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Pensées

Canadian Undergraduate Journal of Philosophy
Revue étudiante canadienne de philosophie

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Introduction

With our fourth volume of *Pensées,* we are pleased to continue our task of bringing to light the great philosophical work of Canadian undergraduate students and providing an opportunity for students to gain valuable experience by participating in our editorial process. This year we received an unprecedented number of submissions from universities across Canada. In response, we assembled a group of enthusiastic undergraduates to form our largest-ever editorial board. This board, together with a smaller group of graduate student readers, is essential to the peer-review process by which we select papers for publication. With the addition of our hard-working translator, copy editors, and editors-in-chief, it is clear that this year's volume of *Pensées* is the result of the sincere effort of people who share a commitment to building a strong future for philosophy in Canada.

This year we are delighted to have been given the opportunity to interview a philosopher who is a living piece of the history of philosophy in Canada: Professor Raymond Klibansky. Klibansky spent his philosophical career working to promote awareness and appreciation of the importance of tolerance. He has also stressed the importance of a historical grounding in philosophy and has edited many texts of crucial philosophical and historical importance. In conducting the interview, we were amazed not only with the lucidity of a man approaching his 100th birthday, but also with the incredible breadth of his knowledge on subjects ranging from little-known medieval texts to the recent invasion of Iraq. It was truly a pleasure to have met and spoken to Professor Klibansky, and we hope that some of his wisdom is conveyed to future scholars and philosophers through these pages.

Afin de représenter toutes les facettes de l'activité philosophique canadienne, Pensées *se voue à la publication de travaux étudiants dans les deux langues officielles. Ayant été incapables de trouver un texte francophone approprié l'an dernier, cet objectif subit un recul. Heureusement, nous avons reçu plusieurs merveilleuses soumissions francophones cette* *année, et c'est avec plaisir que nous publions deux textes francophones ainsi qu'une traduction française de notre entrevue avec le professeur Raymond Klibansky. Nous planifions également l'augmentation de la distribution de* Pensées *auprès des universités francophones afin de construire sur le bilinguisme de cette édition.*

The papers in this year's volume cover a great range of the philosophic landscape. We begin with a paper by Tristram McPherson titled "A Defence of the Coherence of Expressivist Analysis." This paper seeks to defend one of the most notorious doctrines of analytic meta-ethics against the charge that it collapses into a simple ethical subjectivism. Michael Caie's paper, "Frege, Logic and the Foundations of Geometry," is a fascinating reflection on Frege's conception of logic seen in light of Hilbert's revolutionary approach to geometry. Our final English paper is "A Defence of the Limits of Liberal Tolerance in Will Kymlicka's Autonomy Model of Liberalism," by Ilya Winham. It is a happy coincidence that we are able to publish this paper about the role of tolerance within liberal theory in the same volume that we interview Klibansky, a man who devoted his life to promoting awareness of the philosophic basis of tolerance.

Cette année, nos textes francophones explorent la contribution d'importants penseurs de l'histoire de la philosophie. « La protreptique plotinienne dans Ennéades I.6 (Sur le Beau) » par Julien Villeneuve tente de dévoiler l'ingénuité avec laquelle Plotin exploite les ressources de sa tradition en fonction de visées psychagogiques. Le texte final du volume 4 de Pensées *est « Le contrat social de Rousseau : utopie ou ébauche du totalitarisme? ». Ce travail examine en détail l'argument voulant que la philosophie rousseauiste du Contrat Social fasse partie des fondations idéologiques du totalitarisme moderne.*

We would like to sincerely thank everyone who made this year's edition of *Pensées* a success. First and foremost, we thank the many students who sent us their papers big and small for consideration; without them we would not have a journal, and we hope that all those who submitted papers that we were unable to publish will try again next year. We would also like to thank Raymond Klibansky, who gave us a wonderful interview and an experience that we will never forget. Finally, a special thank-you to the various organizations that gave us the funding required to print and distribute our journal, including former McGill dean of arts Carman Miller, the McGill Principal's Office, the Arts Undergraduate Society of McGill, the McGill Philosophy Department, and the Philosophy Department of the University of Western Ontario.

We invite students to e-mail or write to us with any comments or suggestions on this year's volume, and we would encourage all of our readers to consider helping out with the publication of next year's edition. Without further ado, we wish you good reading and hope that you get as much out of *Pensées* 4 as we put into it!

–Avi Craimer and Jonathan Loeb
Montreal, 2003

Conversing With History: An Interview With Raymond Klibansky

Raymond Klibansky was born in 1905 and has lived in France, Germany, England, and Canada.

Much of your work has been aimed at bringing to light crucial texts in the history of philosophy, and this stands in contrast to a trend among some contemporary philosophers toward an ahistorical or problem-based approach to philosophy. We would like to hear your opinion on what the history of philosophy has to contribute to contemporary philosophic investigation.

The contemporary philosophic investigation must know about its own roots and presuppositions. All these presuppositions are of a historical nature. All so-called modern philosophies have their roots in, and are conditioned by, history. Obviously, new authors bring something specific of their own to their philosophy, but they wouldn't be what they are without being rooted in a certain tradition – a tradition in which many of their concepts are conditioned by their own historical formation. Those people who consider themselves modern philosophers, they always forget about their roots. If you do not know your own conditions, you are not really a good philosopher because you think you are totally original in your questions and your answers, but, in fact, the way you formulate the questions themselves has a historical root. They are linked to your upbringing, your formation. This does not mean that you don't bring some original understanding. You must know about a thinker's conditionedness, and only then can you see his originality. This is something which [is overlooked because of] a certain ahistorical mood in some universities. So people do not know about their link to the past, nor that the way they are conditioned by their own language is a development of the language of their philosophic ancestors, their philosophic masters, and their philosophic tradition. This is one thing you have to know when you examine the work of any philosopher: how it is rooted in the past. You cannot understand Descartes without knowing what his own formation was. His originality reveals itself if you know exactly his upbringing, if you know the tradition in which he stands. Then you see what his innovation is.

What do you think are the most important aspects of a balanced undergraduate education in philosophy?

You should know that philosophy presupposes questioning and that the manner of the questioning does not come out of the blue. It is conditioned by the history of the institution and, in a way also, the student's history. The student has a history in which his interests have been formed; he has a school he comes from, a family, and these are historical conditions. Then, here in the study of philosophy, he wants to find an approach which is not conditioned. But he can never get rid of his conditioning because the language he speaks is conditioned and the terms of his language are conditioned and this determines his way of thinking. He tries to find truth which overcomes historical limitations, but in so doing he is always bound by his own language and the tradition in which he stands and the tradition he encounters. Many of the philosophers of language and the logicians think that time plays no part and that they are face to face with the absolute truth, but, in fact, not knowing about one's own condition is a severe limitation and conducive to error.

It is important to know one philosophic tradition and to know it well, but on the basis of what you know well you should branch off. You should not think that it is the only way to truth – you must be familiar with the other approaches. Obviously, you cannot be grounded in all approaches equally, but it is a good thing to know that there are these other things. For example, life does not end with getting a degree; you go on philosophizing.

It is also important to know well the roots of your tradition. You must not split yourself too early. Although it is important to know that there are other approaches, you must first learn about your own approach. You must be at home in logic, you must be at home in the questions which are the centre of interest in your own environment – but knowing at the same time that it is only one approach and having an interest in knowing also about other approaches. You must be a master in your own tradition while being open to others. For example, at McGill there was a fairly good curriculum, when I was there, which leaned strongly to the historical side. You didn't have very much analytical philosophy there at the time. If I compare it with Oxford, where I used to teach, I can see the limitations of the strongly analytic Oxford approach and also the limitations of the more historical McGill approach, but you cannot do everything at once.

Another important thing is to be able to read by yourself certain authors and to know them well so that you also can see the limitations of your teachers. Even though they are good teachers, they obviously represent one aspect of philosophy, and you ought to be able to develop your own critical thought on the basis of your reading and the questions that are formed on the basis of this reading. You might try to put forward these questions in a seminar, but usually there isn't much time to discuss your own questions in class. At least this was the case for me. You see, I was trained at a German university, before I went to England, and there it depended entirely on how the master taught.

You came to Canada from England in 1946. What was the philosophical community like in Montreal at the time?

You have the unique opportunity in this province to have both English and French. The students here can do something they could not do in many other countries: access two languages and their traditions. In my time at McGill, I had a seminar to which French philosophy students were invited, and this seminar was both in English and in French. And everyone would speak his own language and was supposed to understand the other. If a student didn't understand and if you should question him, that was very interesting. Many people came as guests, including Foucault, and it was a lively debate in English and French.

It is very important that students also know something about contemporary French thought. Students from McGill, the University of Montreal, and the University of Quebec are in many ways the same, but there is no dialogue and these young people should do something about it.

Throughout your life as a philosopher you've divided your time between scholarly work and political action. Specifically, you've been a fierce advocate of human rights and political freedom, and our question is: What responsibility do you think intellectuals have to speak out against injustice and intolerance in society?

I put my theories to practice during the war – thought has practical applications. Thought should be concerned with the real world in which you live. Do you accept it as it is, or do you try to change certain aspects? What is the role of the philosopher? These are the questions that interested me. During the war I had a certain opportunity to put my ideas into practice and to show how systematic thought is concerned with the formation of the real world. In war it means knowing your enemy, and this is the task of what is called, in technical terms, intelligence. So for six years [in the British foreign service] my main concern was not the study of philosophy, but the application of philosophical methods to military intelligence.

I was concerned with establishing to what degree logic and thought are important considerations in understanding the world around us and, most importantly, in understanding the actions that you take to this world. You find that there are flaws in this world, and you ask, How can you remove these flaws? How can you alter the world through philosophic thought? Philosophy is abstract. You philosophize, that is to say you act in accordance with responsible thought and you try to make this thought as exact and as pertinent as possible while knowing full well that you don't ever achieve this aim of knowing fully. You only have informed guesses, which are subject to your own criticism, but you can go very far in knowing.

It is very interesting how the aim of philosophy in war is to know exactly your enemy, to know what your enemy is planning. What is he capable of? These are problems of thought. To get the possible sources, to interpret these sources, and to see. Here you also see the importance of personality and individuality. All these talks of sociologists, this thought of entities, collectives, all this is only secondary. Thought is formed from the ideas, and these ideas come from people. So if you want to know the enemy in Germany, you have to know the personalities of Hitler, of his advisers, and of Mussolini in Italy. And I try to show [in my work] how to understand the cause of the war is to know two people: Hitler and Mussolini. To see how the relationship between these two is quite decisive in the cause of the war. This seems to be far-fetched, but this is one of the few things I can prove, if I try. I've written about it in my edition of Mussolini's memoirs. This is the role of philosophy, of logical thought in action and history. You want to know not only the motives but also the actions, and you can see how philosophy is of help in this.

During the war I was able in my free time to visit prisoners' camps to see German prisoners and Italian prisoners. I wanted to see how it is possible that these people do these things … in Germany, a civilized place, how millions followed Hitler, followed him with enthusiasm. To understand this, one must analyze the German education and see how the thoughts of schools and families are formed, and then you see that one idea, which we all know about – toleration – is totally absent in the German tradition. And here you have the influence of German philosophy, not Kantian philosophy, but a certain interpretation of Hegel.

How is it that Hegel's philosophy led to the absence of tolerance in the German people?

Hegel's philosophy did not lead directly to all of this. But, you see, nowadays you find that there is a powerful trend to say that Hegel is merely a liberal, an outstanding liberal. But there is a text, the Introduction to the Philosophy of History, without which you cannot understand what happened in Germany, how people could argue, as they did, about the importance of world history and the historical figure, which implies that you can't argue against the determining force of history in your own time. This text had influenced many people, educated people, including teachers in Germany. And I speak of this to see how in Germany the idea of toleration was absent in education. So the idea of toleration is very important to give others a right to have entertained opinions and to live with opinions which are very different from yours. So I thought it was important in many countries to have the books known at an early age in which this idea of toleration is enshrined, and therefore I founded a series called Philosophy and World Community. I made a list of the classic texts of toleration and had them translated into many languages. I want these texts to be known by young people in schools. …

I don't know if you know that I have written about Heidegger – not his philosophy, but Heidegger the man – and that is in my autobiography, *La philosophie et la mémoire du siècle*. Unfortunately it hasn't come out in English yet.

What do you say about Heidegger in the book?

I was at the University of Heidelberg and Heidegger was in Freiburg, which is in the same German region of Baden, so I heard him speak when he came to Heidelberg and I followed his development. You may have heard of the rise of National Socialism? They came to power in January 1933. And very quickly there were new measures and you heard the name "fuehrer," and Heidegger was one of the first who wrote enthusiastically about Hitler. Heidegger became dean in Freiburg, and as such he very enthusiastically saw to it that the Nazi proscriptions were put through, that Jewish students, not only religious Jews, but students of Jewish ancestry, were discriminated against. Heidegger saw to it that they were not to have any university subsidies and were to be ranked apart. That was very early on, and in June 1933 he came to Heidelberg and gave a big lecture. I went to this lecture and saw that he was embracing Hitler as the man of destiny and, as Heidegger would say – I quote this – he [Hitler] was "of the spirit." These things are forgotten. He was not only an adherent to National Socialism but one who was very active, who saw to it that those students of Jewish descent could not benefit of any subsidy but were truly discriminated against. And to his disgrace, he had a master – Husserl – and he did not visit Husserl any more because Husserl was of Jewish descent. So it is a truly disgraceful affair for Heidegger to mend.

I saw him again in 1964 in Heidelberg, where there was a great academy of the philosopher Nicholas of Cusa. It was the 500th anniversary of the death of Nicholas of Cusa. Since I had edited the works of this philosopher, Heidelberg Academy invited me to give a lecture. I had fought very much against Germany – it was my main aim for six years. The war was only six years long, but I went to Germany after the German defeat and I was in charge of what is called political intelligence, so I knew about Heidegger, about his behaviour. So there I was, at the Heidelberg Academy, and I didn't shake hands with him. I despise him. But he is, of course, an important writer.

You lived through a time when many intellectuals remained silent in the face of great evil. Do you see intellectuals of today fulfilling their responsibilities to speak out against injustice? Have intellectuals today gotten better?

Yes, intellectuals should speak out against injustice, they do. There are intellectuals who stand up, like Chomsky. He speaks up. It's sometimes without too much [philosophical] weight, but he is an opponent. The great trouble is that in the United States you have so little true intellectual opposition

Why do you think that is?

Why is it? Well, American philosophers, they are already inclined to be specialists in their own domain. I knew one very well. You have probably heard of him: Quine. He was a good man, but politically he was not a great example. He was very traditional on policy and political life, and you won't find now a great influence of American philosophers on American politics. Their voice is not heard in something so emotional as American policy. "This must be stopped," "This villain should be destroyed," "The other villain, you can't destroy him so easily because it is so far away" – all these are childish contradictions, and in the streets you haven't got the weight of intellectual opposition. I see and read American papers and it's not very inspiring. So the student of philosophy should also have an interest in politics and see how political action is in the end determined by certain ideas and certain tendencies. You take account of the development of these ideas and tendencies by seeing how they are conditioned.

One of the tendencies that seems to be the case in American policy, but also in political dialogue generally, is to give priority in public debate to quantitative social science, such as economics, over the humanities, such as philosophy. Do you think that this contributes to the low level of public debate that you were pointing out a minute ago?

Yes. I don't want to minimize the importance of economics, but it is so dependent on ideas which economists have not formed themselves. You see on the one hand the great importance of Marx on economics, and you see, on the other, that of certain American thinkers.

Well, maybe if you have any closing remarks that you want to leave us with for young aspiring philosophers who are beginning their careers…

Yes, well, my closing remark is that I wish you well and that it's a good idea to have an undergraduate journal in which different opinions on different subjects can be aired and discussed. Anything that leads to serious discussion is, to my mind, a great advantage. You see to the confrontation of ideas, to the formulation of one's own ideas and the justification and defence of one's ideas.

Conversation avec l'histoire: une entrevue avec Raymond Klibansky

Raymond Klibansky est né en 1905 et a vécu en France, en Allemagne, en Angleterre ainsi qu'au Canada.

L'objectif d'une grande partie de votre travail fût le dévoilement de certains textes cruciaux dans l'histoire de la philosophie, ce qui contraste avec une mode récente parmi quelques philosophes contemporains de se conformer à une approche anhistorique, axée sur la résolution de problèmes. Nous aimerions connaître votre opinion sur la nature de la contribution de l'histoire de la philosophie à l'investigation philosophique contemporaine.

L'investigation philosophique contemporaine doit connaître ses propres racines et présuppositions. Toutes ces présuppositions sont de nature historique. Toutes les soi-disant philosophies modernes ont leurs racines dans l'histoire et sont conditionnées par elle. Bien entendu, de nouveaux auteurs amènent quelque chose d'eux-mêmes à leur philosophie, mais ils ne seraient pas ce qu'ils sont sans être enracinés dans une certaine tradition – une tradition en laquelle plusieurs de leurs concepts sont conditionnés par leur propre formation historique. Ces gens qui se considèrent des philosophes modernes, ils oublient toujours leur racines. Si vous ne connaissez pas vos propres déterminations, vous n'êtes pas vraiment un bon philosophe car vous vous croyez totalement original dans vos questions et vos réponses, alors qu'en réalité la manière même dont vous formulez vos interrogations a une racine historique. Celles-ci sont reliées à la manière dont vous avez été élevés, à votre formation. Cela ne veut pas dire que vous n'apportez aucune compréhension originale. Vous devez connaître la part de conditionné chez un auteur, et seulement alors vous serez en mesure de voir son originalité. C'est un fait qui (est négligé suite à) une certaine ambiance anhistorique au sein de quelques universités. Conséquemment, les gens ne connaissent ni leur propre ancrage dans le passé, ni que la manière dont ils sont conditionnés par leur propre langage est un développement du langage de leurs ancêtres philosophiques, leurs maîtres philosophiques, et leur tradition philosophique. C'est la chose à connaître lorsqu'on examine l'œuvre de quelconque philosophe : comment elle est enracinée dans le passé. Vous ne pouvez pas comprendre Descartes sans comprendre quelle était sa propre formation. Son originalité se dévoile lorsqu'on connaît la manière dont il fût élevé, la tradition dans laquelle il se situe. Alors on reconnaît son innovation.

Que croyez-vous être les aspects les plus importants d'une éducation philosophique équilibrée au baccalauréat?

Vous devrez savoir que la philosophie présuppose un questionnement et que les paramètres de ce questionnement ne sortent pas de nulle part. Il est conditionné par l'histoire de l'institution, ainsi que par l'histoire de l'étudiant. Celui-ci, par sa propre histoire, a formé ses intérêts; il vient d'une certaine école, d'une certaine famille, et ce sont des conditions historiques. Puis, au moment d'étudier la philosophie, il désire une approche qui n'est pas conditionnée. Or, il ne peut jamais se débarrasser de son conditionnement car le langage qu'il emploie est conditionné ainsi que les termes de celui-ci, ce qui détermine sa manière de penser. Il tente de découvrir une vérité qui transcende les limitations historiques, mais en cette tâche il est toujours encadré par son propre langage, la tradition où il se situe, ainsi que la tradition qu'il rencontre. Beaucoup de philosophes du langage et de logiciens croient que le temps ne joue aucun rôle et qu'ils se trouvent face-à-face avec la vérité absolue, mais en vérité ne pas être conscient de sa propre condition est un handicap sévère et conduit à l'erreur.

Il est important de connaître sa propre tradition philosophique, et de bien la connaître, mais sur la base de ce que vous connaissez bien vous devrez bifurquer. Vous ne devez pas penser que cette tradition est la seule voie vers la vérité – vous devez être familier avec les autres approches. Évidemment, vous ne pouvez être enraciné également dans toutes les approches, mais c'est une bonne chose de savoir qu'elles existent. Par exemple, la vie ne s'arrête pas avec l'acquisition d'un diplôme; vous continuerez à philosopher.

Il est également important de bien connaître les sources de sa tradition. Vous ne devez pas vous écarteler trop tôt. Bien qu'il soit important de savoir qu'il existe d'autres approches, vous devez tout d'abord apprendre la vôtre. Vous devez vous sentir chez vous en logique, vous devez vous sentir chez vous dans les questions qui sont le centre d'intérêt de votre propre environnement, tout en étant conscient que ce n'est qu'une approche, ainsi qu'intéressé à connaître les autres approches. Vous devez être un maître de votre propre tradition tout en étant ouvert aux autres. Par exemple, quand j'étais à McGill il y avait un très bon curriculum qui penchait fortement du côté historique. Il n'y avait pas beaucoup de philosophie analytique à ce moment-là. Si je compare avec Oxford, où j'ai enseigné, je peux voir autant les limites de l'approche fortement analytique d'Oxford ainsi que les limites de l'approche plus historique de McGill, mais vous ne pouvez pas tout faire en même temps.

Il est aussi important d'être capable de lire par vous-mêmes certains auteurs et de bien les connaître afin d'être en mesure de cerner les limites de vos enseignants.

