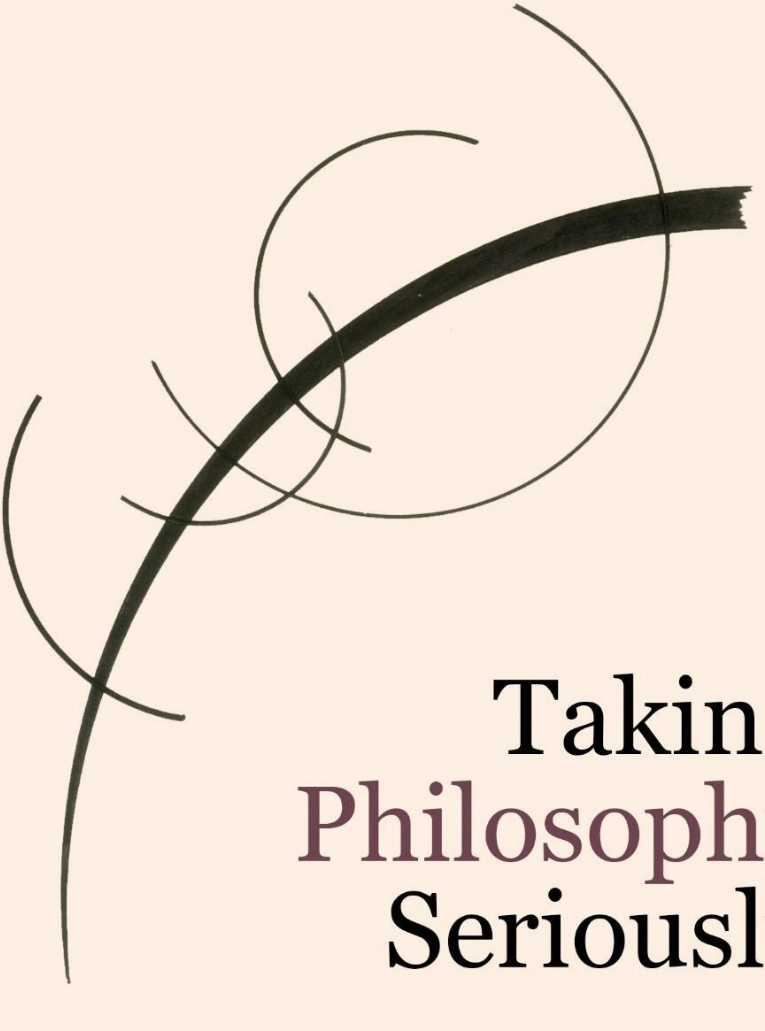

Taking Philosophy Seriously

Lydia Amir

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By

Lydia Amir

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Taking Philosophy Seriously

By Lydia Amir

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A partial version of Chapter 5 was published as "Shaftesbury as a Practical Philosopher." *Haser* 6: 81-102, 2015.

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A previous version of Chapter 13 was published as "Don't Interrupt my Dialogue," in *Thinking Through Dialogue*, edited by Trevor Curnow, 239-43. Oxted, Surney: Practical Philosophy Press, 2001.

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INTRODUCTION

Philosophy, along with science, was founded in the 6th century BC by the mathematician and astronomer Thales of Miletus.[1] Renowned for his wisdom during his lifetime, Thales was primarily remembered in Western civilization as an absent-minded fellow. While examining the sky he fell into a well; and, at least according to Plato's version of the story, this incident provoked the laughter of his servant.[2] Since this memorable beginning of science and philosophy alike, the list of philosophers ridiculed for confining themselves to theory at the expense of practice has been long.[3]

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[1] Following Aristotle's account in *Metaphysics* (bk. 1, 983b6.3).

[2] (*Theaetetus*, 174 b-e). The anecdote stubbornly remained from Aesop to Martin Heidegger, albeit with some variations. Diogenes Laertius, Tatian (recorded by Stobaeus), Cicero, Ovid, Philo, Eusebius, St. Augustine, Tertullian, Pierre Damien, Michel de Montaigne, Francis Bacon, Pierre Bayle, Jean de La Fontaine, Voltaire, Immanuel Kant (who told it on Tycho Brahe), Ludwig Feuerbach, Eduard Gans, and Heidegger, all referred to it. For a longer list, see Blumenberg (2000).

[3] Plato himself generalizes the incident: "The same jest applies to all who pass their lives in philosophy," he adds (*Theaetetus*, 174 b). The tradition of the ridiculous philosopher views philosophy first as laughable in the eyes of society, and later, as laughable in the eyes of theologians and philosophers who prioritize practice over theory. The habit of ridiculing academic philosophers begins with Heraclitus, who laughs at his predecessors, followed by the Cynic Diogenes who scorns Plato. The Hellenistic philosophers Epicurus and Timon the Skeptic ridicule other philosophers, and Lucian mocks them all for their abstractions. In the Middle Ages, theologians follow in the footsteps of those critical philosophers: they ridicule philosophy's emphasis on reason in order to prioritize faith in God and the salvation it grants. In the controversy over the nature of philosophy, Renaissance philosophers such as Desiderius Erasmus and Montaigne laugh at medieval philosophers and theologians who are entangled in abstractions instead of prioritizing life as the true philosophic and theological concern. In modern times, the third Earl of Shaftesbury ridicules theorical thought and academic philosophy. He is followed by Friedrich Nietzsche and George Santayana and, more recently, by Gilles Deleuze. In the spirit of Erasmus and Ludwig Feuerbach, Søren Kierkegaard ridicules Georg W. F. Hegel's abstractions and Hegelian theologians who are forgetful of the individual's genuine life of faith (see Amir 2013; Blumenberg 2000).

The charge of restricting oneself to theory would not be appropriate unless philosophy ought to be relevant to life. Indeed, its dissociation from everyday concerns has been widely considered a deviation from its original purpose.[4] While Plato put the blame for the uselessness of philosophers on society's ignorance of their potential (*Republic* 489b), sociologist Georg Simmel accused philosophers of refusing "to do their job properly," by which he means, "something for which there is still no better description than the somewhat old-fashioned expression, wisdom about life" (Simmel [1921] 1971, 235).

"Taking philosophy seriously," the title of this book, points to doing philosophy's job properly. *Contra* Simmel, however, what this requires is not at all clear. For philosophy has been variously defined over the millennia of its existence, and its very definition is deemed a philosophical problem.[5] Even by focusing on contemporary views of philosophy in order to narrow down the possibilities, we cannot easily answer the question of what "philosophy" includes. One of the reasons for this confusion is that philosophy is, nowadays, a divided discipline.[6] Even more divided is the recent movement of Philosophical Practice, whose theory and practice seek to make philosophy practical again.[7] Thus, not only is the practice of philosophy divided by theoretical concerns about philosophy's nature; it is furthermore divided by questions about the purpose and the means of practical philosophy as well as the relations it should maintain with the academe.

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[4] To take an example, in *Renaissance Thought: The Classic, Scholastic, and Humanist Strains*, Paul Oskar Kristeller comments on the importance of humanist treatises of the Renaissance. He writes, "They derive added importance from the fact that *some of the genuine and more concrete problems of moral philosophy were apparently neglected by professional philosophers of the time*, and thus the humanists prepared the ground for a more systematic treatment of the same problems by later philosophers. *This seems to be the function of poets, writers, and amateur thinkers at any time when the professional philosophers are absorbed in technicalities and refuse to discuss certain basic problems*" (Kristeller 1961, 18; italics added).

[5] See John Passmore's essay, "Philosophy, Historiography," in *The Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (1967). The controversies over philosophy's nature have recently attracted some attention, e.g. Cohen and Dascal (1991), O' Hear (2009), Ragland and Heidt (2001), Plant (2017). Plant's references point to valuable further bibliography (2017).

[6] Between the Analytic (even in its post-Analytic phase) and Continental traditions. On this topic, see Bernard Williams' "What Philosophy Might Become?" the last essay in *Philosophy as a Humanistic Discipline* (2009).

[7] In Amir (2018), I differentiate between the following practical activities or theories about practice. First, public philosophy or philosophers commenting publically on social and political issues. Second, lawyers for philosophy or philosophers who articulate ideas for silenced part of the population and fight for them. Academic philosophers who specialize in ethical, social, legal, and political issues without the ambition nor the interest of seeing them implemented. Finally,

Taking Philosophy Seriously addresses these issues with the aim of outlining a framework in which all factions of philosophical practice can participate without dismissing the significant differences between them. It addresses academic philosophy as well, as it conceives the practice of philosophy as if on a continuum, which begins with the successful appropriation of philosophical theories that effective teaching requires and ends in sharing them with various audiences according to their needs and capacities. It distinguishes accordingly between perfectionism as radical philosophy for the few and meliorism as democratized philosophy for the many, and suggests that the latter should attract our attention both within the academe and outside of it.

This book presents meliorism as philosophy's contemporary challenge. Counterintuitively, meliorism is especially significant in liberal states, where adult education is unattended in many areas that seem necessary for taking effective advantage of one's opportunities. The tools for activating these liberties are not luxuries to be used in an ethical project of self-perfection. Rather, they are necessary for the survival of democracy. This is so because they involve moral and intellectual virtues without which individual autonomy is meaningless, and liberty without the capacity to realize it is an empty notion.

To be fruitful, philosophic education requires individual attention. Philosophical practice can play a vital role within contemporary societies, as the service that philosophical practice offers is both necessary and rare. Since no other discipline can fulfill the needs it addresses, philosophers are subject to a responsibility to their communities on which I have elaborated in *Rethinking Philosophers' Responsibility* (Amir 2017a).

The current volume proposes a melioristic program that enhances democratized philosophy, and thus offers tangible solutions to many problems the new field of philosophical practice encounters. It introduces a detailed educational vision needed both in the academe and outside it, whose feasibility I have witnessed in many years of practice.[8] It challenges

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philosophers involved in practical practice whose aim is to bring philosophy to the many, not by merely writing books about philosophic subjects that may be palatable to most, but engaging philosophically with anyone, to enlighten his philosophical interests, needs, and problems.

[8] For nearly 40 years, I have taught philosophy in Universities and Colleges in various continents (Asia, Europe, South and North America), lectured to and

the divide between theory and practice by revealing its artificiality in philosophy. It aims to engage practical and academic philosophers alike in a meta-philosophical discussion that is required to answer the crisis philosophy faces, both internally and externally.[9]

The first chapter, “Taking Philosophy Seriously,” outlines the main themes that the remaining of the book develops. This chapter further identifies philosophic goals and means that cut through the alleged divide

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conducted workshops with various audiences worldwide. Along my academic career, I have worked since 1992 as a philosophical practitioner with organizations, groups, families, couples and individuals.

[9] Although philosophy is considered part of the humanities, its fate should be dissociated from the contemporary crisis the former undergo. The reason does not lie in philosophy’s alleged closeness to science, in contradistinction to the rest of the disciplines that are currently listed as humanities. Rather, I believe that philosophy’s usefulness is more easily noticeable, its lessons more immediately applicable to contemporary concerns, and its objective of much more significance than the rest of the disciplines deemed humanistic, although they all contribute to its goal. This is not to diminish the respect I have for foreign languages, literature, history, drama and musicology (in short, the rhetorical tradition, as well as the Arts). Thus, to appreciate my argument, it may help to realize how encompassing the term “humanities” is. The Stanford Humanities Center refers to the humanities thus: “The humanities can be described as the study of how people process and document the human experience. Since humans have been able, we have used philosophy, literature, religion, art, music, history and language to understand and record our world. These modes of expression have become some of the subjects that traditionally fall under the humanities umbrella. Knowledge of these records of human experience gives us the opportunity to feel a sense of connection to those who have come before us, as well as to our contemporaries” (http://shc.stanford.edu/what-are-the-humanities). In the National Endowment for the Humanities homepage, we can find the following formulation. It says: “According to this definition, which was used by the U.S. Congress when the National Endowment for the Humanities was established in 1964, the humanities include, but are not limited to, history; literature; philosophy and ethics; foreign languages and cultures; linguistics; jurisprudence or philosophy of law; archaeology; comparative religion; the history, theory, and criticism of the arts; and those aspects of the social sciences (anthropology, sociology, psychology, political science, government, and economics) that use historical and interpretive rather than quantitative methods” (https://www.neh.gov/about). Bertrand Russell argued that the study of history and anthropology should supplement philosophy’s abstract knowledge (1956). More recently, Martha C. Nussbaum’s insistence on the usefulness of literature is understandable, given the interest she has in developing the emotions. However, she requires that the study of literature involve moral philosophy, which points to the centrality of philosophy to any liberal education (2010). She defends this centrality in (1997).

between theory and practice and among various factions of philosophical practice. To that purpose, I first emphasize the significance of abstract thought within the practice of philosophy: the disengagement it occasions is a valuable tool, provided it is provisional. Second, I highlight the importance of epistemology and identifies an agent-based epistemology of intellectual virtues as suitable to the practice of philosophy. Third, because of the close association of moral and intellectual virtues, I advance the view that philosophical practice has a significant moral role to fulfill within democratic and liberal societies. Among various ideas this book advances, let me mention here two: In sharing the tools needed for self-integration, philosophical practice enhances integrity. And, in making autonomy, an epistemological and moral virtue, accessible to as many persons as possible, the practice of philosophy contributes to reducing the gap liberal societies leave unattended between their members.

Following the introductory first chapter, the book is further divided into six parts. They address the main issues philosophy taken seriously and the new field of philosophical practice may encounter. I begin by tackling the understudied philosophic mentors-apprentices relationship: I point to the main problems it often creates and evaluate the means philosophers have used to reduce or avoid them (Part I). I follow with a detailed analysis of the challenges brought by the emulation of past philosophers, who have considered the practice of philosophy a necessary feature of the discipline (Part II). I further examine some unduly neglected topics in philosophy and its practice (Part III). I contribute to the latter by reconsidering the means available to philosophical practice (Part IV), by rethinking the tools it uses (Part V), and by indicating the problematic assumptions of this field as well as the unique benefits it brings to the very discipline of philosophy (Part VI). Let me briefly elaborate on each part.

Part I, “Philosophers as Mentors and Apprentices,” addresses the philosopher’s education. It analyses the relationships between philosophers-teachers (or mentors) and proto-philosophers (or apprentices), their mutual yet no necessarily compatible needs and the problems these relationships may create. Rarely addressed, this subject is of relevance both to academic philosophy and to the renewed emphasis on philosophy’s practice. Through an historical analysis that yields insights into contemporary concerns, I highlight both the need for a teacher (Chapter 2) and the necessity of self-education (Chapter 3). As the tension between these two requirements is obvious, I introduce various methods philosophers have used to prevent or attenuate it.

Part II (“Practical Philosophers—Some Antecedents”) considers landmarks in philosophy’s past that can be especially useful or dangerous for philosophers to emulate today. It addresses the Hellenistic philosophies—Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Pyrrhonism, as well as Cynicism (Chapter 4)—the modern Socratic philosopher of the British Enlightenment, the third Earl of Shaftesbury (Chapter 5), and the Danish 19th-century philosopher, precursor of existentialism and critic of Georg W. F. Hegel, Søren Kierkegaard. Let me explain these choices.

Since the Sophists and Socrates, philosophy has been at least partly considered a practical discipline whose aim is moral and political. This view of philosophy is exemplified not only in Plato's dialogues but also in his Academy and in the often-perilous travels he undertook to Syracuse with the hope of implementing his views. While the aim of Aristotle's Lyceum was no less moral and political than his teacher's, the theoretical part of Plato and Aristotle's metaphysical philosophies, as well as the Aristotelian view that the pursuit of theoretical knowledge has value in itself, came immediately under attack. The Cynics ridiculed these views, and the Hellenistic schools of Stoicism, Epicureanism, and Pyrrhonism replaced them with practical philosophies, often modified in Roman times to be even more palatable.

The Hellenistic schools' impressive appeal to wide audiences position them at first sight as ideal antecedents to the renewed endeavor of making philosophy practical—the movement known as philosophical practice. In Chapter 4, I engage in a thorough analysis of these philosophies, including Cynicism, in order to probe the plausibility of this claim as well as the difficulties it may create. Instead of reviving distant and somewhat problematic Alexandrian roots, I propose the Enlightenment as the genuine origin of contemporary philosophical practice.[10]

Chapter 5 follows on this proposal by identifying the third Earl of Shaftesbury as largely responsible for the revival of interest in philosophy's benefits. His role within the British Enlightenment indicates that, by making virtue the content of happiness and good breeding the goal of philosophy, this Modern Socratic made philosophy necessary for the new class of citizens his politics purported to create. Implementing his views today would single out philosophical practice from psychology and self-help books alike, yet at a price, which philosophical practitioners would not easily pay.

Thus, I move on in Chapter 6 to the 19th century Danish philosopher Søren Kierkegaard, whose existential interests constitute a *prima facie* antecedent for philosophical practice. While voicing concerns about Kierkegaard's religious aims, this chapter outlines the many ways in which his philosophy is of service to philosophical practice, and proposes his dialectical movement between the concrete and the general and back as a model for practicing philosophy.

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[10] The Renaissance occasioned a revival of Hellenistic and Classic philosophies, yet I skip here the significant role of Michel de Montaigne as a practitioner of philosophy. For an elaboration of this view of Montaigne, see Chapter 1 of Amir, *Laughter and the Good Life: Montaigne, Nietzsche, Santayana* (work under contract for State University of New York Press).

