

## CHAPTER 4

# Low Modernities

### 4.1 – The Hegel Effect

Let Hegel recapitulate the last section of our previous path:

The principle of freedom emerged in Rousseau, and gave to man [sic], who apprehends himself as infinite, this infinite strength. This furnishes the transition to the Kantian philosophy, which, theoretically considered, made this principle its foundation.<sup>401</sup>

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<sup>401</sup> 'Das Prinzip der Freiheit ist aufgegangen und hat dem Menschen, der sich selbst als Unendliches faßte, diese unendliche Stärke gegeben. Dieses gibt den Übergang zur Kantischen Philosophie, welche in theoretischer Hinsicht sich dieses Prinzip zugrunde legte.' In G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie III*, in *id.*, *Werke* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1971), Band 20, 308. Eng. trans. *id.*, *Lectures on*

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Though Hegel too sets freedom as the practical and theoretical centre of reality, he is not contented with Kant's foundational move, and he complains that the Kantian principle of freedom is indeterminate, because it is merely formal.<sup>402</sup>

According to Hegel, abstract universality is still incomplete, and it requires another step, which is determination: in his words, 'I do not merely will – I will something.'<sup>403</sup> Moreover, as determination is as one-sided as abstract universality, a further moment is needed, in which this determination is superseded and idealised as a concept. Hegel contends that we already possess the concept of freedom in the experience of friendship and love:

Here, we are not one-sidedly within ourselves, but willingly limit ourselves with reference to an other, even while knowing ourselves in this limitation as ourselves. (...) Thus, freedom lies neither in indeterminacy nor in determinacy, but is both at once.<sup>404</sup>

This is why Hegel characterises freedom as being (with) oneself in another.<sup>405</sup> He applies this peculiar formulation not only

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*the History of Philosophy* vol. 3, E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson trans. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1896), 402.

<sup>402</sup> Hegel criticises Kantian formalism in general: '*Der Mangel der Kantischen Philosophie liegt in dem Auseinanderfallen der Momente der Absoluten form,*' the defect of Kant's philosophy consists in the falling asunder of the moments of the absolute form. *Ibid.*, 386. Eng. trans. *ibid.*, 478.

<sup>403</sup> '*Ich will nicht nur, sondern will Etwas.*' In G. W. F. Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, in *id.*, *Werke* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970), Band 7, 53. Eng. trans. *id.*, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, Allen W. Wood ed., H. B. Nisbet trans. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 40.

<sup>404</sup> '*Hier ist man nicht einseitig in sich, sondern man beschränkt sich gern in Beziehung auf ein Anderes, weiß sich aber in dieser Beschränkung als sich selbst. (...) Die Freiheit liegt also weder in der Unbestimmtheit noch in der Bestimmtheit, sondern sie ist beides.*' *Ibid.*, 57. Eng. trans. *ibid.*, 42.

<sup>405</sup> *Bei-sich-selbst-sein im Anderssein.*

to interpersonal dealings, but also to the sphere of social relations.

Hegel describes as the immediate unity of the universal with the singular the Greek experience of freedom as being with oneself in the wider sphere of the *polis*.<sup>406</sup> However, as the Greek citizen has to yield to the accidental will of the majority, his relation as a singular to the whole is not yet satisfactory. From his Christian and modern perspective, Hegel laments the lack of subjectivity (*Subjektivität*) of classical Greek ethics, and he imputes to Plato the inability to combine with his ideas 'the knowledge, wishes, and resolutions of the individual.'<sup>407</sup>

It is then not surprising that Hegel welcomes the Stoic conception of freedom as a universal notion, but he also objects that this is 'just the Notion of freedom, not the living reality of freedom itself.'<sup>408</sup> According to Hegel, it is only the religious, that is, Christian notion of absolute Spirit that shows by comparison the finitude of the previous natural human Spirit: thanks to this comparison, 'man has won a wholly free foundation within himself,

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<sup>406</sup> Within my narration, the evocation of Hegel's reflection on the evolution of freedom in Western thought operates as a sort of *mise en abyme*, as it recapitulates history within a recapitulation of history.

<sup>407</sup> '[D]as Beruhen, Wissen, Wollen, Beschließen des Individuums.' In G. W. F. Hegel, *Vorlesungen über die Geschichte der Philosophie II*, in *id.*, *Werke* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1971), Band 19, 129. Eng. trans. *id.*, *Lectures on the History of Philosophy* vol. 2, E. S. Haldane and Frances H. Simson trans. (London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner & Co., 1894), 114–115.

<sup>408</sup> '[A]uch nur der Begriff der Freiheit, nicht die lebendige Freiheit selbst.' In G. W. F. Hegel, *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, in *id.*, *Werke* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970), Band 3, 158. Eng. trans. *id.*, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, A. V. Miller trans. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), 122, modified translation.

and established for himself another relation to nature, namely, that of being independent from it.<sup>409</sup>

In Hegel's Lutheran<sup>410</sup> anthropology, similarly to Kant's, 'man [sic] is a free being inasmuch as Spirit,'<sup>411</sup> and the task of his inner side is to resist the natural impulses of his outer side. He has precisely the duty to free himself: according to Hegel, 'the doctrine of original sin, without which Christianity would not be the religion of freedom, has this meaning.'<sup>412</sup>

Hegel is adamant: it is by doing his duty, that he is with himself and free.<sup>413</sup> And he adds: 'The merit and exalted viewpoint of Kant's moral philosophy are that it has emphasized this significance of duty.'<sup>414</sup> However, it is fair to notice that Hegel's duty is to be accomplished within a system of right, which he defines as 'the realm of actualized freedom, the world of the spirit produced by itself, just like a second nature.'<sup>415</sup> It is within this system that one can freely be with oneself.

<sup>409</sup> *Ein Fragment zur Philosophie des Geistes (1822–5)*, in M. Petry ed., *Philosophy of Subjective Spirit*, (Dordrecht: D. Reidel Publishing Company, 1978), vol. 1, 93.

<sup>410</sup> Hegel also explicitly claims his religious affiliation: for example, in the 3 April 1826 letter to Karl Sigmund von Altenstein, the Prussian Minister for Religious and Educational Affairs, Hegel defines himself as 'a professor who prides himself on having been baptized and raised a Lutheran, which he still is and shall remain.' In G. W. F. Hegel, *The Letters*, Clark Butler and Christiane Seiler trans. and eds. (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1984), 532.

<sup>411</sup> '*Als Geist ist der Mensch ein freies Wesen.*' In Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, Werke 7, 69. Eng. trans. *id.*, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, 51, modified translation.

<sup>412</sup> '*Die Lehre von der Erbsünde, ohne welche das Christentum nicht die Religion der Freiheit wäre, hat diese Bedeutung.*' *Ibid.* Eng. trans. *ibid.*, modified translation.

<sup>413</sup> '*[I]ndem ich sie [Pflicht] tue, bin ich bei mir selbst und frei.*' In doing my duty, I am with myself and free. *Ibid.*, 251. Eng. trans. *ibid.*, 161.

<sup>414</sup> '*Es ist das Verdienst und der hohe Standpunkt der Kantischen Philosophie im Praktischen gewesen, diese Bedeutung der Pflicht hervorgehoben zu haben.*' *Ibid.* Eng. trans. *ibid.*

<sup>415</sup> '*[D]er verwirklichten Freiheit, die Welt des Geistes aus ihm selbst hervorgebracht, als eine zweite Natur.*' *Ibid.*, 46. Eng. trans. *ibid.*, 35, modified translation.