Même si ce sont de bons enseignants, ils représentent évidemment un aspect de la philosophie, et vous devez être capable de développer votre propre pensée critique basée sur votre lecture et des questions qui se sont formées suite à celle-ci. Vous pourriez essayer d'amener ces questions au sein d'un séminaire, mais en général il n'y a pas beaucoup de temps pour discuter de vos propres questions en classe. Enfin, ce fut le cas pour moi. Vous voyez, je fus éduqué dans une université allemande, avant d'aller en Angleterre, et là tout dépendait de la manière dont le maître enseignait.

Vous êtes arrivé au Canada, de l'Angleterre, en 1946. Comment était la communauté philosophique montréalaise de l'époque?

Vous avez l'opportunité unique dans cette province d'avoir et le français et l'anglais. Ici, les étudiants peuvent faire ce qui est impossible dans bien d'autres pays : accéder à deux langages et à leurs traditions respectives. Durant mes années à McGill, j'ai eu un séminaire auquel des étudiants français en philosophie furent invités, et ce séminaire se tenait en anglais et en français. Tous parlaient leur propre langue et étaient supposés se comprendre. Si un étudiant ne comprenait pas et que vous le questionniez, cela devenait très intéressant. Beaucoup sont venus en tant qu'invités, incluant Foucault, et ce fût un débat très animé dans les deux langues.

Il est très important que les étudiants connaissent aussi quelque chose de la pensée française contemporaine. Les étudiants de McGill, de l'Université de Montréal et de l'Université du Québec sont sous plusieurs aspects les mêmes, mais il n'y a pas de dialogue et ces jeunes gens devraient faire quelque chose pour remédier à cette situation.

Au cours de votre vie, comme philosophe, vous avez divisé votre temps entre l'érudition et l'action politique. En particulier, vous avez été un farouche avocat des droits humains et des libertés politiques, et notre question est celle-ci : Quelle responsabilité croyez-vous qu'ont les intellectuels de s'exprimer contre l'injustice et l'intolérance en société?

J'ai mis mes théories en pratique durant la guerre – la pensée a des applications pratiques. La pensée devrait être concernée par le monde réel dans lequel nous vivons. Est-ce que vous l'acceptez tel qu'il est ou essayez-vous d'en modifier quelques aspects? Quel est le rôle du philosophe? Telles sont les questions qui m'ont intéressé. Durant la guerre j'ai eu dans une certaine mesure l'opportunité de mettre mes idées en pratique et de montrer comment la pensée systématique se préoccupe de la constitution du monde réel. En guerre, cela veut dire connaître votre ennemi, et c'est la tâche qui est désignée techniquement sous le nom de renseignement ('intelligence'). Donc six années durant (au service des affaires étrangères de l'Angleterre) ma préoccupation principale ne fût pas l'étude de la philosophie, mais l'application de méthodes philosophiques au renseignement militaire.

J'ai fait mon affaire d'établir à quel degré la logique et la pensée sont des considérations importantes afin de comprendre le monde qui nous entoure ainsi que, ce qui est encore plus important, les actions que nous posons envers ce monde. Vous trouvez qu'il y a des défauts dans ce monde et vous vous demandez comment les enlever, comment altérer le monde par la pensée philosophique. La philosophie est abstraite. Vous philosophez, c'est-à-dire que vous agissez en conformité avec une pensée responsable et vous tentez de rendre cette pensée aussi exacte et pertinente que possible tout en sachant très bien que vous n'atteigniez jamais l'objectif d'une connaissance pleine. Vous pouvez seulement faire des conjectures informées, qui sont sujettes à votre propre critique, mais vous pouvez aller très loin en ce qui regarde votre compréhension.

Il est très intéressant que la tâche de la philosophie en guerre soit d'avoir une connaissance exacte de votre ennemi, de savoir ce que ce dernier planifie. De quoi est-il capable? Voilà des problèmes pour la pensée. D'accéder aux sources possibles, d'interpréter ces sources, et d'y voir clair. Ici vous voyez l'importance de la personnalité et de l'individualité. Toutes ces discussions de sociologues, cette pensée des entités, des collectifs, tout cela est secondaire. La pensée est constituée d'idées, et ces idées viennent de personnes. Alors si vous voulez connaître l'ennemi en Allemagne, vous devez connaître la personnalité d'Hitler, de ses conseillers, et de Mussolini en Italie. J'ai tenté de démontrer (dans mes travaux) que de comprendre les causes de la Deuxième Guerre c'est de connaître deux personnes : Hitler et Mussolini. C'est comprendre comment la relation entre ces deux personnes fût une cause décisive de la guerre. Cela semble venir de loin, mais c'est une des seules choses que je puisse prouver, si je m'y mets. J'ai écrit à ce sujet dans mon édition des mémoires de Mussolini. C'est le rôle de la philosophie, de la pensée logique dans l'action et dans l'histoire. Vous voulez connaître non seulement les motifs mais également les actions, et ainsi voir de quelle manière la philosophie peut être utile en ce labeur.

Durant la guerre je pus visiter dans mes temps libres des camps de prisonniers afin de voir des prisonniers allemands et italiens. Je voulais comprendre comment c'était possible que ces gens fissent ces choses… en Allemagne, un endroit civilisé, comment des millions de personnes ont suivi Hitler, et l'ont fait avec enthousiasme. Pour comprendre ceci, il est nécessaire d'analyser l'éducation allemande et de voir la manière dont les pensées des écoles et des familles furent formées. Ainsi vous voyez qu'une idée que nous connaissons tous – la tolérance – est totalement absente de la tradition allemande. Et ici vous avez l'influence de la philosophie allemande, pas de la philosophie kantienne, mais d'une certaine interprétation de Hegel.

Comment la philosophie de Hegel a-t-elle conduit à l'absence de tolérance du peuple allemand?

La philosophie allemande n'a pas mené directement à tout cela. Mais, vous voyez, de nos jours il y a une forte tendance à dire que Hegel était tout simplement un libéral, un libéral modèle. Mais il y a un texte, l'Introduction à la philosophie de l'histoire, sans lequel vous ne pouvez pas comprendre ce qui est arrivé en Allemagne, comment les gens pouvaient maintenir, comme ils l'ont fait, l'importance de l'histoire du monde et de la figure historique, ce qui implique que vous ne puissiez pas argumenter contre la force historique déterminante de votre époque. Ce texte a influencé beaucoup de gens, incluant des enseignants en Allemagne. Je soulève ce point afin de comprendre comment en Allemagne l'idée de tolérance était absente en éducation. L'idée de tolérance est très importante pour accorder à autrui le droit de considérer diverses opinions et de vivre avec des opinions très différentes des vôtres. Alors il m'a semblé très important pour plusieurs pays de propager la connaissance à un très jeune âge de certains livres en lesquels cette idée de tolérance est enchâssée, et c'est pourquoi j'ai fondé une collection nommée 'Philosophie et communauté mondiale'. J'ai fait une liste des textes classiques de la tolérance et les ai fait traduire en plusieurs langues. Je veux que ces textes soient connus à l'école par de jeunes gens…

Je ne sais pas si tu connais ce que j'ai écrit à propos de Heidegger – pas sa philosophie, mais Heidegger l'homme – c'est dans mon autobiographie, *La philosophie et la mémoire du siècle.* Malheureusement, elle n'est pas encore parue en anglais.

Que dites-vous à propos de Heidegger dans votre livre?

J'étais à l'Université de Heidelberg et Heidegger était à Freiburg, qui se trouve dans la même région allemande de Baden, donc je l'ai entendu parler quand il est venu à Heidelberg et j'ai suivi son développement. Vous devez avoir entendu parler de la montée du National Socialisme? Ils sont entrés au pouvoir en janvier 1933. Très rapidement il y eût des mesures nouvelles et on entendait le nom 'führer'. Heidegger était un des premiers à écrire avec enthousiasme à propos d'Hitler. Heidegger devint doyen à Freiberg, et dans ces fonctions il vit avec beaucoup d'enthousiasme à ce que les proscriptions nazies furent appliquées, faisant en sorte que les étudiants juifs, non seulement de religion juive mais aussi d'ascendance juive, furent victimes de discrimination. Heidegger fit son affaire qu'ils n'aient aucune assistance financière de l'université et qu'ils furent classés à part. C'était au tout début (de la montée du National Socialisme), et en juin 1933 il vint à Heidelberg et donna une grande conférence. J'ai assisté à cette conférence et vu qu'il embrassait Hitler comme l'homme du destin et, comme Heidegger le disait alors – je cite – qu'il (Hitler) était « de l'Esprit ». Ces choses sont oubliées. Il n'était pas seulement un partisan du National Socialisme mais un de ses membres très actifs, qui travailla à ce que les étudiants de descendance juive ne puissent pas bénéficier d'aucune assistance financière et à ce qu'on les discrimine réellement. Et à son déshonneur, il avait un maître – Husserl – et il ne visitait plus celui-ci parce qu'il était de descendance juive. Alors c'est une affaire très honteuse à corriger pour Heidegger.

Je l'ai vu à nouveau à Heidelberg en 1964, où il y avait une grande Académie du philosophe Nicolas de Cuse. C'était le 500ème anniversaire de la mort de Nicolas de Cuse. Puisque j'avais édité les œuvres de ce philosophe, l'Académie d'Heidelberg m'invita à donner une conférence. J'avais beaucoup lutté contre l'Allemagne – ce fût mon objectif principal durant six ans. La guerre dura seulement six ans, mais je suis allé en Allemagne après la défaite allemande et j'étais en charge de ce qui était appelé le renseignement politique, alors je connaissais Heidegger, ainsi que son comportement. Alors j'étais là, à l'Académie d'Heidelberg, et je ne lui ai pas serré la main. Je le méprise. Mais il est, bien sur, un écrivain important.

Vous avez vécu durant une époque où plusieurs intellectuels demeurèrent silencieux en face d'un profond mal. Croyez-vous que les intellectuels d'aujourd'hui assument leur responsabilité de prendre la parole contre l'injustice? Est-ce qu'il y a eu une amélioration?

Oui, les intellectuels devraient prendre la parole contre l'injustice, et ils le font. Il y a des intellectuels qui se tiennent debout, comme Chomsky. Il prend la parole. C'est quelquefois sans grand poids (philosophique), mais il s'oppose. Le grand problème c'est qu'aux États-Unis il y a si peu de réelle opposition intellectuelle.

Pourquoi croyez-vous que ce soit le cas?

Pourquoi? Bien, les philosophes américains ont déjà une tendance à être des spécialistes dans leur propre domaine. Je connus très bien l'un d'entre eux. Vous avez probablement déjà entendu parler de lui : Quine. Il était un homme bien, mais politiquement pas un très bon exemple. Il était très traditionnel en matière de politiques et de vie politique, et vous ne verrez pas maintenant de grande influence des philosophes américains sur la politique américaine. Leur voix n'est pas entendue dans quelque chose d'aussi émotionnel que la politique américaine. « Ceci doit être arrêté, » « Ce truand devrait être détruit, » « Cet autre truand, vous ne pouvez pas le détruire aussi facilement parce que c'est si loin » - tout ceci n'est que contradictions enfantines, et dans les rues il n'y a pas d'opposition intellectuelle de taille. Je vois et lis des journaux américains et ce n'est pas très inspirant. L'étudiant en philosophie, donc, devrait aussi avoir un intérêt en politique et voir comment l'action politique est une fin déterminée par certaines idées et certaines tendances. En regardant comment celles-ci sont conditionnées, vous tenez compte du développement de ces idées.

Une des tendances qui semblent occurrentes dans les politiques américaines, mais aussi dans le dialogue politique en général, est de donner priorité dans le débat public aux sciences sociales quantitatives, comme l'économique, sur les humanités, comme la philosophie. Croyez-vous que cela contribue au bas niveau de débat public que vous invoquiez il y a une minute?

Oui. Je ne veux pas minimiser l'importance de l'économique, mais elle dépend tant d'idées que les économistes n'ont pas eux-mêmes constituées. Vous voyez d'un côté l'énorme importance de Marx en économique et vous voyez, de l'autre côté, celle de certains penseurs américains.

Eh bien, peut-être avez vous pour clore quelques remarques destinées aux jeunes aspirants à la philosophie qui débutent leur profession?

Oui, je conclurais en disant que je vous souhaite le meilleur et que c'est une excellente idée d'avoir un journal au baccalauréat où différentes opinions sur différents sujets peuvent être exprimées et discutées. Tout ce qui mène à la discussion sérieuse est, à mon avis, très avantageux. Vous voyez à la confrontation des idées, à la formulation de vos propres idées ainsi qu'à la justification et défense de ces idées.

A Defence of the Coherence of Expressivist Analysis of Moral Discourse

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In their 1998 paper "A Problem for Expressivism," Frank Jackson and Philip Pettit (hereafter J&P) argue that even on an expressivist account, according to which ethical sentences express attitudes, those sentences must also necessarily report the speaker's possession of those attitudes. If this is the case, then ethical sentences have truth conditions, and ethical discourse is, therefore, truth-apt. The truth condition for any uttered token of an ethical sentence would be the utterer's possession of the relevant ethical attitude. However, if the core expressivist presupposition (that ethical sentences express attitudes) entails that ethical sentences have truth conditions, then the expressivist analysis, which also holds that ethical discourse is truth-inapt, is incoherent. J&P's argument entails that the expressivist presupposition about ethical discourse in fact implies simple ethical subjectivism, a significantly less attractive position in contemporary meta-ethical debate. In this paper, I will examine the considerations that J&P marshal to support this conclusion. I will argue that there are substantial problems with their analysis and compelling independent reasons for rejecting it given the expressivist model.

Expressivist meta-ethical theories generally claim that the fundamental function of moral discourse is to express the attitude of the speaker, rather than to report the speaker's beliefs about moral facts. Expressivism possesses some attractive theoretical features. First, moral attitudes seem *prima facie* better placed to motivate us compared with moral beliefs. Many contemporary philosophers would join Hume in denying that beliefs alone can motivate us. Moral attitudes seem structurally similar enough to desires to avoid this apparent difficulty. Thus, expressivism satisfies common intuitions about the (at least *ceteris paribus*) motivating powers of our moral judgments. Second, attitudes are relatively uncontentious natural properties, so expressivists avoid the spectre of a "queer" ontology of moral entities (Mackie 1977). Finally, expressivists can tell

a plausible story about persistent moral disagreement: to disagree morally about some act or object is just to have conflicting attitudes toward it. This seems to give expressivism a *prima facie* edge in explaining the fact of widespread and stubbornly irresolvable moral disagreement.

Expressivism also faces some substantial challenges, the most pressing of which is to adequately explain (or at least explain away) the apparently descriptive and propositional character of moral discourse. This challenge is most recalcitrant where moral statements are embedded in complex sentences that clearly fail to express the attitude relevant to the embedded moral statement at all[1]. One standard expressivist strategy is to try to explain away truth aptness as a 'surface phenomenon' of moral discourse, which developed for reasons of discursive efficacy (Blackburn, 1993, p. 167; 1984, p. 195). The expressivist can then argue that this surface character of moral discourse is irrelevant to the meaning expressed by a moral utterance. However, would-be expressivists could not appeal to this strategy if J&P's arguments were successful, because truth aptness would then be entailed by the underlying expressive nature of an ethical utterance, not by its propositional surface.

J&P's argument begins with a thesis from Locke: words are conventional signs, and we need to learn how to use them. Insofar as we do use them correctly, we must thus be abiding by the relevant linguistic conventions (J&P 241). J&P follow Locke in claiming that this entails that to use a conventional sign requires that one know what the sign signifies (ibid.). According to J&P, this suggests a constraint on any expressivist theory, which I shall call the Lockean constraint:

> Any expressivist explanation of how we came to use a term to express an attitude "must allow that we *recognize* the attitude in question in us." (J&P 242, emphasis theirs)

J&P suggest that this constraint entails that a speaker uses an ethical term sincerely *only* when she believes that she possesses the relevant attitude (ibid.). As we shall see below, they claim that this gives a simple ethical sentence such as 'That is good' truth conditions: it is true just in the case that the speaker possesses the relevant attitude.

However, I will first examine whether the Lockean constraint actually entails that we use a term sincerely only when we believe that we possess the relevant attitude, as J&P suggest. Consider how we are to interpret the scope of the recognition emphasized in the Lockean constraint[2]. If we give the recognition requirement a restricted scope, we would get the following weak Lockean constraint:

> Any expressivist explanation of how we came to use a term to express an attitude must allow that we are in general[3] able to recognize tokens of that attitude-type in us.

This seems to capture a minimal notion of competent employment of a word. The weak Lockean constraint applies the principle that any explanation of a speaker's use of a term must grant that he actually generally knows how to use it. However, it allows that once a speaker has acquired a linguistic rule for expressing attitudes, he could follow that rule without necessarily recognizing that he possessed the relevant attitude every time he utters expressive words. The weak Lockean constraint thus cannot ground the conclusion that a speaker uses a term sincerely only when he possesses the relevant attitude.

To license J&P's inference, we would need to strengthen the weak Lockean constraint by requiring that recognition have a universal scope relative to sincere utterances[4]. Further, this recognition must take the form of a belief. This combination produces the following, strong Lockean constraint:

> Any expressivist explanation of how we came to use a term to express an attitude must allow that we believe that we possess a token of that attitude-type each time we sincerely use the term.

The strong Lockean constraint does license J&P's inference that we only use a moral term sincerely when we believe that we possess the relevant attitude. However, I take it to be problematic for two reasons.

First, I cannot see any arguments that drive us from the weak to the strong versions of the recognition commitment. J&P seem to be smuggling in an undefended substantive thesis (the universal recognition requirement) on the back of the weaker Lockean claim that we need to learn to use voluntary signs. Second, I find the strong Lockean constraint implausible. Any Lockean consideration about words should apply generally, and not just to terms used to express attitudes. The strong Lockean constraint thus seems to depend upon the following generalized, strong Lockean constraint on expressing mental content:

> Any explanation of how we came to use a term to express a mental state with some determinate type of content must allow that we believe that we possess a token of that content-type each time we sincerely use the term.

This constraint seems plausible for some typical sentences. It seems plausible, for example, that in order to sincerely utter 'The cat is on the mat,' I must believe that the cat is on the mat. However, I believe that this constraint fails as a universal rule.

Consider sentences that report belief. It seems that the necessary conditions for my sincerely uttering a sentence of the form 'I believe that P' include my possession of P, the first-order belief reported, but *not* my possession of any higher-order belief, as

the strong general Lockean constraint demands. Next, consider a child who, when offered dessert, unselfconsciously blurts out 'I'd like pie!' It seems unreasonable to convict this child of insincerity, simply because she has not formed conscious beliefs about her attitude toward pie. It thus seems implausible to claim that the sincerity of my utterance of a sentence *always* requires that I believe that I am in a mental state with the relevant content. It would certainly be strange if someone didn't tend to *develop* this belief upon reflection, but that doesn't make possession of the belief necessary for its sincere assertion.

It is instructive to contrast this belief-possession model with Gibbard's notion of sincerity, construed as "a childlike openness or spontaneity," which he takes to be basic in the case of sincere norm expressions (Gibbard, 1997, p. 192). Gibbard's notion of sincerity seems much more plausible than the belief-possession model with respect to many cases involving the expression of attitudes, such as the 'I'd like pie!' example above. However, if this is the best analysis of the sincerity of some ethical utterances, we should reject the strong Lockean constraint, which makes possession of a relevant belief a necessary condition for sincere utterance.

Once J&P have introduced their strong Lockean constraint, they seek to establish that a speaker's use of a moral term serves to *report* her possession of the belief that she possesses the relevant attitude. J&P note that we strive to regulate our use and interpretation of language by the conventions that we have learned, and that we believe and desire that our interlocutors do the same (J&P 242). On expressivism, possession of the relevant attitude is a necessary condition for successful sincere use of a moral term[5]. In making a sincere ethical utterance, I intend that my audience will take my utterance as a sign of my possession of the attitude (J&P 242)[6]. Consequently, a listener who believes that a speaker has sincerely expressed an attitude *A* is thereby licensed to infer that the speaker believes herself to possess *A*. J&P suggest that expressivists should thus be unable to resist what I shall call the reporting principle:

> Any expressivist analysis of the use of sentences containing unembedded[7] ethical terms must grant that those sentences serve as reports of the utterer's possession of the relevant attitude. (J&P 242)

My reconstruction of J&P's argument can now be summarized as follows. By the strong Lockean constraint, possession of a belief token of the relevant attitude-type accompanies all sincere ethical utterances (even on the expressivist account). By the reporting principle, if possession of a belief accompanies a sincere expression of attitude, the expression must (also) report that belief. This reporting of a belief then entails that ethical utterances have truth values: an ethical utterance is true if and only if the belief it reports is actually held by the speaker. This doesn't mean that sentences containing moral terms do not *also* express the relevant attitudes. However, if J&P are correct, this expression of attitudes carries with it the reporting of beliefs, and is thus truth-apt, contrary to expressivism (J&P 243).