Part III ("Unduly Neglected Topics") addresses four uncommon practical topics that are significant yet usually neglected both in philosophy and in its practice.

Chapter 7 addresses the reasons for the contemporary neglect of Benedict Spinoza's ethics, whose key epistemological and moral virtue of understanding I introduce in the opening chapter of the book as particularly interesting for the practice of philosophy. I find the possible reasons for eschewing Spinoza unconvincing, and list good reasons for embracing his ethics, as it answers contemporary concerns and sensibilities better than many other theories.

Chapter 8 tackles the human condition and questions the capacity of humor, even when considered a survival tool, to ameliorate the human predicament. The negative note on which this chapter ends has been the spur of further research. The thesis of *Homo risibilis*, first introduced in Amir (2014) and elaborated on below (Chapter 15), reveals that some form of the comical is uniquely adaptable to the human condition. The significance of humor for all Hellenistic schools as well as for Shaftesbury and Kierkegaard that part II highlighted points to its role in exoteric philosophy. I further elaborate on the interiorization of humor, which enables the enculturated philosopher to approach himself as an exoteric audience with the aim of enhancing self-knowledge and self-change (Chapters 9, 12 and 15).

Chapter 9 brings us to the boundaries of Western philosophy by addressing the neglected topic of educating one's will, its role in self-integrity, and its contribution to philosophy as alternative spirituality. A sufficient understanding of what it takes to educate the will as well as a practice of willing well may mark the difference between philosophy's power and impotence. As willing well is living well, the education of the will is particularly relevant to philosophical practitioners, who may have to face the charge that philosophy is impotent in bringing about personal change. In this chapter, I draw on the program advanced by the famous philosopher of religion, Robert C. Neville (1978) for the education of one's will to attain self-integrity through self-image, action, consciousness, and commitment. Following my critical engagement with his program, I further propose a philosophic tool that makes self-integrity more palatable to persons who are not fully committed to ideals, or well versed in Eastern practices, or interested in the use of psychoanalysis.

Chapter 10 puts sexuality on the agenda of practical philosophers.[11] Since sexuality is intrinsically amoral, the responsibility of devising our own sexual ethics is up to us. As an ethical field, party to the good life, sexuality is the business of philosophers and especially of practical philosophers. A powerful and puzzling force to contend with in everyday life, sexuality's opacity, senselessness, and inherent incapacity of successfully completing the confused project it aims at, no less than its transgressive nature, have been amply discussed in the philosophic and psychoanalytic literature. However, its successful incorporation within a good life is no small feat, an ambitious goal this chapter aims at. This is all the more important since the various narratives of liberation are entangled in social and political agendas that, counter-intuitively, may obscure the individual's duty to himself. Were we to embrace Montaigne's view, that "it is an absolute perfection and virtually divine to know how to enjoy our being rightfully" (Montaigne 1967 III, chap. 13, 857), we would realize that this "know how" is not only a philosophic adventure of self- and other-knowledge, but also an initiation to wisdom. As such defined, sexuality pertains to philosophers' interest, if not responsibility.

Part IV reconsiders the means for practicing philosophy. Since Socrates, the notions of self-knowledge and dialogue loom large in reflections about the practice of philosophy. Thus, the three chapters comprising this part critically assess the possibility of self-knowledge, given the predominance of the unconscious both in philosophy and in psychology, and of dialogue, both the intra-personal and inter-personal varieties. In Chapter 11, Sigmund Freud's view of the role of the unconscious, Jean-Paul Sartre's criticism of it, and the shortcomings of the latter's alternative are thoroughly examined. My proposal to further self-knowledge through an innovative form of intra-personal dialogue follows (Chapter 12). I further examine in Chapter 13, finally, the conditions for a fruitful inter-personal dialogue rather than a polite exchange of two monologues.

Part V reevaluates, in two chapters, the tools available to philosophical practice. Chapter 14 proposes a method for the practice of philosophy that enables us to take philosophy seriously. It provides philosophic goals and means to implement them, and recommends using philosophy rather than relying on other kinds of counseling for which philosophers do not have the required training.

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[11] I first did so in Amir (2017b), in *New Frontiers of Philosophical Practice* (2017c), among various new directions and topics for philosophical practice this anthology advances.

Chapter 15 addresses the thorny problem of the possibility of self-change or even full-fledged transformation, through philosophical tools, and offers the means for all to pursue such goal in view of attaining the good life. To that purpose, I engage in a critical revision of several themes that are inherent to a philosophical good life. These topics involve the relation between the tragic and the comic, the conditions of self-knowledge, the ability to acknowledge one's ambivalence and the capacity of better deliberation. Additionally, I address the relation between reason and emotions, between joy and suffering, and the conditions for endowing one's life with meaning and for grounding compassion in it. Finally, I clarify the possibility of living with unsolvable conflict and of eventually resolving the conflict that characterizes the human condition. I further advance humor as a potent tool for living well and introduce a new vision of the good life, *Homo risibilis*, as well as detailed exercises for implementing it. The views this chapter introduces answer the requirement that the practice of philosophy may have to enable moderate self-change or full-fledged self-transformation for those who seek it. Moreover, because we are not fully rational, the tool proposed there affords a more efficient implementation of philosophic ideals, including those that are not endorsed in this chapter.

Part VI ("Problems and Benefits") addresses the hurdles philosophical practice encounters by uncovering three questionable assumptions at its core (Chapter 16), but also highlights the unique benefits this field provides to the very discipline of philosophy (Chapter 17). This last chapter calls for a meta-philosophical discussion that reconsiders the divide between theory and practice. In addition, as most students of philosophy do not become professional philosophers, academic philosophers could use philosophical practitioners' experience in sharing philosophy with various audiences. I further propose a criterion of relevance to assess the curriculum and the manner in which one teaches philosophic theories. These devises could facilitate imparting philosophy in ways that enable the audience to appropriate its lessons and would make sure that philosophy, through its revised past theories and its future contribution to contemporary needs, stays firmly in the academe and thrives outside of it as well.

Several concluding remarks, based on two written interviews, sum up my views as shaped by experience in the practice of philosophy, both inside and outside the academe. They disclose my personal path whilst recalling this volume's ideas as well as those advanced in *Rethinking Philosophers' Responsibility* (2017a).

Most of the chapters comprising this book are considerably revised and updated essays and articles published separately over the last fifteen years. Whilst their content aims at academic accuracy, I have rewritten them in an accessible style to engage not only academic and practical philosophers, either students or accomplished scholars, but also professionals in other disciplines, such as in education and the helping professions, as well as the general public.

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CHAPTER ONE

TAKING PHILOSOPHY SERIOUSLY

There are various ways to practice philosophy. This variety may account for the tension between academic and practical philosophers, and among philosophical practitioners. In this chapter, as well as in the remaining of this book, I attempt to reconcile the factions by proposing a view of philosophy and its practice that can tolerate divergences. I explain what taking philosophy seriously means and I distinguish between radical philosophy (perfectionism) and democratized philosophy (meliorism). In the remainder of the chapter, I explicate what meliorism entails by focusing on three topics. First, I assess the significance of abstract thought within the practice of philosophy. Second, I propose an agent-based epistemology of intellectual virtues as an epistemological model suitable for the practice of philosophy. Given the inter-connectedness of intellectual and moral virtues, finally, I advance the view that philosophical practice has a significant moral role to play in democratic and liberal societies.

1. Taking Philosophy Seriously

Taking philosophy seriously means recognizing its potency whilst remaining faithful to its objectives. Two main approaches to philosophy seem not to take it seriously enough. The philosophy professor, who holds that philosophical theory is irrelevant to life, exemplifies one approach. The philosophical practitioner, who believes that philosophical theory is not significant for its practice, exemplifies the other approach.

The philosophy professor, who believes that his discipline is not relevant to life, may not be taking his profession seriously enough. Were he to take seriously his profession as a teacher of philosophy, he would thereby participate in one form of philosophical practice, for good teaching implies appropriating the matter at hand and the ability to communicate the essential in a way that answers the audience's capacities and interests. Imparting philosophical theories without a Socratic emptying of previously held conceptions is hardly possible. In addition, mere theoretical understanding of philosophical theory is no understanding, I argue, not necessarily because of the so-called existential features of philosophy, but because a theory has to be exercised or essayed, as Michel de Montaigne would say (1967), in order to effectively comprehend what it could be.

If this is true, there is no discontinuity between academic philosophy and philosophical counseling.[13] The practice of philosophy can be pictured as if on a continuum, which begins with the successful appropriation of philosophical theories that understanding requires and ends in sharing them with various audiences according to their needs and capacities. Thus, these requirements, which make of philosophy a practical discipline, merely define effective teaching and learning, which naturally assumes the teacher's prior understanding of the material at hand.

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[13] The criticism of academic philosophy did not begin in this century, nor did it begin with the philosophical practice movement. In a way, Socrates initiated it with his criticism of the Sophists; Arthur Schopenhauer rekindled it with his attack on Georg Wilhelm F. Hegel. Michel de Montaigne, Søren Kierkegaard, and Friedrich Nietzsche took part in in it, as well as Henry David Thoreau and Ralph Waldo Emerson. In the twentieth century, we may add John Dewey, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Michel Foucault, the existentialist philosophers, as well as the Spanish-born American philosopher, George Santayana, to the long list of philosophers who were critical of the way philosophy was approached in the academe. Let me elaborate on Santayana, as his views on the matter may be less known. The very discipline of academic philosophy rubbed Santayana the wrong way. "That philosophers should be professors is an accident," he wrote, "and almost an anomaly. Free reflection about everything is a habit to be imitated, but not a subject to expound; and an original system, if the philosopher has one, is something dark, perilous, untested, and not ripe to be taught, nor is there much danger anyone will learn it." Looking back on his Harvard days in *Character and Opinion in the United States* (1921), he spoke of the new breed of philosophy professor who was "very professional in tone and conscious of his *Fach*," "open-minded, whole-hearted, appreciative," but also "toasted only on one side." In "On Philosophers and Philosophy," he notes, "there is a sense in which [William] James was not a philosopher at all. He once said to me: 'What a curse philosophy would be if we couldn't forget all about it!' In other words, philosophy was to him what it has been to so many, a consolation and a sanctuary in a life, which would have been unsatisfying without it. It would be incongruous, therefore, to expect of him that he should build a philosophy like an edifice to go and live in for good" (Santayana 1921, 56-57). More recently, Michel Foucault has rekindled the views of the Greeks, Benedict Spinoza, Nietzsche, and Kierkegaard by saying: "More important, however, than scrutinizing the lives of others, each philosopher must direct critical attention and creative imagination to her own concrete deeds and life-experiences as well as to her own ideas . . . . At every moment, step by step, one must confront what one is thinking and saying with what one is doing, with what one is" (Foucault 1984, 374). Richard Shusterman sums up the views shared by Dewey, Wittgenstein and Foucault by noting that "the disrespect for mere academic philosophizing" stems from the view that "philosophy had a much more crucial, existential task: to help us lead better lives by bettering ourselves through self-knowledge, self-criticism, and self-mastery. Philosophy is more than thought; it is a life-practice where theory derives its real meaning and value only in terms of the life in which it functions, in the concrete pursuit of better living" (1997, chap. 1). The idea of philosophy as "self-help" in the art of living was once philosophy's prime goal, and it remains a worthy one. Yet it may bring a scornful smirk from

The philosophical counselor who believes that philosophical theory is not important is not so different from the professor who does not take philosophy seriously enough. For this counselor does not trust his own discipline, philo-sophy, to bear fruitfully on life's problems and interests. Thus, he emulates forms of counseling taken from other disciplines, such as psychology, New Age theories, and so on. Not to take philosophy seriously is not to trust its potency, not to take advantage of the wealth of wisdom it contains, but rather to sell it short.

Reflecting adequately is the seal that differentiates philosophy from psychology and New Ages theories. The difference between philosophy and psychology lies in the emphasis on reflection: philosophical reflection is general or abstract yet its power derives from this characteristic feature. The difference between philosophy and New Age thought lies in the emphasis on adequacy: adequacy stems from rigor of thought, from arguments that establish the reliability of conclusions. This locates epistemology and logic at the heart of philosophical practice, although papers and articles on practical philosophy hardly address these topics.

Thus, to take philosophy seriously is to be loyal to its objectives. Forms of communication may differ among the consultancy, groups outside the academe, and the classes within the academe, but the objectives have to be the same. Otherwise it is no longer philosophy.

I have found three interrelated objectives of philosophy that we could agree on. First, philosophy aims at truth, at least by *via negativa*, through the eradication of our errors (Popper 1962). This means that the philosopher aims at truth rather than happiness, choosing the former over the latter if he has to.[14] Second, philosophy aims at liberation, even partial,

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most professional philosophers. As one of them writes, "The idea of philosophy as a deliberate life-practice that brings lives of beauty and happiness to its practitioners is as foreign to professional philosophy today as astrology is to astrophysics" (Shusterman 1997, 3). Yet another contemporary philosopher warns us: "Philosophy is a wonderful subject but it does not make a human life . . . Too much of it is not good for a person" (McGinn 1989, vi).

[14] Truth is the philosopher's happiness. Among other classical formulations of this idea, recall Descartes' view (1991, vol. 3: Letter to Princess Elizabeth, 6 October 1645), and more recently, André Comte-Sponville's. The latter states that the

from illusions, preconceptions, and self-centered perception. Third, philosophy aims at wisdom, even if negative, in the sense of realizing that I do not know, yet also of actively finding out what I do not want to know, which results in a better understanding of the human condition. The relation that holds among these objectives seems to be the following: liberation from untruth is the path to wisdom.

To further elucidate these notions, it propose to distinguish between two traditions within philosophy: one tradition may be called perfectionism, or radical philosophy, the other, meliorism, or democratized philosophy. While we may be more familiar with the former, both traditions live on in academic philosophy, and are practiced in the variety of philosophical practices. Both are valid and significant forms of philosophy; however, unawareness of the differences between them results in tension among counselors as well as between practitioners and academics.

Those who are familiar with Eastern philosophy may recognize in this distinction the Western analogue to the main schools of Buddhist thought: on the one hand, the Hinayana school, or small vehicle, which leads to personal liberation, and, on the other, the Mahayana school, or large vehicle, whose goal is to help others achieve liberation. Other ways of describing these alternative approaches could be "radical" *versus* "piecemeal" philosophy, "elitist" *versus* "democratic" approaches, or philosophy that is more oriented towards liberty *versus* philosophy that is more oriented towards equality. Let me elaborate on each of these approaches to philosophy.

2. Radical Philosophy: Perfectionism

> *Unless one is a genius, philosophy is a mug's game.*
> Iris Murdoch, *The Philosopher's Pupil*

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choice between happiness and truth is indicative of philosophers: because we made this choice, we are philosophers, and not the other way around. As human beings, we require happiness, and as philosophers, we are committed to the truth, in the same way that scientists are. However, truth predominates, if we have to choose, otherwise we are no philosophers: "Le philosophe, on s'en doute, fait un autre choix, qu'à vrai dire il ne choisit pas. Ce n'est pas en effet parcequ'il est philosophe qu'il fait ce choix; c'est parce qu'il fait ce choix qu'il est philosophe. Il est l'effet, plutôt que le sujet de ce choix qui le définit . . . Toujours est-il qu'il a 'choisi', lui, doublement la vérité et le bonheur. Comme le savant, il a souci du vrai; et comme nous tous, cette exigence d'être heureux. Mais le vrai prime: s'il faut choisir entre une vérité et un bonheur, il choisit la vérité. Il ne serait pas philosophe autrement" (Comte-Sponville 1993, 199).

Any teacher of the history of philosophy cannot avoid noticing the radical enterprise that philosophy is. If the lecturer does not notice it, his students will not fail to do so. Philosophy is revolutionary, time and again, and for various reasons. It presents itself as an alternative to established religion, and to all other establishments. It is highly critical of society's values: it dismisses the common-sense, non-critical views of regular persons, urging them to examine their lives and not take appearances at face value; it presents itself as an alternative to the common societal views of happiness—riches, pleasure, and power or fame. It requires a conversion to forms of thought and allegiances foreign to most persons. It assumes that radical change is possible through the transformative power of thought, through sole understanding and practice. It is comprehensive, keeping touch with other disciplines but in a supervisory and critical stance, perfectionist and ambitious in answering all worthy needs, including spiritual ones. It prescribes the highest ideals, in morality and ethics: it aims at nothing less than liberty, happiness or peace of mind, and even at philosophic redemption. It is for the few. Rare are those who live according to its requirements and even fewer dare claim that they do.

Consider, for example, Arthur Schopenhauer's description of the requirements of "mere" philosophizing:

> The two main requirements for philosophizing are: firstly, to have the courage not to keep any question back; and secondly, to attain a clear consciousness of anything that *goes without saying* so as to comprehend it as a problem. Finally, the mind must, if it is really to philosophize, also to be truly disengaged: it must prosecute no particular goal or aim, and thus be free from the enticement of will, but devote itself undividedly to the instruction which the perceptible world and its own consciousness impart to it. (Schopenhauer, 1970, *Essays and Aphorisms*, "On Philosophy and the Intellect," section 3)

The perfectionist tradition within philosophy is immensely rich, and as perennial philosophy it redefines itself time and again, being the sole enterprise whose definition and role are subject solely to internal criticism (meta-philosophy is part of philosophy, while meta-psychology, for example, is part of philosophy of science). It was repeatedly dying or declared dead, losing its best minds to the established religions or the sciences, which it helped create, but like the phoenix, it has always been reborn out of its ashes.