From this perspective, whilst the bond of duty may appear as a restriction of freedom, it only affects it in an abstract sense, and it rather constrains natural urges and arbitrary will. Hegel contends in Pauline fashion that duty frees the individual from dependence on natural impulses,<sup>416</sup> and, perhaps more surprisingly, from the depression (*Gedrücktheit*) that engulfs the same individual 'as subjective particularity in the moral reflections on what ought to be and what might be.'<sup>417</sup> Moreover, duty frees subjectivity from its self-enclosure and its inability to be actualised. This is why Hegel can triumphantly affirm: duty 'is the attainment of [our] essential being, the acquisition of affirmative freedom.'<sup>418</sup>

At any rate, regardless of his theological slant, Hegel endows the notion of freedom with a historical path. Of course, Hegel also subordinates the various historical constructions of freedom to an evolutionary task: yet, each and every historical understanding of freedom is recovered as a necessary contribution to this progression.

If compared with the mighty and complex Hegelian narrative, Benjamin Constant's contemporary comparison of ancient and

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<sup>416</sup> Hegel does not intend to get rid of natural impulses, but rather to subordinate them to the aim of happiness: '*gesetzt und sollen teils einer dem andern zum Behufe jenes Zwecks, teils direkt demselben ganz oder zum Teil aufgeopfert werden*,' partly they are to be sacrificed to each other for the benefit of that aim, partly sacrificed to that aim directly, either altogether or in part, modified translation. In G. W. F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse III, Die Philosophie des Geistes*, in *id.*, *Werke* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970), Band 10, 299–300. Eng. trans. *id.*, *Philosophy of Mind: Translated from the Encyclopedia of the Philosophical Sciences*, William Wallace trans. (New York: Cosimo, 2008), 99 (§ 479).

<sup>417</sup> '[A]ls subjektive Besonderheit in den moralischen Reflexionen des Sollens und Mögens.' Hegel, *Grundlinien der Philosophie des Rechts*, *Werke* 7, 298. Eng. trans. *id.*, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, 193.

<sup>418</sup> '[S]ie [Pflicht] ist das Gelangen zum Wesen, das Gewinnen der affirmativen Freiheit.' *Ibid.*, 298. Eng. trans. *ibid.*, 193.

modern freedom may appear simplistic.<sup>419</sup> We may even suspect that he exploits the French *topos* of the quarrel of the Ancients and the Moderns, which shakes the *Académie française* in the late seventeenth century.<sup>420</sup> For sure, Constant reiterates the opposition between past and present to better establish his endorsement of the modern notion of freedom. Nevertheless, unlike the debaters of the seventeenth-century *querelle*, Constant does not claim the superiority of his view, but he rather argues that the different senses of freedom are the expressions of different historical contexts.

Despite '[t]he metaphysics of Rousseau,'<sup>421</sup> Constant thus invites his audience to accept the evidence of an unbridgeable historical gap: 'we can no longer enjoy the freedom of the ancients, which consisted in the active and constant participation in collective power. Our freedom must consist of the peaceful enjoyment of private independence.'<sup>422</sup>

We may observe that Constant shares with Hegel the devaluation of the individual agency of Greek citizens, who are anachronistically described as being thoroughly subjected to the control of the

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<sup>419</sup> See Benjamin Constant, *De la liberté des anciens comparée à celle des modernes* (On the liberty of the ancients compared to that of the moderns), speech delivered at the Athénée Royal in Paris in 1819, in *id.*, *Œuvres Politiques de Benjamin Constant*, C. Louandre ed. (Paris: Charpentier, 1874), 258–286. Eng. trans. 'The Liberty of the Ancients compared with that of the Moderns,' in *id.*, *Political Writings*, Biancamaria Fontana ed. and trans. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1988), 308–328.

<sup>420</sup> The *querelle des Anciens et des Modernes* pits Boileau against Perrault: on the other side of the Channel, it is echoed by Swift's *Battle of the Books*.

<sup>421</sup> 'La métaphysique de Rousseau,' Constant, *De la liberté*, 273. Eng. trans. *id.*, 'The Liberty of the Ancients,' 319–320.

<sup>422</sup> '[N]ous ne pouvons plus jouir de la liberté des anciens, qui se composait de la participation active et constante au pouvoir collectif. Notre liberté, à nous, doit se composer de la jouissance paisible de l'indépendance privée.' *Ibid.*, 268. Eng. trans. *ibid.*, 316, modified translation.

magistrates.<sup>423</sup> These alleged ancient constraints allow Constant to underline the modern gain of individual independence as a more than fair compensation for the modern loss of direct political participation.

This very claim of modern individual independence leaves Max Stirner unconvinced though: he rather contends that whilst liberalism promises the emancipation from personal domination, it actually enchains individuals to the impersonal mastery of abstract values, ideas, and norms.

Stirner attends the lectures of both Friedrich Schleiermacher and Hegel, and he detects in the latter's theoretical constructions the Lutheran strategy of appropriation of reality.<sup>424</sup> Compared with puritanical Calvinism, which works by excluding the mundane in order to purify the church, Lutheranism is more radical, as it 'sets about annihilating the mundane altogether, and that simply by *hallowing* it.'<sup>425</sup>

On the contrary, liberal thinkers boast their emancipation from religion. Yet, according to Stirner, they only dismiss the name of the divine whilst retaining its predicates: they just replace religious

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<sup>423</sup> According to Constant, with the notable exception of Athens, '[t]outes les actions privées sont soumises à une surveillance sévère.' All private actions are subjected to a severe surveillance. *Ibid.*, 261. Eng. trans. *ibid.*, 311, modified translation.

<sup>424</sup> Stirner complains that the Hegelian system is 'the extremest case of violence on the part of thought, its highest pitch of despotism and sole dominion, the triumph of mind, and with it the triumph of *philosophy*.' In Max Stirner, *The Ego and Its Own* (hereinafter *Ego*), David Leopold ed., Steve Byington rev. trans. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), 69.

<sup>425</sup> '[D]as Weltliche ganz und gar zu vernichten sich anschickt, und zwar einfach dadurch, daß er es heiligt.' In Max Stirner, *Der Einzige und sein Eigentum* (hereinafter *Einzige*) (Leipzig: Wigand, 1845), 119; Eng. trans. *Ego*, 83.

clericalism with moral clericalism.<sup>426</sup> Stirner acerbically remarks: 'On this account the priestly spirits of our day want to make a "religion" of everything, a "religion of liberty," "religion of equality," etc.'<sup>427</sup>

Stirner quotes Luis Blanc, who contends that in France also, at the time of the restoration, 'Protestantism becomes the background of ideas and customs.'<sup>428</sup> Stirner argues that more generally, '[p]olitical liberty, this fundamental doctrine of liberalism, is nothing but a second phase of – Protestantism, and runs quite parallel with "religious liberty".'<sup>429</sup>

Stirner agrees with Hegel: 'Freedom is the doctrine of Christianity.'<sup>430</sup> Nevertheless, from his non-religious perspective, this association undermines the very notion of liberty. However, he also treasures the Hegelian recovery of history:

Must we then, because freedom betrays itself as a Christian ideal, give it up? No, nothing is to be lost, freedom no more than the rest; but it is to become our own, and in the form of freedom it cannot.<sup>431</sup>

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<sup>426</sup> Stirner 'quotes' Proudhon: 'Man is destined to live without religion, but the moral law (*la loi morale*) is eternal and absolute. Who would dare today to attack morality?' Eng. trans. *Ego* 46. See Pierre-Joseph Proudhon, *De la création de l'ordre dans l'humanité ou principes d'organisation politique* (Paris: Librairie de Prévot, 1843), 38.