Before turning to the three potential objections that J&P treat in detail, I will more briefly discuss another point germane to the strong Lockean principle that J&P mention. It might be thought that the expressivist can avoid the principle by arguing that moral expressions "rise unbidden to our lips" (as in my 'I like Pie' example), without any conscious cognitive processing (J&P 244). It could then be argued that there is no belief to be reported in these cases (J&P 244). J&P point out that, in fact, much of our use of moral discourse is self-conscious: we reflect on the qualities of an object or circumstance, and come to a moral evaluation of it (J&P 244). It is thus not the case that the use of moral language is like wincing – a sort of automatic response to some stimuli (J&P 244). As J&P phrase it, we rarely " 'give out' with the first thing that pops into our head" (J&P 244). Thus, the expressivist cannot avoid the strong Lockean principle by denying that there is a conscious cognitive process underlying the utterance of moral sentences.

A detailed discussion of the psychology of moral reflection is outside of the scope of this paper. However, a brief expressivist-style analysis should clarify the issue of reflective vs. automatic moral utterance. Consider an evaluative claim, such as 'Jones is *fat*,' where '*fat*' is uttered in a sneering tone to convey the underlying attitude of disgust (see Blackburn, 1998, p. 95). Imagine a person considering this claim, for whom the underlying attitude of disgust is at least plausible. We can roughly distinguish the descriptive and evaluative content of the claim. There is descriptive content, because our deliberator might be moved to reject the claim 'Jones is *fat*' because Jones is skinny. However, her deliberation might focus instead on the evaluative content: on whether disgust towards the overweight was consonant with her other attitudes and values. Only cases of this latter type would require her self-conscious awareness of her possession of moral attitudes. Her deliberation about the descriptive content of the claim could occur without requiring her self-conscious awareness of her moral attitudes at all. It seems to me that this sort of reflection does not accompany most of our evaluative utterances. However, even if non-self-conscious evaluative utterances are infrequent, they appear to be both intelligible and non-defective. Thus, self-consciousness cannot be a *general* constraint on sincere moral utterance, as is implied by the strong Lockean constraint. However, J&P argue that even if moral statements *were* just automatic 'outings' like wincing, this would not free them from truth conditions. This is because even judgments backed primarily by non-conscious processes, such as judgments of another's facial expression, have truth conditions (J&P 244). Your judgment that I am smiling at a given time (for example) can be true or false. Thus, even if a moral statement was a relatively automatic response to a stimulus (like wincing, or a judgment of facial expression), it could still have truth conditions (J&P 244). The automatic character of some moral utterances can therefore provide no solace for the

expressivist, according to J&P.

There are serious problems with J&P's discussion here. First, their discussion of judgments of facial expressions is opaque. The truth conditions of my judgment that 'Jones is smiling' have nothing to do with my mental processes. What I have is a non-conscious visual/mental mechanism that gives me reliable evidence that Jones is smiling. J&P could say that, similarly, the mechanism that leads to my unselfconsciously uttering 'Love is good' provides reliable evidence of my possession of the relevant underlying attitude. However, that by itself does not make my possession of the attitude the truth-condition on my utterance. One might equivalently reason that my scratching my arm is true just in case I possess the relevant itch.

Further, if (as J&P suggest) the outing story does not rule out there being truth conditions for the relevant utterances, it does provide a counter-example to J&P's argument for how moral utterances come to have truth conditions. The sharp point of the appeal to cases of automatic moral utterance is that, in these cases, there is no conscious state intervening between the development of the attitude and the utterance that expresses it. Thus, these cases – like the 'I like pie!' example discussed above – do not conform to the strong Lockean constraint. If I am correct in arguing that the expressive contents of a substantial class of moral utterances are not the objects of self-conscious belief, it is difficult to see how J&P's putatively universal strong Lockean principle can account for them. Thus, all else aside, J&P's argument fails to establish that automatic/unreflective moral utterances have truth conditions.

I will now turn to J&P's discussion of what they take to be three potential plausible objections to their argument. I will argue that their response to the first of these is compelling, that their response to the second objection can be improved, and that the third objection points to some of the central weaknesses of their analysis. The first objection deals with the reporting principle. One might object that since simple declarative sentences express beliefs, but do not report them, we should interpret simple ethical sentences analogously, as expressing rather than reporting attitudes (J&P 245). J&P reply that this apparent parallel does not help the expressivist. To be useful to the expressivist, the parallel would need to carry over to the analysis by which belief-expressing sentences are taken to be truth-evaluable. The analysis here does not help the expressivist. The objection presumes (plausibly) that when you express your belief 'snow is white,' you thereby report the content of this belief: that snow is white (J&P 245). J&P note that if the analysis of moral utterance were parallel, your expressing the attitude that X is good would report the content of that attitude.

J&P argue persuasively that this analysis is implausible, because if 'X is good' has content at all on the expressivist account, it is something like 'that X happens' (J&P 245). This fails to aid the expressivist. First, it gives 'X is good' truth conditions after all – it is true only in the case that X obtains (J&P 245). Second, these truth conditions are also obviously wrong, as they violate considerations of direction of fit.

Thus, I *do not* in general require that my attitude that X is good be sensitive to evidence of the truth or falsity of 'X happens.' Note as well that it might not make sense to ascribe *propositional content* to some attitudes (Mautner, 2000, p. 198). While the content of my belief 'P' is just P's being the case, the content (more aptly, the object) of my desire for chocolate is chocolate. However, chocolate isn't a proposition. The attitude expressed by 'Jones is good' is structurally similar to this desire, on the expressivist account. There is an attitude of approbation, and an object (Jones) to which that attitude is directed, but no apparent propositional content for the attitude[8].

All of this makes the point that the expressivist cannot appeal to a systematic parallel in the analysis of belief. While J&P must grant that there is a disanalogy between utterances that report belief and those that express belief, they suggest that this is a difference in what is reported, not a difference between reporting and failing to report (J&P 245). Thus, on J&P's account, a statement reports the content of a belief. In the descriptive case, this is a belief about the world, and its truth conditions are thus (roughly) the existence of certain states of that world. In the moral case, the belief is about one's own possession of a given attitude. The expressivist thus cannot use this difference as an analogy to underwrite the claim that expressions of moral attitudes fail to simultaneously report truth-evaluable content.

The second potential objection that J&P meet is a familiar one: moral statements like 'X is good (bad)' are analogous (or even roughly translatable) to the exclamations 'Hurray (boo) X!' (Blackburn, 1984, p. 193-195). The latter seem to lack truth conditions. By analogy, the former must also lack truth conditions. J&P grant the premise that exclamations of the 'Boo X!' form lack truth conditions, but deny the analogy. They say that the fact that these types of exclamations lack truth conditions "very much calls for explanation" (J&P 246). They suggest that the explanation consists in the fact that use of the term " 'boo' has a rather erratic, highly personal connection to our feelings" (J&P 246). According to J&P, the truth-inapt nature of some elements of language derives from the fact that their use fails to conform to a consistent and entrenched public convention (J&P 246). They appeal here to Dummett's similar analysis of the non-truth-conditional nature of the contrast between sentences of the form 'P and Q' and 'P but Q.'

If J&P's analysis is correct, they can offer the expressivist an unpleasant dilemma: either she takes ethical sentences to have truth conditions, or (if she holds to the 'Boo X!' analogy) she takes the connection between ethical words and the relevant attitudes to be "rough, unclear, [and] insufficiently entrenched for truth aptness" (J&P 247). Because the would-be expressivist is committed to ethical discourse being adequate to the task of clearly expressing the relevant attitudes, the second horn is ruled out, and he fails to escape commitment to the truth aptness of ethical discourse.

The notion that all linguistic terms or differences that lack truth-conditional import are insufficiently entrenched is a *prima facie* perplexing claim, considering the

wide variety of terms that seem to exhibit systematically entrenched use without affecting the truth conditions of the sentences in which they occur. It is also ironic, when you consider that expressions like 'Boo X!' have not infrequently been offered as *explications* of such expressions as 'X is bad.' However, I can see no good reason to accept this entrenchment account of what distinguishes truth-apt from non-truth-apt elements of expressions.

As Barker (2000) has shown, a Gricean-style analysis of the implications of conversation can serve as a persuasive counterexample to the notion that only distinctions with semantic import can be clear-cut. To this end, he suggests an exhaustive set of implications for sentences of the form 'Even T is G' (Barker, 2000, p. 269). Thus, "Even Granny is drunk" reports that Granny is drunk, and is true only if Granny is drunk. However, it also implies that for the utterer: (a) the probability of Granny being drunk is lower than the probability of other members of the contextually relevant class being drunk, (b) that others are drunk, and (c) that the utterer's belief in (a) and (b) are shared by her audience (Barker, 2000, p. 269). The implicature of the particle 'even' thus appears clear cut and entrenched, while nevertheless being irrelevant to the truth conditions of 'Even Granny is drunk.' If Barker's analysis is correct, clarity and entrenchment cannot be a sufficient condition for the distinction between what is said and what is implied, because words like 'even' can have non-truth-conditioning implications that are both clear and entrenched.

Next, consider vague predicates, which clearly *are* relevant to the truth values of the sentences in which they occur. It seems reasonable to suggest that our conventions for the correct use of 'tall' are rougher than our conventions for the use of 'but' or 'even.' However, 'tall' has truth-conditional import, so J&P's criterion appears not to function as a necessary condition for the distinction between what is said and what is implied, either.

I am rather surprised that J&P do not simply dig in their heels and claim that 'Boo X!' does have truth conditions. This latter approach seems more consistent with their generally liberal attitude toward truth aptness. After all, it is easy to imagine someone uttering 'Boo X!' where they have a positive attitude toward X. If my possessing the belief that I possess the relevant attitude were adequate to generate a truth condition for 'X is Bad' (as per J&P's analysis), I see no reason why a little fuzziness should stand in the way of the same analysis here. J&P's failure to take this tack is even more surprising considering their treatment of a final objection.

The final objection that J&P consider seeks to defend expressivism by suggesting that the relation between my pro-attitude toward X and my statement that X is good is analogous to the relation between my desire that the door be shut and my uttering an order that the door be shut[9] (J&P 248). Their response to this objection is to suggest that this strategy cannot help the expressivist, because the sentence 'Shut the door' has truth conditions in ordinary usage. J&P's reasoning is by now familiar:

"it makes no difference whether I say 'Shut the door' or I say 'I command that the door be shut' " (J&P 248). The latter has truth conditions[10] (it's true only if the command is non-defectively produced), and so, they claim, must the former (J&P 248). J&P note that it is not open to the expressivist to complain that this analysis violates the surface features of imperative discourse, because (unlike expressivism itself) the analysis does *not* violate the surface features of moral discourse (J&P 249). If the surface features make the difference here, then the expressivist cannot apply imperative-style analyses to moral discourse.

A consideration of the role of imperatives is relevant here. Surely it is not central to their role that they provide information. The role of imperatives is paradigmatically one of co-ordinating behavior – especially in contexts where the utterer possesses some power or authority. Sentences of the form 'I command you to shut the door' seem to garner their truth aptness parasitically, merely from their propositional form. In general the use of imperatives is to command, not to report a command. Contrary to what J&P claim, there is an obvious difference between 'Shut the door' and 'I command you to shut the door': the former expresses a command, and the latter reports it. It is only because the same presuppositions that guide J&P's analysis of the moral case are being applied here that we seem to find truth conditions all around. I thus read the consequence of the imperative case very differently from J&P. It is a burden of near-absurdity that the generalized form of the analysis J&P offer for ethical sentences gives imperative utterances truth conditions (Mautner, 2000, p. 196).

In my opinion, this sort of consideration shifts the burden of the debate squarely onto J&P – to show why we must accept these consequences. Moreover, I think that decisive considerations against their view can be developed from J&P's own discussion. J&P point out that when we produce sentences,

> there will typically be a whole web of beliefs lying behind their production. The problem is to isolate the ones that matter for what is literally said, in the sense of determining truth conditions, by using the sentences. For instance, typically, an English speaker only says 'Snow is white' when they believe that there is someone around to hear what they are saying, but that is not part of what they intend to convey and is not a necessary condition for what they say being true. (J&P 247)

They further suggest that there is a complex set of conventions that suffice for an audience to recognize the primary communicative intention of the producer of a sentence (J&P 247).

The crux of the question is, thus, whether it is part of the convention that guides our use of moral language that it be primarily a report of our mental states. It seems clear that it is not. The justifiable status of the inference by an audience member, from hearing my uttering 'X is good' to the conclusion that I can speak English, does not entail that I report the latter. Nor does the fact that she can infer that I possess a pro-attitude toward X entail that I report the possession of that attitude. Why not? Again, I take it that we can best understand the conventions that guide what we intend to convey by some class of utterances in part by examining the functional role of that class of utterances in a linguistic community. As I have explained above, expressivists argue that the function of moral discourse is simply not descriptive. Moral discourse doesn't attempt to describe the world, as realists might suggest[11], and neither does it function to describe our internal states, as J&P's subjectivism implies. It is unreasonable to suggest that there is a convention that dictates that all of my utterances in English report my status as an English speaker, because this is not the function of most of my utterances. Reporting our possession of attitudes, or otherwise providing data about our inner lives, cannot be the function of moral discourse on any expressivist analysis. Thus, it is radically implausible to suggest with J&P that we would have founded a convention of taking ethical discourse as reporting our internal states *simply* because there is a correlation between ethical utterances and the possession of certain attitudes.

If it were compelling, J&P's argument would take expressivist stances off of the map of defensible meta-ethical positions, because if expressivist presuppositions entail that ethical utterances report beliefs about their own states that are true if sincere, then it is unclear how expressivists can distinguish their position from subjectivism. However, I have argued in this paper that the boldness of J&P's thesis is not matched by adequate arguments. I have attempted to show that there are substantial considerations that count against each element of their argument. The success of my arguments would not, of course, make life easy for expressivists. There are still substantial worries: notably regarding the compatibility of the naturalistic analysis of our moral discourse with anti-realism, and the traversing of 'Frege's Abyss.' However, by dealing with Jackson and Pettit, this paper does allow expressivist theories to duck one apparently lethal blow.[12]

Notes:

1 Blackburn uses the colourful term 'Frege's Abyss' to refer to this set of problems, which were most famously emphasized by Frege and by Peter Geach (Blackburn 1998, 68).

2 Readers sympathetic to the late Wittgenstein (for example) might simply balk at the notion that anything like a conscious process of recognition typically plays a central role in the learning or use of a language. I will not directly address this response. Instead, my discussions of linguistic competence and sincerity aim to make deflating the role of recognition and belief the most plausible course.

3 An even more minimal constraint (perhaps implausibly so) would only require that we be

able to recognize the attitude *at the time we learned the term.*

4 Obviously, I can *insincerely* use an expressive term while failing to possess (or recognize that I possess) the relevant attitude.

5 If we accept J&P's sincerity-as-belief-possession, this might not hold. If beliefs about one's own attitudes were fallible, one could sincerely report the possession of an attitude while lacking it.

6 This is probably intended as a *ceteris paribus* claim.

7 I add the non-embedding condition, because it is not clear how the best expressivist analysis would handle the Frege-Geach problems associated with embedded contexts. It does not seem that the particular nature of the expressivist analysis of these contexts would affect J&P's argument.

8 It is thus counterintuitive to suggest that the content to which my attitude applies is something like 'Jones has a character of which we approve.' I approve of *Jones* here, not of his having some specific character.

9 J&P's analysis here is also intended to apply to analyses in terms of recommendations.

10 Mautner (2000, p. 200) suggests that in contexts where 'I command you to shut the door' is used to give (and not to report) an order, it does not have truth conditions. However, I find it more plausible to see these sentences as explicitly reporting the command while implicitly issuing it.

11 I do not intend this as a bald claim; rather, I mean to note that J&P have granted this point for the purposes of their argument.

12 I would like to thank Sam Black, Avi Craimer, and especially Evan Tiffany for their helpful comments on drafts of this paper.

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Frege, Logic and the *Foundations of Geometry*

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It is generally agreed that modern logic, as we today conceive it, owes much of its development to the work of Gottlob Frege. What Frege achieved in the *Begriffsschrift* was the creation of a formal system, based on such notions as quantification, predication, negation and the logical conditional. While the notation he used to set out his system has completely disappeared, many of the technical advances achieved in this work remain as cornerstones of the logical calculus with which we work today.

However, despite obvious points of contact between the logic of Frege and our modern variant, there is dispute as to the extent to which these two conceptions of logic *essentially* differ. Clearly, there are certain important notions, central to today's logic, of which Frege was unaware. For example, the notions of a semantics and of a logical model were completely foreign to Frege's system. Such factual differences, however, are not in themselves conclusive. What is important – the question that such differences raise – is whether or not Frege could have consistently adopted such notions, given the way that he conceived of logic. It is this question that I will try to address in the following paper.

For many, the answer to this question is a clear no. Commentators, such as Warren Goldfarb and Jaakko Hintikka, have put forth persuasive arguments to this effect (Goldfarb, 2001; Hintikka, 1988). According to their arguments, Frege, as a proponent of the universalist doctrine, is philosophically committed to a view of logic that is essentially different from our own. The logic of the universalist doctrine is supposed to make statements about the world as it actually is. In the words of Bertrand Russell: "Logic is concerned with the real world just as zoology, though with its more general and abstract features" (Russell, 1919, p. 169). Thus, logic for Frege has a content – it is "about" something. For this reason, his logic does not admit interpretation. As he says in response to Hilbert's *Foundations of Geometry*: "The word 'interpretation' is objectionable, for when properly expressed, a thought leaves no room for interpretations. We have seen that ambiguity simply has to be rejected" (Frege, 1984, p. 315).

Modern logic, on the other hand, is about nothing in particular – it has no content (Goldfarb, 2001, p. 26). Logic only receives a content when it is interpreted, that is, when it is given a model. On this cursory inspection it would seem that there is an unbridgeable gap between the Fregean account of logic and the modern account. However, as natural as this may sound, in this essay I would like to propose that the gap dividing these two accounts might not be as unbridgeable as one might at first suspect. There are good reasons to suppose that many of the properties thought unique to the modern account of logic, while not held by Frege, could have been. Specifically, I will contend that the notion of model theory – and, with it, semantics – was not as foreign to Frege's logic as it might appear.

It has often been remarked that modern logic, in its use of models and semantics, owes a great debt to the axiomatic work of David Hilbert. According to Hintikka, "Hilbert's *Foundations of Geometry* was one of the main gateways of model-theoretical thinking into 20th-century logic and philosophy" (Hintikka, 1988, p. 6). Hilbert's work, however, did not develop in a vacuum. Instead, it can be seen as the culmination of a long trend in 19th-century geometry.

In this essay, I will outline some of the main results which led up to the work of Hilbert, in order to highlight the areas in Hilbert's work that bear significance to modern logic. I will then look at the reaction of Frege to the work of Hilbert. It is often supposed that the correspondence between Frege and Hilbert, and the subsequent literature it generated, highlights in the clearest terms the essential gap between logic as conceived by Frege and the logic that was to develop out of Hilbert's work. While it is undeniable that there are many areas of conflict between the two, what this essay will aim to show is that such differences, while manifest, are not essential points of dispute. There is a clear solution to the conflict, one provided by Frege himself, that has often been ignored in the literature. If this solution can be consistently held by Frege, given his other views (as I will argue it can), then the supposed gap between Frege's logic and our own would seem to close considerably.

Geometry in the 19th Century

Prior to the late 19th century, geometry had traditionally been viewed as the mathematical treatment of space or extension. A geometer, thus, had a definite subject matter with which he or she was concerned. Geometrical theories spoke of the outside world; they said something about space and the bodies contained in it as they actually are.

On this view, geometry as a mathematical discipline was based upon the notion of spatial intuition. There are certain properties of space that are known *a priori* to be true. These *a priori* truths are the axioms of geometry – the true but unprovable statements that lie at the base of all geometrical theorems. It was the role of the professional geometer to make deductions based upon these axioms, such that other less obvious properties of space would become apparent. Given the *a priori* truth of the axioms, it was assured through logical deductions that the theorems themselves would also be true.

Such was, for a long time, the demarcation of geometry. However, within a period of 60 years, all of this changed. By the beginning of the 20th century, the task of the pure geometer would probably best be described as: "The exploration of the mutual interrelation of signs governed by specific rules of operation, irrespective of the 'interpretations' or 'meanings' which may be assigned to them" (Nagel, 1939, p. 157). This was a radically different conception of the science called geometry. Notice that nowhere do the concepts of space or extension appear. The geometry here characterized, unlike the traditional variety, has no definite subject matter, but instead is considered to be a purely "formal" discipline.[1]

Geometry as a Formal Discipline and the Theory of Duality

The path leading from the conception of geometry as the *a priori* investigation of space and extension to the conception of the science as a formal exploration of the logical relations of a given system is long and complicated. While a full exposition would be far beyond the scope of this paper, it will be edifying to look briefly at two of the most prominent reasons for this shift: the theory of duality and non-Euclidean geometries.

Among the main results of 19th-century geometry, results that began to lend credence to the subject in its formal incarnation, were the at-first baffling properties of duality, exhibited by many geometrical theorems. The first mathematician to explicitly formulate this principle was Gergonne (ibid., p. 179). What he realized was that "to each theorem in plane geometry there necessarily corresponds another, deduced from it by simply interchanging the two words 'points' and 'lines'; while in solid geometry the words 'points' and 'planes' must be interchanged in order to deduce the correlative from a given theorem" (Gergonne, 1826, quoted in Nagel, 1939, p. 180).