You may believe that this philosophical spirit has been forgotten in the time elapsed since Antiquity, during which Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, the Cynics, Stoics, Cyrenaics, Epicureans, and Pyrrhonists may have lost much of their impact. You may change your mind by taking a second look at Benedict Spinoza, Arthur Schopenhauer, Friedrich Nietzsche, Søren Kierkegaard, George Santayana, the existentialists, and the movement called “philosophical practice.”

Those who offer perfectionist teaching have to be themselves on this path; otherwise, they do not understand the content of their teaching. Usually, they avoid presenting themselves as sages, and the path they are pointing at may be reached by shared search. Moreover, contrary to common opinion, they can be pluralists, for various philosophical schools give different definitions of liberty, happiness, peace of mind, and even philosophic redemption. In this tradition, truth is lived more than known, and the appropriate model is that of the sage (see Neville 1978, 47-70).

Perfectionism is for a minority, yet the majority of philosophical schools are of this type. (Even existentialism, which is seemingly a democratization of Nietzsche and Kierkegaard, posits authenticity as an ideal, which, by embracing anxiety, contradicts common views of happiness, and is, therefore, a rare achievement.) Today, the academe’s interest in perfectionism is being revived.[15] When pointing below to philosophy’s limitations in effecting self-transformation, and, thus potentially frustrating its adherents,[16] I am referring to this tradition of philosophy.

3. Democratized Philosophy: Meliorism

I use the term “meliorism” to refer to less ambitious theories than perfectionist philosophies. These meliorist philosophies would better fit common sense as well as the psychological needs and social goals of regular persons, who may be skeptical about the feasibility of perfectionist ends and means. For example, Aristotle’s *Nicomachean Ethics* may qualify as meliorist, if we exclude its tenth chapter, which addresses the few (1941). Among the philosophers who provide melioristic philosophies, we can count Montaigne, David Hume, John Locke, Bertrand Russell, and Karl Popper.

This is the tradition that requires further development, both in the academe and outside of it. A melioristic philosophical practice should be faithful to philosophy’s objectives and methods to deserve the title “philosophic,” and thus differentiate itself from psychology and New Age theories and practices. This means that the objectives proposed above

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[15] See, for example, Hurka (1994) and Cavell (1994).

[16] See Amir (2004b). I will address this topic below (Chapter 16).

(truth, liberation, and wisdom) should be sought through adequate reflection, which, in turn, should be ensured through philosophic methods, such as abstract thought, logic, and epistemology, yet made accessible to what Aristotle calls “the many.”

In what follows, I explain what such a melioristic practice may entail. To that purpose, I first elaborate on the significance of abstract thought within the practice of philosophy. Second, I propose an epistemological model suitable to the practice of philosophy: rather than a belief-based epistemology, I offer an agent-based epistemology of intellectual virtues. Given the inter-connection of intellectual and moral virtues, I finally argue that philosophical practice has a significant moral role to play in democratic and liberal societies.

Before elaborating on these topics, let me briefly introduce them in order to show how they work together. First, because philosophy is an abstract discipline, its practice also calls for abstract thinking. In practicing philosophy, it is best done by moving from the concrete to the abstract and back. By appropriating the insights gained in the abstract, one is faithful to philosophy (abstract thought) as well as to the goals of practical philosophy (the concrete). Rather than being a hindrance, the abstract considered in this light seems to be philosophy’s specific therapeutic tool.

Second, epistemology is the core of philosophy. Its value lies in developing one’s autonomous thinking. By making use of an epistemology of virtues, philosophical practitioners could enhance intellectual virtues, which, to my mind, are what philosophy is about. This argument is closely related to the question-and-alternative-answers method I propose for the practice of philosophy.[17] Let me explain how. Knowledge, as “intelligent development,” is associated to the capacity of adopting additional or alternative points of view. This fits Jean Piaget’s account of the development of thought (1932) and the role that alternative points of view have played in the history of sciences (Holmes 1976). Adopting different points of view fosters epistemic virtues such as impartiality and openness to the ideas of others. Critically assessing different answers develops one’s intellectual sobriety, or the virtue of the careful inquirer who accepts only what evidence guaranties. Additionally, the entire process of a practice of philosophy that is faithful to philosophy furthers the development of the virtue of intellectual courage, which includes perseverance and determination.

Finally, an ethics whose focus is on developing moral virtues, an aretaic ethics, seems to be the moral theory that more easily appeals to persons and professionals of all creeds.[18] Its value lies in developing one's solidarity with one's fellow human beings. Following Russell's Spinozistic ethic (see Blackwell 1985), who said that "one could stretch the comprehensiveness that constitutes wisdom to include not only intellect but also feeling" (Russell 1956, 174), I suggest that developing better feelings is a worthy philosophic goal (Amir 2002; 2004a), best attained through virtue ethics.

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[17] See Amir (2003). I introduce this method below (Chapter 14).

Luckily, the goal of furthering moral virtues[19] need not be pursued independently of the goal of developing intellectual virtues. Feelings and intellectual virtues are interwoven, and their operation shows how blurry the distinction between intellectual and moral virtue really is, a point that is forcibly made by Linda Zagzebski (1996). Spinoza made understanding, which is an intellectual virtue, the key to all the virtues (*Ethics*, part 4, prop. 26), and understanding different points of view brings forth pluralism, tolerance, and acceptance, which furthers solidarity with our fellow human beings.[20]

John Benson sums up my main goal by defining autonomy in a way that makes it both a moral and an intellectual virtue: "The virtue of autonomy is a mean state of character with regard to reliance on one's own powers in acting, choosing, and forming opinions" (Benson 1987, 205). He argues, "Autonomous moral thinking is closely parallel to autonomous theoretical thinking, the one being concerned with what should be done, the other with what is the case. . ." (Benson 1987, 208). Because autonomy is related to both courage and humility, it exemplifies how cognitive and volitional processes are associated:

> To be autonomous in one's thinking calls for intellectual skills, including the ability to judge when someone else knows better than yourself. But it calls also for the ability to control the emotions that prevent those skills from being properly exercised. (Benson 1987, 213)

These three tools of meliorist philosophical practice (appropriating abstract thought in practice, fostering intellectual virtues, and developing more encompassing feelings through moral virtues), could enhance autonomy. This in turn would help to minimize the tension between freedom and equality, which plagues every democratic and liberal society. This worthy goal could be considered the ultimate objective of a democratized philosophical practice. Let me elaborate on what has been succinctly stated so far, beginning with the role of abstract thought in Kierkegaard's philosophy.

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[18] See Oakley and Cocking (2001) and Amir (2010).

[19] See Amir (2003) and Chapter 14 below.

[20] On Spinoza's philosophy, see Chapter 7 below.

A. The Abstract

At the end of *The Concept of Irony*, Kierkegaard writes, "If our generation has any task at all, it must be to translate the achievement of scientific scholarship into personal life, to appropriate it personally" (Kierkegaard 1965, 328). By "scientific scholarship," Kierkegaard means Georg W. F. Hegel's philosophy, which was the dominant philosophy of his time. This quotation designates his task as it differs from Hegel as well as the link that associates him with Hegel (Stewart 2003, 647). The notion of appropriation is clearly at least a part of what lies behind his famous notions of repetition and reduplication.

Kierkegaard was critical of the accepted view of philosophy in the nineteenth century. He thus sought alternative models in Greek philosophy or in religious literature to juxtapose to the then contemporary praxis of philosophy. He echoes in these words Epictetus, who is reported to have said:

> If what charms you is nothing but abstract principles, sit down and turn them over quietly in your mind: but never dub yourself a Philosopher, nor suffer others to call you so. Say rather: He is in error; for my desires, my impulses are unaltered. I give my adhesion to what I did before; nor has my mode of dealing with the things of sense undergone unchanged. (Epictetus 1937, CIX, 157)

For Kierkegaard, abstract thought is significant if rightly used in order to clarify intellectual confusion and to serve the passion of desiring a better way of life. For existential dialectic is concerned also with bringing about reconciliation between thought and being. However, this sort of dialectic achieves this within existence and within the strictures which existence places upon the human being. Kierkegaard describes the means by which this is carried out as "subjective reflection." Subjective reflection, unlike its objective counterpart, proceeds not away from, but toward, existence, namely the existence of the individual human being. It is called "subjective" because it turns towards the "subjectivity," that is, the innermost personal being of the single individual. It is concerned not with establishing a speculative system but with applying the categories of abstract thought to the concrete existence of the individual human being. In *Concluding Unscientific Postscript*, Kierkegaard writes:

> While abstract thought seeks to understand the concrete abstractly, the subjective thinker has conversely to understand the abstract concretely. Abstract thought turns from concrete men to consider man in general; the subjective thinker seeks to understand the abstract determination of being human in terms of this particular human being. (Kierkegaard 1941, 315)

Thus, whereas objective reflection only moves in one direction, namely, away from existence to the abstract and essential, subjective thought moves in two directions. First, it makes the movement of objective reflection. That is, abstract thought is employed to obtain a conception of existence and of the categories that make it up. Secondly, it bends objective reflection back on itself and applies it to existence. A circular movement is created in which thought first moves away from existence but is then turned back and applied to its point of origin. Thus, a dialectical movement is established between existence, the abstract conception of existence, and the existential application of this conception.

A similar movement can be found in ascending Spinoza's three kinds of knowledge and their related emotional states, the first kind being existential and concrete, the second abstract and scientific, while the third is an implementation in particular practical cases of what has been understood only abstractly in the second kind of knowledge (Spinoza 1985).

The significance of this movement in Kierkegaard's thought is twofold. First, subjective reflection provides the individual with the means with which to understand his personal existence. By means of the first movement, namely that of abstract thought, he acquires the concepts with which to understand himself. Thus, in the case of the passage from *Concluding Unscientific Postscript* quoted above, abstract thought provides the individual with a concept of humanity, which he can then employ to interpret and comprehend his own individual humanity. By making the second movement of subjective reflection, that is, by applying the abstract concept of humanity to himself, the individual achieves an understanding of his own humanity. In this sense, then, subjective reflection is a reformulation of the Socratic dictum "know thyself," the process by which the individual comes to achieve a greater understanding of himself (Kierkegaard 1941, 314-16).

Secondly, subjective reflection has an ethical function. That is, it not only provides the human being with the wherewithal with which to interpret his existence, but also provides him with the means with which to develop and improve this existence. For Kierkegaard, the categories of objective reflection are not only forms of thought but are also possibilities. Kierkegaard holds that the process of abstraction employed in abstract thought results in an object or aspect of reality being transferred *ab esse ad posse* (see Law 1993, chap. 3). This is necessary in order to transform an external reality into a thinkable form. These conceptual possibilities constitute not only the basis for thought, but are also possibilities for action. If the individual discovers that his existence does not correspond to his abstract conception of what existence ideally is, he is compelled to “act” to restructure his existence so that it corresponds to this conception.

The question now arises as to how this dialectical process of subjective reflection results in the overcoming of the contradiction between thought and being that existence brings about, and to which Kierkegaard was particularly sensitive. The individual, who posits an identity between them in his own personal existence, overcomes this division. That is, through his application of the categories of objective reflection (thought) to his own existence (being) he brings about an identity: by attempting to live according to his conception of what existence truly is the existing individual brings about an identity between thought and being. This identity is short-lived, for striving rather than reaching a “result” characterizes living. Nonetheless, the identity between thought and being that one reaches in moments of passion is worth striving for.

Kierkegaard’s concept of subjective reflection can be seen as a paradigm for philosophical practice.[21] The movement from the individual and concrete to the general and abstract, and back, is one of the main assets of philosophical practice.[22] The intellectual and ethical functions of this dialectic do define philosophical practice’s main tool, as I see it: abstract thought in the service of individual life.[23]

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[21] On this topic, see Amir, “Søren Kierkegaard and the Practice of Philosophy” (2006b), and Chapter 6 below.

[22] See Amir (2003, 37), and Chapter 14 below.

[23] By temporarily disconnecting the client from his more personal concerns, the abstract allows for a space, sometimes a necessary hiding space, for understanding, and maybe self-transformation, to take place. The abstract as an inward space where thought expands and freedom is gained without the tyranny of personal fear is one of the great therapeutic inventions of philosophy. However, any solution to a problem that would remain at the abstract level is useless. Self-philosophical counseling as well as philosophical counseling for others presuppose some knowledge of the art of shades and light. Some people will perish from too much light, according to Plato (Plato, *Republic*, 1961; Amir 2001); all neurotics, that is, all of us, need the shade, according to Freud (Amir 2006a; 2017); and the value of an individual might well be the quantity of truth (light) she can bear, according to Nietzsche (Nietzsche 1974). I explain how to translate this into the practice of questions and answers in Amir (2003), which describes the method I use in counseling, as well as in Chapter 14 below.

B. Intellectual Virtues

Epistemology and logic are the most powerful tools against the New Age Movement's laxity of thought. A philosophical practice that is faithful to philosophy's objectives has to address epistemological issues. In *Rethinking Philosophers' Responsibility* (Amir 2017), I have argued that philosophical practitioners have an edge over psychologists of all trainings in dealing with moral problems and dilemmas. Moreover, notwithstanding psychology, I emphasized there philosophical practice's ethical role. I would like to stress here its epistemological role and to unite both roles *via* the proposal to use virtue epistemology in philosophical practice. To this purpose, I introduce virtue epistemology and emphasize the interconnectedness of moral and intellectual virtues.

1. Virtue Epistemology

In her groundbreaking work, *Virtues of the Mind: An Inquiry into the Nature of Virtue and the Ethical Foundations of Knowledge* (1996), Linda Zagzebski argues,

> We can distinguish several types of virtue theory by the ways in which they relate the fundamental moral concepts of a virtue, the good, and a right act. A pure virtue theory makes the concept of a right act derivative from the concept of a virtue, although there is more than one way such a theory can relate virtue to the good…. Happiness-based virtue theory and the more radical motivation-based virtue theory are two forms of pure virtue theory that can be developed in ways that adequately handle epistemic evaluation. (Zagzebski 1996, 77)

Almost five decades ago, Roderick Chisholm observed that "many of the characteristics which philosophers and others have thought peculiar to ethical statements also hold of epistemic statements" (Chisholm 1969, 4). In the last twenty years, parallel to a revival of interest in virtue ethics, there has been an interest in virtue epistemology.[25]

Virtue epistemology, as characterized by David Solomon, "would not be belief-based; it would be agent- or end-based in that virtue would be more basic than belief. It would focus on the cognitive set-up of the agent rather than on episodes of cognitive activity in isolation" (Solomon 2003,

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[25] For the renewed interest in virtue ethics, see Amir (2010).

80).[26] In a similar vein, another virtue epistemologist suggests that instead of focusing on static states such as belief and the evaluation of these as justified or constituting knowledge, we might instead focus on evaluating and regulating the activities of inquiry and deliberation and the role of virtues in such evaluation and regulation (Hookway 2003).

Zagzebski summarizes in her introduction (1996) the short contemporary history of the intellectual virtues. The idea of intellectual virtue was introduced into the epistemological literature by Ernest Sosa (1980; see also 1991), but Sosa does no more than mention an association with virtue ethics. Subsequently, "virtue epistemology" has been used as another name for reliabilism, the view according to which the epistemic goal is to form true beliefs and not form false beliefs. The works of Lorraine Code (1987) and James Montmarquet (1986) come closer to linking epistemology with virtue ethics, but neither one derives the concept of epistemic virtue from a background aretaic ethics or pushes the similarities between intellectual virtue and moral virtue very far.

Zagzebski further develops a virtue theory that is inclusive enough to handle the intellectual as well as the moral virtues within a single theory. She argues that intellectual virtues are, in fact, forms of moral virtue, and that intellectual virtue is properly the subject of moral philosophy. This claim is not intended to reduce epistemic concepts to moral concepts in the way that has sometimes been attempted, she argues. Rather, it is intended to extend the range of moral concepts to include the normative dimension of cognitive activity: normative epistemology is a branch of ethics.

A virtue-based epistemology is preferable to a belief-based epistemology for the same reasons that a virtue-based moral theory is preferable to an act-based moral theory (see Statman 1997). Zagzebski notes the current neglect of epistemic values, such as understanding and wisdom, which have been significant in the history of philosophy (Zagzebski 1996, 2, 43-51). These values are especially significant, I should add, for philosophical practice.

Epistemology is a practical activity, according to Solomon:

> Just as moral philosophers find themselves asking epistemological questions, epistemologists are centrally concerned with questions about our practical life. After all, the central problems of normative epistemology are

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[26] Among contemporary philosophers who have written on epistemology, a few seem to be moving in the direction of a radical virtue epistemology: Jonathan Knaving (1992), Linda Zagzebski (1996), and Alasdair MacIntyre (1990). Zagzebski's work has deeply impressed me, thus, my account of epistemology is heavily indebted to her.

> problems about what to do. To believe or not to believe, that is the question—or at least one of them. Even the most avid naturalizers in epistemology must recognize the centrality of evaluations of ourselves and others to our epistemic life. (Solomon 2003, 60)[27]

Among the various forms of epistemology, virtue epistemology seems to be the most practical, and thus highly relevant to philosophical practice. As I have recently elaborated on practical epistemology,[28] I wish to continue here with the relations between moral and intellectual virtues.

