have no point. The considerations of justice Hampshire talks about and the possibility of finding a truly admirable way of life, a rational and thoroughly desirable life plan, are dependent for their very possibility on the considerations Rawls concerns himself with. Thus in that obvious way they are more funda-

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mental than the others; i.e., the others depend on them. If they are not coherently set out and rationally justified, the rest would be a shambles.

There is a lot of metaphor here which may resist more literal statement, but, that consideration aside, even if Rawls' considerations provide the base, it does not follow that the rest of the edifice is less important. My house would not stand without its foundations, and it would not be the house it is without its basement, but it by no means follows that my basement is the most important room in my house. Perhaps, as Hampshire points out, Rawls' considerations give us the theory of the kind of social order—a theory of just institutions—which provides the machinery "that makes a desirable, natural and admirable way of life possible," but from that it does not follow that such considerations, rather than considerations about what constitutes the most truly desirable way of life—with its concern for ideals of perfection—are at the core of moral philosophy, i.e. an inquiry into the reasonable foundations of morality.

What we must recognize from the above discussion is that we have not yet settled, as Rawls thinks we have, the issue of whether justice as fairness or perfectionism provides the more adequate articulation of the foundations of morality or even the foundations of social justice.10 Perhaps we should say something eclectic such as this: neither gives the whole or even the most central aspects of the picture of what morality is all about, but both, perhaps with conceptions taken from utilitarianism as well, are essential and indeed essentially complementary in any more adequate account of morality. And perhaps this in effect points to the superiority of some form of pluralism encompassing all of these elements and eschewing anything like priority rules.

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10 Rawls might stick to his guns and respond that in much of what I have said I have assumed mistakenly that the standard of perfection is a principle of justice; on the contrary, though it is a moral principle and a principle concerning which moral arguments can be made, it is not a principle of justice. This perhaps is true, but even if it is true it would not touch the essentials of my argument. Rawls acknowledges that perfectionist principles are rational moral principles. The crucial question involved in the above argument is whether Rawls has shown that his principles, rather than the perfectionist principles, should be said to be the most basic elements of morality and which principles, where they conflict, should take pride of place. Rawls claims that the principles of justice as fairness should take pride of place. My argument has been that he has not established this essential point, and my argument would hold here even if (a) perfectionist principles are not principles of justice and (b) the moral terrain is so complex that we should not say that either form the most basic elements of morality but that they both are indispensable parts of the moral terrain. See here Stephen Toulmin, "Is There a Fundamental Problem in Ethics," Australasian Journal of Philosophy 33 (1955): 1–19.
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