In order to prove that this was the case, he set out, in two columns, two sets of axioms, the members of each being duals of the other by the principle just enunciated. He then showed how dual theorems in each could be derived. What is of particular interest is that not only did Gergonne show, through this method, that their existed dual theorems, but that the derivations of the theorems also exhibited this property of duality (Nagel, 1939, p. 180).

Now, it might seem obvious to us today that what Gergonne had shown was the formal character of geometrical derivations. For, if one ignores the traditional intuitive meanings ascribed to the words "points," "lines," and "planes" and simply takes them to be symbols, or variables, then the derivations in the two columns show themselves to have the exact same structure (ibid.). It might therefore appear obvious that we conclude that what matters in the derivation of geometrical theories is not the particular meanings of the elements involved, for it is immaterial what objects (whether it be points or lines) we take to stand in certain relations. What matters, for our derivations, is simply the relations in which these arbitrary elements stand. This fact, however, was not realized by Gergonne (ibid., p. 181). At the time he was writing, the conception of geometry as based upon intuition was still too prevalent. Indeed, it was not until the work of Plucker that this formal property, exhibited by the principal of duality, became explicit (ibid., p. 189).

Non-Euclidean Geometry and the Use of Models

Toward the end of the 19th century, the formal properties of geometry became more widely recognized, to the point that they became the cornerstone for many important investigations into the properties of various geometries. Specifically, they played an important role in the investigation of non-Euclidean geometries. Non-Euclidean geometries had, for a number of years, been viewed with great suspicion. When non-Euclidean theorems were interpreted – given the traditional intuitive meanings of "points," "lines," and "planes" – they seemed to make blatantly counter-intuitive or false statements. For example, in non-Euclidean geometry it was a theorem that for any given point and line, there are an infinite number of lines going through that point that do not intersect the given line. Now, what could be more obviously false! However, with the recognition of the formal properties of geometrical deductions, mathematicians such as Felix Klein and Poincaré were able to show that non-Euclidean geometries, far from being invalid, were in fact just as valid as the traditional Euclidean variety.

Poincaré, in his work *Models of Non-Euclidean Geometry* (1902), sought to show that the consistency of non-Euclidean geometry could be given relative to the consistency of Euclidean geometry itself. His method for proving this will be seen to rely heavily upon the thesis that the properties of a given geometrical system do not depend on the intuitive contents of its elements, but simply upon the stipulated logical relations set out in the system.

What Poincaré suggested was that the elements of non-Euclidean geometry can be translated into elements of Euclidean geometry. As he says: "Let us construct a kind of dictionary by making a double series of terms written in two columns and corresponding each to each, just as in ordinary dictionaries" (Poincaré, 1902, p. 41). Strictly speaking this is a poor description of what Poincaré does, for in a normal bilingual dictionary, the sense of a word is meant to be preserved. What Poincaré does is destroy the sense of the terms "point," "line," "plane," "space," etc. Through such a translation, the theorems of non-Euclidean geometry can be translated into Euclidean theorems. It thus follows that if there is an inconsistency in non-Euclidean geometry, there will also be one in the Euclidean translation and thus in Euclidean geometry itself. Given the assumed consistency of Euclidean geometry, we may conclude that non-Euclidean geometry itself is consistent.

Poincaré's proof depends, for its cogency, on the fact that the properties of a geometry are derived, not from the content of the elements, but from the relations in which they stand. We have already seen this suggested in the theory of duality. It is in virtue of this fact that Poincaré is able to exploit the translations of sense within a geometry, and then draw general conclusions about the system, on the basis of such a translation. However, despite the clear use of such notions of formality, made by Poincaré and predecessors in the field of non-Euclidean geometry, the recognition of the full import of this property to the investigation of geometry belongs to David Hilbert.

Hilbert and the Foundations of Geometry

Hilbert, in the *Foundations of Geometry*, is the first mathematician to set up a completely rigorous, logical analysis of the axioms of geometry. Hilbert viewed the axioms of his geometry as a set of logical relations between things called "points," "lines," and "planes." For Hilbert, the intuitive meaning of these elements was entirely extraneous. Indeed, reliance on intuitive meanings was thought by Hilbert to be an obstacle to achieving logical insight into a geometrical system. This leitmotif in Hilbert's work is probably best summed up by another mathematician, Pasch, when he says: "Whenever geometry has to be really deductive, the process of inferring must be independent of the meaning of the geometrical notions, as well as of the figures. The only things that matter are the relations between the geometrical notions as they are established in the theorems and definitions used" (Pasch, 1882, as quoted in Freudenthal, 1960, p. 617). While this is never explicitly stated by Hilbert in the *Foundations of Geometry*, it becomes clear that it is this assumption that lies at the base of many of the important results achieved in his work.

Hilbert begins the *Foundations of Geometry* by dividing up the axioms into five groups: the axioms of connection, order, parallels, congruence, and continuity. He then proceeds to derive various theorems based upon these groups, pointing out which axioms are relevant to which theorems; that is, he makes explicit the underlying logical connections between the theorems and the axioms.

At this point in the work, it is not necessarily clear that Hilbert is doing anything particularly innovative. In deriving theorems from axioms, it could easily be misconstrued that he is simply performing the task of the traditional geometer: the derivation of true theorems from true axioms. Yet this would be a grave misconstrual of

Hilbert's intention. This can be seen most clearly in his next task: proving the consistency of the axiom system.

The traditional view held that "from the truth of the axioms it follows that they do not contradict one another" (Frege, 1980, p. 37, letter IV/3). For Hilbert's axiom system, however, the matter is quite the opposite. "If the arbitrarily given axioms do not contradict one another with all their consequences, then they are true" (Hilbert, 1980, p. 39, letter IV/4). Thus, for Hilbert, neither the truth nor the consistency of the axioms may be presupposed; the axiom system, as a logical system, must be validated on logical grounds. Hilbert goes about proving consistency of the system in a manner we have already seen: he gives a relative consistency proof. Hilbert translates the axioms of his geometry into axioms of arithmetic. Thus, as in the Poincaré example, the consistency of the geometric system is guaranteed by or (more accurately) is conditional upon the consistency of the system of arithmetic.

As we have already mentioned, such a proof requires that one divorce the elements of the system in question from any intuitive content. For if "points," "lines," and "planes" in Hilbert's system have definite meanings, then it would be illegitimate to claim that anything is proved of such a system by changing the meaning of such words. Clearly, this is not the way that Hilbert sees his system, or the elements that compose it. As he writes to Frege:

> But it is surely obvious that every theory is only a scaffolding or schema of concepts together with their necessary relations to one another, and that the basic elements can be thought of in any way one likes. If in speaking of my points I think of some system of things, e.g. the system: love, law, chimney-sweep … and then assume all my axioms as relations between these things, then my propositions, e.g. Pythagoras's theorem, are also valid for these things. In other words any theory can always be applied to infinitely many systems of basic elements. (Ibid., p. 40)

For Hilbert, then, the elements of his system lack a fixed meaning. Instead, these elements (in this case points, lines, planes, etc.) are defined implicitly; they are given simply by their stipulated mutual relations. Such implicit definition allows Hilbert to vary the interpretation of the elements of his geometry. By changing the possible interpretations of the elements he is able to prove certain logical properties of this system. We have already seen how he does this with his consistency proof.

Another such example, one that highlights just how far removed Hilbert's geometry is from any intuitive content, is given in his *Elemente der Euklidischen Geometrie*, which preceded the *Foundations of Geometry*. In the earlier work, Hilbert sets out to show that the axiom (2), "Any two distinct points of a straight line completely determine that line; that is if AB=a and BC=a, where B ≠ C, then BC=a," is not a logical consequence of the axiom (1), "Two distinct points A and B always completely determine a straight line a. That is AB=a" (Hilbert, 2003, p. 388).[2] What Hilbert has to show is that (1) can be true where (2) is not; that is, he needs to provide a model that gives him these values. Hilbert does this by providing an arithmetical interpretation of "points" and "lines." To points he assigns positive whole numbers. To lines he assigns negative whole-number values in accordance with the formula: (where p1, p2 stand for points and -g for the line value, given by the closest negative whole number) $p1p2/2 = -g$. He then assigns the various points A, B, C the positive values 1, 2, 3 respectively. We then receive as our values of lines: $AB = -1$, $AC = -1$ and $BC = -3$ (ibid., p. 390). But given this, we can see that axiom (2) is not satisfied; that is, it is not the case that $AB = a$ and $AC = a$ entail that $BC = a$. However, axiom (1) is obviously satisfied, for AB, AC, and BC all determine lines. Thus, Hilbert is able to conclude that axiom (2) is not dependent on axiom (1).

The two examples of Hilbert's work we have just given provide a fair indication of the nature of the work as a whole. What Hilbert does throughout the text, in exploring the various interrelations of given axioms, is provide models; he provides various interpretations of his primary elements. In this work Hilbert is clearly exploiting many of the ideas generated earlier in the century. Thus he says in justification of his use of interpretations: "This circumstance is in fact frequently made use of, e.g. in the principle of duality, etc., and I have made use of it in my independence proofs" (Hilbert, 1980, p. 40, letter IV/4). However, in Hilbert's work, the usage of models is extended far beyond the ranges previously explored by such mathematicians as Poincaré, Klein or Beltrami. Specifically, Hilbert's models, unlike the Poincaré example, provide translations that extend beyond the bounds of what might be called the "geometrical domain." For Hilbert, the domain of possible models extends as far as the given relations hold. This is what is meant by his remark about "love, law and chimney-sweep." It is this realization, along with Hilbert's natural innovation in proofs, that justifies the importance of this work in the history of mathematics.

19th-Century Geometry and Modern Logic

What we have been able to set out so far is only the barest of indications of a long, complicated movement within mathematics. However, for anyone acquainted with the methods of modern logic, some parallels should already appear obvious. Logic, as it is conceived today, is a subject devoid of any particular content. The formulas of logic, much like those of Hilbert's system, are simply schemes. The subject matter of logic is logical form, the abstract relations between variables. On the syntactic, or proof-theoretic, side, it is simply the logical relations that are of interest. One is able to make deductions from sets of logical formulas without any regard to the meaning of the variables.

This conception of logic in the abstract, contentless sense is fairly new. It is of particular interest that it came long after similar realizations were being made in the field of mathematics and, specifically, geometry. Indeed, many of the techniques that followed from this realization in geometry – a few of which we have had occasion to look at – are used as cornerstones in modern logic. Most important is the use of models for the investigation of various logical formulas.

In modern logic, the schematic formulas only receive a content through the interpretations given to the variables by a model. By providing interpretations, one is able to investigate the various logical properties of given formulas. One may, for example, wish to investigate whether or not a given formula is logically valid. To do so one needs to provide a proof that this formula is true in all possible models; that is, one must prove that there is no interpretation that makes the formula false (Machover, 1996, p. 155). One might also wish to investigate the logical relations between two formulas to determine whether one formula, say A, is a logical consequence of another formula, say B. In order to prove this, we must show that every model that makes B true also makes A true. If there is a model in which B is true and A is false, then we can conclude that A is not a logical consequence of B, or that A is logically independent of B (ibid.). This last example is just Hilbert's independence proof that we dealt with earlier. Indeed, many of the techniques used by Hilbert in the *Foundations of Geometry* have exact analogues in modern logic.

The view of formulas as contentless logical relations, the use of interpretation, the very notion of investigating a formal system – all of these, which one finds manifest in modern logic, have their origins in the work of 19th-century geometry, and most pointedly so in the work of Hilbert. It is for this reason that as we now turn to the primary question of this essay – the relation between Frege's logic and our modern conception – the correspondence between Frege and Hilbert is of great importance. For, while it would be anachronistic of us to blame Frege for lacking certain logical notions, it is pertinent to ask to what extent was he possibly open to such ideas. That the seeds of modern logic existed in a work – the *Foundations of Geometry* – with which Frege was at one time much concerned offers us a unique means of analyzing this question.

Frege and the *Foundations of Geometry:* the Problem

As has hopefully been made clear, the *Foundations of Geometry*, at the time of its publication, was a work revolutionary in character. As with such works, its full comprehension was far beyond the grasp of many at the time, even talented mathematicians like Gottlob Frege. In the correspondence between Hilbert and Frege, one sees very clearly in Frege's letters a man trying to grasp a conception of geometry that had moved far beyond his own traditional understanding. What is often further supposed

is that Frege's bafflement, his apparent inability to comprehend the sense of this work, reveals a fundamental difference in the conceptions of logic employed by the two men. While this view is certainly understandable, I think that it misses the mark. I think that the main difficulties presented to Frege are purely geometrical in nature. What essential logical differences exist between the two would appear to be minor in comparison.

Frege, like many mathematicians at the time, conceived of geometry in its traditional, Euclidean sense. Geometry consisted, as we have earlier mentioned, of true axioms referring to space. As Frege puts it in his first letter to Hilbert after the publication of the *Foundations of Geometry*: "I call axioms propositions that are true but are not proved because our knowledge of them flows from a source very different from the logical source, a source which might be called spatial intuition" (Frege, 1980, p. 37, letter IV/3). For Frege, axioms are propositions expressing thoughts. In Frege's terms, this means that the axioms have a reference. What axioms refer to is their truth value – the True.

For Hilbert, on the other hand, as we have already seen, axioms are something altogether different. While Hilbert remarks at the beginning of his work that "the axioms of geometry are divided into five groups; every one of these groups expresses certain closely related fundamental facts of our intuition" (Hilbert, 1947, p. 3), this designation seems to be, at heart, purely metaphorical. The axioms treated in Hilbert's work are merely sets of schemata; and unlike those conceived by Frege, these axioms are certainly not propositions with any definite reference. It is not surprising, then, that upon reading Hilbert's work, Frege found himself extremely confused. As he remarks: "Beside the old meaning of the word 'axiom,' which comes out in the proposition that the axioms express fundamental facts of intuition, there emerges another meaning, but one which I can no longer quite grasp" (Frege, 1980, p. 35-36, letter IV/3).

This confusion is further amplified by Hilbert's use of the word definition. For Frege, a definition is something that fixes the reference of a term. In Euclidean geometry it is necessary to give definitions for the elementary terms "point," "line," "plane," etc. It is only through such definitions that the axioms containing these terms can be said to truly express thoughts. An axiom in Frege's sense must therefore "not contain a word or sign whose sense and meaning, or whose contribution to the expression of a thought, was not already completely laid down, so that there is no doubt about the sense of the proposition and the thought it expresses" (ibid., p. 36). Hilbert doesn't adhere to this sense of definition; his definitions are implicit. Because they're implicit, they do not fix the reference of terms once and for all. A point for Hilbert is not "that which is extensionless," but merely anything that stands in the stipulated relations to other possible elements. For Hilbert's purpose, as we have earlier outlined, this conception is entirely necessary. However, one can see how this use of "definition," in this sense, would be confusing for Frege, or anyone else not fully aware or accepting of the tidal change in 19th-century geometry.

At this early stage, Frege's objections and confusion are clearly the result of specifically geometrical problems. Hilbert's conception of geometry is radically different from Frege's; that his terminology is the same does not help matters. For all this, Frege does have some sense of how Hilbert's system operates. By Frege's second letter to Hilbert, in reference to the *Foundations of Geometry*, he comes to an important realization: the logical character of Hilbert's system. As he says: "It seems to me that you want to detach geometry entirely from spatial intuition and to turn it into a purely logical science like arithmetic" (ibid., p. 43, letter IV/5). The question that thus arises is whether or not Frege can accept what Hilbert is doing.

In his second letter to Hilbert, and the subsequent essays "Foundations of Geometry" I and II, Frege begins to look seriously at the logical architecture of Hilbert's system. Frege is particularly keen to make explicit that which in Hilbert's work is merely assumed. Having accepted that Hilbert's axioms do not express intuitive truths, Frege attempts to clarify their role by citing his own distinction between first- and second-level concepts.

For Frege, the elements of the world (taken in its more abstract sense) can be divided up into different logical categories. The most obviously sharp division is between concepts and objects. An object for Frege is a logical simple and therefore does not admit a proper definition. However, we can elucidate what he means by object in stating that proper names correspond to objects (Frege, 1980, p. 92, letter X/2). Thus, the Ganges is an object, so is the moon, and so is Aristotle. Concepts, on the other hand, are predicative in nature (ibid.). A concept word cannot stand on its own, but like all things predicative must be stated of something. Another way Frege elucidates this distinction is by saying that while objects are "saturated," concepts are "unsaturated"– they require fulfillment (Frege, 1984, p. 281). As saturated, object words refer only to a particular object. Concept words, on the other hand, refer to a class of things – the class of things that fall under that concept, or the class of things of which that concept may be properly predicated. Frege calls this the extension of a concept.

The distinction between objects and concepts, however, is not final. Beyond this, there are further distinctions between different types of concepts. Frege distinguishes these different concepts by levels, i.e. first level, second level, third level. What distinguishes a concept of one level from a concept of a different level is the type of logical entity that can fall under it (ibid., p.282). A first-level concept, for example, can be saturated by, or predicated of, an object. For example: "The south of France is sweet-smelling." In this example, "sweet-smelling" is a first-level concept, which is predicated of (or saturated by) the object "the south of France." "The south of France," as an object, thus falls under the first-level concept "sweet-smelling," i.e. it is part of that concept's extension. A second-level concept, however, can only be saturated by a first-level concept. A good example of this is the second-level concept of existence. For example, in the sentence "There are libraries," what I am ascribing the predicate of existence ("there are") to is not an object, but a first-level concept, "libraries." Similarly, a concept of the third level can have only second-level concepts falling under it, and so on. What is important for our purposes is the relations between objects, concepts of the first level, and concepts of the second level. This can be summed up by saying that under first-level concepts fall objects, and under second-level concepts fall first-level concepts.

Given this distinction, we might now wonder, of what logical type are the elements of traditional Euclidean geometry? For Frege, the Euclidean points, lines and planes are concepts of the first level – this is to say that the concepts "points," "lines," and "planes," as conceived in traditional geometry, can be predicated of certain objects: the objects that fall under these concepts, i.e. point objects, line objects, etc. Similarly, the relations in which they stand, e.g. the betweeness relation, or the congruence relation, are first-level relations, i.e. relations between first-level concepts.

For Frege, the axioms of Hilbert's geometry, however, are of a completely different logical nature than the Euclidean axioms. Correspondingly, so are the elements that appear in them. Frege surmises that the elements of Hilbert's system are not of the first level but of the second (Frege, 1980, p. 46, letter IV/5). Thus, the points, lines and planes denote not first-level, but second-level concepts. Consequently, the relations of Hilbert's geometry, betweeness, congruence, etc., denote second-level relations. As Frege says:

> If we now go through Mr. Hilbert's axioms, considering them as parts of definitions of a point, we find the characteristics stated in them are not of the first level. That is, they are not properties an object must have in order to be a point. Rather, they are of the second level. Therefore, if any concept is defined by means of them, it can only be a second-level concept. (Frege, 1984, p. 283)

Whether this is true or not we will have to investigate. At the outset, we can surmise why Frege would naturally make this distinction. Analyzing Hilbertian points, lines, and planes as second-level concepts at first allows Frege to make sense of much of what Hilbert does in the *Foundations of Geometry*. Most importantly, this distinction allows Frege to justify Hilbert's use of interpretation in his consistency and independence proofs. Given that Hilbert's element are second-level concepts, Frege is able to make sense of such "interpretation" as the mere instantiation of a second-level concept by a first-level concept that falls under it. Thus, on one interpretation, the "points," "lines," and "planes" are interpreted as the first-level Euclidean concepts; on another, they are interpreted as various arithmetical concepts, etc. This procedure is valid in Frege's eyes only because all of these first-level concepts fall under, or are part of the extensions of, the second-level concepts.

At first glance, this analysis of Hilbertian points, lines, planes, etc., as second-level concepts appears to be a perfectly coherent way of making sense of Hilbert's methods. However, on further inspection, there would appear to be irreconcilable problems with the analysis. For Frege, a concept, whether of the first, second or third level, must be strictly defined. Frege sums this up by saying that concepts must have "sharp boundaries." What this means is that any concept must be defined so that for any object, or lower-level concepts, one can determine whether or not that object or lower-level concept falls under the particular concept. Therefore, if Hilbert's system is to comprise second-level concepts, these concepts must be just as sharply defined as if they were traditional first-level Euclidean concepts. Thus, the question of Hilbert's definitions once again arises.