2. The Interconnectedness of Moral and Intellectual Virtues

It is a commonplace of Western philosophy to regard human cognitive and feeling processes as distinct and relatively autonomous. At least, it is usually thought that cognition is capable of operating independently of feeling and that it ought to do so in the rational person, whether or not feeling is actually independent of cognition. This part of our philosophical heritage is so strong that philosophers have maintained what Michael Stocker (1980) calls a "purified view of the intellect," long after it was given up by cognitive psychologists and in spite of the fact that a few philosophers like David Hume (1983) and William James (1937) called attention to the close connection between believing and feeling.[29]

Related to the alleged independence of the cognitive and feeling processes is the alleged distinctness of the intellectual and the moral virtues, a position we owe to Aristotle. Although it is no longer usual to draw the distinction in precisely Aristotle's fashion, few philosophers have doubted that the division is deep and important. At any rate, few philosophers have opposed Aristotle's claim that such virtues as courage and temperance differ in nature from such qualities as wisdom and understanding.

One exception is Spinoza, who connected both the passions and virtue with adequate ideas of God's nature, and who made understanding, which is an intellectual virtue, the key to all the virtues:

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[27] Christine McKinnon (2003) argues for the advantages of applying feminist ethics to epistemology since it permits an account of a broader range of cases of knowing than those standardly discussed, in particular, knowledge of oneself and others. She argues that a virtue approach in epistemology is better suited to giving an account of knowledge of persons than traditional approaches.

[28] I refer the reader to Chapter 11, "Intellectual Virtues," in Part V, "Practical Epistemology," in Amir, *Rethinking Philosophers' Responsibility* (2017).

[29] See Zagzebski's discussion (1996, part 1, sec. 3).

> Again, since this effort of the mind, by which the mind, in so far as it reasons endeavors to preserve its being, is nothing but the effort to understand . . . it follows . . . that this effort to understand is the primary and sole foundation of virtue, and that . . . we do not endeavor to understand things for the sake of any end, but, on the contrary, the mind, in so far as it reasons, can conceive nothing as being good for itself except that which conduces at understanding. (Spinoza, 1985, *Ethics*, part 4, prop. 26, parenthetical references removed)

Spinoza has solidly unified the moral and intellectual virtues, as no other philosopher seems to have done.

Hume is another apparent exception to the alleged distinctness of the intellectual and the moral virtues. Hume insisted that the distinction between the intellectual and the moral virtues is merely verbal. Additionally, such qualities of intellect as wisdom, a capacious memory, keenness of insight, eloquence, prudence, penetration, discernment, and discretion should count as among a person's "moral" virtues since they are as much objects of praise as his honesty and courage (*Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*, Appendix 4). Hume also said it is merely a verbal matter whether the class of virtues includes all the human talents and the class of vices all the human defects. Thus, he is using a much broader notion of virtue than that which dominated philosophy both before and after (Appendix 4, paragraph 1). Hume's inclusion of intellectual virtues within the class of moral virtues therefore loses most of its drama.

Julius Moravcsik has argued that Plato makes no sharp distinction between moral and nonmoral virtues, whether in terms of the source of virtue or its function (Moravcsik 1992, 300).[30] Aristotle, however, does make such a division. He makes a further division within the intellectual virtues between those that aim at speculative insight or theoretical knowledge and those that pertain to practical thinking aiming at the production of artifacts or the performance of acts. These virtues are art (*techne*) and practical wisdom (*phronesis*) respectively.

When we consider how entrenched the distinction between moral and intellectual virtue is in Western philosophy, it is remarkable that Aristotle's grounds for distinguishing them are so unpersuasive. Zagzebski challenges these grounds, and in the process addresses the issue of distinguishing "the moral from the intellectual virtues on the grounds that the former but not the latter involves the proper handling of feelings, whereas the latter but not the former involve the proper direction of cognitive activities" (Zagzebski 1996, 146).[31]

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[30] For example, Plato recognized the need for natural feeling and moral rectitude in the apprehension of truth, particularly in moral matters, and gave a dramatic argument for their power in the seventh epistle (Plato 1961, Letter VII, 344a-b, 1961).

Benson defines autonomy in a way that makes it both a moral and an intellectual virtue. As mentioned above, he defines autonomy as "a mean state of character with regard to reliance on one's own powers in acting, choosing, and forming opinions" (Benson 1987, 205). He argues,

> Autonomous moral thinking is closely parallel to autonomous theoretical thinking, the one being concerned with what should be done, the other with what is the case . . . . Autonomy is a proper degree and kind of reliance on others, what is proper being determined by the end of the activity in which one is engaging. (Benson 1987, 208-9)

This virtue, Benson says, is closely allied to courage, as well as to humility, and it shows the connection between cognitive and volitional processes:

> To be autonomous in one's thinking calls for intellectual skills, including the ability to judge when someone else knows better than yourself. But it calls also for the ability to control the emotions that prevent those skills from being properly exercised. (Benson 1987, 213)

Various philosophers, such as Zagzebski (1996), Karl Popper (1965), and his followers (Agassi and Jarvie 1987), may have their own lists of intellectual virtues and their own agenda of how to further them.[32]

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[31] For examples of how intellectual virtues or vices involve feelings, see Blaise Pascal's argument that self-love weakens the love of truth and leads to self-deception, the deception of others, and hypocrisy. These can be seen as partly intellectual vices (*Pensées*, 1961, 348). Two of the few important philosophers in the history of philosophy who discuss intellectual vice, Francis Bacon and John Locke, associate intellectual failings with the passions and the moral vices. Both Bacon and Locke emphasize the connections between moral and intellectual character in their enumerations of the ways things can go astray in human thinking. See Bacon, *Novum Organum*, Book I, aphorisms 41-44, 49, 52-62; Locke, *On the Conduct of the Understanding*, sec. 3, 208-9; also *Essay* IV.20.

[32] See Karl Popper (1963) and his followers' (1987) critical rationalism for a method of improving thinking for scientists as well as nonprofessionals. I elaborate on Popper and Agassi's views in the following chapters. See also Zagzebski's detailed many-staged method for developing intellectual virtues (Zagzebski 1996, 152-55). The stage after *akrasia* is intellectual self-control, she writes: "At this stage, a person has to stop herself from accepting inadequate evidence or poor testimony or lapsing into ways of speaking and reasoning of which she disapproves. However, unlike the previous stage, she does it successfully. Still, she

However, philosophical practitioners may join in the debate that contemporary virtue epistemologists have initiated. Sharing the experience they gather from various publics, they may help to determine the intellectual virtues most needed today by citizens of different nations.

C. Moral Virtues

The past forty years "have witnessed a dramatic resurgence of philosophical interest in the virtues. The charge that modern philosophical thought neglects the virtues, once apposite, is by now outmoded; and the calls for a renewed investigation of virtue and virtue ethics are being answered from many quarters" (Velazco y Trianoski 1997, 42).[33]

Daniel Statman characterizes virtue ethics as a "rather new (or renewed) approach to ethics, according to which the basic judgments in ethics are judgments about character" (Statman 1997, 7). Virtue theory argues that the aim of the moral life is to develop those general dispositions we call the moral virtues, and to exercise and exhibit them in the many situations that life sets before us. This approach to ethics is recognized as a viable alternative to act- and principle-centered and consequentialist theories.

Aristotle is the philosopher who is best known for his emphasis on the cultivation of the virtues. When Aristotle is not taken as the prime model of virtue ethics, the classical philosophers generally are: Martha C. Nussbaum, for example, argues that these philosophers are relevant to our lives on the basis of the resemblance she notices between Antiquity and our times (Nussbaum 2000, 41). New Age movements, theories, and practices represent a thoroughly different influence, which urge us to search for inspiration in non-Western and pre-Christian civilizations.[34]

Interesting as these cultures may be, I believe that the applicability of Pagan or Pre-Christian values to contemporary issues is problematic. For

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lacks the virtue because she finds it difficult to weigh evidence properly, judge authority reliably, or reason with care. Her behavior may be correct, but it is not grounded in a 'firm and unchangeable character,' as Aristotle characterizes the person who truly possesses virtue. The final stage is the intellectual virtue. Examples include intellectual carefulness, perseverance, humility, vigor, flexibility, courage, and thoroughness, and the virtues opposed to wishful thinking, obtuseness, and conformity" (155).

[33] See Velazco y Trianoski (1997, 53n1), for a relatively updated list of recent work on the virtues.

[34] For the New Age movement's characteristics, see Hanegraaff (1998), Heelas (1996), and York (1995).

all Westerners are post-Christians in the same way in which we are all post-Freudian. That is, whether or not we are Christians, we are part of a civilization that is heir to the Christian world. Consequently, we are all profoundly influenced by Christian values. This may be the reason for the revival of interest in Aquinas. To the Aristotelian list of the moral virtues, he added the theological virtues of charity, hope, and faith, as well as various Christian virtues, such as humility.[35]

Spinoza is a virtue ethicist who has been neglected in the literature. However, I see clear advantages for Spinoza's approach over Aquinas and Greek and Roman philosophers', because he is a post-Judeo-Christian philosopher. He is also the most Eastern of Western philosophers (with the possible exception of Arthur Schopenhauer), his thought often being compared to Buddhism (e.g., Wetlessen 1979). He could pass for a New Age theorist, sharing the broad appeal of this movement's goals, but without the logical and epistemological deficiencies that plague the New Age movement's theories (see Grossman 2003).[36]

Russell's philosophy echoes Spinoza's ethical goals (see Blackwell 1985). Russell seems to believe in the necessity of developing an impersonal feeling that would be constitutive of wisdom. He writes:

> Our age is in many respects one which has little wisdom, and which would therefore profit greatly by what philosophy has to teach. The value of philosophy is partly in relation to thought and partly in relation to feeling, though its effects in these two ways are closely interconnected. On the theoretical side it is a help in understanding the universe as a whole, in so far as this is possible. On the side of feeling it is a help toward a just appreciation of the ends of human life. (Russell 1956, 178)

He argues that the development of impersonal feeling is closely parallel to the development of impersonal thought. At least equally important, the former also ought to result from a philosophical outlook. This is so because our desires, like our senses, are primarily self-centered. The egocentric character of our desires interferes with our ethics, Russell explains. However, "in the one case, as in the other, what is to be aimed at is not a complete absence of the animal equipment that is necessary for life, but the addition to it of something wider, more general, and less bound up with personal circumstances" (see Kuntz 1986, 107ff). Thus,

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[35] For the revival of interest in Aquinas' ethics, see Casey (1990) and Ramsey (1997, especially 177n1). Ramsey maintains that "just as mainstream ethics a generation ago consisted largely of debate concerning utilitarianism and Kantian theories, it is now for the most part concerned with debate over virtue ethics and versions of objectivist or natural law ethics [principles]" (Ramsay 1997, x).

[36] I elaborate on the contemporary relevance of Spinoza's virtue ethics in Amir (2010), which can be found with revisions in Chapter 7 below; and in Amir (2012), an article that has been reprinted in various places (2015a; 2015b; 2017).

> What philosophy should do in matters of feelings is very closely analogous to what it should do in matters of thought. It should not subtract from the personal life but should add to it. Just as the philosopher's intellectual survey is wider than that of an uneducated man, so also the scope of his desires and interests should be wider. A man who has acquired a philosophical way of feeling, and not only of thinking, will note what things seem to him good and bad in his own experience, and will wish to secure the former and avoid the latter for others as well as for himself. (Quoted in Kuntz 1986, 107ff)

Wisdom involves affects, Russell argues, because comprehensiveness alone does not constitute wisdom. There must also be "a certain awareness of the ends of human life." For example, the best way to overcome the fear of death, according to Russell, is to make your interests gradually broader and more impersonal, until "bit by bit the walls of the ego recede, and your life becomes increasingly merged in the universal life" (Russell 1956, 52).[37] Russell rightly notes, however, that it is "by no means uncommon to find men whose knowledge is wide but whose feelings are narrow." These men lack what he refers to as "wisdom" (Russell 1956, 174).

Liberating one's thought frees from an intelligence focused on narrow interests. My proposal of a method developed around questions and critically assessed alternative answers, which does not shun abstract thought, develops one's intelligence. The effect of such an approach is the furthering of intellectual virtues—an essential role of philosophy. An agent-based epistemology of virtues is more suited to philosophical practice's goals and means than a belief-based epistemology. Moreover, because intellectual virtues are moral virtues, a virtue epistemology harmonizes with the ethical endeavor that philosophical practice is. Thus, a virtue ethics, equipped to harmonize reason and feelings, be it in the Spinozean way I propose, also echoed in Russell's philosophy, or in any other way, best serves the ethical goals that can be furthered in the philosophic consultation. Finally, an ethics of virtues avoids the skepticism that plagues postmodern morality and circumvents the aesthetic turn in ethics that is so fashionable. Allow me to elaborate on this final argument in favor of virtue ethics.

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[37] Various philosophical counselors have argued that the main goal of philosophical practice is to educate the emotions (e.g., Shibles 1998; 2001). I have followed Russell's view that "the good life is one inspired by love and guided by knowledge" (Russell 1957, 56) and have argued that developing better feelings is a worthy philosophical goal (e.g., Amir 2002; 2004a).

Virtues and vices are currently out of fashion. Morality has become a matter of taste in postmodern thought, a shift that has been deemed the aesthetic turn in ethics. Discussing morality is not fashionable in non-postmodern circles as well. Thus, scholars such as Bernard Williams (1985, 29) and Richard Wollheim (1984, 215-16) emphasize the difference between ethics, which has a connotation of individual development, and morality, which has an undertone of obligation.

The *bon ton* today is to avoid issues of values by talking about aesthetic self-realization (e.g., Shusterman 1992; 1997). Aesthetic self-realization follows the Nietzschean injunction to become what one is. It is predicated on an individual becoming that eschews the confines of a definition of human nature. A criticism is in order here, however: the content of aesthetic self-realization involves an immense effort to better oneself. The motivation and on-going effort that are needed cannot be justified on aesthetic grounds alone, because arbitrary self-fashioning would not provide the discipline required. When one compares the philosophical aesthetic ideal of self-realization with other aesthetic ideals, the difference is the ethical nature of the former, as Dewey rightly notices.

Ethics should not be narrowed down to morality. An ethic of virtues, which shuns rules and obligations, avoids this pitfall, and represents, therefore, a viable alternative to a philosophical aesthetic ideal of self-realization. Moreover, I consider this kind of ethics a better answer to the question, what is the good life, because it provides a justification and a possible motivation that the aesthetic ideal cannot provide.

Concluding Remarks: Note on a Contemporary Debate

A meliorist philosophy should be faithful to philosophy's objectives (truth, liberation, and wisdom) and methods (adequate reflection, using abstract thought, logic, and epistemology), yet made accessible to all. The three tools of meliorist philosophical practice proposed in this chapter (appropriating abstract thought in practice, fostering intellectual virtues, and enhancing more encompassing feelings through moral virtues), will hopefully enhance the autonomy of those who aspire to it. Furthering autonomy helps to minimize the tension between freedom and equality that plagues every democratic and liberal society. This worthy goal may be considered the ultimate objective of a democratized philosophical practice.

If meliorism and perfectionism were both loyal to philosophy's aims and methods, the same virtues championed in perfectionism would also predominate in meliorism. The difference would be that the high ethical ideals of perfectionist philosophy, as well as its demand for a radical break with the presuppositions of ordinary society, would be discarded.

This proposal amounts to a palatable program of effective self-integration along life's way. It can be an overarching goal for philosophical practice, considered as the discipline of putting philosophy into practice.

Defined as such, meliorism also inscribes itself within a contemporary academic debate. Richard Rorty's proposal of dividing the self into two heteronymous domains, the public moral domain, and the private "ironic" or perfectionist domain (Rorty 1989), may prove unnecessary. This is significant insofar as Rorty's proposal stands in the way of intellectual integrity. In contradistinction, Stanley Cavell defends the conscious cultivation of distinctive self-perfection. He explains that his goal "is not simply to show that [self-perfection] is tolerable to the life of justice in a constitutional democracy but to show how it is essential to that life" (Cavell 1994, 56). Meliorism, more adapted to the many than perfectionism, yet as essential to the life of justice in a constitutional democracy, may more easily fulfill Cavell's goal.

Meliorism's aim is to provide the citizen, myself included, with necessary tools to live autonomously in a liberal democracy. The considerations on which its necessity can be established involve a political debate about the virtues of negative and positive liberty (Berlin 1969). They also require taking a stand in the controversy about the assistance societies should give to their members to help them meaningfully fulfill their liberties by developing their capacities.[38]

Having legal rights may not be sufficient; one should have the means to exercise those rights. The right to the "pursuit of happiness" is empty, if the tools to develop and harmonize an individual's intellectual and moral capacities are lacking. In attaining intellectual and moral integrity, we become autonomous not only *de jure* but also *de facto*. Unless philosophers help in this endeavor, democracy will not be valued enough to survive its tensions. Neither is it sufficient to write on these issues, as some academics do. An active and involved philosophical practice helps minimize the tension between liberty and equality that plagues every liberal society.