<sup>427</sup> 'Die pfäffischen Geister unserer Tage möchten deshalb aus Allem eine „Religion“ machen; eine „Religion der Freiheit, Religion der Gleichheit, u.s.w.“; in *Einzige*, 103; Eng. trans. *Ego*, 72–73.

<sup>428</sup> 'Le protestantisme devint le fond des idées et des moeurs,' in Luis Blanc, *Histoire des dix ans. 1830–1840*, vol. 1 (Paris: Pagnerre, 1841), 138.

<sup>429</sup> 'Die politische Freiheit, diese Grundlehre des Liberalismus, ist nichts als eine zweite Phase des – Protestantismus und läuft mit der "religiösen Freiheit" ganz parallel.' In *Einzige*, 140; Eng. trans. *Ego*, 96.

<sup>430</sup> 'Freiheit ist die Lehre des Christentums.' *Ibid.*, 206; Eng. trans. *ibid.*, 142.

<sup>431</sup> 'Müssen Wir etwa, weil die Freiheit als ein christliches Ideal sich verrät, sie aufgeben? Nein, nichts soll verloren gehen, auch die Freiheit nicht; aber sie soll unser eigen werden, und das kann sie in der Form der Freiheit nicht.' *Ibid.*, 207; Eng. trans. *ibid.*, 143.



Let me underline Stirner's assertion as a veritable turning point in our genealogical path. We may consider our route as the drawing of several constellations of words, some of which can be rendered *tout court* in English with the terms 'freedom' and 'liberty.' Whilst the majority of the authors here considered support one or the other notion of freedom, some of them caution against the abuse and the excess of freedom itself. For example, Plato's ironic handling of *eleutheria* is somewhat mirrored by de Maistre's caustic treatment of the Rousseauan *liberté*. However, no one before Stirner asserts that the very notion of freedom is not enough.

More than that, Stirner does not propose a substitute concept for freedom. He is dissatisfied with freedom (*Freiheit*) both as a specific notion and as an idea in general: for Stirner, ideas such as truth, freedom, humanity, and justice, inasmuch as they are severed from their producers, exert an impersonal power over humans that is no less despotic than personal domination.

More than a century before Derrida,<sup>432</sup> Stirner depicts Western thought as a chain of substitutions: 'Criticism smites one idea only by another, such as that of privilege by that of mankind, or that of egoism by that of unselfishness.'<sup>433</sup> On the contrary, Stirner does not look for a better concept, but he rather attempts to depict

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<sup>432</sup> See Jacques Derrida, 'La structure, le signe et le jeu dans le discours des sciences humaines' in *id.*, *L'écriture et la différence* (Paris: Seuil, 1967), 409–429. Eng. trans. 'Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences' in *id.*, *Writing and Difference*, Alan Bass trans. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978), 278–294.

<sup>433</sup> 'Es schlägt die Kritik eine Idee nur durch eine andere, z. B. die des Privilegiums durch die der Menschheit, oder die des Egoismus durch die der Uneigennützigkeit.' In *Einzige*, 478; Eng. trans. *Ego*, 315, modified translation.

a different attitude, which escapes the simply negative approach of the 'freedom addicts' (*Freiheitssüchtige*).<sup>434</sup>

Similarly to La Boétie's human being, Stirner's human subject, whom he names as 'unique one' (*Einzig*) to underscore his [sic] absolute singularity, is originally (*ursprünglich*)<sup>435</sup> free, so that 'he [sic] does not need to free himself first,'<sup>436</sup> but he has rather to positively accept his property (*Eigentum*). Just as La Boétie's subjects need only acknowledge their own political power in order to revoke their allegiance to the tyrant, Stirner's labourers need only to recognise the ownness (*Eigenheit*) of their economic power in order to get rid of their employers: 'they would only have to stop labour, regard the product of labour as theirs, and enjoy it.'<sup>437</sup>

Stirner insists that ownness 'is not in any sense an *idea* like freedom, morality, humanity, and the like: it is only a description [*Beschreibung*] of the - owner.'<sup>438</sup> Of course, one may doubt whether Stirner's claim to merely describe the unique owner (*Eigner*) relieves him from the suspicion of prescribing another moral rule.<sup>439</sup>

<sup>434</sup> *Ibid.*, 216; Eng. trans. *ibid.*, 148, modified translation.

<sup>435</sup> *Ibid*; Eng. trans. *ibid.*, 149.

<sup>436</sup> '[E]r braucht sich nicht erst zu befreien.' *Ibid*; Eng. trans. *ibid.*

<sup>437</sup> '[S]ie dürsten nur die Arbeit einstellen und das Gearbeitete als das Ihrige ansehen und genießen.' *Ibid.*, 153; Eng. trans. *ibid.*, 105.

<sup>438</sup> '[S]ie denn überhaupt keine Idee ist, gleich der Freiheit, Sittlichkeit, Menschlichkeit u. dgl.: sie ist nur eine Beschreibung des - Eigners.' *Ibid.*, 225; Eng. trans. *ibid.*, 154.

<sup>439</sup> Stirner's indictment of all severed ideas not only transcends critique and its game of substitutions, but it also dismisses epistemology in the name of a local and analogical ethics, which prescribes nothing but a vertiginous contraction towards the sphere of intervention of the *Einzig*, the unique one. Stirner's bold rejection of conceptual generalisation is unprecedented in Western philosophical thought: his theoretical retraction within the sphere of his unique singularity may be somewhat compared to the religious gestures of the Christian κένωσις [*kenōsis*], the self-emptying of Jesus (*Phil.* 2.7), and the Kabbalistic צמצום [*tzimtzum*], the self-contraction of the Hebrew god.

Marx and Engels appear bitterly resentful of Stirner's lexicon, and of his use of synonymy (*Synonymik*)<sup>440</sup>: in particular, they point out the overlapping of the semantic areas of 'proper' and 'peculiar,' which occurs in German words such as *Eigentum*, property as possession, and *Eigenschaft*, property as attribute, and which is a feature common to European languages in general.

Marx and Engels inflict on the body of Stirner's text an orthopaedic operation of semantic policing, which somewhat anticipates Carnap's disciplining of Heidegger's prose<sup>441</sup>: despite a tradition that harks back at least to Aristotle, they require that the notions of *Eigentum* and *Eigenschaft* should be kept apart, as a condition of producing meaningful statements. However, their corrective intervention is triggered by a more substantial anomaly, namely the unrestrained attack that Stirner levels at modern thought: 'How can one try to assert of modern philosophy or modern times that they have reached freedom, since they have not freed us from the power of objectivity (*Gegenständlichkeit*)?'<sup>442</sup>

Marx and Engels instead strive to determine in historical and social terms the supposedly objective basis of reality<sup>443</sup>: they maintain

<sup>440</sup> Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, *Die Deutsche Ideologie*, in *id.*, *Gesamtausgabe* (hereinafter MEGA), Band 1.5 (Glashütten im Taunus: Verlag Detlev Auvermann KG, 1970), 207–211. Eng. trans. *id.*, *The German Ideology*, in *Marx & Engels Collected Works* (hereinafter MECW), vol. 5, Clemens Dutt, W. Lough and C. P. Margill trans. (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1975), 228–231.