According to Hilbert, "to try to give a definition of a point in three lines is to my mind an impossibility, for only the whole structure of axioms yields a complete definition" (Hilbert, 1980, p. 40, letter IV/4). This is another way of saying that his definitions are implicit. However, Frege spots a problem here. For Frege, Hilbert's claim that the whole axiom structure yields definitions is equivalent to saying that this structure allows one to determine, for any object or concept that might fall under the concept of a Hilbertian point, whether or not this is the case. Yet, in Hilbert's system, concepts like "point" are defined by means of and in conjunction with other concepts ("lines," "planes," etc.) and relations ("between," "congruent," etc.). Thus, in trying to decide if something falls under the Hilbertian concept "point," one must have knowledge not only of what a "point" is, but also knowledge of such concept terms as "line" and "plane," as well as relational terms like "between." For one who expects an unambiguous solution to the question, "Is this a point?," this consequence is a serious problem. Thus Frege says: "[Hilbert's] system of definitions is like a system of equations with several unknowns, where there remains a doubt whether the equations are soluble, and especially whether the unknown quantities are uniquely determined" (Frege, 1980, p. 45, letter IV/5).

Now, it is clear to us, and probably to Hilbert himself, that his system of definitions does not allow for the unique determination Frege is looking for. In asking the question "Is a star a point?," the correct answer will have to be yes and no. The answer will be yes for certain other interpretations of "line," "plane," "between," etc., which, given that we interpret the concept "star" as our "point" concept, will make the axioms true. However, the answer will be no for other interpretations that make the axioms false. In this sense, the question of whether a given X falls under the Hilbertian concept "point" is not unambiguously determined. Frege recognizes this. He eventually concludes: "It must surely be taken as established once and for all that Hilbertian pseudo-definitions do not give meanings to the words 'point,' 'straight line,' 'between,' etc., that seem to be explained in them" (Frege, 1984, p. 303).

Given that this is the case, we must conclude that the Hilbertian concepts "point," "line," and "plane" are not concepts of the second level; indeed, they are not concepts at all. For this reason, we must also conclude that the Hilbertian axioms are not propositions; that is, they have no clear reference and therefore no thought content.

As we have seen in our look at 19th-century geometry and particularly Hilbert, this is a fair conclusion. The axioms of Hilbert's system, as schemata, have no necessary reference to the world. All that they do is stipulate certain abstract relations between contentless symbols: in this case "points," "lines," and "planes." Frege finds this fact very difficult to swallow. One might expect Frege, having come to this realization, to give up entirely on Hilbert's system. One might even expect him to reject the coherence of this system on purely logical grounds. As we mentioned in the introduction, logic for Frege has a content. It would seem natural, then, for Frege to demand of any purely logical system, such as Hilbert's, that the axioms themselves have content, that they refer. The argument would go something like this: Logic for Frege deals with the most universal of content – logical content. Logic is thus applicable to anything that has content – that is, everything in the world. The axioms of Hilbert, however, do not have content; they refer to nothing in the world. Thus the laws of logic cannot apply to them. For this reason, Hilbert's system (the axioms and the theorems deduced) cannot count as a logical system.

On this reading, one could construe Frege's suggestion that Hilbert's axioms comprise second-level concepts and relations as an attempt to salvage Hilbert's system from logical meaninglessness. Many of Frege's remarks would seem to fall nicely in line with such an interpretation. For example, early on in their correspondence, Frege expresses a doubt as to the cogency of Hilbert's independence proof. He says: "If you are merely concerned to demonstrate the mutual independence of the axioms, you will have to show that the nonsatisfaction of one of these axioms does not contradict the satisfaction of the others. But it will be impossible to give such an example in the domain of elementary Euclidean geometry because all the axioms are true in this domain" (Frege, 1980, p. 43, letter IV/5). Once again, Frege appears to reject the notion of a logical analysis as removed from particular content. What he seems to be saying is that one cannot draw any conclusions as to the logical structure of the Euclidean axioms by changing their interpretation, because the logic of these axioms is intimately bound up with their content.

If one were to read Frege like this, it would certainly seem that there is an unbridgeable gap between his conception of logic and ours, for we would accept Hilbert's system as perfectly legitimate. That Hilbert's axioms lack content does not preclude us form applying the laws of logic to them, from deriving theorems based on the stipulated relations. Neither would we hold that the logical properties of the Euclidean axioms depend upon their content. From the current logical perspective, logical properties inhere in things, in systems, regardless of their extralogical content. It is for this reason that such content can be ignored in a logical investigation. Given what we have set out so far, it certainly does seem that Frege is unaware of this "formal" or "contentless" property of logic. In this sense, our analysis so far is quite in line with many commentators. It might thus come as quite a surprise to those who adhere to such a clear-cut difference between Frege and ourselves that this is not the final picture that results from Frege's correspondence with Hilbert.

The Solution

Having determined that the Hilbertian axioms are not propositions – that they do not express thoughts – Frege, in his article "Foundations of Geometry II," seeks to determine what logical role these axioms actually play. Not being propositions, Frege calls the axioms pseudopropositions.

While they do not express thoughts, they have a similar grammatical structure to most propositions. Yet beyond merely being a concatenation of symbols with no sense, the Hilbertian axioms do seem to play an important role in the structure of the system. Frege likens this to the relation between antecedent and consequent propositions (Frege, 1984, p. 308). The axioms of Hilbert's system play the role of the antecedent, while the theorems play the role of the consequent.

According to Frege, neither an antecedent nor a consequent proposition need have a sense in and of itself. He invites us to consider the expression "if A > 1, then A > 0." Now, certainly one would agree that this proposition expresses a thought, and a true one at that. More specifically, this statement expresses a generally true thought. The generality of this thought is conveyed in the above expression by the variable A (ibid., p. 309). For Frege then, "a proposition can express a true thought even though it contains words … or letters that do not mean anything but merely indicate whenever these words or letters have the purpose of lending generality of content to the propositions" (ibid., p. 310).

However, while this expression, as a whole, expresses a thought and is thus a proposition, the antecedent and consequents are mere pseudopropositions – they are senseless. Let us take the antecedent "A > 1." In this case, as in the whole proposition, the letter 'A' does not signify anything – it is simply a variable. However, it also does not express generality, as it does in the original proposition. If it did, this expression would be a thought, but a false one, i.e. "every number is greater than 1." Thus, according to Frege, two pseudopropositions, senseless in and of themselves, may express a thought when bound together by a conditional.

How might this analysis bear on the characterization of Hilbert's axioms as antecedent pseudopropositions? Well, as we have already acknowledged, Hilbert's "points," "lines," "planes," etc., have no reference; they can be interpreted however one

wants. In this sense they play a role analogous to that of variables. Frege clearly recognizes this fact. The Hilbertian system, then, consists of senseless axioms (antecedent pseudopropositions) and senseless theorems (consequent pseudopropositions). While neither of these expresses thoughts in and of themselves, in their connection (that is, the conditional connection "if … then") they do express a thought. As Frege says: "Hilbertian axioms are parts of a general theorem that has a sense, although the parts themselves do not" (ibid., p. 313).

Not only does the Hilbertian system express a thought, but it expresses a generally true thought. As the words "points," "lines," "planes," serve merely to lend generality, the conditional propositions expressed by the axioms and theorems will always be true regardless of what one instantiates for the words "points," "lines," and "planes." If the axioms are not satisfied by the particular interpretation, then clearly the proposition as a whole is true, for a false antecedent always lead to a true conditional statement. However, if the interpretation does satisfy the axioms, then the theorems themselves will also be satisfied. This is guaranteed by the fact that it is only the laws of logic that are used in deriving these theorems from the axioms.

On this interpretation, Frege is much closer to understanding what Hilbert is doing. In accepting this as a logically valid account, Frege is admitting something some might find surprising. What Frege seems to be implicitly stating is that the laws of logic can be applied in a purely formal sense. For, in deriving theorems from axioms, all that Hilbert is doing is applying logical laws to meaningless symbols. Frege would seem to accept this. All that he requires is that this derivation be made explicit, that it be shown in its conditional sense.

This disregard for content shows up even more clearly when Frege returns to the question of independence proofs. As we have mentioned, Frege had, early on in his thinking on Hilbert's work, expressed doubts as to whether or not an independence proof could be established. However, by the end of "Foundations of Geometry II," he seems to have some understanding of how it would work. He suggests that the independence of real axioms – i.e. axioms that express thoughts, such as Euclidean axioms – can be proved by providing a translation "where on both sides there stand words of the same language but having different sense" (ibid., p. 335). In such translations all that needs to be preserved are the purely logical attributes; the logical constants must not be re-interpreted. As well, the logical "level" of various terms must be maintained. Thus, to object words will stand object words, to concept words of a certain level, other concept words of the same level (ibid.). Now, if in translating a group of axioms (say the Euclidean axioms) in which all the axioms, including some specific axiom (say A1), are all true, one is able to provide a translation in which the translated axioms are all true, except for the translation of A1, then we can conclude that A1 is independent of the other axioms. As Frege puts it:

> Let us now consider whether a thought G is dependent upon a group of thoughts Ω. We can give a negative answer to this question if, according to our vocabulary, to the thoughts of group Ω there corresponds a group of true thoughts Ω-prime, while to the thought G there corresponds a false thought G-prime. For if G were dependent upon Ω, then since the thoughts of Ω-prime are true, G-prime would also have to be dependent upon Ω-prime, and consequently G-prime would be true. (Ibid., p. 339)

This formulation is very much in line with the independence proofs given by Hilbert, one of which we illustrated earlier. It is also a radical reformulation of Frege's previous view. What Frege has realized here is that, in providing a logical investigation, the particular content of the symbols is of no importance. In setting up his independence procedure, Frege refers to the underlying principal of the independence proof as "the formal nature of logical laws" (ibid., p. 337). This "formal nature" is just that which we have been ascribing to the modern conception of logic. In the words of Frege, it is simply the fact that "as far as logic itself is concerned, each object is as good as any other" (ibid., p. 338). Thus, in providing a logical investigation, the particular content of that which one is investigating can be completely ignored.

It might be objected that this is a misleading characterization of Frege's view, for, in Frege's independence proof, not all content can be ignored. This is certainly true, for the purely logical content must be maintained. Yet how far is this from the modern view? Not very, it seems to me. All models used in modern logic maintain the purely logical operators, the conditional, and conjunction, and disjunction, etc. In any interpretation, the variables standing for predicates can only be interpreted by actual predicates, and similarly for object and relational variables. Thus, we can see that even modern logic is not entirely devoid of "content" taken in its broadest sense. Modern logic is simply devoid of all content that is not purely logical – but this is the very view that Frege himself espouses.

By coming to this fundamental recognition, Frege is able to make sense of Hilbert's use of models. Frege is even able to build a notion of a model that is not only strikingly similar to our own, but is also consistent with his own stipulations as to the inviolability of logical content. The notions of models and semantic interpretation are not as foreign to Frege's system as one might suspect.

What has often led to this view is Frege's famous rebuke that "a thought leaves no room for different interpretation" (ibid., p. 315). His words certainly seem to put models out of the question. However, we are now in a position to fully appreciate what Frege intends. What the word "interpretation" seems to connote to Frege is some sort of irresponsible caprice in which one can substitute anything one likes for a particular variable. In this sense, interpretation is logically objectionable, not only for Frege's

logic, but also for our own, for as we have seen, certain properties must not be changed or "interpreted" – the logical properties. It is this that Frege is rebuking here, and it is why he prefers the term "inference," for with an inference logic is always preserved. This objection, however, is clearly not pertinent to the modern use of "interpretation." Between our "interpretation" and Frege's "inference," there would only seem to be a difference of taste.

Conclusion

After all that we have said so far, one question seems to remain: What is the reason for Frege's apparent reversal of opinion? In his early thinking on the matter, Frege seems to be very concerned with the particular geometrical content of Hilbert's system. By the end, all concern with any but logical content has vanished. I think that the reason for this apparent shift has little to do with Frege's logical view and everything to do with Frege's conception of geometry.

As we have seen, Frege was very traditional in his view of geometry. The view of a geometry devoid of geometrical content was new and very perturbing to him. Many of his early suggestions can be seen as a way to salvage this arcane conception of geometrical science. It is for this reason, I think, that he suggests that Hilbert's axioms define second-level concepts. If this were the case, then Hilbert's geometry could still be said to be about space or extension, but in a more abstract sense.

As we have seen, Frege was forced to let go of this idea. What is particularly interesting is that once he had accepted the idea that Hilbert's geometry was lacking any geometrical content, Frege was able to reconcile himself to what Hilbert was doing on purely logical grounds. Specifically, we have seen that Frege's conception of logic is in full agreement with Hilbert's with respect to the "formal" character of logical investigations. From this conception follows Hilbert's own use of models, and Frege himself seems to grasp how such models might be used to investigate logical properties.

We can see, therefore, that Frege's conception of logic is not necessarily as divorced from our own as many would contend. It would be ridiculous, based on what has been said here, to draw too strong a conclusion. The logic of Frege and our modern logic are certainly not isomorphic. The idea of investigating the internal properties of a logical system, the use of models in such investigations, the very concept of an explicit notion of semantics – all of these are completely lacking in Frege's logic. It would probably be safe to surmise that prior to his correspondence with Hilbert, such ideas had never occurred to Frege.

What is important, however, is that Frege is able to reconcile himself to such ideas, and to do so on his own logical terms. This reconciliation would seem to indicate that the essential differences between these two conceptions of logic are not as numerous as has often been supposed.

Notes:

[1] It should here be noted, to avoid possible confusion, in what sense the word "formal" is being used. Formalism in mathematics is often taken to be a mere playing with empty symbols, with no further purpose. This is not the sense in which I use the word. Instead I take it to mean a discipline in which the "worldly" content of the symbols is ignored, where only the logical relations of the symbols is taken into consideration.

[2] The translation is my own.

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La protreptique plotinienne dans Ennéades I.6 (Sur le Beau)

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L'activité philosophique, lorsqu'elle ne se limite pas à définir les limites d'un paradoxe, ne réussit néanmoins pas souvent à s'affranchir totalement de celui-ci, et ainsi elle se retrouve plus souvent qu'autrement située en ses marges. Le cas de la protreptique plotinienne ne fait pas exception. Endossant d'un côté, bien que la qualifiant, la critique platonicienne du langage telle qu'elle se retrouve articulée dans le *Phèdre* ainsi que dans la *Septième Lettre,* Plotin doit néanmoins composer avec les modes d'expressivité propres à l'être humain dans l'objectif de débloquer pour ses élèves une quelconque voie d'accès épistémique à l'Un.

Le présent essai se propose d'examiner de quelle manière Plotin utilise au sein du traité « Sur le Beau » (Ennéades I.6)[1] les diverses ressources que lui offre une tradition philosophique déjà riche afin de tenter d'accomplir ce dur labeur. Après avoir discuté de la méthode propre à la protreptique plotinienne se réalisant au sein du traité, les langages de la purification de l'âme ainsi que de l'accès à l'Être seront successivement explorés, en insistant sur le rôle fondamental qu'y joue l'analogie. Nous reviendrons brièvement, en guise de conclusion, sur les propos plus purement esthétiques de Plotin, afin de clarifier le rôle de l'art dans l'ascension vers l'Un. Ce faisant, nous mettrons l'emphase sur une certaine rupture entre la pensée plotinienne et celle de son maître spirituel, Platon.

Méthode

Il y a minimalement deux méthodes mises en oeuvre au sein de « Sur le Beau » : celle au sujet de laquelle Plotin écrit et celle qu'il pratique lui-même en écrivant. Les deux méthodes suivent le même modèle, celui de l'αναβασιϖ (ascension). L'importance de cette figure dans la philosophie platonicienne s'exprime paradigmatiquement dans un passage sans équivoque de la *République:* « Faire cela [conduire les

apprentis philosophes vers la lumière], il semble bien que ce [soit comme] la conversion d'une âme qui laisse derrière elle un jour mêlé de nuit, pour aller vers un jour véritable, puisqu'il s'agit d'une ascension vers ce qui est, ascension que nous affirmons être la vraie philosophie »[2]. L'objet de la protreptique philosophique consiste donc à détourner son âme du côtoiement constant de l'obscurité vers l'accès à une clarté permanente. La tâche du pédagogue est de faciliter ce même détournement chez l'élève.

La méthode dont Plotin s'inspire dans le traité à l'étude suit celle du *Banquet* de Platon, où Diotime relate « […] what it is to go right, or to be led by another, into the mystery of Love : one goes always upwards for the sake of this Beauty, starting out from beautiful things and using them like rising stairs: from one body to two and from two to all beautiful bodies, then from beautiful bodies to beautiful customs, and from customs to learning beautiful things, and from these lessons he arrives in the end at this lesson, which is learning of this very Beauty, so that in the end he comes to know just what it is to be beautiful » (211c). L'ajout à cette liste par Plotin des actions (πραχειϖ, I.6.1.6) ainsi que de la beauté propre aux vertus (αρετων καλλοϖ, I.6.1.7) est tributaire de l'importance accordée par Plotin au volet « pratique »[3] de l'activité philosophique, et ne semble pas étrangère à une certaine influence du stoïcisme. D'autres indices de cette influence suivront ultérieurement.

Une inspection de l'incarnation de cette échelle dans le traité à l'étude mène au constat suivant : Plotin se concentre principalement sur le premier échelon (les beautés sensibles) et le dernier (les vertus), et n'offre même pas aux intermédiaires l'espace d'un livre. L'absence totale de considération de l'effet bénéfique des sciences théoriques sur l'âme, trope pourtant fondamentale du platonisme (cf. *Rep.* VII 521c-531d), nous semble également un symptôme de l'emphase plotinienne sur la *praxis* ci-haut mentionnée. Par ailleurs, Plotin est conscient qu'une âme se libérant du sensible peut être distraite dans sa recherche du Bien par la beauté du monde intelligible (V.5.12.36-7). Ce n'est certes pas la considération des objets intelligibles en soi qui est une erreur. La faute est plutôt d'ordre contextuel : le progressant confond une étape du processus avec sa fin et s'y abîme. De manière encore plus radicale, la conclusion même du parcours philosophique ne semble pas être la même. Pour Platon il se conclut par l'accès à la forme de la Beauté, elle-même exemplairement belle. L'Un de Plotin n'est pas beau, au sens qu'il est une belle chose : il est beau car il est « source et principe du beau » (I.6.9.42-43). L'existence de la beauté est donc ontologiquement seconde à l'existence de l'Un.

Une autre différence fondamentale entre la protreptique du *Banquet* et celle de Plotin est que cette dernière semble beaucoup moins sûre des capacités du pédagogue d'influencer de manière effective l'âme de l'élève. Celui qui n'a pas fait l'expérience des choses élevées se trouve face à elles comme l'aveugle de naissance face aux beautés du monde sensible (I.6.4.4-9). Si le progressant ne s'est pas préparé à atteindre cette vision, il ne l'atteindra pas, « […] pas même si un autre lui montre ce qui est là et qui peut être vu » (I.6.9.26-28). Une expression privilégiée de ce constat se trouve dans la manière dont Plotin récupère la célèbre métaphore du *Phèdre* où l'amoureux « […] érige [à son amoureux] une statue qu'il orne » (252e1, trad. L. Brisson). Plotin métamorphose cette métaphore en : « Ne cesse de sculpter ta propre statue […] » (1.6.9.13-14)[4]. Le pédagogue ne peut façonner directement le progressant, sa tâche est plutôt d'inciter celui-ci à se façonner lui-même. C'est sans doute une manifestation de cette incapacité ainsi que de son empressement à voir ses élèves passer à l'action qui explique l'utilisation fréquente par Plotin de l'exhortation, plutôt rare dans l'histoire du platonisme (comparativement, par exemple, au stoïcisme chez qui elle figure de manière saillante).

Il nous paraît intéressant de constater, par ailleurs, que la protreptique plotinienne dans son exécution suit plus purement celle de Platon en plusieurs points. Premièrement, le moment de l'ascension de l'échelle est toujours précédé d'un mouvement de déblocage de l'accès à celle-ci. C'est la destruction plus proprement socratique de l'opinion reçue, qui est particulièrement au premier plan des dialogues platoniciens dits « de jeunesse ». Dans le texte à l'étude, il s'agit de la conception stoïcienne de la beauté comme proportion, opinion de « presque tout le monde » (I.6.1.21) si l'on en croit Plotin. Sans ce premier acte négatif, par lequel l'élève remet en question ses acquis antérieurs, l'acte philosophique est impossible, la dialectique sombre soit dans l'éristique, soit dans un monologue sans écho. Deuxièmement, comme dans beaucoup de dialogues platoniciens, un premier sujet est amené, qui transparaît ultérieurement comme prétexte à la discussion d'un sujet autrement plus philosophique, ce qui n'empêche par ailleurs pas que le premier sujet soit discuté sérieusement pendant qu'il se trouve au centre de la discussion. Ainsi, dans l'*Ion* de Platon, la discussion de l'habileté d'un rhapsode laisse la place à un échange sur la nature de l'inspiration. La question de la beauté, dans les pages de « Sur le Beau », se voit subtilement transmutée en une méditation sur la possibilité et les moyens d'accès à l'objet ultime de l'activité philosophique, l'Un ou le Bien. Partageons à cet endroit l'absence de surprise de Gerson : « This remarkable association of the religious with the aesthetic is not of course uniquely Plotinian. But it is so to say naturally Plotinian » (Gerson, 1994, p.216). Le choix particulier de l'esthétique comme point d'entrée d'un premier traité[5] ne doit également pas nous sembler étrange. Le public de Plotin disposait d'un certain vernis culturel[6] et d'une tendance encore plus certaine à vouloir étendre celui-ci; l'esthétique est l'hameçon naturel d'une telle proie, le piège parfait pour s'assurer d'une écoute attentive avant d'opérer la conversion du thème. Finalement, cette conversion même mime la structure de l'échelle; il est donc possible de parler d'un parallélisme plus ou moins étroit entre la méthode dont Plotin recommande l'usage à ses élèves et celle qu'il utilise lui-même afin de les instruire. C'est peut-être par cette « mise à vide » rhétorique que la protreptique de Plotin se présente par-delà les siècles comme exemplaire : la coïncidence entre contenu et contenant réver-

bère jusqu'au tréfonds de l'âme du lecteur attentif.