Though a perfectionist in my personal life, in my practice— unless asked specifically to provide perfectionist tutoring—I am a meliorist. I offer the means to ameliorate one's thinking as its bears on life with the overarching goal of attaining to moral and intellectual integrity. The advance may be partial but it is proportionate to the effort invested. If the philosophical practitioner concentrates her efforts on that which is relevant to the majority of persons, she would succeed in her task because she offers a useful service to her community. To the contrary, the power a philosopher may assume and its necessary consequence—heteronomy for those who listen to him—seem to encapsulate the danger of perfectionism in consultation or private tutoring, where the philosopher serves as the ideal to be emulated.

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[38] Such a controversy can be staged between Dewey and Rorty. Richard Shusterman introduces this debate in *Practicing Philosophy: Pragmatism and the Philosophical Life* (1997, 71-5).

By accepting the humbler task of meliorism, we minimize the risks of power and personal influence, we fulfill an indispensable role in society, and we realize an important educational goal. One should act where one is needed and not where one fancies.[39] At the very least, respectability for philosophical practice depends on this ethic.

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[39] For a diagnosis of contemporary needs that require philosophical work, see the first chapter in Amir, *Rethinking Philosophers’ Responsibility* (2017). Updated versions of many of my works, to which I refer in this chapter as well as in the following ones, can be found in that book or further below in this one.

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PART I

PHILOSOPHERS AS MENTORS AND APPRENTICES

CHAPTER TWO

THE NEED FOR A TEACHER

Where both are friends, it is right to prefer Truth.
Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*

Except from some notable exceptions, philosophers have not written much on philosophers' education. When they do write on education, they focus on children. We often forget that philosophy itself is (young) adult education. Thus, philosophers' writings on education do not exhaust the profound relationship between these two fields.

As philosophers often wished to educate humanity, they approached rulers who were able to influence humanity. Indeed, philosophers were often part of societal power systems. However, the education of the powerful differs from the education of philosophers. One reason is that philosophers tend to see themselves as self-taught and to emphasize their autonomy and radicalism. This in itself may explain why relatively little has been written on the education of philosophers.

As can be gathered from the history of philosophy, however, for all their self-education and desire for autonomy, would-be philosophers need teachers. A teacher can take many forms: a book, an imaginary model, or a living example. No less than the student needs a teacher, the teacher needs students, though for different reasons. When the student is lucky enough to find a mentor and the master an apprentice, the relationship is usually problematic or turns out to be so after a while. This relationship is further complicated by aspirations to autonomy on both sides, and by the intimate bond that commonly forms between teacher and learner.

This chapter addresses the understudied subject of the education of philosophers by philosophers. Because the would-be philosopher seems to need other philosophers, the understudied topic of the mentor-apprentice relationship is of interest.

1. Philosophers on Education

Philosophers' views on education are mainly on children's education. However, philosophers have usually viewed children as different from adults. In addition, as a rational activity, philosophy was not considered suitable for children.

On the Stoic view, for example, infants and children up to the age of about fourteen are constituted very differently than adults (Laertius, *Lives*, 7, 55-56; see Becker 1998). Benedict Spinoza's view on the matter is remarkable. "A man of advanced years," he writes in the *Ethics*, "believes their [infants'] nature to be so different from his own that he could not be persuaded that he was ever an infant, if he did not make this conjecture concerning himself from [the example of] others" (*Ethics*, part 4, proposition 39, scholium). Additional examples include Immanuel Kant, who thought that children are not completely rational (Herman 1998) and Aristotle, who held that good habits are all the moral education we can give to children.[40] Plato changed his mind twice about Socrates' predilection for engaging children in philosophical discussion. Several early Platonic dialogues portray Socrates as eager to engage young minds in philosophical inquiry. By contrast, the Socrates of the *Republic* warns of the danger of introducing young people to elenctic discussion, reserving philosophy for mature minds. In the *Theaetetus*, Socrates again engages a young person in the deepest of philosophical enquiries, now with a warning that such enquiry must be conducted fairly.

In *The Philosophers*' *Child*, Susan Turner and Gareth Matthews concluded that "following this development we may ourselves reflect on both the intellectual potential children embody, as well as the safeguards that may be necessary to keep philosophy from corrupting young minds" (Turner and Matthews 1998, 4). Matthews, who was instrumental in the movement known as philosophy for children, continued this line of thought in *Philosophy and the Young Child* (1980) and *The Philosophy of Childhood* (1994). Philosophy for children has since developed to become a worldwide movement.

I do not wish to discuss here the merits of introducing philosophical themes and methods to children. Following the tradition of the history of philosophy and the biographical material I have found, I assume in this chapter that philosophy is (young) adult education.[41] On such a view, therefore, little can be drawn from writings on the education of children in order to understand philosophers' education.

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[40] Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, bk. 2, chap. 3, 1104b4-1104b26; bk. 10, chap. 9, 1179b26.

[41] Some etymological comments may be helpful, since etymology is always revealing. Amélie Oksenberg Rorty notes (1998, 11n1) that "education" derives

Philosophers' writings on education strictly speaking do not exhaust the important relationship philosophy maintains with education. Amélie Oksenberg Rorty begins her fascinating *Philosophers on Education: New Historical Perspectives* thus:

> Philosophers have always intended to transform the way we see and think, act and interact; they have always taken themselves to be the ultimate educators of mankind. Even when they believed that philosophy leaves everything as it is, even when they did not present philosophy as the exemplary human activity, they thought that interpreting the world aright—understanding it and our place in it—would free us from illusion, direct us to those activities that best suit us. Even pure philosophy—metaphysics and logic—is implicitly pedagogical. It is meant to correct the myopia of the past and the immediate. (Rorty 1998, 1)

She rightly concludes,

> Philosophical reflection on education from Plato to Dewey has therefore naturally been directed to the education of rulers, to those who are presumed to preserve and transmit—or to redirect and transform—the culture of society, its knowledge and its values. (Rorty 1998, 1)

Most philosophers in the past were not solely philosophers by training and profession. Whether due to that fact or not, they were part of the power system: many were tutors,[42] still more were advisers,[43] activities that time

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from *e-ducare*: to bring out, draw forth and from *e-ducere*: to lead out. Its double etymology suggests both drawing something out of the learner, and leading the learner out to a new place. *Erudire* typically suggests taking someone or something out of a rude or crude condition. Our "doctrine" and "indoctrinate" come from *docere*, to teach; and, of course, *disciplina* covers both senses of the English "discipline." "Instruction" comes from *in-struere*: "to build into." Hence, the German *Bildung* to shape, form, cultivate. The German *erziechen* gives: to bring up or train. The verb "to school" derives from the Greek *schole*: discuss at leisure, and *scholion*: a commentary, interpretation. The French use "formation" as well as "education." Greek has the general term *trophe*: rearing, and *paideia,* which refers to the bringing up of young children, both surprisingly limited.

[42] Plato tutored Dionysius, Aristotle taught Alexander the Great, and Locke was a tutor of the third Earl of Shaftsbury, later a philosopher in his own right. Hobbes was the tutor of the Cavendish family from his graduation until his death in 1679. Hegel spent most of his life as an educator, and between 1794 and 1800, he was a private tutor.

and again conflated the distinction between philosophers and sages.[44]

This may give the false impression that philosophers were successful in educating rulers. Neither Plato nor Aristotle had much influence on humanistic education in Rome. Isocrates (436-338 BC), who established and headed an alternative higher education school to the Academy and the Lyceum held that role. Mediated by Quintilian's *Institutio Oratoria* (*The Training of an Orator*), written in the first century AD, Isocrates was very influential on humanistic education in the Renaissance (Machiavelli's *The Prince* [1513], Castiglione's *Courtier* [1528]) and the Modern Period. His

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[43] Centuries before the movement called "philosophical practice and counseling," philosophers were advisers. Xenophon's *Memorabilia* shows Socrates giving advice, preaching the virtues of agreement between brothers, pointing out the advantages of self-control to those who seemed much in need of it. According to Donald Dudley, the cynic Crates gave services as a "public consultant" to the Athenian people (Dudley 1967, 52). Many cynics followed this example in Antiquity. In the Hellenistic period, Stoics, Epicureans, and Skeptics all agreed upon peace of mind as philosophy's main objective. The Romans appreciated this practical approach. Plotinus gave advice and reconciled many disputes.

Cicero defined philosophy as the art of life, a view that became predominant during the Renaissance, at least among cultivated men. It can be found as late as the seventeenth century: John Selden, for example, considered philosophy as nothing else but prudence, or the art of life.

Many philosophers have offered practical advice in relation to their philosophy. An example is John Locke in *Some Thoughts concerning Education*. Leibniz's views on the duty of the powerful to hear philosophers' advice are discussed below. Bertrand Russell is another well-known example of a philosopher ready to give advice on the conduct of life.

Not all philosophers agreed on the importance of this role of the philosopher, not even in the Hellenistic period. Already Ariston, a Stoic of the third century BC, argued that the business of philosophy was to produce the good actor for the play of life (Laertius, *Lives*, VII, 160), not to coach him in separate roles. He rejected not only Logic and Physics, but also one branch of ethics, the study that gave advice on the conduct of marital affairs, on the management of servants' affairs, and so on (von Arnim, 1903-1905, 50 358). Cleanthes in particular seems to have devoted attention to it. Ariston rejected such precepts as improper for philosophy. They were too numerous and too particular to be embraced under the laws of Philosophy, which should be brief and universal (see Dudley 1967, 100-101).

[44] Is there a difference between a philosopher and a sage? John Passmore, in trying to elucidate the meaning of "philosophy," suggests that the advice philosophers give "rests upon, but does not constitute, the successful completion of a philosophical task. In this respect, the philosopher differs from the sage: not uncommonly the whole content of the sage's 'wisdom' consists in advice" (Passmore 1967, 219). On sages and philosophers, see Passmore (1967, 217-19), Woodruff (1998, 14-31), and Neville (1978, chap. 3: "The Sage").

conservative and traditional view emphasized the legacy of culture (language, literature, poetry, history and music) with the orator as its ideal, in contradistinction to the Platonic-Aristotelian tradition whose main interests were science and philosophy and its prominent representative the philosopher.[45]

2. Teaching Philosophers

Is there a difference between teaching would-be politicians and philosophers? To take some well-known examples: was there a difference between Plato's teaching at the Academy and his tutoring of Dionysius? Between Aristotle's lectures at the Lyceum and the education of Alexander? We know there was. Already Xenophon differentiates between Socrates' teaching of philosophers and his teaching of gentlemen.[46] Plato portrays Socrates as failing with Alcibiades and Lysis, both renowned as ambitious politicians, for their unwillingness to espouse philosophy as a complete way of life (Scott 2000, chap. 4). Only in the case of Plato's views in the *Republic* do the philosopher and the ruler's education coincide.[47] Already in Aristotle, there is a difference between the theoretical life, fit for the philosopher, and the active life, fit for the politician (*Nicomachean Ethics,* bk. 10).

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[45] This is not the whole story of Renaissance education. Rorty notes in her introduction to *Philosophers on Education*: "In radically different ways, St. Ignatius Loyola (1491-1556), Martin Luther (1483-1546) in "Letter to Mayors. . . On Behalf of Christian Schools" (1524) and "On the Duty of Sending Children to Schools" (1530), and Desiderius Erasmus (c.1469-1536) in *Education of the Prince* (1516) developed new measures of integrity, new criteria for the unity of the outer and inner man…. Loyola's *Spiritual Exercises* (1526/1556) is a handbook for spiritual directors, who are charged with reconstituting the minds—the senses, imagination, desires, and so the will—of the faithful" (Rorty 1998, 5).

[46] Xenophon focuses on how Socrates "took care that his associates be self-sufficient [*autarkies*] in the actions appropriate to them" by providing them with whatever knowledge was "appropriate for a gentleman" (*Memorabilia*, 4.7.1). It becomes clear in the discussion that Socrates' own self-sufficiency was of a different character than the self-sufficiency of his gentlemanly associates. Socrates "taught them up to what point the properly educated gentleman should be familiar with any particular subject" (*Memorabilia* 4.7.2) but his own knowledge often exceeded this limit (see O'Connor 1994, 169).

[47] At the end of Plato's *Republic*, philosophic inquiry is reserved for the few, the well-tested or well-educated people. Zhang LoShan (Rorty's pseudonym) sums up the education they get: Beginning with "children's pastimes," myths, music (*Republic*, 3.398-403), and gymnastic training (*Republic*, 3.409-11), and then mathematics (arithmetic, plane and solid geometry), astronomy, and harmonic theory (7.521-37), persons with both passion and aptitude for philosophic devotion are introduced to dialectic (*Republic*, 7.531-40). LoShan rightly concludes, "But

Two examples from modern times indicate that there is a difference between educating politicians and philosophers. Thomas Hobbes' education of generations of young Cavendishes was centered on the practice of rhetoric. Richard Tuck explains:

> This was the essential technique for young men who, through the accident of birth, were going to play a major role in the councils of the kingdom. In a summary of Aristotle's *Rhetoric*, which he wrote for his pupils, Hobbes described the practice of rhetoric as resting "on the common opinions that men have concerning *Profitable* and *Unprofitable*; *Just* and *Unjust*; *Honourable* and *Dishonourable*…."[48] The skilled orator or writer would manipulate the existing opinions of his audience in order to win them round to his own point of view, and Hobbes devoted a great deal of effort to showing his young charges how they could win victory at the council table or in Parliament. (Tuck 1998, 149)

When advising philosophers, however, he urged them to attend consciously to their own differentiation in terms that are akin to self-creation:

> If you will be a philosopher in good earnest, let your reason move upon the deep of your cogitations and experience, those things that lie in confusion must set asunder, distinguished and every one stamped with its own name set in order; that is to say, your method must resemble that of creation. (Hobbes, *Works*, 1, 13; quoted in Mintz 1962, 18)

To take another example, Patrick Reily (1999) reports that Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz wrote a letter on the education of a prince.[49] Later on, he discussed his own education in letters he wrote to the French Platonist Remond.[50] However, Reily notes,

> He never wrote a substantial essay on the education of that class of intellectuals that (he thought) should give enlightened counsel to those among "the great" who are more "powerful" than "reasonable": "Those to

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unless we take the whole of the Republic to exemplify it, Plato does not offer a description of dialectic, let alone an analysis" (LoShan 1998, 37).

[48] Harwood (1986, 41); quoted in Tuck (1998, 155n2).

[49] Leibniz, "*Letter on the Education of a Prince*." In *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*, edition of the Berlin-Brandenburg Academy of Sciences (Berlin, Darmtadt, Leipzig, etc. 1923-), 4th ed., vol. 3 (1987), 542-57.

[50] Leibniz, "Letters to Remond," in C. I. Gerhardt, 1875-1890.

> whom God has given reason without power . . . have the right to be counselors [while the powerful] must listen patiently, and not throw good counsels to the winds."[51] Since Leibniz was, or considered himself, largely self-taught, he may have thought that the education of independent thinkers was too individual and idiosyncratic to permit useful generalization. (Reily 1998, 191-92)

Leibniz considered his autonomy as a thinker the result of his self-education and of his focus on novelty in each science, even before comprehending its established content. His reward, he said, was double:

> First, I did not fill my head with empty and cumbersome teachings accepted on authority of the teacher instead of sound arguments; second, I did not rest until I traced back to the issues and roots of every teaching and had penetrated to its principles. By such training, I was enabled to discover by my own effort everything with which I was concerned. (Leibniz 1969, 222)

At first sight, philosophers' education seems to be mainly self-education. This may explain why not much has been written on teaching philosophers. Although a journal named *Teaching Philosophy* exists, the kind of educational relationship a philosopher has with his close student may more appropriately be called an apprenticeship. This relationship is hardly described in the literature, as far as I know, except for two instances. Gregory Landini's recent monograph on *Wittgenstein's Apprenticeship with Russell* (2007) contains no material on the relationship between the two thinkers; in David Edmonds and John Eidinow's *Wittgenstein's Poker* (2001), however, much information is given about how this relationship went sour (39-53). The second instance I have in mind is Joseph Agassi's invaluable monograph on the years of his apprenticeship with Karl Popper (1993). It enables us to understand better the advantages, dangers, and possible tragic outcomes of this kind of relationship. This study is especially interesting since Agassi is himself now someone to whom the titles of the chapters in his *A Philosopher's Apprentice: In Karl Popper's Workshop* may apply, such as "The master's class" or "At the feet of the great thinker."[52]

Looking back at the history of philosophy, some examples of such relationships can be found. The Socratics, both early (Aeschines, Plato,

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[51] Leibniz, *Grundriss eines Bedenckens von Aufrichtung einer Societät in Teutschland*, in *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*, IV (fourth series), 1, 530-31, 1923.

[52] This is especially interesting to me as I have been his apprentice for many years, during the time he was my Doctoral Thesis adviser, but also before and after.

Xenophon) and modern (Popper, Leonard Nelson, and Agassi) address the issues involved in teaching philosophy, as do the Cynics and other Hellenistic philosophers. St. Augustine's view of the teacher inside and its modern alternatives (Cartesians, Naturalists, and Freudians) are also an important source. In modern times, the views of Francis Bacon, Michel de Montaigne, René Descartes and Spinoza are all relevant to the education of philosophers. The third Earl of Shaftesbury, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Søren Kierkegaard, all nostalgic for Ancient philosophy as a radical call to change one's whole personality, contributed to the subject. Some information on other philosophers' views of the matter can be drawn from letters and scattered remarks, the kind of material that usually finds its way into biographies.