<sup>441</sup> See Rudolf Carnap, 'Überwindung der Metaphysik durch logische Analyse der Sprache,' in *Erkenntnis* 2 (1): 219–241 (1931). Eng. trans. 'The Elimination of Metaphysics Through Logical Analysis of Language,' A. Pap trans., in A. J. Ayer ed., *Logical Positivism* (Glencoe, IL: The Free Press, 1959), 60–81.

<sup>442</sup> 'Wie kann man von der neueren Philosophie oder Zeit behaupten wollen, sie habe es zur Freiheit gebracht, da sie Uns von der Gewalt der Gegenständlichkeit nicht befreite? In *Einzig*, 114; Eng. trans. *Ego*, 79.

<sup>443</sup> In a note to the 1890 German edition of the *Communist Manifesto*, Engels remarks that in spring 1845, Marx had already worked out the fundamental proposition that

that Stirner dangerously mistakes symptoms for causes,<sup>444</sup> and they plainly dismiss him, with the whole lot of Hegel's left-wing followers, or young Hegelians (*Junghegelianern*), as conservatives (*Konservativen*).<sup>445</sup> Yet, it may not be by chance that under the pressure of Stirner's rebuttal of ideas, Marx and Engels put forth their captivating definition of communism, not as an ideal, but as 'the *real* movement which abolishes the present state of things.'<sup>446</sup> As to actual causes, Marx is categorical:

[T]he exchange of exchange values is the productive, real basis of all *equality* and *freedom*. As pure ideas they are merely the idealized expressions of this basis; as developed in juridical, political, social relations, they are merely this basis to a higher power.<sup>447</sup>

As a consequence, Marx underlines that modern equality and freedom 'are exactly the opposite of the freedom and equality in the world of antiquity, where developed exchange value was

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economic production constitutes the foundation for the political and intellectual history of any epoch.

<sup>444</sup> 'Jacques le bonhomme macht das idealistische Symptom zur materiellen Ursache,' Jacques le bonhomme [Stirner] transforms the idealist symptom into the material cause. In Marx and Engels, *Die Deutsche Ideologie*, MEGA 1.5, 117. Eng. trans. *id.*, *The German Ideology*, MECW 5, 136.

<sup>445</sup> *Ibid.*, 9. Following the ironic trope put forth by Marx himself in *Der 18te Brumaire des Louis Napoleon*, this tragic dismissal finds its farcical repetition in 1981, when Habermas labels Foucault and Derrida as 'Young Conservatives.' See Jürgen Habermas, 'Modernity versus postmodernity,' *New German Critique* (22), 1981, 3–14, 13.

<sup>446</sup> '[D]ie wirkliche Bewegung, welche den jetzigen Zustand aufhebt.' In Marx and Engels, *Die Deutsche Ideologie*, MEGA 1.5, 25. Eng. trans. *id.*, *The German Ideology*, MECW 5, 49.

<sup>447</sup> '[D]er Austausch von Tauschwerthen ist die productive, reale Basis aller Gleichheit und Freiheit. Als reine Ideen sind sie bloß idealisirte Ausdrücke desselben; als entwickelt in juristischen, politischen, socialen Beziehungen sind sie nur diese Basis in einer andren Potenz.' In Marx, *Grundrisse*, MEGA 2.1.1 (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1976), 168. Eng. trans. *id.*, *Grundrisse*, Martin Nicolaus trans. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), 245.

not their basis, but where, rather, the development of that basis destroyed them.<sup>448</sup>

However, Marx further specifies that the modern system of equality and freedom, which is nothing else than the exchange or money system, cannot but necessarily produce 'inequality and unfreedom [*Ungleichheit und Unfreiheit*].'<sup>449</sup>

In the meantime, Mill's nearly contemporary essay *On Liberty*<sup>450</sup> adopts a more optimistic stance towards current experiences of freedom: in particular, Mill scrutinises civil or social liberty, and he sets out to elucidate 'the nature and limits of the power which can be legitimately exercised by society over the individual.'<sup>451</sup>

Though Mill does not ignore historical and cultural<sup>452</sup> references, and he dismisses the fiction of the social contract, he focuses on the quite abstract relation between government and the governed. However, this traditional Hobbesian framework is irreversibly transformed by Rousseau's paradoxes, which – Mill quips – did 'explode like bombshells in the midst, (...) forcing its elements to recombine in a better form and with additional ingredients.'<sup>453</sup>

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<sup>448</sup> 'Die Gleichheit und Freiheit in dieser Ausdehnung sind grade das Gegentheil der antiken Freiheit und Gleichheit, die eben den entwickelten Tauschwerth nicht zur Grundlage haben, vielmehr an seiner Entwicklung caput gehn.' *Ibid.* Eng. trans. *ibid.*

<sup>449</sup> *Ibid.*, 172. Eng. trans. *ibid.* 249.

<sup>450</sup> John Stuart Mill, *On Liberty* (London: John W. Parker and Son, 1859).

<sup>451</sup> *Ibid.*, 7. For Locke's religious motivation against self-alienation, see note 335.

<sup>452</sup> As to one's cultural allegiances, Mill observes that 'the same causes which make him a Churchman in London, would have made him a Buddhist or a Confucian in Pekin.' *Ibid.*, 35.

<sup>453</sup> *Ibid.*, 85.

Mill himself provides us with a recombining principle: 'the only purpose for which power can be rightfully exercised over any member of a civilised community, against his will, is to prevent harm to others.'<sup>454</sup> Moreover, Mill is not afraid to cross the Rubicon of negative freedom, as he understands the harming of others not only as the result of someone's action, but also of someone's inaction.<sup>455</sup>

Mill also challenges the notion of freedom as absolute self-determination, both at the individual and the collective level. On the one hand, he underscores the unacceptability of selling oneself into slavery as a necessary limit to personal choice: a person willing to sell himself would contradict 'the very purpose which is the justification of allowing him [sic] to dispose of himself.'<sup>456</sup> This argument is far from being a merely rhetorical exercise, especially considering the contemporary definition of waged work as waged slavery.<sup>457</sup> On the other hand, Mill questions the very Rousseauan identity of the people with itself as an absolute justification for government: whilst dealing with the possibility of legal coercion of the liberty of thought and political discussion, he utterly denies 'the right of the people to exercise such coercion, either by themselves or by their government.'<sup>458</sup>

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<sup>454</sup> *Ibid.*, 22.

<sup>455</sup> 'A person may cause evil to others not only by his actions but by his inaction,' *Ibid.*, 24.

<sup>456</sup> *Ibid.*, 184.

<sup>457</sup> In this regard, Mill mentions von Humboldt's requirement that 'engagements which involve personal relations or services should never be legally binding beyond a limited duration of time,' *ibid.*, 185. Here von Humboldt somewhat echoes Aristotle: ὁ γὰρ βάνανσος τεχνίτης ἀφωρισμένην τινὰ ἔχει δουλείαν [*ho gar banausos tekhnitēs aphōrismenēn tina ekhei douleian*], for the *banausos* [roughly, one who does manual work for money] is under a sort of limited slavery, in Aristotle, *Pol.* 1260b.

<sup>458</sup> Mill, *On Liberty*, 33.