Mélange et purification

La considération de la méthode propre à la protreptique plotinienne invoque naturellement le questionnement des modalités pratiques de réalisation par le progressant de l'αναβασιϖ. Le traitement de cette question nécessite une réflexion sur le mal, dont il est précisément question lorsque Plotin traite de la laideur au livre cinq de « Sur le Beau ». Le langage utilisé est celui de la désacralisation : la laideur provient du mélange avec l'âme de ce qui lui est étranger, la matière (I.6.5.46). Celle-ci « […] corrompt [l'âme] et la rend impure » (I.6.5.34). Les métaphores utilisées sont celles de la souillure et de la contamination : l'homme tombé dans la boue et la fange dont on ne peut plus reconnaître la beauté (I.6.5.44-5), la terre se mélangeant à l'or (I.6.5.50-54).[7] Cette conception du triste sort de l'âme se lit toujours en filigrane de la pensée platonicienne : tout comme pour Platon, selon qui l'âme ayant contemplé les Formes dans leur pureté subit un blocage épistémique avant de pouvoir se réincarner (boire l'eau de la rivière Léthé (cf. *Rep.* X, 621c)), pour Plotin, l'âme pure se voit corrompre par son inclinaison puis sa descente dans le monde sublunaire (I.1.12.20-28).

Le propre de la matière est d'offrir une résistance à la Forme, qui ainsi ne s'incarne qu'imparfaitement. Les objets du monde sensible ne sont donc jamais totalement mauvais, et c'est dans la mesure où ils participent des Formes qu'ils sont bons (ou beaux, ces expressions étant pour Plotin ultimement équivalentes (I.6.6.24)). Ainsi, ce n'est pas la participation à une forme particulière (la Beauté) qui rend les choses belles; toute participation à la Forme accroît la qualité spirituelle de la matière, car c'est sous l'égide de la Forme que la matière, informe et divisée, se configure et s'unifie (I.6.2.19-28). La beauté d'une chose est à la mesure de l'intensité de cette participation. La théorie plotinienne englobe ainsi la théorie stoïcienne de la beauté qu'elle s'affairait préalablement à nier : la proportion n'est pas beauté, mais uniquement un des symptômes de la beauté, elle signale que la chose est configurée par la forme. Or l'idéal plotinien n'est pas la proportion, mais l'unité. La proportion doit donc être comprise comme l'incarnation partielle de l'unité dans la matière. La participation, bien que récalcitrante, de la matière à la forme empêche Plotin de tomber dans le dualisme des manichéens et des gnostiques, et permet aux beautés corporelles de servir de « première marche » à l'αναβασιϖ du progressant.

C'est cette chaotique absence de forme et de repos qui amènent Plotin et une bonne partie de la tradition néo-platonicienne à utiliser l'eau comme expression analogique par excellence de la matière[8]. Le mythe de Narcisse est utilisé implicitement par Plotin en I.6.8.9ff afin d'établir une analogie en chiasme entre la Forme et son incarnation dans la matière d'un côté, et la beauté de Narcisse et son reflet dans l'eau de l'autre. Celui qui tente de saisir une réalité dans la matière est comme Narcisse tentant d'attraper son reflet et se noyant. Cette inclinaison et chute de l'âme fait écho à l'« […] homme tombé dans la boue et la fange qui ne peut plus laisser voir la beauté qui est la sienne […] » (I.6.5.44-46). Numénius[9] utilise similairement la tradition, du moins autant par désir d'appel à l'autorité que par réelle filiation conceptuelle, lorsqu'il relate que les Pythagoriciens maintenaient que toutes les âmes qui descendent dans la génération « séjournaient sur l'eau »[10]. Il cite également Héraclite (pour qui l'âme devenait humide lorsqu'en contact avec la génération et s'asséchait en s'en séparant) et Homère à ce sujet. Le *De antro nympharum*, de Porphyre[11], dans lequel on retrouve ces références à Numénius, constitue lui-même une vaste allégorie de la description qu'effectue Homère de la caverne des nymphes Naïades[12] au chant XIII (lignes 102-12) de l'Odyssée, interprétant celle-ci à la lumière des sources les plus diverses, dont le Mythe d'Er du dixième livre de la *République*.

Ceci concerne la présente enquête puisqu'à la fin du même traité, Porphyre relate l'interprétation standard de l'école de Numénius pour qui « l'Ulysse de l'Odyssée représentait pour Homère l'homme qui passe par les générations successives et ainsi reprend place parmi ceux qui vivent loin de tout remous, sans expérience de la mer. »[13] Cette interprétation est de la même famille que celle que Plotin utilise dans « Sur le Beau », invitant ainsi le progressant : « Prenons le large, comme le fit Ulysse, nous dit Homère – et il me semble nous parler par énigmes […] Notre patrie, c'est le lieu d'où nous sommes venus, et notre père est là-bas » (I.6.8.16-24). Ces passages sont empreints de symbolisme pythagorico-orphique : parler par énigmes (αἰνίττομαι) ne signifie pas dans ce contexte une simple expression obscure, mais une dont le sens ne doit être comprise que par les initiés (cf. Brisson et Pradeau, 2002, p. 91, note 78).

C'est de ce même horizon de langage qu'est tirée l'expression par excellence du trajet que les progressants doivent suivre pour parvenir à l'union avec l'Un : la purification (καθαρσιϖ). C'est par celle-ci qu'ils « […] s'élèvent vers le haut et y retournent en se dépouillant de ce qu'ils portaient […] » (I.6.7.6-8), se dirigeant vers cette « […] beauté immense qui demeure à l'intérieur des temples sacrés sans se risquer à l'extérieur pour que nul profane ne la voit. » (I.6.8.2-4) Cette purification du mal se réalise par la fuite ascétique de tout le domaine du corporel. Le seul intérêt des objets sensibles est de favoriser la progression initiale du débutant, mais ils deviennent bien vite non seulement inutiles, mais encombrants, et l'apprenti philosophe ne doit pas hésiter à s'en débarrasser, à fermer les yeux (c'est-à-dire à devenir aveugle au sensible) et ainsi à convertir son regard extérieur en une vision intérieure (I.6.8.25-9.1). C'est cette faculté dont le philosophe recherche l'éveil, elle est le prix des plus grandes peines. Plotin est clair, tout doit être abandonné[14], « […] la royauté et même tout le pouvoir sur toute la terre, la mer et le ciel […] » (I.6.7.37-39), dans l'acte rendant possible cette vision, et il paraît clair que le progressant ne peut pas, dans les mots de L. Gerson, « have it both ways » (Gerson, 1994, p.216) : se perdre dans l'autre que l'Un ou fuir vers lui et le trouver, telle est l'alternative.

Il est important de ne pas confondre l'ascétisme plotinien avec les pratiques mortificatrices qu'inspire de nos jours ce terme. Tout comme pour les stoïciens, l'important n'est pas de détruire le corps et les choses corporelles[15] mais simplement de ne pas y abîmer son attention, de ne pas passer sa vie à y dériver. C'est d'ailleurs dans les passages d'appel à la purification que le style de Plotin se rapproche le plus des exhortations que pouvait articuler un Épictète (et articulera plus tard un Marc Aurèle). On pourrait même spéculer que, pour Plotin, la mortification corporelle serait non seulement inutile, dans la mesure où c'est l'âme doit être purifiée, le corps n'ayant que peu d'importance, mais nuisible, puisque la pratique même de la mortification témoigne d'un excès d'importance attaché au corporel.[16] Porphyre, dans sa *Vita Plotini*, nous offre des renseignements de première main sur la pratique ascétique de son maître : il ne parlait jamais de sa race, de ses parents ou de son pays natal (1.2-4), refusait de se laisser peindre ou sculpter (1.5-6), ne traitait pas ses maladies, ne consommait pas de viande[17] et ne se prenait pas de bain (2.1-7), dormait et mangeait peu (8.20-22). Les données biographiques cadrent donc avec la théorie : ce qui est recommandé, c'est d'exécuter le minimum nécessaire afin de maintenir la vie; tout le reste de l'attention doit être investi dans l'activité contemplative.

L'expérience de l'Un

Le dernier chapitre, et certainement le plus sublime, du traité « Sur le Beau » est consacré à une description de l'objectif ultime de la contemplation : l'accès au Bien par le progressant s'étant purifié. Plotin parle personnellement de ces expériences avec conviction (bien que moins convaincu des capacités du langage d'en exprimer proprement les caractéristiques, comme nous l'avons remarqué en introduction), implicitement en I.6.7.2 : « Si donc quelqu'un l'a vu [le Bien], il sait ce que je veux dire en parlant de sa beauté »[18]; explicitement dans ce fameux passage : « I see a marvellous beauty and then most of all I am assured that I am part of a higher order, enacting an excellent life and becoming identical with the divine » (IV.8.1). Lorsque Porphyre déclare au livre vingt-trois de sa *Vita Plotini* que Plotin a atteint cette union quatre fois en sa présence, il parle avec autant de sûreté que peuvent laisser transparaître des pages aussi augustes. Les descriptions plotiniennes d'accès au Bien s'effectuent par analogie avec les modalités de la perception, et ce sur deux registres : celui de la vue et celui du toucher.

Plotin emprunte l'image par excellence de la contemplation du Bien à un célèbre passage de la *République* : l'œil, « […] celui qui ressemble le plus au soleil […] » (508b), par sa conversion en vision intérieure, se détourne du monde de l'obscurité et de la corruption sensible jusqu'à connaître ce que la vérité et l'être illuminent, et semble ainsi « posséder l'intellect » (508d). Peut-être encore à plus juste titre devrions-nous invoquer le *Timée*, où l'homme reçoit la vision afin qu'il puisse observer « […] the orbits of intelligence in the universe and apply them to the revolutions of our own understanding » (47c). Plotin prépare les analogies entre la vision intérieure, la lumière et le Bien depuis le début du traité : il donne déjà en I.6.1.31 la lumière du soleil comme exemple de beauté simple, en I.6.3.18-19, la lumière colorant l'obscurité de la matière est décrite comme « pouvoir formatif et forme », en I.6.5.16 la « lumière d'essence divine de l'intellect » éclaire les vertus, et en I.6.7.1-2 Plotin joue sur la distinction de sens entre le verbe ειδω (voir) et son parfait οιδα (savoir) en traitant de l'ascension vers le Bien et la perception de sa beauté. N'oublions pas également l'analogie déjà fermement établie entre blocage épistémique et aveuglement (I.6.4.6, I.6.5.36-7 et I.6.8.15).

L'objet ultime de la contemplation plotinienne, et ce malgré tous les parallèles tout juste effectués, diffère néanmoins de celui de son maître spirituel. Chez Platon, le philosophe recherche à voir les objets réels de la connaissance (les Formes) tels qu'éclairés par la lumière de cette Forme hyper-ontique qu'il appelle la Forme du Bien. Le dépassement effectué par Plotin est la recherche de l'identification du philosophe à cette lumière même, et c'est en cette mesure que nous pouvons parler de mysticisme plotinien. La possibilité de cette identité entre le contemplant et le contemplé suit la métaphore de la purification jusqu'à sa conclusion logique, et n'est sans doute pas totalement étrangère aux parallèles que trace l'interprétation du γνωθι σαυτον delphique se trouvant dans les pages du *Premier Alcibiade* : « [...] the command that we should know ourselves means that we should know our souls » (130e), en particulier la partie connaissante de l'âme. Celui qui contemplerait celle-ci, dans la mesure où elle s'apparente de manière privilégiée au divin, et où elle « grasped everything divine – vision and intelligence – [and therefore] would have the best grasp of himself as well » (133c). Élaguée de toute impureté, l'âme du philosophe ne possède plus d'obstacle à sa propre émission d'une lumière divine; plus proprement, elle n'est elle-même que lumière divine (I.6.9.17-8). L'*unio mystica* se réalise, celui qui voit devient lui-même vision (I.6.9.21-22).

À divers moments de la progression, le registre perceptuel qu'utilise Plotin passe de la vue au toucher. Par exemple, en I.6.4,15 le progressant est « mis en contact avec des réalités véritables». Par la vision intérieure, il s'étire « [...] en vue d'un contact » (VI.9.11) et au moment de l'union, il « [...] comes into contact with it [l'Un] » (V.3.17.25). Ce changement de registre n'est certes pas effectué à la légère, particulièrement à la lumière de l'importance des métaphores visuelles dans le platonisme (Rist, 1967, p. 197-198). C'est néanmoins dans le second extrait du *Premier Alcibiade* tout juste cité que l'on retrouve à l'égard du toucher un premier précédant dans la tradition (par l'utilisation du verbe « grasped »). Toutefois, la source de l'expression chez Plotin doit certainement être retracée dans le livre lambda de la *Métaphysique* d'Aristote, où celle-ci est déjà associée au langage de l'union: « [...] for [thought] becomes an object of thought in coming into contact with and thinking its objects, so that thought and object of thought are the same » (Barnes, 1985, p.1695). L'emphase

sur l'aspect tactile renforce l'importance de l'union sur la contemplation, dépassement déjà intimé dans la première partie de cet essai, ainsi que sur la tangibilité spirituelle de ce contact.

Pour conclure, revenons brièvement sur la pensée plus proprement esthétique de Plotin. Le parallèle entre purification et sculpture établi en I.6.9.14, les descriptions de l'activité de l'artisan imposant la forme contemplée en son âme sur la matière qui lui résiste (I.6.2.26), et les invectives contre ceux qui « [...] méprisent les arts parce qu'ils produisent leurs travaux en imitant la nature [...] » (V.8.I) tracent un portrait clair de la situation : Plotin ne partage pas la critique platonicienne de l'art, du moins pas celle qui s'exprime dans le fameux passage du livre X de la *République* (597b-598c). Les arts ne font pas simplement des copies du sensible, des images d'une image; ils « [...] run back to the forming principles from which nature derives » (V.8.I). Les beautés artificielles se retrouvent donc presque dans un rapport d'équivalence face aux beautés naturelles : les deux dépendent du pouvoir formateur d'une âme s'imposant sur un matériau récalcitrant. La mécanique de l'identité entre l'âme purifiée et l'Un, les deux contenant tout (παντα εισω, III.8.6.40), porte donc logiquement aux conséquences esthétiques suivantes : la nature est elle-même artificielle, puisque produit du démiurge[19], et c'est seulement dans la mesure où l'âme de celui-ci serait plus pure que celle d'un artisan particulier que l'on pourrait dire que la nature dépasserait en beauté l'œuvre de ce dernier. On reprochera peut-être à Plotin son obscurité, mais pas son incapacité à tirer les conséquences de ses principes. Peut-être cet essai aura-t-il, par contre, œuvré afin d'aider à faire comprendre l'étendue des ressources que le langage ésotérique de l'analogie peut conférer à un philosophe de la trempe de Plotin dans l'objectif d'exprimer l'inexprimable. En cette époque de communication instantanée où simplicité et rapidité de compréhension sont des critères apparemment inviolables, il nous semble crucial de s'interroger sur ce que nous pouvons sacrifier d'incompréhensible mais d'essentiel en vue de cette compréhension.

Notes:

1 La traduction utilisée est celle de Jérôme Laurent, parue au sein de Brisson, L. & Pradeau, J. (dir.), (2002), *Plotin, Traités 1-6*, Paris: GF Flammarion, p. 67-92. Le texte grec utilisé afin de contrôler la traduction et d'effectuer le repérage des lignes est celui d'Armstrong, A., (1966 (rev. 1989)), *Plotinus I*, Cambridge: Harvard UP (Loeb Classical Library), p. 232-263. Les citations des autres traités de Plotin viennent également d'Armstrong. Les citations de Platon sont toutes tirées de Cooper, J. (éd.), (1997), *Plato: Complete Works*, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Co, sauf dans le cas de la *République* où elles nous sont fournies par Leroux, G. (éd. et trad.), (2002), *Platon : La République*, Paris: Garnier-Flammarion.

[2] Notons que le langage du mélange et de l'obscurité sera traité dans la deuxième partie de cet essai, et le langage de la lumière dans la troisième.

[3] En tenant compte de toutes les nuances entourant ce mot dans un contexte néanmoins platonicien.

[4] Nous ne comprenons pas l'indignation de Laurent devant l'utilisation d' « *Autoerotik* » par Herder afin de décrire ce processus. L'expression nous semble correcte, lorsque comprise à la lumière de l'érotique platonicienne.

[5] Selon la chronologie porphyrienne.

[6] On y comptait entre autres des médecins, un critique et poète, un rhéteur et plusieurs sénateurs romains (Porphyre, *Vita Plotini* 7).

[7] L'or est par ailleurs utilisé précédemment (I.6.1.33-4) comme exemple d'une beauté simple, c'est-à-dire sans parties, et conséquemment incommensurable à la théorie stoïcienne de la beauté comme proportion.

[8] La terre représenterait le meilleur second candidat (par sa résistance à la forme, et ses connections aux métaphores de la boue et du domaine de la sculpture), et le feu l'état le plus sublimé de la matière (I.6.2.19-28).

[9] Prédécesseur de Plotin. L'influence de celui-ci sur le philosophe de Lycopolis était assez grande pour que ce dernier se fasse accuser de plagiat, ce qui poussa son disciple Amélius à rédiger un document soulignant les oppositions doctrinaires entre Numénius et son maître afin que se taise la critique (relaté par Porphyre, *Vita Plotini* 17).

[10] Fr. 30 Des Places (Test. 46 Leemans), lignes 2-3.

[11] Élève de Plotin, faut-il le rappeler.

[12] Elles-mêmes éminemment aquatiques.

[13] Fr. 33 Des Places (Test. 45 Leemans), lignes 2-5.

[14] "Enlève tout!", dit Plotin en V,3,17,39.

[15] Pour des raisons connexes, bien que différentes, dans les deux cas. Pour les stoïciens, les choses sont indifférentes au bien ou au mal, qui sont essentiellement d'ordre moral et dépendent de l'application du libre-arbitre de l'argent. Pour Plotin, le corporel n'est pas essentiellement mauvais, à la limite il est un bien dans la mesure où il participe de l'Être, même s'il pêche par manque de forme.

[16] À ce sujet, et sur les différences d'opinions entre Plotin et Proclus sur l'interprétation des formules orphiques et la pratique de la théurgie, Rist, J., (1967), *Plotinus, The Road to Reality.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, p. 188-193.

[17] Pratique pythagoricienne de longue date.

[18] Un passage parallèle se retrouve en VI.9.9.

[19] Plotin souscrit évidemment à la physique du *Timée.*

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A Defence of the Limits of Liberal Tolerance in Will Kymlicka's Autonomy Model of Liberalism

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It is tempting to argue that the whole theory of tolerance is either incoherent or obsolete, a notion that has been historically superseded by the constitutional guarantees of modern states. As Dario Castiglione and Catriona McKinnon put it: "If the individual virtue of tolerance is incoherent, the tolerant society may turn out to be either an impossibility or an abstract myth" (Castiglione & McKinnon, 2001, p. 226). Many philosophers and commentators with this view of tolerance conclude that liberal thinkers need to think "beyond tolerance" as an expedient means of peaceful coexistence, and think instead about "a deeper conception of mutual respect," or, in a phrase reminiscent of John Rawls' *Political Liberalism,* "a discourse about *accepting* the other by having recourse to one's own resources of reasonableness and recognition" (ibid., p. 230).

Injunctions to go "beyond tolerance," however, have been made too quickly and dismissively. They seem to be a retreat from the problem of tolerance rather than a real solution. While pointing to the commendable goal of moving beyond tolerance and toward mutual acceptance, these injunctions fail to deal with all too frequent cases in which fundamental differences in values are not able to be resolved according to shared principles. Debates about tolerance are, in many respects, about the fundamental value and meaning of liberalisms since liberalism is characterized by the attempt to allow for the peaceful coexistence of different ways of life. Will Kymlicka is one thinker who has attempted to come to grips with the problems inherent in liberal tolerance. He argues that tolerance follows from liberalism's emphasis on the value of autonomy, and he tries to give an account of how a liberal state should deal with intolerant minorities in its midst. In this paper, I defend Kymlicka's autonomy model of liberalism against his most scathing contemporary critics, Rawls and Kukathas. First, I shall discuss Kymlicka's autonomy model of liberalism and the limits of liberal tolerance in comparison with Rawls's conception of liberalism. Second, I critically examine Kukathas's challenge to Kymlicka.