One common theme in these sources is the philosopher's autonomy. Philosopher Ben-Ami Scharfstein, who wrote a unique book on the psychology of philosophers, *The Philosophers: Their Lives and the Nature of Their Thought*, emphasizes the philosopher's interest in creating recognizably personal extensions of himself. Thus, the philosopher demands autonomy or "the right to constitute himself imaginatively or intellectually as he pleases." He "would expect a person of this kind to be stubbornly individual in what most concerns him and to resist all encroachments on his self-expression" (Scharfstein 1980, 89).

Scharfstein gives many examples of the early origin of philosophers' autonomy and of the ways in which they often demanded and exhibited it. He lists the proud independence that characterized Socrates; the "elbowroom in all directions" that Montaigne needed; the detachment from philosophical tradition to which Descartes strove; the distance from community that Spinoza desired; Hobbes' need, even when young, "to prove things after" his "own sense"; Locke's hatred for a "slavish temper"; David Hume's decision, born in illness and depression, to depend on his own reasoning alone; George Berkeley's resolve to be his own man; Kant's obstinate freedom and advocacy of freedom; Friedrich Schelling's axiom, "The beginning and end of all philosophy is—freedom"; Nietzsche's exclamation, "Independence of soul! . . . No sacrifice is too great for that"; Wittgenstein's satisfied remark, "It is good that I did not let myself be influenced"; Edmund Husserl's view that everything in true philosophy must be established by the philosopher's own thought, the "radical attitude of autonomous self-responsibility which the meaning of a philosophy demands," and so on (Scharfstein 1980, 89).[53]

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[53] Montaigne, "On Vanity," (1956, 740); for Hobbes, see Mintz (1962, 2); for Schelling, see Margoshes (1966); Nietzsche (1974, aphorism 98); Wittgenstein, (1978, 11); Husserl (1931, 29). I have written on the desire for autonomy, its lack,

For all his autonomy, however, the would-be philosopher seems to need other philosophers. The rest of the chapter examines the mutual need of philosophers, the student's need for a teacher and the mentor's need for an apprentice.

3. The Would-Be Philosopher's Need for a Teacher

The would-be philosopher may be lonely, isolated in his natural surroundings. The encounter with philosophy provokes a crisis, or helps resolve a crisis. Philosophers are so different from their peers, some afraid that they are mad, that they have a great need for a parent-like teacher, "a friend." Various philosophers describe their conversion to philosophy, many times precipitated by an encounter with a philosopher or a philosophy book.

The teacher can take many forms. First and most common in the history of philosophy, one can learn about philosophy from writings. Many philosophers read and reacted to one philosopher, with whom they "dialogued," even if the latter was dead. Some examples are St. Augustine with Cicero,[54] Spinoza with Descartes,[55] Johann Gottlieb Fichte with Kant's *Critique of Practical Reason* (Heimsoeth 1923, 27-32), the third Earl of Shaftesbury, who abandoned his tutor John Locke for Epictetus and Marcus Aurelius (Voitle 1984, 13), and Nietzsche, who found Arthur Schopenhauer's *The World as Will and Representation* in a second-hand bookstore.[56]

However, reading may not be enough. Nietzsche insists on the significance of the philosopher's personality. He describes his yearning to "discover a philosopher to educate me, a true philosopher whom one could

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and its relevance for the encounter between a philosopher and an aspiring philosopher or client in Amir (2003; 2004).

[54] St. Augustine described what happened to him while reading Cicero's *Hortensius*: "Suddenly every vain hope became empty to me, and I longed for the immortality of wisdom with an incredible ardour in my heart . . . 'Love of wisdom' is the meaning of the Greek word *philosophia*. This book kindled my love for it" (*Confessions* 34.7-8).

[55] Descartes, according to Colerus, was Spinoza's *Leermeester* (Freudenthal, 1899, 39; quoted in Nadler ([1999, 13).

[56] Nietzsche describes thus his encounter with Schopenhauer's book: "I do not know what demon whispered to me, 'Take this book home with you' . . . . I threw myself into the corner of the sofa with the newly acquired treasure and began to allow that energetic, gloomy genius to take effect on me . . . . Here I saw sickness and health, exile and refuge, hell and heaven" (Hollingdale 1973, 51).

follow without any misgiving because one would have more faith in him than one had in oneself" (1983, *Untimely Mediations*, 2, "Schopenhauer as Educator," 139). Looking for "moral exemplars and models" (1983, 132), like "a son being instructed by his father" (1983, 134), he discovers Schopenhauer:

> I had discovered the educator I had sought for so long. But I had discovered him only in the form of a book, and *that was a great deficiency. So I strove all the harder to see through the book and to imagine the living man* whose great testament I had to read and who promised to make his heirs only those who would and could be more than merely his readers: namely his sons and pupils. (Nietzsche 1983, *Untimely Mediations*, 2, 36; italics added)

He further explains:

> I profit from a philosopher only insofar as he can be an example . . . this example must be supplied by his outward life and not merely in his books—in the way, that is, in which the philosophers of Greece taught, through their bearing, what they wore and ate, and their morals, rather than what they said, let alone by what they wrote. (1983, *Untimely Mediations*, 3, 136-37)

A role model is therefore important for a philosopher. Nietzsche, like all those who are nostalgic for Ancient philosophy's requirement of complete transformation, is right in insisting on life details. Thus, James Conant argues in "Biography and Philosophy":

> There is a distinctively philosophical role for biography to play in the practice of ancient philosophy . . . . One must have some understanding of the lives that the authors of Sceptical, Stoic or Epicurean texts aspire to lead in order to understand such texts. One way of acquiring such an understanding is, while reading such texts, through imaginatively entering into the conception of how one ought to live that the texts themselves presuppose. (Conant 2001, 44n9)

Bertrand Russell has noted the significance of role models in Plutarch's famous *Lives*. In ancient Greek and Roman times, all biography contained an element of philosophical biography, which aimed to highlight that which was exemplary in such a life. Thus, for the ancients, lives could not be evaluated independently of philosophical considerations.

The role model may be imaginary. The Stoics, who found it hard to point to a living embodiment of their ideal, recommend, "Lose no time in setting before you a certain stamp of character and behaviour to observe both when by yourself and in company of others” (Epictetus 1937, CLXIV, 175).

The founder of Stoicism, however, was lucky enough to begin with a book that led him to a living example. As Diogenes Laertius tells us (*Lives*, VII, 2-3), when Zeno was reading the second book of Xenophon’s *Memorabilia* in an Athenian bookstore, he asked the owner where men like Socrates could still be found. Crates happened to pass by, and the owner, pointing to him, said to Zeno, “There, just follow that man.” Zeno did precisely that, and thus became Crates’ disciple.

If in luck, then, one can learn from a living philosopher. Philosophers are often persuasive presences, mentors, even saints. Socrates was extraordinarily attractive to his disciples, including Plato. As Plotinus’ loving disciple, Porphyry, tells us, Plotinus searched for a philosophical mentor. His failure to find someone adequate depressed him, until an understanding friend “sent him to Ammonius, whom he had so far not tried. He went and heard him, and said to his friend, ‘This is the man I was looking for.’ From that day on he stayed continually with Ammonius” (Plotinus 1966, 9). Plotinus, too, proved to be a magnetic philosopher-father, who inspired such devotion that “many men and women of the highest rank, on the approach of death, brought him their children, both boys and girls, and entrusted them to him along with their property, considering that he would be a holy and god-like guardian” (Plotinus 1966, 25, 31).

Searching hard and travelling far to find a teacher was common practice in Antiquity, as Diogenes Laertius tells us (*Lives*, 7: 310). Indeed, Hellenistic writers tried to establish uninterrupted successions of philosophers by classifying them as teacher-pupil relationships. This means that we cannot count on biographies or anecdotes for telling us the truth about successions or about the relations between teacher and student.

I must pass over the Middle Ages and ignore India and China. To all these cultures, Scharfstein tells us, “the saintly philosophical mentor is an indispensable figure” (Scharfstein 1980, 8). Moving to Modern Europe, the real or apparent saintliness (or heroism) of some its philosophers has been far more influential than is evident from the prosaic biographical words allotted to them in the usual history of philosophy. According to Reinhold Bernhard Jachmann, while lecturing on morality, Kant “was almost worshipped by his students, who took every opportunity of letting him know it . . . . People used to wait attentively to see him as he crossed the courtyard” (translated in Klimke 1951, 36, 38; quoted in Scharfstein 1980, 398n4). Though Schopenhauer never knew Kant personally, he regarded himself as his true disciple and inheritor. To those who venerated him, G. E. Moore was surely the philosopher-saint, while Wittgenstein was the philosopher-demon. Russell, too, could inspire veneration.

I hope these examples have sufficiently established the would-be philosopher's need for a teacher. It remains now to be seen whether this need is mutual.

4. The Philosopher's Need for Students

Does the teacher need the student? What for? Is it for securing the teacher's immortality, as David Blacker, following Plato, has intimated (Blacker 1997)? Is it for furthering his own education, as Socrates did? Is it for soothing the teacher's doubts by convincing others to share his worldview, as many philosophers have done? Is it for alleviating his solitude that a philosopher shares his views, even at the risk of being killed when coming back into Plato's cave? Does he feel a responsibility to propagate the truth? Does the truth come with an imperative to be shared? Is teaching a gift to others? If yes, of which kind?

In the history of philosophy, some philosophers-teachers depended on their students more than others: without their students' writings, we would not have known them. To take a few examples, the Socratic dialogues reveal Socrates, as does Timon's account of Pyrrho of Ellis; Arrian wrote Epictetus' *Discourses*, and most of Aristotle's texts survived thanks to his students' notes. If a philosopher writes, the student may be nevertheless significant, as significant as non-verbal communication is for promulgating one's ideas. Non-verbal communication between individuals takes place when they are in intimate contact. Its more apparent effects on the history of philosophy are through the faithful disciples who propagate a philosopher's ideas and, sometimes, his mannerisms.

Epictetus emphasizes the teacher's dependence on his students:

> There is an art of hearing as well as of speaking . . . one who proposes to hear philosophers speak needs a considerable training in hearing . . . . Show me what good I am to do by discoursing with you. Rouse my desire to do so . . . . Thus we also have certain natural desires, aye, and one that moves us to speak when we find a listener that is worth his salt: one that himself stirs the spirit . . . show yourself worthy or fit to *hear*, and then you will see how you will move the speaker. (Epictetus 1937, LXXXI, 147-48; see also *Discourses*, third book, chap. 23)

The philosopher who believes he understands is at odds with his surroundings. Tension is created because his achievement has come at the price of his isolation from those who uncritically accept societal values.

He may therefore need to communicate with others, yet on the condition that they share his views. In this sense, philosophy is a medium for mutuality. Spinoza writes:

> It is part of my happiness that many others should understand as I do, and that their understanding and desire should be entirely in harmony with my understanding and desire. (Spinoza, *Treatise on the Emendation of Intellect*, section 14)

Human mutuality is more difficult to achieve and human happiness more distant without understanding, which is passed on by means of philosophical persuasion.

I may think that if you approve of my ideas, you are indirectly approving of me. As you state your disagreement, I feel the hint of physical tension. Thus, persuasion can be seen as a form of attempted mutuality, which is disturbed in the end by resistance. Resistance expresses, among other things, my need to assert myself rather than yielding to others' thought. Because the need for intellectual self-assertion is so strong in creative thinkers, it is likely to deafen them to whatever is inconsistent with their own thought.

The resistance to persuasion may have yet another cause. Philosophers, writers, and their likes may themselves be hard to persuade just because their persuasive energies are directed against their own concealed doubts. Scharfstein highlights the self-doubts exemplified in the behavior of Descartes, Hegel, Husserl, Wittgenstein, and Russell. The sometimes-truculent self-assurance they have expressed and their stubborn attempts to persuade may have been meant to still their own doubts (Scharfstein 1980, 6-7).

What about Socrates? His alleged self-sufficiency in both Plato and Xenophon's writings[57] has raised an interesting discussion. If Socrates was a paradigm of self-sufficiency, why was so much of his philosophical activity bound up with relationships to other people? Why were Socrates' lovers attractive to him?

In addressing these questions, the renowned Socratic scholar, Gregory Vlastos, focuses on Socrates' epistemological reasons for caring about other people. Noting the importance of dialectic and elenchus to the Socratic conception of philosophical understanding, Vlastos maintains that Socrates was interested in finding support for the doctrines on which he based his life. Leaving aside any pious duties of general benevolence, on

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[57] See Scott (2000, 128n20, chap. 4, 218-19, chap. 5) for the former and O'Connor (1994) for the latter.

Vlastos' final view Socrates desired partners in elenctic argument who could be fellow-seekers after moral truth (Vlastos 1991, 177; see O'Connor 1994, 152n3).

Gary Alan Scott advances another explanation of the teacher's self-sufficiency: teaching may be a pure gift. Indeed, Socrates portrays himself in Plato's *Apology* as the god's gift to the city. In addition, following Nietzsche's interest in teaching as a spiritual gift, Marcel Mauss, Georges Bataille, and Jacques Derrida show an interest in the topic of gift giving. Scott concludes his discussion of their views by asserting, "Socrates' gift undercuts the (false) dichotomy between self-regard and other-regard, egoism and altruism" (Scott 2000, 232n13). The charge of egoism, arising from Socrates' frequent claims to be benefitting himself by practicing philosophy in the way he does, is not a fatal counterclaim against the purity of his gift.

This reading answers the Nietzschean criticism of Socrates' alleged dependence on his students (*Twilight of the Idols*, "The Problem of Socrates"). Nietzsche, however, creates Zarathustra in contradistinction to his view of Socrates, as an example of an overflowing generosity that generates the teacher's spiritual gift. This is how he describes it:

> The gift-giving virtue is the highest virtue. Verily, I have found you out, my disciples . . . . You force all things to and into yourself that they may flow back out of your well as the gifts of your love. Verily, such a gift-giving love must approach all values as a robber; but whole and holy I call this selfishness. (*Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, part I, chap. 22, "On the gift-giving virtue," 1)

According to Nietzsche, the teacher (Zarathustra) takes in order to benefit his students.

To conclude, teachers may need students but only of a certain kind. Students need teachers but for other reasons. The needs may be mutual but not necessarily similar or even compatible. The mutual but dissimilar needs of philosophers, of the would-be philosopher for a teacher, and of the mentor for an apprentice, may be at the origin of the problems such relationship often create.

5. Problems between Mentor and Apprentice

Various problems may arise between a philosopher-mentor and a philosopher-apprentice. I have identified three related issues that involve personality worship, an erotic bond that is misused, either by the teacher (sexual abuse) or by the student (falling in love with the messenger rather than the message), and relationships that eventually go sour.

A. Personality Worship

Personality worship is not foreign to philosophers. Hegel was fortunate with his disciples, who venerated him as “a philosophical world saviour” (Rosenkranz 1971, 383). We saw above that Kant, G. E. Moore, Wittgenstein, and Russell were also idolized. This was ancient practice: The Pythagoreans, who were the first to describe themselves as philosophers (according to a tradition deriving from a disciple of Plato, Heraclides Ponticus), attributed everything they created to Pythagoras.

As early as the end of the fourth century, the Academic and Peripatetic style of philosophy seemed to be the exception. Anthony Long, a prominent scholar of the Hellenistic Period, notes that the “Guru type of Greek philosopher,” whose principal concerns were ethical, was common at that time. Those philosophers did not belong to a monolithic group. However, Long maintains that the early Academic and Peripatetic emphasis on systematic discussion and written exposition can be sharply distinguished from Stilpo, Crates, and others’ informal and more individualized teaching. Another characteristic Long highlights is that “the followers of Epicurus and Pyrrho were alike in treating their leader as a quasi-divine and unique discoverer of… [equanimity’s] grounds” (Long 1978, 84n15). So were Plotinus’ followers.

Along these lines, in *A History of Cynicism*, Donald Dudley maintains, “Philosophy brought to the masses inevitably differed from the Philosophy of Plato and Aristotle; from the noble quest to satisfy the curiosity of the intellect it has descended to become Daily Strength for Daily needs” (Dudley 1967, 53). This kind of practice may be potentially dangerous as it causes dependence between the philosopher and his audience.

Whether Socrates was such a Guru is debatable. Xenophon and Plato picture a Socrates who inspired his associates with a passionate desire to imitate him. However, he seemed to push his interlocutors towards a crisis, a shameful public display of their ignorance, while seducing them in the first place as the potential answer to their innermost desires and ambitions.[58] Further discussion of Socrates brings us inevitably to eroticism.

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[58] See Morrison (1994), O’Connor (1994), Scott (2000).

B. Eroticism

In her groundbreaking work on the role of biographical anecdotes in antiquity (2004), Ava Chitwood remarks that the student-teacher relationship in philosophical biography is often presented as a love affair between two philosophers, a relationship that is not precluded by age differences. She explains that biographers generally attempt to make the information about their subjects concrete and personal; thus,

> Philosophical influence becomes a love affair, much as philosophical differences become a feud. The terms and their implications (*paides*/*errates*) owe much, according to the great Greek scholar, Karl Dover, to Plato's "exploitation of the Athenian homosexual ethos as a basis of metaphysical doctrine and philosophical method." (Dover 1972, 16; quoted in Chitwood 2004, 11).