In the following years, Marx, who seems already unimpressed with Mill's economic work,<sup>459</sup> only rarely comes back to the topic of freedom. A notable exception is a long letter in which he strongly reacts to the programme of the Social Democratic Workers' Party of Germany. In particular, he disagrees with the party's declared intention to free the German state. Marx instead retorts:

Freedom consists in converting the state from an organ superimposed upon society into one completely subordinate to it; and even today, the forms of state are more free or less free to the extent that they restrict the 'freedom of the state.'<sup>460</sup>

Three years later, Engels claims an equivalence of definitely Stoic (if not Lutheran) flavour, which he also ascribes to Hegel: 'freedom is the insight into necessity [*die Einsicht in die Notwendigkeit*].'<sup>461</sup> To my knowledge, the closest Hegelian statement is in the

<sup>459</sup> See Marx, MEGA 2.6, 703.

<sup>460</sup> '*Die Freiheit besteht darin, den Staat aus einem der Gesellschaft übergeordneten in ein ihr durchaus untergeordnetes Organ zu verwandeln, und auch heurig sind die Staatsformen freier oder unfreier im Maas worin sie die "Freiheit des Staats" beschränken.*' In Marx, *Kritik des Gothaer Programms*, MEGA 1.25 (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1985), 5–25, 21. Eng. trans. *id.*, *Critique of the Gotha Programme*, Peter and Betty Ross trans., in MECW 24 (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1989), 75–99, 94.

<sup>461</sup> 'Hegel was the first to state correctly the relation between freedom and necessity. To him, freedom is the insight into necessity.' Engels adds: '*Blind ist die Notwendigkeit nur, insofern dieselbe nicht begriffen wird,*' necessity is blind only in so far as it is not understood. This second sentence is a quote from G. W. F. Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse I, Die Wissenschaft der Logik*, in *id.*, *Werke* (Frankfurt: Suhrkamp Verlag, 1970), Band 8, 290. Eng. trans. *id.*, *The Encyclopedia Logic, Part I of the Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences*, T. F. Geraets, W. A. Suchting, and H. S. Harris trans. (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1991), 222. A few lines later, Engels specifies: '*Freiheit besteht also in der, auf Erkenntniß der Naturnotwendigkeiten gegründeten Herrschaft über uns selbst und über die äußere Natur.*' Freedom therefore consists in the control over ourselves and over external nature, a control founded on knowledge of natural necessity. In Friedrich Engels, *Anti-Dühring*, MEGA 1.27 (Berlin: Dietz Verlag, 1988), 217–580, 312. Eng. trans. *id.*, *Anti-Dühring*, Emile Burns trans., MECW 25 (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1975), 1–309, 105–106.

*Encyclopaedia of Philosophical Sciences in Outline*: 'Generally speaking, the highest independence of man is to know himself as totally determined by the absolute Idea; this is the consciousness and attitude that Spinoza calls *amor intellectualis Dei* [the intellectual love of God].'<sup>462</sup>

## 4.2 – Nietzschean Dynamite<sup>463</sup>: The First Detonation

Stirner's lines of flight from Hegel reach for fairly different outcomes: whilst his vertiginous theoretical contraction towards an unrepeatable singularity seems to be somewhat mirrored by Kierkegaard's notion of '*hiin Enkelte*,'<sup>464</sup> that single one,<sup>465</sup> Nietzsche carries further Stirner's rejection of ideas, though he never acknowledges it.<sup>466</sup>

<sup>462</sup> 'Überhaupt ist dies die höchste Selbständigkeit des Menschen, sich als schlechthin bestimmt durch die absolute Idee zu wissen, welches Bewußtsein und Verhalten Spinoza als den *amor intellectualis Dei* bezeichnet.' In Hegel, *Enzyklopädie der philosophischen Wissenschaften im Grundrisse I*, in *id.*, *Werke* 8, 304. Eng. trans. *id.*, *The Encyclopaedia Logic*, 233. The reference here is to the mind's love of god, in which, according to Spinoza, our freedom, salvation, and blessedness consist. See Spinoza, *Ethica* 5.36 scholium. In a similar way, in the *Introduction to the Philosophy of History*, Hegel puts forth the unequivocally theological claim that the Spirit finds its freedom in necessity alone.

<sup>463</sup> 'Ich bin kein Mensch, ich bin Dynamit.' I am not a man [sic], I am dynamite. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Ecce homo: Warum ich ein Schicksal bin* § 1; <http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/EH-Schicksal-1>; Eng. trans. *id.*, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, 143–144, modified translation. Of course, as a philologist, Nietzsche reads in the word 'dynamite' also the meaning of its Greek source *dynamis*, potency, which motivates the choice of the explosive's name by its inventor Alfred Nobel.

<sup>464</sup> Søren Kierkegaard, preface to *To opbyggelige Taler* [two upbuilding discourses] (Copenhagen: Philipsen, 1843); Eng. trans. in *id.*, *Eighteen Upbuilding Discourses*, Howard Vincent Hong and Edna Hatlestad Hong trans. and eds. (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1990), 5.

<sup>465</sup> See Martin Buber, *Between Man & Man*, Ronald Gregor Smith trans. (London: Fontana, 1966), 46 on.

<sup>466</sup> See Karl Löwith, *From Hegel to Nietzsche: The Revolution in Nineteenth-Century Thought*, David E. Green trans. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1991). The mature Nietzsche only comes to admit an affinity with Spinoza.



Nietzsche is even too aware of his extraordinary eccentricity:

What separates me most deeply from the metaphysicians is: I don't concede that the "I" is what thinks. Instead, I take the *I itself to be a construction of thinking*, of the same rank as 'matter,' 'thing,' 'substance,' 'individual,' 'purpose,' 'number': in other words to be only a *regulative fiction* with the help of which a kind of constancy and thus 'knowability' is inserted into, *invented into*, a world of becoming. Up to now belief in grammar, in the linguistic subject, object, in verbs has subjugated the metaphysicians: I teach the renunciation to this belief. It is only thinking that posits the I: but up to now philosophers have believed, like the 'common people,' that in 'I think' there lay something or other of unmediated certainty and that this 'I' was the given cause of thinking, in analogy with which we 'understood' all other causal relations.<sup>467</sup>

This is a veritable vindication of Hume's dissolution of the subject over Kant's Ptolemaic counter-revolution.<sup>468</sup> Nietzsche then

<sup>467</sup> 'Was mich am gründlichsten von den Metaphysikern abtrennt, das ist: ich gebe ihnen nicht zu, daß das "Ich" es ist, was denkt: vielmehr nehme ich das Ich selber als eine Konstruktion des Denkens, von gleichem Range, wie "Stoff" "Ding" "Substanz" "Individuum" "Zweck" "Zahl": also nur als regulative Fiktion, mit deren Hülfe eine Art Beständigkeit, folglich "Erkennbarkeit" in eine Welt des Werdens hineingelegt, hineingedichtet wird. Der Glaube an die Grammatik, an das sprachliche Subjekt, Objekt, an die Tätigkeits-Worte hat bisher die Metaphysiker unterjocht: diesem Glauben lehrte ich abschwören. Das Denken setzt erst das Ich: aber bisher glaubte man, wie das Volk, im "ich denke" liege irgend etwas von Unmittelbar-Gewissen und dieses "Ich" sei die gegebene Ursache des Denkens, nach deren Analogie wir alle sonstigen ursächlichen Verhältnisse "verstünden".' *Nachgelassene Fragmente* (hereinafter NF) Mai-Juli 1885, N. 35[35]; [http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/NF-1885,35\[35\]](http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/NF-1885,35[35]); Eng. trans. in Friedrich Nietzsche, *Writings from the Late Notebooks* (hereinafter WLN), Rüdiger Bittner ed., Kate Sturge trans. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 20–21.