In Chapter 8 of *Multicultural Citizenship,* Canadian political theorist Will Kymlicka defines the limits of liberal tolerance and discusses a number of factors that should determine the proper remedy to violations of those limits. Kymlicka presupposes a "we," the state, the majority nation, that is tolerating "their" (the minority group's) way of life. That is, tolerance implies that there is an accepted view that tolerates less accepted views. In the relation of the liberal state to national minority groups, Kymlicka identifies two limits of liberal tolerance. First, liberal justice has difficulty accommodating special rights that protect internal restrictions – "that is, the demand by a minority culture to restrict the basic civil or political liberties of its own members" (Kymlicka, 1995, p. 152).[1] An example of this type of violation is the deprivation of freedom of religion for Pueblo Indians. The Pueblo Indians discriminate against their own members who have abandoned the traditional religion and against women who have married outside of the tribe. Liberalism would want *prima facie* to prevent this kind of discrimination against individuals. Second, liberal justice cannot accept external protections "which enable one group to oppress or exploit other groups, as in apartheid" (MC 152). In short, liberal tolerance aims to establish both tolerance of dissent within groups and tolerance between groups. However, these two goals cannot always be realized concurrently. In the case of the Pueblo Indians, we cannot ensure tolerance of individuals within the group unless we are intolerant of the group itself.

Kymlicka bases the limits of liberal tolerance on the principle of autonomy because "liberalism is committed to (perhaps even defined by) the view that individuals should have the freedom and capacity to question and possibly revise the traditional practices of their community" (MC 152). Autonomy means the actual power, or, at least, the capacity of the individual to question and dissent from some community practices, and either to revise those practices or to leave the community altogether.[2]

The problem with the value of autonomy is that while Kymlicka and other liberals give it a high priority vis-à-vis other values, people who are members of groups that do not embrace liberalism assign autonomy a comparatively low priority or out-and-out "do not value personal autonomy" and want to "restrict the ability of their members to question and dissent from traditional practices" (MC 154). The value of autonomy, then, serves as a practical reason for tolerating a diversity of societal cultures, but it also seems to require intolerance toward groups that restrict the autonomy of their members.

Kymlicka defends the right of national minorities to maintain themselves provided that they are governed by liberal principles. In principle and in practice, a way of life is permissible if it is free from all injustice; that is, free from individual rights violations, racism, sexism and other *prima facie* evil forms of discrimination. Kymlicka also talks about cases of tolerance involving immigrant groups. However, Kymlicka focuses on national minority groups when considering the tolerance of illiberalism within a liberal state. He argues that cases involving immigrant groups "are very different" and less problematic than national minority groups, because "it is more legitimate to compel respect for liberal principles … [and] insist that immigration entails accepting the legitimacy of state enforcement of liberal principles" (MC 170). Others might differ, but I think if one accepts the moral weight Kymlicka ascribes to history, as we shall see, then one is likely to accept his view of immigration.

Kymlicka also defends the right of illiberal national minority groups to maintain themselves, provided that they find an acceptable *modus vivendi* with the majority nation. A *modus vivendi* is an arrangement made between the national minority group and the majority nation by which each can live their differing lifestyles side by side. The two groups might not agree on values and might dislike the other group's way of life, but they nevertheless find a way to coexist. By definition, national minority groups that oppress or exploit other groups will never find an acceptable *modus vivendi* unless they significantly change their ways. Liberal justice demands repression of such groups. But Kymlicka insists that this principle can accommodate national minority groups that restrict the autonomy of only their own members. The Pueblo are a good example of a tolerable group that "violates the rights of its members by limiting freedom of conscience and by employing sexually discriminatory membership rules" (MC 165).

It is important to emphasize that, in *principle,* Kymlicka is openly contemptuous of the injustice of restrictions on autonomy, but groups are still free to do so because he tolerates, in *practice,* some internal restrictions as a substitute to *forcing* illiberal groups to change their ways. In addition, Kymlicka would ideally like more than a *modus vivendi* between groups, and he therefore emphasizes the need for an ongoing search for agreement about fundamental principles. Failing that, however – and here is where we get to the limit of liberal toleration – "they [two national groups] will have to rely on some other basis of accommodation, such as a *modus vivendi*" (MC 168). Kymlicka demands less of his "principles," which is why they resemble less a comprehensive theory of liberalism than a pragmatic justification of existing liberal arrangements.

The larger point in *Multicultural Citizenship* is that contemporary liberals should act toward national minorities they do not like in the same way they act toward disagreeable foreign countries. Liberals are "reluctant" to justify intervention abroad except in cases where the injustice shocks the conscience of the nation, as in "the case of gross and systematic violation of human rights, such as slavery or genocide or mass torture and expulsions." Kymlicka argues that liberals should be equally reluctant to justify the imposition of liberal values on illiberal national minorities except in cases of unconscionable and gross injustice (MC 167, 169).[3]

It is ultimately the weight of history that gives illiberal national minority groups "a stronger claim to maintain internal restrictions than newly arriving immigrants" (MC 170). Indigenous groups, like the Pueblo, and long-standing ethnic and religious

sects, like the Amish, have already found a *modus vivendi* with the majority nation. At some time in the past, these groups were allowed to maintain certain internal restrictions and have survived largely because of these restrictions. These groups were granted special rights in the form of exemptions from certain government regulations and judicial review. This historical *modus vivendi* should be honoured in the same way that nations should honour the obligations of international treaties. Though Kymlicka does not make this particular analogy to the international context, it is clearly implied.

In summary, the answer to the question "How should liberals respond to illiberal cultures?" is that they should tolerate them unless forceful intervention is *clearly* warranted by egregious harm-doing. Above all, liberals should eschew illiberal practices, especially the coercive use of force. A *modus vivendi* is a good way to achieve a practical accommodation of illiberal groups. While the limits of liberal tolerance as determined by the principle of autonomy are fairly narrow, these limits are partially overruled by the practical considerations involved in dealing with entrenched illiberal groups.

Some critics, most notably John Rawls, say that grounding tolerance in the idea of *modus vivendi* is not stable over the long-term, since it is based on nothing more than "happenstance and a balance of relative forces," or a temporary agreement that can be abrogated whenever the consenting parties find it advantageous (Rawls, 1993, p. 147-148). The bottom-line of the *modus vivendi* principle for Rawls is that "social unity is only apparent, as its stability is contingent on circumstances remaining such as not to upset the fortunate convergence of interests" (ibid.). Instead, Rawls argues, we need a stable form of association that is not likely to be jettisoned for the sake of expediency. An "overlapping consensus" principle of tolerance, he argues, offers a political conception of justice that groups would support on their own religious, philosophical or moral grounds "for its own sake, or on its own merits" – diverse conceptions of the good notwithstanding (ibid.).

Tolerance as a *modus vivendi* does not rely on an agreed-upon "political conception" of justice, as in Rawls's political liberalism. A *modus vivendi* is socially stable according to Kymlicka's model, which does not go beyond tolerance by attempting to nail down, as Rawls does, an abstract "reasonable political conception of right and justice affirmed by an overlapping consensus of comprehensive doctrines" (Rawls, 1999, p. 6). Kymlicka argues that it is not obvious that all people would accept Rawls's political conception of justice, especially if they are not committed to liberalism in their private life. For example, if groups accept the value of autonomy of groups for political purposes, then this arguably "enables its [autonomy's] exercise in private life, an implication that will only be favoured by those who endorse autonomy as a general value" (MC 162). Moreover, it is not only unclear whether Rawls's political liberalism could establish tolerance between groups, it more damningly fails to ensure non-persecution and tolerance of dissent within groups since its sole demand is that groups assume the character and creed of liberalism in *public* life.

For Kymlicka, it follows that tolerance and *modus vivendi* go together more naturally than tolerance and overlapping consensus on a liberal notion of public reason. The best way to traverse the tension within liberalism between not wanting to impose a particular conception of the good, on the one hand, and wanting to accept all citizens, on the other, is by way of a *modus vivendi*. A *modus vivendi* does not exclude any groups *a priori*, but instead offers reasons not to repress what Rawls calls "unreasonable doctrines [that] are a threat to democratic institutions" (ibid., p. 179). The reason to think that this is an ideal theory, rather than a temporary social measure taken in response to irreconcilable differences, is that diverse conceptions of the good cannot be reconciled otherwise. Kymlicka is fundamentally at odds with Rawls, who thinks that diverse groups can be brought to accept a liberal view of the public sphere without threatening their illiberal conception of the good in the private sphere. Hence, Kymlicka builds into his view a *modus vivendi* precisely because he thinks that diverse conceptions of the good cannot be reconciled otherwise.

A *modus vivendi* is a temporary or contingent accommodation (not acceptance) because it is not an agreement on fundamental principles, but a coming together of interests. It is contingent because there is nothing to compel groups to come together apart from their interests. If working together ceases to be in one of the parties' interest (i.e., the balance of power changes in favour of the illiberal group), then there is no longer a coincidence of interests and the agreement will be broken. Rawls would argue that this does not provide room for "public reason" – a set of shared ideas that we can use to resolve our disputes according to just principles. In response, Kymlicka could argue that unlike Rawls's public reason, a *modus vivendi* does not mask the *realpolitik* behind tolerance, which makes tolerance inherently unstable and contingent. Further, a *modus vivendi* is more practical – because by allowing groups to coexist it creates room for "public reason" to debate which political conception of justice or moral regulative idea can be shared in the first place. That is, in order for agreement on fundamental principles to be possible, a *modus vivendi* is necessary to start with.

Many objections can be levelled against Kymlicka's model of tolerance through *modus vivendi*. For starters, though the argument is sophisticated, it is ethereal, hovering above messy history. Kymlicka never gets around to telling us which cultures should die, if any, in rubbish heaps and the cellars of the British Museum; or he only hints at what he has in mind with statements such as: "a liberal defence of minority rights 'does not create a mandate for vast change. It merely ratifies and explains changes that have taken place in the absence of theory' " (MC 127). The lack of details are not simply accidental omissions, because *Multicultural Citizenship* is not a handbook on intercultural conflict resolution. One can criticize Kymlicka for keeping his distance by constraining the conversation to neat and tidy categories of groups.[4] From afar, he can pick out illiberal national minority groups in North America, but he is

unable to specifically describe their dynamism and liberal potential. He indicates where points of dissent and sources of liberal potential might be, but not where they are. These objections notwithstanding, I want to focus the remainder of my discussion on one particular critique of Kymlicka's work: the view held by Australian theorist Chandran Kukathas that tolerance (and not autonomy) is the core of liberalism. Kukathas has recently (1997) taken issue with Kymlicka's approach to liberal tolerance, arguing that his theory is not tolerant enough.

Kukathas argues for a qualitatively different conception of liberalism rooted in the ideal of tolerance. Strictly speaking, it is not an argument against Kymlicka, but an alternative ideal against which we can compare Kymlicka's ideal of autonomy. Instead of assuming in advance, as Kymlicka does, that there is "a 'we' who are faced with the problem of determining how far to tolerate particular groups in 'our' midst," Kukathas argues that the problem should be approached without the authority of the state (Kukathas, 1997, p. 71).[5] Why could this be preferable? Well, in the first place, Kukathas agrees with Kant that, in the words of Glen Newey, "to tolerate is to exercise power … in circumstances where power should be absent" (Newey, 2001, p. 324-325). In the second place, Kymlicka's approach makes certain assumptions about how the state ought to use its power. Kukathas, in contrast, wants to question the nature of the state itself, so he must question these assumptions.

Specifically, Kymlicka assumes in advance a liberal social order committed to the value of autonomy. As Kukathas puts it, "a common standpoint of morality which is established" in the state (CT 78). The problem with this approach is that complete tolerance "is not possible" because the predominant concern for the preservation of the majority social order means that minority cultures inevitably "will be restructured to be brought into accord with majority practice" (CT 78). Indeed, under Kymlicka's model, this is the fundamental limit of liberal tolerance, a limit which liberalism can never overstep without being guilty of neglecting its own task. In other words, where there is an existing structure of institutionalized liberal power, tolerance, when pressed to its limits, will always reveal its allegiances to the status quo.

The liberal state interacts with illiberal groups vis-à-vis the established principles of liberal justice embodied in state institutions and procedures. Tolerance is accorded insofar as individuals and groups obey the established rules and procedures of liberal justice. Kymlicka's tolerance, then, can be summarized by the injunction: "Be liberal enough and you will be tolerated!" A stronger approach to tolerance, Kukathas argues, is to give tolerance "independent weight" by valuing it in itself. To value tolerance in itself means that it is "not subordinate … to some other value" like the value of autonomy (CT 78). Kukathas offers a conception of liberalism that has as its core the value of tolerance, which precludes viewing "liberalism as a comprehensive ideal regulating group life" (CT 98). By doing away with the role of the liberal state and its institutions, Kukathas hopes to do away with a locus of power to which tolerance can pledge allegiance.

Tolerance should be valued in itself because "it is the condition which gives [reasoned] judgments worth" (CT 79). According to Kant:

> Reason depends on this freedom [of criticism] for its very existence. For reason has no dictatorial authority; its verdict is always simply the agreement of free citizens, of whom each one must be permitted to express, without let or hindrance, his objections or even his veto. (Kant, *Critique of Pure Reason,* A738-739/B766-767, as quoted in CT 80)

From these words, Kukathas concludes that if we think that standards of reason and truth can and should be challenged, then we must defend tolerance because it is, in the words of Onora O'Neill, the "precondition for the emergence of any reasoning mode of life" (O'Neill, 1989, 38-39).[6] The development of reason and tolerance are bound together, root and branch. We should justify tolerance in itself, then, because it is necessary to publicly reason about the nature of the good life.

To value tolerance in itself is essentially to argue for a "public" realm structured so that tolerance is the foundation and *sine qua non.* In effect, there would be no question of toleration because all ways of life would be accepted equally. In short, the social differences that exist only exist because they harmonize with each other, and therefore tolerance would never be necessary. Kukathas conceives of such a "public" realm as "an area of convergence of different moral practices … [a] kind of settlement reflecting the need of people of different ways to develop some common standards by which to regulate their interaction" (CT 84). This settlement is not a *modus vivendi,* he insists, because the agreements reached are not compromises, but "accepted as more basic norms governing social relations" (CT 84). "The product over time," Kukathas asserts, will acquire "the character of a public space without a sovereign power" (CT 84). This means that in order to enter the public realm, groups must "strike a balance between retaining their own practices and moral ideals and compromising them" (CT 85). This conception is inherently unstable because the "points of convergence" will shift and thus undermine social unity. Kukathas thinks that instability is merely a price we must pay to achieve greater tolerance, and not, as Michael Walzer argues, a view of negotiated settlement that mistakes reality and the process by which it can be changed (CT 86).

In his article "Response to Kukathas," Walzer describes this regime of tolerance in these words:

> No sovereign One tolerates the Others; they all tolerate one another. … The different communities coexist, constantly negotiating and renegotiating the terms of their coexistence. These negotiations produce not one but a series of practical moral convergences, a series of 'settlements,' each of which, in its time, determines everyday practices in this or that area of social life. … Kukathas's ideal is a domestic society all of whose constituent groups have exactly equal standing in a very special sense, which no theory of equality has yet described: it is as if they had all arrived on the ground, in the country, simultaneously, and then participated actively and equally in the negotiated settlement of common rules and social practices. Or … it is as if every negotiated settlement is purely provisional, subject to immediate renegotiation whenever a new group arrives. *But the second 'as if' is no more plausible than the first, and the whole picture mistakes what it means to 'settle' on a set of rules and practices.* (Walzer, 1997b, p. 105-108, my emphasis)

If Walzer is right, then Kukathas's model is utopian in the literal sense that the society he envisages has no *topos,* no geographical or historical place on earth. Kukathas assumes that the result of the convergence process will be a common moral standpoint. However, he does not recognize the implication, that the common moral standpoint will become a *tradition,* something "transmitted in the lullabies that mothers sing, the prayers they whisper, the clothing they make, the food they cook, and the domestic rites and customs that they teach" (Walzer, 1997a, p.65). The participants will want to pass on *their* way of doing things. This is a good, and in any case a necessary, development for society. The transmission of beliefs and patterns of behaviour over generations allows us to act rationally and make intelligent judgments about how to lead our lives.[7]

Kukathas exaggerates the fluidity of the settlement process. In reality, the participants will literally *settle* on norms. Hence, "the question that Kukathas wants to exclude is necessarily posed (one might say it poses itself): Should *we* tolerate *them*?" (Walzer, 1997b, p. 108). This question is forced on the existing society whenever a new group seeks entrance into the settlement. "The domestic society that Kukathas wants us all to live in would, therefore," Walzer concludes, "have to be inhabited by beings of some other sort" than ourselves (ibid., p. 110-111).

The difference between the autonomy and the tolerance models of liberalism is not as great as one might think. The idea of a social community comprising a plurality of moralities where power is decentralized and conversion takes place by public reason rather than by the sword is not entirely different from Kymlicka's conception of the liberal-democratic state. The difference is that where Kymlicka identifies the limits and appropriate state response to illiberal national minority groups, Kukathas identifies the limits and appropriate community response to "intolerable" groups. Kymlicka is concerned with real societal cultures as they actually exist, and Kukathas is concerned with defining an ideal type or, as Walzer sees it, a utopian type of pluralistic commonwealth.

The difference in approach is explained by the different beliefs that Kymlicka and

Kukathas hold about the nature of the state. *Multicultural Citizenship* is in many respects a defence of the authority of the modern administrative state to enforce liberal norms. Kymlicka argues that the state can and should take positive actions to safeguard equality between and freedom within societal cultures. Kukathas, on the other hand, is primarily worried about the potential abuse of state power. To be sure, this is his foremost objection to Kymlicka's approach: "Kymlicka has suggested that the state must have the authority to enforce liberal norms. … If we are talking about the liberal state … it is not for the state to determine what values its members must accept" (CT 95).

It is hard to take this objection seriously considering Walzer's point about the implications of a "settlement" and the fact that Kymlicka's model of liberal society only excludes such oppressive and exploitative practices as slavery, robbery, rape and murder – in a word, criminality. These practices would probably also be excluded from Kukathas's tolerance model. If anything, Kukathas's community draws a sharper line between the tolerable and intolerable, forcing nearly all fanatical, crazy, and irrational people to withdraw from the wider moral community. By foreclosing the option of a *modus vivendi* between groups, Kukathas is advocating a stronger and, therefore, much more difficult standard to meet in order to gain and maintain a place within the wider moral community.[8] Kymlicka's model seems to be more open to alternative, or just plain odd, experiments in living so long as a means of practical coexistence is found.

To shift to a more philosophical criticism, Kukathas's appeal to Kant to justify the intrinsic value of tolerance does disservice to his proposed model. The claim that "tolerance is the condition of rational inquiry" is agreeable enough, but I think that Kukathas has not thought through the implications of this truism. H.S. Reiss notes in Kant's *Political Writings* that "discussion before the court of reason entails publicity. It must be freely and equally open to all. This implies toleration" (Reiss, 2001, p. 253). Kukathas says that if we take Kant seriously, then "toleration becomes something we should value independently" (CT 80). This does not follow from Kant's claims about tolerance and public reason because to value tolerance in itself is not to value it as the condition of reason. It is actually reason that Kant values in itself, and tolerance is valued only because of the vital role it plays in establishing rationality in society. Kukathas has not explained what valuing tolerance in itself means, nor given us any reason to think that we should so value it. Further, the idea of freedom of speech, as we understand it, is to express our views in order to persuade others to share our viewpoint. This not only presupposes tolerance as the condition for the possibility of dialogue, but it also presupposes that I am capable of making my own judgments. It presupposes, therefore, personal autonomy. In the words of Guy Haarscher: "Freedom of conscience is necessarily personal, 'individualist'; matters of conscience should not be imposed on anyone through external constraint. Freedom of conscience presupposes moral autonomy" (Haarscher, 1992, p. 238). If my freedom of conscience is restricted, then I am not an equal partner in rational conversation. What I am suggesting is that a degree of individual autonomy is integral to public reason, yet Kukathas's model promotes the value of tolerance on this very ground while failing to promote the value of autonomy at all.

If we interpret Kukathas as saying that Kant's point is that the very operation of reason would compel us to accept the moral law (universalizeable maxims) as the prevailing moral norm, then it seems that Kukathas cannot claim that "in a liberal settlement among groups with different ways of life, the illiberal groups that are tolerated are illiberal precisely because they are intolerant" (CT 99). In practice, that is, it seems that the first moral norm that the community would agree upon to regulate their rational interaction would be the principle of tolerance, for that is the condition of public reason. The use of reason surely could not validate intolerance, for that would undermine reason itself, since tolerance (and also, perhaps, autonomy) is what gives reason its authority.