However, Chitwood's explanation does not exclude the possible eroticism of the mentor-apprentice relationship. Some of the accounts I gave express the not-un-erotic love of disciples for their teachers. Moreover, love can work more directly in making its philosophic conversions, as in the case of Socrates, the wonderful old exemplar of the personal and philosophical *eros* as one. Charles Kahn notes the significance of Socrates' eroticism already in Aeschines' Socratic dialogues (1994), earlier than Plato and Xenophon's well-known depictions of Socrates as the master of erotics. Another example is Hipparchia (c. 300 BC), who converted to Cynicism when she fell stubbornly in love with Crates (Laertius, *Lives*, 1, 399).

Love, potency, pregnancy, birth—these are common terms used to describe creativity. As Scharfstein argues, an actual connection exists between sexual and otherwise creative life (Scharfstein 1980, 98-99). Some modern philosophers have regarded their love for a woman as decisive, not only for their personal lives, but for their philosophy as well (examples are Friedrich W. J. Schelling's Caroline, Auguste Comte's Clothilde, John Stuart Mill's Harriet).

One of the potential dangers of the eroticism of the mentor-apprentice relationship is referred to today as "transference." In *Socrates as Educator*, Scott claims that Plato's dialogues repeatedly exemplify the danger of falling in love with the messenger and not the message. The critique of discipleship that Plato builds into his portrayal of Socrates underscores the risks of using charismatic figures and methods that rely heavily upon imitation and upon *ad hominem* argumentation. Perhaps this is also the main reason, in dramatizing more than two dozen of Socrates' innumerable conversations, that Plato shows the philosopher succeeding only momentarily or in small measures with select interlocutors. More pronounced success might only trivialize what is at issue in his approach to these youths and lead readers to underestimate the odds against the popularization of philosophy. Socrates' modest success might also minimize the risks of misappropriation to which even Socrates, who proclaims not to teach, nevertheless remains vulnerable.

Time after time, Socrates interlocutors are shown falling in love with the philosopher instead of with philosophy. Scott argues that this may be a problem endemic to the role of the philosophical exemplar, in which Plato casts him; but this problem may threaten all teachers and mentors in the process of nurturing others. He further notes that Plato wrote these dialogues in such a way as to illuminate the problem we now call "transference" and to show how closely the *eros* that can lead one to philosophy is related to honor-love (*philotimia*), spiritedness (*thumos*), and the desire to get more than one's fair share (*pleonexia*) (see Scott 2000, 176-77). This is the student's potential misuse of the erotic relationship.

The teacher's misuse is abuse. While Socrates was free from it, this may not always be the case. Yet this subject is rarely publicly debated. Hazel Rowley's recent *Tête-à-tête* is an example of the sexual use a philosopher (Sartre, in this case) made of his followers (Rowley 2006).

The erotic bond that may be inseparable from teaching and learning is prone to different kinds of misuse, either by the teacher (sexual abuse) or by the student (falling in love with the messenger rather than the message). However, the relationship can go sour for other reasons as well.

C. Relationships Go Sour

Paul Valerie wrote, "Philosophy cannot suit anyone except the person who creates it, and even in him it is always in an inchoate stage," the stage of always being born (Valerie 1973, 593, no. 1927). Some people have a natural resistance to ideas other than their own. Leibniz said that one is violently disturbed when compelled to follow the thoughts of someone else (Leibniz 1969, 152-53). Kant also tells us of the great difficulty he has in grasping the ideas of other philosophers (To Reinhold, March 28, 1794, in Kant 1972, 662), as does Husserl (Spiegelberg 1965, 90). The difficulty in following others is the converse of the intensity of thought in their own direction and in response to their own needs. Even apart from such creative resistance, a philosopher is naturally more difficult to persuade than a nonprofessional is, as he lives an intellectually competitive life.

When in spite of such difficulties, philosophers become allies the relationship can go sour. For when a mutual opponent is absent, the allies' differences grow more apparent. The criticism levelled by an ally may strike as hard as that levelled by a member of our family, who resembles us, shares our sensitivities, knows our weak and sore spots, and enters into our lives in every way.

Let us consider some examples. Descartes' relationship with his disciple, Henricus Regius, also called Henri le Roy (or, de Roy), began to sour when Descartes required that everything Regius wrote be approved by Descartes, and Regius desired to be both Cartesian and independent (Descartes 1970). Grown old in battle, Kant praised those of his disciples who had remained loyal, deploring the "ludicrous passion for originality" that has misled other disciples, such as Fichte (Saner 1973, 13; chaps. 6, 7; 203-4). Husserl, who revered his own teacher, Franz Brentano, painfully abandoned him and went his own way, only to perpetuate bitter relationships with his own disciples, Eugen Fink, for example (Spiegelberg 1965, 2, 740, n125). Nietzsche's prophet, Zarathustra, entertains ambivalent relations with his followers, hating his friends and urging his students to leave him:

> Go away from me and guard yourselves against Zarathustra! And better still: be ashamed of him! Perhaps he has deceived you.
>
> The man of knowledge must be able not only to love his enemies but also to hate his friends.
>
> One repays a teacher badly if one remains only a pupil. And why, then, should you pluck at my laurels?
>
> . . . . You had not yet sought yourselves when you found me. Thus do all believers; therefore, all belief is of so little account.
>
> Now I bid you lose me and find yourselves; and only *when you have all denied me will I return to you.*[59]

The relationships within the circle of Popper's followers has been notorious for their violence. Agassi's autobiography, *A Philosopher's Apprentice: in Karl Popper's Workshop*, is loaded with emotions: aggression, ambivalence and melancholy (1993). Agassi himself follows Eastern teachers' practice by reacting violently to students who refuse to be autonomous by clinging dependently to him: I am not your mother, he says (Fuks 2008). Wittgenstein, once an apprentice to Russell, grew to dislike his mentor (Edmonds and Eidinow 2001, 39-53). Both Georg Henrik von Wright and Norman Malcolm's testimonies of Wittgenstein repeat the themes of sectarianism among his students, the pain it caused him, and the failure he felt as a teacher. Because he exemplifies most of what can go wrong in the mentor-guru type of philosopher, I quote both testimonies to conclude this chapter:

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[59] From Nietzsche's *Zarathustra*, quoted in *Ecce Homo*, forward, 4; see *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, part 3, chap. 11, "On the spirit of gravity," 2; part 1, chap. 22, "On the gift-giving virtue," 3; see *Gay Science*, Prelude in German Rhymes, 7.

> There grew much unsound sectarianism among his pupils. This caused Wittgenstein much pain. He thought that his influence as a teacher was, on the whole, harmful to the development of independent minds in his disciples. I am afraid that he was right. And I believed that I can partly understand why it should be so. Because of the depth and originality of his thinking, it is very difficult to understand Wittgenstein's ideas and even more difficult to incorporate them into one's own thinking. At the same time the magic of his personality and style was most inviting and persuasive. To learn from Wittgenstein's without coming to adopt his forms of expression and catchwords and even to imitate his tone of voice, his mine and gestures was almost impossible. The danger was that the thoughts should deteriorate into a jargon. The teaching of great men often has the simplicity and naturalness which makes the difficult appear easy to grasp. Their disciples usually become, therefore, insignificant epigones. The historical significance of such men does not manifest itself in their disciples but through influences of a more indirect, subtle, and often unexpected kind. (Von Wright, quoted in in Malcolm 1984, 17)

Malcolm's *Ludwig Wittgenstein: A Memoir* echoes this experience:

> He believed that his influence as a teacher was largely harmful. He was disgusted and pained by what he observed of the half-understanding of his philosophical ideas, or a tendency towards a shallow cleverness in his students. He felt himself to be a failure as a teacher. This, I believe, was a source of constant torment to him. (Malcolm 1984, 53)

Concluding Remarks

I have investigated in this chapter the mutual need of philosophers, of the would-be philosopher for a teacher, and of the mentor for an apprentice. The fruitful outcome of those not necessarily similar needs is complicated by the aspirations to autonomy of both teacher and student and by the strong erotic bond the tradition commonly ascribes to learning and teaching. Thus, such a relationship is not devoid of dangers. I have identified three related problems that may arise between a philosopher-mentor and a philosopher-apprentice. These include personality worship, an erotic bond that is misused either by the teacher (sexual abuse) or by the student (falling in love with the messenger rather than the message), and a relationship that goes sour usually because of both teacher and student's needs for autonomy, the teacher's need for influence and the student's growing need for independence.

Various philosophers have attempted to avoid the potential dangers I have enumerated in the mentor-apprentice relationship, either by educating for self-education or by pushing the student away at the appropriate time. These include the Socratics, both ancient (Aeschines, Plato, Xenophon) and modern (Nelson, Popper, Albert Einstein, Agassi), the Cynics and their counterpart Eastern teachers (such as Zen and Taoist masters), early Modern philosophers, philosophers of the Enlightenment, and those like Shaftesbury, Nietzsche, and Kierkegaard, who were nostalgic for the Ancients' view of philosophical education as complete transformation. However, further discussion of these contributions will await the next chapter.

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CHAPTER THREE

TEACHING SELF-EDUCATION

This chapter addresses the means to enhance self-education in view of avoiding the problems the mentor-apprentice relationship may create. In the previous chapter, I have identified three related problems that may arise between a philosopher-mentor and a philosopher-apprentice. These include personality worship, an erotic bond that is misused either by the teacher (sexual abuse) or by the student (falling in love with the messenger rather than the message), and a relationship that goes sour usually because of both teacher and student's needs for autonomy, the teacher's need for influence and the student's growing need for independence.

Various philosophers attempted to avoid the dangers identified above. Among them, we can count the Socratics, both Ancient (Aeschines, Plato, and Xenophon) and Modern (Leonard Nelson, Karl Popper, Albert Einstein, and Joseph Agassi), the Cynics, and their Eastern counterparts, such as Zen and Taoist masters. Later, Early Modern philosophers, philosophers of the Enlightenment, and those thinkers, like the third Earl of Shaftesbury, Friedrich Nietzsche, and Søren Kierkegaard, who were nostalgic for the ancients' view of philosophical education as radical transformation, attempted to curtail the possible dangers involved in teaching.

The three following sections introduce three answers to the question the chapter addresses, what are the means to enhance self-education? Each answer begins with Socrates as the supreme philosophic example of both the autonomous individual and the consummate teacher.

The first answer regards philosophical education as a gift. Beginning with Socrates, this view has been further developed by Nietzsche. Later on, following the contribution of Marcel Mauss' analysis of the "gift," it became the topic of a (post-)modern ethical debate involving Georges Bataille, Jacques Derrida, and Jean Baudrillard.

The second answer regards philosophical education as a teacher-less education. Beginning again with Socrates, this view was reprised by Shaftesbury in the eighteenth century and by Kierkegaard in the nineteenth century, and was endorsed by modern Socratics such as Popper, Nelson, and their follower, Agassi.[60] In another key, Socratic education evolved into the view that philosophers should not have human teachers at all, as can be seen in St. Augustine's interpretation of Christ as the teacher within and in some modern counterparts of it. Socrates' notorious irony as a means to further teacher-less education has been reprised as humor in Shaftesbury and Kierkegaard's Socratic endeavors.

Socratic irony is also at the origin of the Cynics' sarcasm, later attenuated into humor by Crates; coupled with unconventional teaching methods, such as violence and humiliation, Cynics' educational tools pertain to the third and final answer to the question this chapter addresses. The final answer includes such diverse examples as Cynic teachers, Zen Masters, and Nietzsche's advice. They can be subsumed under the title "unconventional methods to promote autonomy and further self-education." Let us begin with the first answer, which considers philosophical education to be a gift.

1. Philosophical Education as a Gift

Can education be a gift? Could it liberate the student from debt and the teacher from dependence, thus making the relationship easier and avoiding its becoming sour? In the history of philosophy, two examples of philosophic education as a free gift stand out: first, Socrates, who famously saw his activity as a gift to the city, and second, Nietzsche's Zarathustra, who insists on his overflowing virtue as a teacher, inspiring thereby a renewed discussion of the gift of education by Mauss, Bataille, and Derrida.[61]

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[60] On Shaftesbury as a precursor of some features of Popper's Critical Rationalism, see Amir (2016a) and (2016b).

[61] The ethical Nietzschean concept of gift giving has recently been the focus of interest in various disciplines, and in ethics, it has reached the status of a key concept. See for example, Berking (1999), especially part IV, "Morality and Society," and Schrift (1997). Alan D. Schrift writes, "The theme of the gift, then, can be located at the center of current discussions of deconstruction, gender, ethics, philosophy, anthropology, and economics. It is . . . one of the primary focal points at which contemporary disciplinary and interdisciplinary discourses intersect" (Schrift 1997, "Introduction: Why Gift?" 3). Readers interested in economy should consult in the anthology Schrift edited the contributions of Hélène Cixous (148-73), who proposes a "feminine" economy of gift and generosity, and Pierre Bourdieu (1997a; 1997b), who considers the question of the gift to be ultimately a *political* question.

A. God's Gift to the City

All discussion of educational gifts must begin with Socrates. In the *Apology*, he publicly announces for the first time what had previously been implicit in his daily practice. Considering himself "the god's gift" to the Athenian people, the greatest benefactors of all (36c-d), he warns the jury against the prosecution of the case (*Apology* 30d-e). Throughout the Socratic dialogues, Plato makes sure Socrates is incorruptible. Indeed, Plato makes Socrates' incorruptibility—by money, gifts, honors, and even sexual favors, as the encounter with Alcibiades illustrates—a prominent feature of Socrates' characterization. This way of describing Socrates and, by extension, philosophy, as Socrates practices it, appears to be extremely important to Plato's portrayal. The incorruptibility of Socrates is also vital to his characterization of the philosopher's role as a *paideutes*, a lover, and a gadfly in the city. Thus, it should be no surprise that Plato has Socrates argue in his defense that, far from benefitting personally from his practice in the city, he has neglected his own affairs in order to do the god's work, always refusing to accept a fee (or to enrich himself in any other conventional way) for his services (see *Apology* 23c, 31c). As Gary Alan Scott explains,

> This stance is vital to his philosophical practice, because it keeps Socrates uniquely free in several important respects: to converse with whoever he wishes, to be able to speak the truth, to be unconstrained by his interlocutor's evaluation of him or any need to make him feel good, to be mastered by no one, and to be in no one's debt. (Scott 2000, 31)

Furthermore, Scott maintains that because Socrates considers himself a gift from god as well as the city's greatest benefactor, and Plato locates him "in a distinctive gift economy instead of a market economy based upon exchange." Thus,

> The connection between two essential characteristics of Plato's Socrates—the notion of the philosopher as a benefactor and the characterization of his gift as being incomparable with the kinds of goods that can be exchanged––underwrites the contrast that Plato is drawing between Socrates' behaviours and practices, on the one hand, and prevalent conventions, on the other hand. (Scott 2000, 170)

Taking Aristotle as a source for the conventional ethos governing Athenian practices of gift exchange in the fifth and fourth centuries, the logic governing the benefactor/beneficiary relationship in Aristotle's account oblige the other or render him indebted.[62] It will be helpful at this point to recall Aristotle's view of the philosopher as a friend.

B. Philosophy as Friendship

When discussing friendship in the *Nicomachean Ethics*, philosophy comes up in Aristotle's discussion of how to repay benefactors. Aristotle compares the Sophists' use of knowledge for honor and gain to the relationship between the true philosopher and his student. The latter is a friendship based on excellence in which the philosopher bestows the greatest benefits for the sake of the friend (1164a33-b6). The philosopher is willing to be a benefactor to those who are his inferiors; he is even, Aristotle suggests, the benefactor by excellence, and the philosophic friendship that Aristotle presents as paradigmatic of virtuous friendship is not that between two mature philosophers but that between a philosopher and his student. Nor is Aristotle idiosyncratic in this choice: both Plato and Xenophon portray Socrates as the friend of his students, but they do not present him as the close friend of other philosophers, and are reticent even about depicting conversations between Socrates and those students such as Plato who were most nearly his equals.[63]

Protagoras was not a true philosopher because he used knowledge in the service of gain, and he was not a true friend because he accepted only students who could pay and gave them only what they paid for. A true teacher, like Aristotle's teacher, Plato, in contrast, must have real affection for, and interest in, his students. Although not his equals, they must be sufficiently promising and sufficiently akin to him that he can take pleasure in their company and find the activity of teaching them inherently rewarding. Aristotle does not explain just how teaching may be helpful for the philosopher, but Plato's own portrayal of Socrates suggests that even more important than the value of being pressed to get one's thoughts in the clearest possible form may be the value of watching what happens to others' souls as they confront certain arguments. Moreover, in the case of

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[62] See Aristotle, *Eudemian Ethics*, bk. 7, chap. 3: 1238b22-26; *Nicomachean Ethics*, bk. 4, chap. 3: 1124b10-13; bk. 9, chap. 7: 1168a9-12; bk. 8, chap. 13: 1162b6-13; bk. 9, chap. 1: 1164a33-b7. See also Scott (2000, chap. 1, section 1c).

[63] In her excellent discussion of Aristotle's view of friendship, Lorraine Smith Pangle remarks that it would be surprising if mature philosophers who knew and respected one another did not develop some sort of friendship based on mutual admiration, a sense of kinship, and shared benefits from discussions. Evidently, the greater degree of activity and warmth, and surely the more decisive benefits, would be found in a teacher-student friendship (Pangle 2003, 134).