<sup>468</sup> Following Kant's own suggestion, textbooks define his proposed internalisation of Newtonian space and time as his Copernican revolution, by analogy with the notorious definition of the astronomical reversal of the rotating position of the sun around the earth devised by Copernicus. Yet, as Copernicus' move undermines the anthropocentrism of the Ptolemaic astronomical model, the Kantian reversal

pushes it further as a radically pluralist suggestion, which subverts all the constructions of the Western subject as a single and hierarchized entity, from Plato<sup>469</sup> onwards:

The assumption of the *single subject* is perhaps unnecessary; perhaps it is just as permissible to assume a multiplicity of subjects on whose interplay and struggle our thinking and our consciousness in general is based? A kind of *aristocracy* of 'cells' in which mastery resides? Certainly an aristocracy of equals which together are used to ruling and know how to command? *My hypotheses*: The subject as multiplicity (...).<sup>470</sup>

It is possible to understand Nietzsche's inner aristocracy of peers as an internalisation of Classical Athenian democratic<sup>471</sup> practice, in which each *eleutheros* alternately obeys and commands.<sup>472</sup> As

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is more akin to a Ptolemaic counter-revolution, because it makes the whole reality rotate, so to speak, around human transcendental subjectivity.

<sup>469</sup> Plato's hierarchical tripartition of *psykhē*, which disciplines the plural legacy of Homeric inner senses, is not radically challenged until Stimer's emptying and Nietzsche's pluralisation of the subject.

<sup>470</sup> 'Die Annahme des Einen Subjekts ist vielleicht nicht notwendig; vielleicht ist es ebensogut erlaubt, eine Vielheit von Subjekten anzunehmen, deren Zusammen-Spiel und Kampf unserem Denken und überhaupt unserem Bewußtsein zu Grunde liegt? Eine Art Aristokratie von "Zellen", in denen die Herrschaft ruht? Gewiß von pares, welche mit einander an's Regieren gewöhnt sind und zu befehlen verstehen? Meine Hypothesen: das Subjekt als Vielheit (. . .).' NF August-September 1885, N. 40[42]; [http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/NF-1885,40\[42\]](http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/NF-1885,40[42]); Eng. trans. Nietzsche, WLN, 46. One year after, Nietzsche quotes this hypothesis in literal terms: "'Seele als Subjekts-Vielheit", the soul as a subject-multiplicity. *Jenseits Gut und Böse*, § 12; <http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/JGB-12>; Eng. trans. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, R. P. Horstmann and J. Norman eds. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), 14.

<sup>471</sup> As I attempted to show, Classical democratic practice should be understood as an extended oligarchic direct government. Modern democratic practices, which are mostly indirect ones, do rely on a further extended constituency, but they do not question the model of preliminary excision: just like in Classical Greece, modern entitlement precedes its own exercise.

<sup>472</sup> We saw that for Aristotle this alternance is necessary, as a result of the dichotomy between ruling and being ruled. Nietzsche appears to be caught within the same alternative whilst dealing with the issue of self-overcoming in his *Zarathustra*: 'Was

compared to the Platonic threefold functional repartition of both *polis* and *psykhē*, Nietzsche's pluralist and democratic model of the mastering subject better mirrors the ideal body of Platonic rulers than the Platonic *logistikon*, or rational soul, which is an immediately unified function of command.

Though Aristotle too is unsatisfied with Plato's specific tripartition of *psykhē*,<sup>473</sup> he accepts that whilst inner faculties may and do conflict, they are ultimately subjected to the calculative function in the pursuing of the good.<sup>474</sup> Hence, also in Aristotle the functional differences within *psykhē* do not require any negotiation, because they are hierarchically ordered by nature. On the contrary, the multiplicity of Nietzsche's inner peers is not the expression of different natures: and because their fair composition is not pre-determined by a hierarchy of functions, we may suppose that, just like in the outer world, also in Nietzsche's inner republic of masters 'being fair is consequently difficult and demands much practice and good will, and very much very good spirit.'<sup>475</sup>

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*überredet das Lebendige, dass es gehorcht und befiehlt und befehlend noch Gehorsam übt?* What persuades the living to obey and command, and to still practice obedience while commanding?' In Friedrich Nietzsche, *Also sprach Zarathustra II: Von der Selbst-Überwindung*; <http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/Za-II-Ueberwindung>; Eng. trans. *id.*, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Adrian Del Caro and Robert B. Pippin eds., Adrian Del Caro trans. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 89.

<sup>473</sup> See Aristotle, *De Anima* 432a.

<sup>474</sup> πότερον γὰρ πράξει τόδε ἢ τόδε, λογισμοῦ ἥδη ἐστὶν ἔργον· καὶ ἀνάγκη ἐνὶ μετρεῖν· τὸ μείζον γὰρ διώκει· [*poteron gar praxeî tode ē tode, logismou ēdē estin ergon; kai anagkē eni metrein; to meizon gar diōkei*] in fact, it is now the work of calculative reason whether to do this or that; and it is necessary to operate just one kind of measurement, because the best option rules. *Ibid.*, 434a.

<sup>475</sup> '[B]illig sein ist folglich schwer und erfordert viel Übung, <viel> guten Willen und sehr viel sehr guten Geist.' *Morgenröthe* § 112; <http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/M-112>; Eng. trans. Friedrich Nietzsche, *Daybreak*, Maudemarie Clark and Brian Leiter eds., R. J. Hollingdale trans. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 67, modified translation. Nietzsche understands calculation and its logical tools as the historical result of a long-lasting attempt to impose a specific order onto the chaos of reality: 'wir, längst bevor uns die Logik selber zum Bewußtsein kam,

We may notice that Nietzsche too shares Plato and Aristotle's binary logic of either doing or suffering: however, as he understands any order whatsoever as a produced cultural effect, he rejects not only the Classical notion of nature and its pre-established order, but also their theological and scientific reshapings. In turn, as Nietzsche radically undermines the various historical groundings of the notion of necessity, he inevitably questions also the status of freedom.

However, Nietzsche not only keeps on claiming his own freedom, but he also argues that 'the freedom from every sort of conviction, the freely-looking-ability, belongs to strength.'<sup>476</sup> This is why he insists that the levelling trend of liberal institutions damages the cause of freedom. Nevertheless, Nietzsche also acknowledges that the struggle *for* liberal institutions always promotes freedom, and he adds: 'On closer inspection, it is the war that produces these effects.'<sup>477</sup> He even goes alarmingly close to his Christian *bêtes noires* when he endorses a notion of freedom defined as '[b]eing ready to sacrifice people for your cause, yourself included.'<sup>478</sup>

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*nichts gethan haben als ihre Postulate in das Geschehen hineinlegen: jetzt finden wir sie in dem Geschehen vor (. . .). Die Welt erscheint uns logisch, weil wir sie erst logisirt haben.'* Long before logic itself came to our awareness, we did nothing but insert its postulates into events: now we discover them in events (. . .). The world appears logical to us because we first logicised it.' (My translation) NF Herbst 1887, N. 9[144]; [http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/NF-1887,9\[144\]](http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/NF-1887,9[144])

<sup>476</sup> 'Die Freiheit von jeder Art Überzeugungen gehört zur Stärke, das Frei-Blicken-können. . .' *Der Antichrist* § 54; <http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/AC-54>; Eng. trans. Nietzsche, *The Anti-Christ, Ecce Homo, Twilight of the Idols, and Other Writings*, 53, modified translation.