While Kukathas would reply that the "underlying characteristic is toleration" (CT 85), my criticism amounts, in the final analysis, to the argument that it is not obvious that the actual participants in the formation of the social order would accept groups that do not value tolerance. If anything, I think, the participants would settle on principles of justice that would be very similar to Kymlicka's model. Indeed, in his discussion of the Pueblo, Kukathas is pressed to come close to admitting that they would probably have to either withdraw from the moral community or change their values, that is, tolerate Christian dissenters in their midst and give their members, and even give women, freedom "to seek out alternative ideas and ways" (CT 91). To be sure, the kind of reasons that Kukathas seems to say will be recognized – abstract, universal, and trans-historical – are "precisely what the members of many so-called illiberal cultures reject. The application of 'reason' in an effort to persuade is not the opposite of imposition [of liberalism] but a version of it" (Fish, 1999, p. 316). Therefore, in practice, Kukathas's tolerant society functions at best in the same way as Kymlicka's liberal state.

If Kukathas's theory turns out to be different than Kymlicka's, then it is different because the limits of tolerance are narrower, excluding all "irrational" and "intolerable" groups who, like the Pueblo, do not accept the prevailing moral norm. This narrow limit to tolerance arises because the common moral standpoint that is developed in Kukathas's scheme would be "much thicker than that of international society" (Walzer, 1997b, p. 108). All this has been said, regrettably, by assuming two things about the tolerance model that have yet to be proven. Namely that tolerance would (a) lead to the convergence of moral ways of life and produce a common standard of interaction, and (b) that this common standard would be fundamentally liberal. Moreover, it is impossible to name the groups that would be excluded from coexisting in such a model, since the content of the moral norm that regulates interaction exists as empty formalism until it is filled with moral content in the vicissitudes of the "settlement" process. This makes it difficult to evaluate Kukathas's model fully, but also should give us pause over the workability of such a model.

In conclusion, Kymlicka gives us a pragmatic defence of tolerance that is realistic about the ability of liberal principles to accommodate less-than-liberal groups in a multicultural or multinational state. The reason Kymlicka's conception of liberal tolerance is prudent is that he sees and understands the bigger picture. "In the end," he writes, "liberal institutions can only really work if liberal beliefs have been internalized by the members of the self-governing society, be it an independent country or a national minority" (MC 167). Liberalism cannot prescribe that which it invalidates; it cannot honestly impose an autonomous way of life on others by force. In other words, a tolerant, liberal society cannot be maintained by intolerant, illiberal means. Liberal tolerance is a rejection of coercion in favor of argument and persuasion, which is itself a type of compromise or *modus vivendi.* Given the multicultural reality of modern life, we should agree with Bernard Williams that "the practice of toleration has to be sustained not so much by a pure principle resting on a value of autonomy as by a wider and more mixed range of resources" (Williams, 1996, p. 26-27). People can change their minds about fundamental values, although they might not do so as fast as we might like. But no such change is possible until a *modus vivendi* can be found that allows people with conflicting values to coexist. I cling to tolerance, however, because tolerance protects the autonomy of people like me from the tyranny of well-meaning people like … well, I will leave you to supply your own examples.

Notes:

1 All subsequent citations to this work will be to this edition and will be given in parenthesis as follows: (MC 152).

2 The idea that someone can distance herself from the otherwise close and constitutive traditions and conventions that give meaning to her life is very controversial and rife with theoretical problems. Susan Mendus puts the problem succinctly as one of "elucidating the relationship between the autonomous individual and the surrounding world which generates his autonomy" (Mendus, 1986-87, p.115).

3 It is not impossible that an illiberal group could cause minimal or no damage to the liberal social order while pursuing extremely harmful policies toward its own deviant, recusant members. So there is a question about Kymlicka's selective application of the harm principle. I think Kymlicka is implicitly assuming that the forms of oppression in question are not all that bad for the persons who suffer them – what they don't know won't hurt them – but (a) some practices are that harmful, and (b) where autonomy is restricted, it is not obvious that those who are restricted are the best judges of how badly they are suffering.

4 On Kymlicka's problematic categorization of groups, see Yael Tamir, 1998, p. 79.

5 Subsequent citations to this work will be to this edition and will be given in parenthesis as follows: (CT 71).

6 As quoted by Kukathas (CT 80).

7 See Arendt, 1961, p. 3-15.

8 Adeno Addis makes the same point in these words: "Thus, Kukathas's seemingly generous toleration of cultural and ethnic minorities actually comes with a heavy price. Toleration comes in abundance only after the tolerated group has been redescribed so as to rob it both of its significance and the nature of its complaints" (Addis, 1997, p. 125).

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Le contrat social de Rousseau : utopie ou ébauche du totalitarisme?

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Nous proposons ici une lecture du Contrat social *qui fasse ressortir les éléments totalitaires des thèses de Rousseau, afin de se demander si elles plaident en faveur du totalitarisme moderne.*

1. Définition de totalitarisme

Il convient d'abord de spécifier ce que nous entendons par « totalitarisme moderne ». L'encyclopédie *Routledge* de la philosophie le définit comme une « distinctively modern type of dictatorship of which nazism and stalinism are the most prominent examples (…) An essential aspect of totalitarian rule is ideological domination, guided by an official ideology aimed at radical transformation » (Craig, 1998, p. 443). La structure de ce régime vise à « mould the thoughts of [its] subjects into conformity with official ideology » (Craig, 1998, p. 443).

2. Certains éléments de la pensée de Rousseau qui étayent la thèse proposée dans la question

Liberté civile

L'homme perd, par le contrat social « sa liberté naturelle et un droit illimité à tout ce qui le tente et qu'il peut atteindre » (Rousseau, 2001, p. 61). Nous voulons souligner de la « liberté civile » (pour une définition rousseauiste, voir p. 60-1) qu'elle est limitée par la *volonté générale.*[1]

Le contrat social exige l'abdication des intérêts de l'individu pour ceux de la société, de la liberté naturelle pour la liberté civile, la soumission de l'individu à l'intérêt collectif. Chaque membre est la « partie indivisible d'un tout ». Le bien commun

supplante tous les autres.

Cette pensée, généralement, sied bien au totalitarisme. Mais dans l'esprit de Rousseau, ce bien commun, cette volonté générale est *idéalement* identique au bien du citoyen et à sa volonté.

Crainte des factions

Un peu comme chez Hobbes, on constate chez Rousseau une sorte de peur, d'anxiété face au pluralisme, source de danger principale face à la démocratie. Rousseau craint que des factions ne se forment. Ce sont des groupes, des « blocs de votes » homogènes, qui suivent des intérêts différents; les individus composant ces factions suivent l'intérêt de leur groupe, au lieu de donner *leur* opinion. Or, tous ces petits groupes cherchant leurs intérêts représentent la continuation de ce que Rousseau déplore : une société où tous cherchent leurs intérêts.

Ainsi, le peuple qui s'assemble pour voter doit voter individuellement, et il ne doit pas trop délibérer : des factions pourraient se former.

D'une part, l'idée que les citoyens ne peuvent discuter entre eux, échanger, critiquer, renvoie à l'idée du totalitarisme, qui ne prône pas une société ouverte, c'est-à-dire « in which critical thinking, freedom and progress can flourish » (Craig, 1998, p. 443).

D'autre part, ces factions – qu'on se les figure dans notre propre société – sont l'expression du pluralisme[2]. Être contre le pluralisme est certes un trait du totalitarisme, tel que défini précédemment.

Unité et indivisibilité de l'autorité politique

Ensuite, la souveraineté, selon Rousseau, est une et indivisible. Il craint la séparation des pouvoirs. La dispersion du pouvoir entraîne le risque de factions. De plus, comme chez Hobbes, il n'y a qu'une seule source légitime du pouvoir et des lois, une seule autorité politique. Selon Rousseau, la stabilité politique dépend de ce que seules les autorités politiques dûment instituées soient perçues par les citoyens comme sources valides de pouvoir.

Or, le totalitarisme est caractérisé par une domination idéologique, mais aussi par l'exercice du pouvoir par une seule partie (Craig, 1998, p. 443).

« Rousseau nationaliste »

Le « Rousseau nationaliste » ou « romantique » :

– dans ses projets de constitution, insiste sur la création d'une identité nationale distincte (langues, folklore, habits);

– trouve dans une « religion civile » la source d'un lien affectif, de nature familial, quasi-mystique, qui unit les citoyens[3];

– critique la religion chrétienne, entre autre pour la raison donnée précédemment, à savoir qu'il ne peut y avoir d'autres sources d'autorité (telles que les lois divines) que les « lois de la Cité »;

– en résumé, divinise le lien social, et le souverain lui-même (au moins dans le sens où l'on doit lui obéir avant Dieu); veut faire de la République une entité politique, religieuse et morale (à l'instar des Cités antiques).

Tous ces éléments évoquent la procédure qu'emploierait un régime totalitaire, voulant essentiellement imposer une domination idéologique, et « mouler » les pensées des citoyens conformément à l'idéologie officielle.

La volonté générale?

La volonté générale est souveraineté. Mais que survient-il si elle n'est pas exactement ce que Rousseau prévoit idéalement (comme nous l'expliquerons ci-après) qu'elle soit?

Le peuple

Si le peuple n'est pas ce peuple vertueux qu'espère Rousseau, on ne peut plus dire que forcer l'individu à obéir à la volonté générale, c'est le « forcer à être libre ». On imagine aisément un peuple exerçant sa volonté (non vertueuse, ne cherchant pas le bien commun) comme un despote. C'est la « dictature du peuple ». Une démocratie, au sens classique du terme, peut causer de grands torts aux minorités. Pourquoi deviendrait-elle un jour une démocratie de citoyens vertueux voulant l'intérêt commun?

« L'optimisme » de Rousseau (par ailleurs pessimiste sur d'autres aspects de ses thèses, comme nous le verrons) n'est pas gratuit. Il s'appuie sur sa conception de l'homme, corrompu par la société, malléable, et pouvant être modelé en un citoyen vertueux, placé sous des institutions incitant à la vertu civique et sous la « tutelle » d'un Législateur (évidemment, on peut douter de cette conception elle-même).

Le législateur

Figure importante du traité de Rousseau, le Législateur (Rousseau, 2001, p. 79-83) est un personnage anti-démocratique. Que faire s'il n'est pas aussi parfait que le voudrait Rousseau? Après tout, la description de Rousseau du Législateur, dans laquelle il énoncera « [qu'il] faudrait des Dieux pour donner des lois aux hommes » (Rousseau, 2001, p. 79) place la barre haute; on peut en fait y voir un appel à « l'homme providentiel » (Bernardi, 2001, note 94). Si ce Législateur ne perçoit pas le

bien commun (ce bien commun qui, rappelons-le, ne pouvait pré-exister au peuple), ne se rapproche-t-il pas de la figure d'un tyran totalitaire, qui dit connaître le bien « relativement »[4] commun?

Le législateur est d'ailleurs dans une position assez enviable pour établir son autorité : lui seul connaît la volonté générale. N'est-il pas légitime d'entrevoir l'ombre du totalitarisme, sous l'autorité d'un législateur imposant une religion civile à laquelle éventuellement, *si* effectivement l'homme est à ce point malléable, on adhérera librement?

Rousseau pourrait répondre à cela que, premièrement, le Législateur est nécessaire parce qu'il voit le bien commun clairement, alors que les citoyens encore non-mûrs pour la démocratie ne le voient pas[5], et parce qu'il formera les moeurs de ces derniers pour qu'ils apprennent à le voir. Deuxièmement, Rousseau établit des sauvegardes pour ne pas que le Législateur devienne un tyran (son rôle est transitoire; l'assemblée doit demeurer l'unique source de législation).

3. Réponses que l'on peut formuler, selon la pensée de Rousseau, contre la thèse proposée par la question

La crainte des factions est justifiée puisque, pour être véritablement libre, le citoyen doit obéir à sa propre volonté. Or, s'il soumet sa volonté à l'intérêt collectif de la faction, ou coalition à laquelle il adhère, il n'exprime plus sa volonté propre. En conséquence, la volonté générale ne pourra être obtenue à l'issue d'un vote; en effet, le vote doit être individuel, informé et exprimant l'opinion du citoyen (et pas de sa faction) sur le bien commun pour que la volonté générale en soit le résultat.

Cette crainte de la « factionnalisation » de la volonté générale justifie qu'il n'y ait qu'une seule autorité politique. Par exemple, même le Dieu des chrétiens ne peut entrer en compétition avec la Cité puisqu'il créerait une faction poursuivant les biens que prescrit cette source divine plutôt que l'intérêt commun.

Quant aux arguments « nationalistes » de Rousseau que nous avons évoqués, ils se justifient par le but de défendre la souveraineté d'une république et d'affirmer, de raffermir le lien « affectif » qui solidifie le corps politique, tout en augmentant la vertu civile, l'amour de ses concitoyens.

Ce processus rendra les moeurs des citoyens plus vertueuses; et même s'il ressemble à une procédure totalitaire, son résultat n'est pas le totalitarisme. Le résultat sera des citoyens plus libres qui n'obéissent qu'à leur propre volonté. Par le nationalisme (religion civile, etc), ils ne comprennent, n'intériorisent et n'atteignent que mieux cet idéal.

La réponse principale semble donc être que cette volonté vertueuse imposée au citoyen, par les institutions et le Législateur, et grâce à la malléabilité de l'être humain, deviendra *celle du citoyen*, après une « transmutation » de la nature humaine. Cet élément de la pensée de Rousseau est central, mais ambigu, et il vaut la peine qu'on s'y attarde un peu. En effet, on peut voir une contradiction dans la pensée de Rousseau qui admet tout de même que « chaque individu peut comme homme avoir une volonté particulière contraire ou dissemblable à la volonté générale qu'il a comme Citoyen » (Rousseau, 2001, p. 59). La transformation « apparaît donc comme ne pouvant jamais être parfaite » (Bernardi, 2001, note 53).

Le résultat est qu'il est possible qu'un individu désire exécuter d'abord sa volonté particulière, auquel cas, s'il refuse d'obéir à la volonté générale, il « y sera contraint par tout le corps : ce qui ne signifie autre chose sinon qu'on le forcera à être libre [au sens de « liberté civile », tel que l'entend Rousseau] » (Rousseau, 2001, p. 60), et ce tout en admettant que les individus peuvent avoir des intérêts particuliers, une volonté particulière.

Le problème est le suivant : dès lors que l'on conçoit une volonté particulière, il est difficile de ne pas voir une aliénation de la liberté individuelle si on exige de l'individu qu'il fasse passer la volonté générale avant la sienne, d'où le parallèle avec le totalitarisme[6].

À cette réplique s'oppose une autre réplique. Bernardi écrit que « à aucun moment il n'a été question pour Rousseau de faire taire l'intérêt particulier : il parlera toujours, pour autant que toujours un homme devra veiller à sa propre conservation. C'est bien plutôt à faire parler à l'unisson l'intérêt particulier et l'intérêt général, la voix de l'homme et celle du citoyen que doit s'employer l'art politique » (Bernardi, 2001, note 53). Ne l'oublions pas : l'individualisme est le point de départ du contrat social. Nous étudions, dans la dernière section, cette tension entre volonté particulière et volonté générale puisque nous pensons qu'elle est déterminante dans la qualification des thèses de Rousseau comme anticipant le totalitarisme.

4. La volonté générale sauve-t-elle les thèses de Rousseau de servir le totalitarisme?

Nous croyons que ce qui ressort des éléments de réponse que nous avons présentés est que certains éléments de la pensée de Rousseau anticipent le totalitarisme moderne, mais que Rousseau s'en défendrait par l'application « parfaite », idéale de sa pensée (et non pas seulement de certains éléments).

Les régimes totalitaires, peut-on lire dans l'encyclopédie *Routledge*, sont des dictatures « au motif caractéristique idéologique » (Craig, 1998, p. 443, traduit par nous). Ce qui distingue la société vertueuse rousseauiste de *Du Contrat social* d'avec le totalitarisme n'est pas l'absence d'idéologie : le rôle du Législateur est en effet de « mouler » les citoyens, de les rendre vertueux, de former leurs mœurs afin qu'ils désirent tous ce « bien commun ». Cette volonté générale peut justement être vue comme une idéologie, propre aux régimes totalitaires.

On peut cependant identifier une différence entre les deux dans le fait que le contrat social n'exige pas nécessairement de se sacrifier, en ce que l'homme individuel voudra le bien commun; mais à cela on répondra – surtout si on tient compte du caractère malléable de la nature humaine pour Rousseau – qu'il pourrait (théoriquement) en aller de même pour d'autres idéologies au cœur de régimes totalitaires.

Nous pensons que *la différence la plus fondamentale est que l'idéologie n'est pas externe aux citoyens* : la volonté générale trouve sa source *en eux*.

Ce n'est pas un bien qui puisse leur pré-exister et leur être imposé. Il émane d'eux – dans les circonstances idéales que décrit Rousseau – et est « verbalisé » dans une loi. Mais ces circonstances idéales sont-elles possibles?

5. Conclusion

Rousseau peut certes affirmer que sa pensée n'était pas totalitaire, mais il ne peut en contrôler l'interprétation; il ne peut empêcher que, de sa pensée, soient extraits des germes totalitaires, jamais destinés à fleurir dans la société aux mœurs vertueuses décrite dans *Du Contrat social.* Et il est possible que ces germes, plantés dans la société réelle et imparfaite donne naissance à des « imprisoning structures and destructive process [that] have been created by human beings but have escaped from human control ... [which] forms a sharp contrast to the original philosophical vision of a totally intelligible and totally harmonious society » (Craig, 1998, p. 444).

Rousseau n'est d'ailleurs guère optimiste et pense qu'il est déjà trop tard pour la société française pour réaliser cet idéal. C'est pourquoi « l'utopie » démocratique de Rousseau, à demi mise en place, peut tendre vers le totalitarisme (Robespierre, par exemple, offre un bon modèle du « Législateur dénaturé »).

Cette lacune entre théorie et réalité, entre idéal et fait, n'est pas qu'une question d'ordre factuel. En effet, l'argument qui distingue la volonté générale d'une idéologie totalitariste ne cause pas que des problèmes lors de son « application imparfaite ». La difficulté, *à l'intérieur* des thèses de Rousseau, est en fait une des raisons pour lesquelles Rousseau croyait avoir échoué, celle pour laquelle Rousseau demeure une « conscience malheureuse » : il n'a pas résolu la tension entre l'individualisme du point de départ (individus signant un contrat) et le Législateur qui nous impose une religion civile, entre bien individuel et bien commun.

Est-ce dire que l'on ne peut en retenir que les germes totalitaires du bien commun *ou* les principes démocratiques du bien individuel, mais pas concilier les deux? Est-ce dire, dans la mesure où l'on peut seulement se permettre d'espérer que les thèses conciliatrices de Rousseau soit – à son dire même – effective dans un peuple similaire à la Corse de son époque, que la « volonté générale est une chimère et le contrat social une utopie » (Bernardi, 2001, note 53)?

Notes:

1 La *volonté générale* est la volonté du souverain : c'est la souveraineté. Il y a identité entre souveraineté et volonté générale. Cette volonté générale pousse les « forces de l'État » vers « le bien commun » (Rousseau, 2001, p. 65). Elle doit avoir comme souci le bien-être commun plutôt qu'individuel. Effectivement, suite au contrat social, les volontés individuelles sont absorbées dans la volonté générale. Les intérêts particuliers s'accordent en ce qu'ils ont de commun (les notions de volonté et d'intérêts sont indissociable, voir Livre I, VII et Bernardi, annotations de *Du Contrat social,* note 53). Il s'agit donc de la volonté de tous, plutôt que de la somme des volontés particulières. L'objet de cette volonté générale est le bien et l'intérêt commun, l'utilité publique (Rousseau, 2001, p. 68), car « [lorsque] le peuple est assemblé, la voix de la volonté générale parle en chaque citoyen » (Bernardi, 2001, note 73). Cette souveraineté est indivisible. C'est la volonté du corps du peuple, et non pas d'une partie : « la volonté est générale », écrit Rousseau (p. 66), « ou elle ne l'est pas ». Vue plus globalement dans l'oeuvre de Rousseau, cette volonté, cette conscience civique et politique, est « la volonté du général au sens de l'universel, de l'universellement humain. Elle est le vouloir de la vraie raison instinctive […; elle est] un véritable amour de soi et des autres » alors que la volonté particulière correspond plutôt à l'amour-propre (Huisman, 1984, p. 2488).

2 D'ailleurs, s'il n'y avait pas d'intérêts divergents dans la société, la démocratie serait inutile – pourquoi ne pas confier le pouvoir à un seul?

3 « Il y a donc une profession de foi purement civile dont il appartient au souverain de fixer les articles, non pas précisément comme dogmes de Religion, mais comme sentiments de sociabilité, dans lesquels il est impossible d'être bon Citoyen ni sujet fidèle » (Rousseau, 2001, p. 178).

4 En ce sens qu'un tel chef peut bien qualifier un « bien idéologique » comme « bien commun », même s'il n'a rien à voir avec ce qu'entend Rousseau par ce terme.

5 Ces derniers confondent encore trop leur bien individuel avec le bien commun.

6 Ainsi, le citoyen se fera dire qu'il *consent* à la loi passée malgré lui (ou même, à la loi qui le punit) car elle est conforme à la volonté générale qui est la *sienne* (Rousseau, 2001, p. 147), ce citoyen pensera peut-être (à tort ou à raison) que cette théorie n'est qu'une fiction légale et que sa liberté individuelle est bel et bien brimée.

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