<sup>477</sup> 'Genauer zugesehn, ist es der Krieg, der diese Wirkungen hervorbringt.' Nietzsche, *Götzen-Dämmerung: Streifzüge eines Unzeitgemässen* § 38; <http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/GD-Streifzuege-38>; Eng. trans. *ibid.*, 213.

<sup>478</sup> 'Dass man bereit ist, seiner Sache Menschen zu opfern, sich selber nicht abgerechnet.' *Götzen-Dämmerung: Streifzüge eines Unzeitgemässen* § 38; <http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/GD-Streifzuege-38>; Eng. trans. *ibid.*, 213.

This definition is somewhat puzzling, as Nietzsche shares neither the Platonic nor the modern passion for principle-driven transformations. As we saw, seventeenth-century revolutionaries cultivate this passion in its still religious attire: after a revolutionary deist stage in the eighteenth century, transformative political practices move then under the umbrella of so-called secular ideologies, such as socialism and nationalism, which both gain Nietzsche's disdainful scorn. Nietzsche strives to see beyond ideological justifications a more general dynamic of conflict: and he infers that war teaches people to be free, that is, 'having the will to be responsible for oneself.'<sup>479</sup> This redefinition of freedom ignores the role of participation in collective activities and its powerful transformative effects,<sup>480</sup> which Nietzsche instead recaptures within the narrative of self-mastery.

Such a recapture is all the more surprising, if we consider that Nietzsche ferociously mocks free will as a ridiculous attempt to mimic god as *causa sui*, that is, his own cause:

[T]he longing to bear the entire and ultimate responsibility for your actions yourself and to relieve God, world, ancestors, chance, and society of the burden – all this means nothing less than being that very *causa sui* and, with a courage greater than Munchhausen's, pulling yourself by the hair from the swamp of nothingness up into existence.<sup>481</sup>

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<sup>479</sup> 'Dass man den Willen zur Selbstverantwortlichkeit hat.' *Ibid.* Eng. trans. *ibid*, modified translation.

<sup>480</sup> These transformative effects are nothing short of the participative production at once of oneself, of collectives, and of realities at large. *Pace* Nietzsche, the outcome of this participative production is not necessarily freedom, as the fascist aftermath of the First World War will soon demonstrate.

<sup>481</sup> '[D]as Verlangen, die ganze und letzte Verantwortlichkeit für seine Handlungen selbst zu tragen und Gott, Welt, Vorfahren, Zufall, Gesellschaft davon zu entlasten,

However, Nietzsche does not limit himself to mockery, which he also combines with a construction of human inner and outer dimensions as reflecting each other. We may understand this reflection as a twisted replica of the Platonic and Aristotelian mirroring of the *polis* and the *psykhē*: Nietzsche's depicts freedom through Classical lenses, but without the justifications of the Classical order:

'Freedom of the will' – that is the word for the multifaceted state of pleasure of one who commands and, at the same time, identifies himself with the accomplished act of willing. (...) *L'effet c'est moi*: what happens here is what happens in every well-constructed and happy community: the ruling class identifies itself with the successes of the community. All willing is simply a matter of commanding and obeying, on the groundwork, as I have said, of a society constructed out of many 'souls.'<sup>482</sup>

Here Nietzsche not only improves, as I suggested, the correspondence between Plato's ordered *polis* and *psykhē*, but he also strips bare the hierarchical orders of both *polis* and *psykhē* of their epistemic rationalisation.

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ist nämlich nichts Geringeres, als eben jene *causa sui* zu sein und, mit einer mehr als Münchhausen'schen Verwegenheit, sich selbst aus dem Sumpf des Nichts an den Haaren in's Dasein zu ziehn.' *Jenseits von Gut und Böse* § 21; <http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/JGB-21>; Eng. trans. Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, 21.

<sup>482</sup> "Freiheit des Willens" – das ist das Wort für jenen vielfachen Lust-Zustand des Wollenden, der befiehlt und sich zugleich mit dem Ausführenden als Eins setzt (. . .) *L'effet c'est moi*: es begiebt sich hier, was sich in jedem gut gebauten und glücklichen Gemeinwesen begiebt, dass die regierende Klasse sich mit den Erfolgen des Gemeinwesens identifiziert. Bei allem Wollen handelt es sich schlechterdings um Befehlen und Gehorchen, auf der Grundlage, wie gesagt, eines Gesellschaftsbaus vieler "Seelen." *Ibid.*, § 19; <http://www.nietzschesource.org/#eKGWB/JGB-19>; Eng. trans. *ibid.*, 19–20.

The reconsideration of human inner and outer dimensions is also the task of Bergson, who is likewise not afraid to redefine freedom. He contends that all the controversies between the determinists and their adversaries on the topic of freedom imply a 'previous confusion of duration with extension, of succession with simultaneity, of quality with quantity'<sup>483</sup>: Bergson precisely sets out to dispel this undue mixture.

His first step is to construct this confusion as the impingement of the outer world of matter upon the inner world of consciousness. Bergson observes that modern scientific thought divests 'matter of the concrete qualities with which our senses clothe it, colour, heat, resistance, even weight'<sup>484</sup>: that which is left is the space without bodies and without quality.

Moreover, Bergson pits the homogeneity of the outer space against the 'radical heterogeneity of deep psychological facts, and the impossibility for any two of them to be completely similar, because they are two different moments in a story.'<sup>485</sup>

As compared with outer objects' multiplicity, which is quantitative inasmuch as it relies on the numeric identity of bodies in space, the multiplicity of the states of consciousness is

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<sup>483</sup> '[U]ne confusion préalable de la durée avec l'étendue, de la succession avec la simultanéité, de la qualité avec la quantité.' Henri Bergson, *Essai sur les données immédiates de la conscience* (Paris: Alcan, 1889), viii. Eng. trans. *id.*, *Time and Free Will*, F. L. Pogson trans. (London: Swan Sonnenschein & Co., 1910), xix–xx, modified translation.

<sup>484</sup> 'Bref, on dépouillera la matière des qualités concrètes dont nos sens la revêtent, couleur, chaleur, résistance, pesanteur même, et l'on se trouvera enfin en présence de l'étendue homogène, de l'espace sans corps.' *Ibid.*, 156. Eng. trans. *ibid.*, 205.

<sup>485</sup> '[L]'hétérogénéité radicale des faits psychologiques profonds, et l'impossibilité pour deux d'entre eux de se ressembler tout-à-fait, puisqu'ils constituent deux moments différents d'une histoire.' *Ibid.*, 152. Eng. trans. *ibid.*, 200, modified translation.

qualitative, because these very states are neither clearly distinct from each other nor computable. Time itself is linear and computable when it is spatialised on the model of the outer world, whilst it is a qualitative duration when it is modelled on the inner experience.

Bergson does not reject altogether the spatialisation of time, but he rather restricts its application. In particular, he gives a qualified answer to the question whether time can be adequately represented with space:

Yes, if you are dealing with time flown; no, if you talk about the time flowing. Now, the free act occurs in the time which is flowing and not in time which has already flown. Freedom is therefore a fact, and among the facts that we observe there is none clearer. All the difficulties of the problem, and the problem itself, arise from the desire to endow duration with the same attributes as extension, to interpret a succession by a simultaneity, and to express the idea of freedom in a language into which it is obviously untranslatable.<sup>486</sup>

This impossibility of translating the idea of freedom into a language of extension becomes evident when Bergson publicly meets Einstein in Paris,<sup>487</sup> and their debate turns up a dialogue of the deaf: Einstein's notion of time as the fourth dimension of the physical world leaves

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<sup>486</sup> '[O]ui, s'il s'agit du temps écoulé; non, si vous parlez du temps qui s'écoule. Or l'acte libre se produit dans le temps qui s'écoule, et non pas dans le temps écoulé. La liberté est donc un fait, et, parmi les faits que l'on constate, il n'en est pas de plus clair. Toutes les difficultés du problème, et le problème lui-même, naissent de ce qu'on veut trouver à la durée les mêmes attributs qu'à l'étendue, interpréter une succession par une simultanéité, et rendre l'idée de liberté dans une langue où elle est évidemment intraduisible.' *Ibid.*, 168. Eng. trans. *ibid.*, 221, modified translation.

<sup>487</sup> Bergson and Einstein publicly meet on April 6th, 1922 in Paris, at the Société française de philosophie.



no space for a parallel construction of time as duration, which is again<sup>488</sup> downplayed to a subjective perception<sup>489</sup> of objective reality.

Yet, the challenge to Einstein's deterministic approach comes also from within his own discipline in the very language of extension: when, four years after his encounter with Bergson, this challenge takes the shape of the new quantum physics, Einstein appeals to his Spinozan god<sup>490</sup> in Pascalian clothes: '[quantum] theory yields a lot, but it hardly brings us any closer to the secret of the Old One. In any case I am convinced that he does not throw dice.'<sup>491</sup>

The Danish physicist Niels Bohr is unimpressed with Einstein's theological preoccupations, and apparently, he invites him not to tell god what to do. Unlike Einstein, Bohr accepts quantum uncertainty (which limits the precision of the measurement of couples of physical variables such as position and momentum) as a feature of 'a novel situation unforeseen in classical physics and

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<sup>488</sup> Einstein's relativity principle may be understood as repeating and expanding the performance of Newtonian laws as conservation principles.

<sup>489</sup> 'Il n'y a donc pas un temps des philosophes,' hence, there is no time of the philosophers, Einstein dismissively replies to Bergson's claim of a philosophical notion of time. And he adds: 'il n'y a qu'un temps psychologique différent du temps du physicien.' There is only a psychological time that differs from the physicist's. In 'La Théorie de la relativité: séance du 6 avril 1922,' *Bulletin de la Société française de philosophie* 22(3) 1922, 364.

<sup>490</sup> 'Ich glaube an Spinozas Gott [sic], der sich in der gesetzlichen Harmonie des Seienden offenbart,' I believe in Spinoza's God, who reveals himself in the harmony of all that exists. Albert Einstein, 24 April 1929 cable to Rabbi Herbert S. Goldstein. In Einstein Archives, item 33–272. Eng. trans. in *New York Times*, 25 April 1929, p. 60, col. 4.

<sup>491</sup> 'Die Theorie liefert viel, aber dem Geheimnis des Alten bringt sie uns kaum näher. Jedenfalls bin ich überzeugt, daß der nicht würfelt.' Einstein, 4 December 1926 letter to Max Born, in Albert Einstein, Max Born and Hedwig Born, *Briefwechsel 1916–1955* (Reinbek: Rowohlt, 1972), 98. Eng. trans. *The Born-Einstein Letters; Correspondence between Albert Einstein and Max and Hedwig Born from 1916 to 1955*, Irene Born trans. (New York: Walker, 1971), 90 (modified translation).

irreconcilable with conventional ideas suited for our orientation and adjustment to ordinary experience.<sup>492</sup>

Paradoxically, right when the new researches of physics demand the reconsideration of modern science's deterministic stance, most contemporary economists hold fast to the absolute certainty of quantification and formal computing methods.<sup>493</sup> The effort of the economists to attain a scientific status for their theories revolves around a new anthropological specimen, which already in 1883 Devas defines as *homo oeconomicus*.<sup>494</sup>

Actually, the human subject of Economics is not that new, as he<sup>495</sup> not only inherits Benthamic utilitarianism and Hobbesian social atomisation, but his rational computing ability may even be traced to Aristotle's (and Plato's) calculating agent. More than that, Adorno and Horkheimer go further back in time until they reach Odysseus: 'The cunning loner is already *homo oeconomicus*.'<sup>496</sup>

<sup>492</sup> Niels Bohr, discussions with Einstein on 'Epistemological Problems in Atomic Physics', in P. A. Schilpp, *Albert Einstein: Philosopher-Scientist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1970), 235.

<sup>493</sup> Hayek and Keynes are the two most notable exceptions to this nearly general rule.

<sup>494</sup> Devas first deploys the expression *homo oeconomicus* in 1883, whilst commenting on Mill's writings. See Charles Stanton Devas, *The Groundwork of Economics* (London: Longmans, Green, & Co., 1883), 27.

<sup>495</sup> The Latin term *homo* is masculine.

<sup>496</sup> 'Der listige Einzelgänger ist schon der *homo oeconomicus*.' In Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer, *Dialektik der Aufklärung: Philosophische Fragmente* [1947] (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Verlag GmbH, 1969), 69. Eng. trans. *id.*, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, Gunzelin Schmid Noerr ed., Edmund Jephcott trans. (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002), 48, modified translation. Adorno and Horkheimer's description of Odysseus as '*Urbild eben des bürgerlichen Individuums*,' just the prototype of the bourgeois individual (50; Eng. trans. 35), is hardly more than a crude retrospective projection. At least, Marx, as a good Hegelian, does not project into the past a simple identity, but an evolutionary series: see, for example, his image of the anatomy of the ape as a biological metaphor of the analysis of precapitalistic economy in Marx, *Grundrisse*, MEGA 2.1.1, 40.

Nevertheless, Odysseus' freedom of choice and planning ability arouse the surprised admiration of the other characters, as well as of bards and audiences of Odysseus' stories. On the contrary, the modern *homo oeconomicus* is made to perform in the wasteland of the Market as a new Everyman, whose behaviour is expected to set a universal paradigm for modern subjects.

This expectation is shared by a small group of intellectuals who meet on 8 April 1947 in the Swiss resort of Mont Pèlerin<sup>497</sup>: they are determined to save 'that most precious possession of Western Man, freedom of thought and expression.'<sup>498</sup> In particular, they uphold the banner of private property and a competitive Market, because they are firmly convinced that 'without the diffused power and initiative associated with these institutions it is difficult to imagine a society in which freedom may be effectively preserved.'<sup>499</sup>

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<sup>497</sup> Among the participants at the meeting, we may recall Friedrich Hayek, Ludwig von Mises, Walter Eucken, Karl Popper, Michael Polany, and Milton Friedman.

<sup>498</sup> Mont Pèlerin Society, *Statement of Aims*. <https://www.montpelerin.org/statement-of-aims>

<sup>499</sup> *Ibid.*