Socrates, whatever profit he gained from these discussions seems to have been supplemented by the enormous pleasure he took in the simple act of conversing with promising young people.

Why, then, does Aristotle suggest that we owe some reward to the philosophic teacher? The philosopher has not acted for a reward and does not need one. While the gratitude and affection of a good student will surely please him, they are not crucial to him, and being wise, he can have little concern for honor. Perhaps the strongest sense in which gratitude and affection are fitting is that they are a good man's natural responses to someone who has helped him. Indeed, one betrays an impoverished soul if one does not respond in this way. If honoring the philosopher is fitting, the chief reason must be that it is good for us, or good for others who may take notice to recognize excellence:

> One [should] make a return to those with whom one has studied philosophy; for their worth cannot be measured against money, and they can get no honour which will balance their services, but it is perhaps enough, as it is with the gods and with one's parents, to give them what one can. (Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*, 9.1; quoted in Pangle 2003, 222)

The discussion of philosophy as friendship is closely associated with the issue of taking fees for philosophical discussions, an issue which I now address.

C. Fees

In taking fees for philosophizing, analogous to taking fees for a sophistic education, the philosopher, like the sophist, makes himself and his expertise available to anyone who can pay. Moreover, in so doing, the philosopher loses the right to refuse his services or to terminate them once begun (see Blank 1985, 10-20). In short, the philosopher loses his autonomy. Making philosophical truth readily available to all who can and wish to pay for it assimilated the philosopher to the sophist, who has been criticized as making philosophy available to all those who can pay. One begins to discern the analogy between sophists and prostitutes (*pornai*), which Xenophon drew explicitly (*Memorabilia* 1.6.13).

Why is prostituting oneself, making oneself available to all those who can pay, especially odious if one is a philosopher? The answer lies in the nature of philosophy, both the activity and its subject matter, at least as Diotima taught it to Socrates in Plato's *Symposium*. Philosophy, the search for truth, is an act of friendship and love between willing partners and Socratic conversation is the spiritual or intellectual analogue of physical intercourse (*Symposium*, 203bff; see also Blank 1985, 22-24). Given this erotic conception of the philosopher's activity, to take a fee for it is antithetical to the enterprise itself. It would "commodify" what cannot be commodified. Further, it would entail extreme bad faith on behalf of the philosopher. To be a prostitute taking a fee for "love" is one thing, to be a philosopher engaged in a joint venture for truth is something quite different. To conflate the two is illicit, a sort of category mistake; it is to bring together a false ideal of love with a true one. At least in the whorehouse one is (hopefully) aware of its illusory status as an abode of love. In Socratic conversation there are not, however, or ought not to be, any illusions. One must say what one thinks, without encumbrance, and not dissimulate.[64] Moreover, to demand a fee for this is to demean it, to assimilate philosophy to a craft-like instrumentalism, and, correlatively, to obligate the philosopher and thereby remove his autonomy and freedom.

Lorraine Smith Pangle sums this up thus:

> To retain one's independence and autonomy, not to be obligated to talk to anyone willing to pay, is crucial. To be "available" not merely assimilated philosophy to sophistry, but also provides the reason why such assimilation is odious. It forces the philosopher to engage in acts of extreme bad faith, to pretend to engage in an act of friendship. (Pangle 2003, 158)

In his study of Socrates and Maimonides' dislike of fees, Daniel Frank notes how teaching for a fee is compared with the prostitute's activity (Frank 1996). Oliver Leaman interestingly connects fees and academic language in the following argument:

> Once philosophers did start teaching for payment, they no longer were concerned to transmit their subject in the way in which one friend would talk to another, and so the language of philosophy changed from being interesting and witty to becoming highly academic, technical and obscure. (Leaman 1996, 4)

What was, then, the example of philosophy as a gift that Socrates gave us?

D. Philosophy as a Gift: Socrates

In contrast to the way the gift functions in Athenian economy, Socrates' gift requires no repayment, since for the most part its recipient does not even recognize it as a gift. In general, it is fair to say that practically all the characters, who converse with Socrates, do not recognize what he is offering them or they misconstrue or misappropriate the gift he gives them. Socrates can nonetheless claim, however, that he has conferred upon Athens the greatest benefit, because the gift he gives his fellow citizens is not improvement but moral perplexity "with all its painfulness," as Richard Kraut noted in *Socrates and the State* (Kraut 1984, 225). What is more, at the same time that Socrates is conferring his gift and through the very same activity, he claims to be benefiting himself.

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[64] See the references in Brickhouse and Smith (1994, 14nn21-22).

Unlike the way in which the gift functions in Aristotle's account, Socrates' gift is designed to liberate and empower rather than to enslave its recipients. This further distinguishes it from gifts in what are referred to as "potlatch economies," following Mauss' description (1990 [1950]). Throughout the dialogues, this unlikely philanthropist consistently avoids becoming enmeshed in the prevalent forms of market exchange. This policy is dramatized by the examples of his encounters with Thrasymachus and Alcibiades and is made explicit by his testimony in the *Apology*. At the same time, Socrates somehow always manages to gain the upper hand in the dialogues within the conventional ethos governing gift relations. He prides himself on the freedom that this posture secures for him, and many of his interlocutors express the offense they feel at Socrates' "air of superiority."

Because it is the nature of Socrates' gift to be incommensurable with the kinds of gifts that can be exchanged, and that often mask a kind of warfare, Plato forces his readers to go beyond the exchange framework of the conventional ethos of benefaction to grasp the nature and function of Socrates' gift. This gift is not well construed within a restrictive or limited economy such as that which underwrites Aristotle's account of benefaction and Mauss' description of potlatch. One obvious reason for this is that it is not recognized as a gift by most of his interlocutors. It is in the nature of the purest kind of gifts to go unnoticed by their recipients.

Is Socrates' gift then a "pure" gift, an act of pure generosity that carries with it no implied obligation to reciprocate because it goes unrecognized by its recipients and because Socrates expects nothing in return? If so, then Socrates' gift might be conceived of within a general or an unrestricted economy. Construed in this way, one wonders whether the failure of Socrates' interlocutors to recognize that a gift is being given is evidence of a fault or a misuse of Socrates' gift, as Nietzsche charged, or whether this is rather its necessary condition. Nietzsche criticized exactly that in several of his books, and perhaps most clearly in *Twilight of the Idols*, especially in the section entitled "The Problem of Socrates." Nietzsche accuses Socrates of being a decadent, inasmuch as he needs followers to philosophize as he does. The adoration of these fawning disciples, Nietzsche would say, is what Socrates gets out of his philosophical practice.

Following Nietzsche's portrayal of Zarathustra as a gift-giver, to which we shall attend shortly, and Mauss' work *The Gift* ([1950] 1990), the notion of the gift has attracted various thinkers (Bataille 1997; Baudrillard [1972] 2001; Derrida 1998). A pure gift within a general economy, as Derrida and Bataille have stressed, must be an act of excess, of pure squandering. If we should understand Socrates' gift as a pure gift, then he would have no need for his interlocutors or his associates, and he should not care about how any of them choose to live. Plainly then Socrates' gift cannot be a "pure" gift in this sense.

Thus, there are weighty reasons for rejecting both a restrictive and a general economy as fitting frameworks within which to understand Plato's portrait of Socrates' gift. A *tertium quid* emerged from the notion of a circulating gift, a gift that arises neither from an act of squandering nor from the desire to enslave another, but rather from the gift's own intrinsic powers. This is the notion of the gift that arises: something that must be shared with others, something sacred that one must pass along for one's own good. Alan Schrift points out that the second-generation commentators on Mauss have focused more closely upon the spiritual significance of the gift and the idea of a circulating gift than on the practice of potlatch (Schrift 1997, 1-22). This was chiefly due to the influence of Nietzsche's view on gifts, to which I turn now.

E. Philosophy as a Gift: Nietzsche and Beyond

Nietzsche occupies a significant place in the recent discussion of gift giving, due to his genealogy of the notion of guilt and the ethics of generosity he advocates.

One way of understanding gifts is through the concept of guilt: gift and sacrifice belong together, sacrifice is related to debts (*Shulden*) and debts are related to guilt (*Schuld*). Helmuth Berking explains:

> We do not know how guilt came into the world, but we can investigate what it may have meant to owe *something*, and try to show how this *something* gradually fell away, how guilt (*Schuld*) came out of debts (*Shulden*) and how obligations came out of the relationship formulae brought about by exchange. (Berking 1999, 51)

Nietzsche gave an amazingly simple answer to the "genealogy of morals." Guilt, he argued, comes from owing. Creditor and debtor (*Shuldner*) form the basic configuration, but its obvious core is the idea that there is an equivalent for damage and pain, that debts can be settled through suffering. The creditor, as it were, acquires a right to cruelty, which he executes by making the other suffer in a "veritable festival." Nietzsche bases his critique of morals on the exchange relation, or rather on the law of obligation in which punishment, precisely as pain and suffering, serves as compensation to the injured party. Punishment, however—at first, the right of masters—is one of those outer bulwarks which were erected against the instincts of freedom, but which in the end only caused them to turn inward. Someone who is too weak to harm others will harm himself:

> Hostility, cruelty, the delight in persecution, raids, excitement, destruction all turned against their begetter. Lacking external enemies and resistances, and confined within an oppressive narrowness and regularity, man began rending, persecuting, terrifying himself, like a wild beast hurling itself against the bars of its cage . . . . This fool, this pining and desperate prisoner, became the inventor of "bad conscience." (GM, 218)[65]

Thus began the malady of a humanity whose history has been one of resentment and guilt: "Guilt comes from debts, and debts are settled with violence, with murder and homicide, torture and enslavement. Retribution, however—repentance, atonement, reparation—remains a sacred duty" (GM, 52).

Resentment and guilt cannot be the source of a healthy morality. They have to be exchanged for self-sufficient strength. "Interestingly," Michael Slote remarks,

> this new form of self-sufficient strength can help us to justify some further kinds of altruistic behavior, and ironically enough, it is Nietzsche, the self-avowed egoist, who shows us how to do this . . . . As Nietzsche points out in *Beyond Good and Evil* (section 260), *Joyful Wisdom* [i.e., *The Gay Science*] (section 55) and many other places, one can also be moved to do things to other people out of a self-sufficient sense of having more than enough, a superabundance, of things. Nietzsche thinks this kind of "noble"

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[65] I have used the following abbreviations for Nietzsche's works: EH for *Ecce Homo*, GS for *The Gay Science*, GM for *The Genealogy of Morals*, Z for *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, GA for *Werke: Gross-Oktav-Ausgabe*. Unless otherwise indicated, usually by p. (for page) preceding Arabic numerals, references to Nietzsche's works are the abbreviation of the book and the relevant section in Arabic numeral. For example, GS, 3, refers to *The Gay Science*, section 3. When referring to *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, Arabic numerals refer to chapters and P stands for Prologue. Roman numerals refer to parts of books. For example, Z, II, 1, means *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, part II, chapter 1.

> such longing and condescending. That the lonely heights should not remain lonely and self-sufficient eternally; that the mountain should descend to the low plains—oh, who were to find the right name for such longing? "Gift-giving virtue"—thus Zarathustra once named the unnamable. (Z, III, 10)

In "Zarathustra's Prologue," Zarathustra addresses his first speech to the sun, which he personifies and praises for its s*chenkende Tugend*: "You great star, what would your happiness be had you not those for whom you shine?" Zarathustra too is overfull:

> Behold, I am weary of my wisdom, like a bee that has gathered too much honey; I need hands out-stretched to receive it . . . . I would give away and distribute (*verschenken and austeilen*), until the wise among men find joy once again in their folly, and the poor in their riches. (Z, I, P, 1)

Moreover, at the same time that he praises the sun, which always gives and never receives, he names the deficiency, the vice that corresponds to the gift-giving virtue: "So bless me then, you quiet eye that can look upon an all-too-great-happiness without envy [*Neid*]!" Envy, we learn later (for example, in "On the Tree on the Mountainside," Z, I, 8), is a disease of the eye, the evil eye that characterizes the economic stance of the resentful who practice a morality of good and evil.

Die schenkende Tugend, like other virtues, requires courage, as giving and receiving are both fraught with danger. Nietzsche read that in Ralph Waldo Emerson's "Gifts."[67]

On the one hand, in the chapter, "On the Gift-Giving Virtue," Zarathustra says to the men in the market place, "I love him whose soul squanders itself, who wants no thanks and returns none; for he always gives away and does not want to preserve himself." Moreover, at the beginning of the fourth part he describes himself as a squanderer "with a thousand hands" (Z, I, 22). Zarathustra soon comes to stand in relation to his followers as a giver of gifts, and his followers are very eager to receive

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[67] Emerson wrote an essay on "Gifts" (1983). A large part of the substance of the debt that Nietzsche often expresses to Emerson is a complex of themes drawn from economic thought, taken in the most comprehensive sense: debts, gifts, compensation, squandering and the like. The external signs of indebtedness have often been noted. Nietzsche's notes for *The Gay Science* and for *Thus Spoke Zarathustra* are full of references to Emerson and citations from his essays. On Emerson's economic thought, see Grusin (1988). Discussions of Nietzsche's reading of and use of Emerson's writings can be found in Baumgarten (1957); Hubbard (1958); and Walter Kaufmann's "Translator's Introduction" in Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science* (1974, 7-13).

ideas and Freudian views of education. Again, the right place to begin is with Socrates.

A. The Model of Socrates

To learn from Socrates, you must be guided, as he is, by the desire for knowledge and you must set the highest value, as he does, on learning. To live under the influence of this desire is to be a philosopher as Plato understands the term: a lover of wisdom. Socrates has been the prototypical teacher in European thought and the model philosopher for the same reason. He is dangerous, exciting, a wellspring of dissatisfaction, spreading a wave of yearning to know what is evidently beyond the powers of human beings.

Socrates' peculiar form of teaching involves turning his mind to philosophy in opposition to traditional forms of teaching and culture. Through his description of Socrates' life in the dialogues, Plato develops and defines a concept of philosophy as a distinct practice, with its own particular aim, standards, and methods. If individuals turn to philosophy, their lives are transformed; they set wisdom and virtue as their goals instead of power, wealth, or reputation; and their peers may fear that they have become useless. The critical stance of Socrates' philosophy threatens traditional religion, morality, and perhaps the foundations of democracy. We may see the quarrel between Socrates and his accusers in the *Apology* as well as the contest between Socrates and the sophists as a basic disagreement concerning the value of Socrates' education pedagogy.

Philosophy, however, is not just another addition to the Athenian curriculum; it does not compete directly with other subjects for the attention of students. Philosophy threatens to transform altogether its devotees' lives as well as the actions that they undertake. Love in the life of a philosopher is turned from personal erotic desire into a shared passion for knowledge. Socrates' life was dedicated to unceasing education, for himself and for those around him, and it has been both a gift and a challenge to the notion of liberal education that was emerging then under the name of *paideia*. It has been a gift because of Socrates' power to draw people into philosophy, and a challenge because of Socrates' refusal to make philosophy immediately useful to his society. Philosophy, as Socrates pursued it in Athens, seemed to lead nowhere but to more philosophy.

This description refers to the Socrates of the early dialogues, that is, the *Apology* and other works that are consistent with it. In addition, I draw on passages from other dialogues that either reflect on, or further illustrate,

Socrates spends much of his time examining himself, reflecting on his own views, and protecting himself against the conceit that his opinions should be taken for knowledge. Paul Woodruff deems it a "teacherless education" (Woodruff 1998, 22).[70] It remains to be seen how the notorious Socratic irony is related to teacher-less teaching and what its fate was since the fifth century BC.

B. Socratic Irony

Plato presents Socrates as a character whose irony is part of his teaching device and generally of his relationships with others. Xenophon's Socrates, for example, has none of the arrogance and very little of the irony of his Platonic counterpart.

"The history of the word [irony] is relatively well known," Alexander Nehamas explains:

> Originally terms of abuse, *eirôneia* and its derivatives, which first appeared in the works of Aristophanes, carried the sense of dissembling, shamming, and deceiving. The same sense is sometimes found in Plato. In a form slightly more complex than that of its original Aristophanic uses it survives as late as Demosthenes. (Nehamas 1998, 50)

However, in some other cases in Plato's dialogues, a radically new sense of *eirôneia* appears for the first time. The *eirôn*—the person who uses *eirôneia*—is now no longer simply a cunning, dissembling hypocrite, an outright deceiver who intends and needs to escape completely undetected. The *eirôn* is now transformed into a subtler character, who lets part of his audience know that his words do not obviously or necessarily express his considered opinion, that he does not always mean what he says, and that he does not mind if some people are aware of his dissembling. The dissembling is no longer secret, at least not for all of one's audience.

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self-examination illustrate a different method from the one Socrates uses in the *Euthyphro*.

[70] For Socrates on education, see Scott (2000), Woodruff (1998) and the bibliographical note there (30-31). Platonic dialogues that illustrate Socratic education or self-education include the *Charmides*, *Crito*, *Euthydemus*, *Gorgias*, *Hippias Major*, *Ion*, *Laches*, *Lysis*, *Protagoras*, and probably Book 1 of the *Republic*. Reflections on Socratic education are found in Alcibiades' speech in the *Symposium*; Socrates illustrates a somewhat similar method with a slave in the *Meno*; and there is an important discussion of education as midwifery in the *Theaetetus*. For the Platonic Socrates see Vlastos (1991; 1994). For a fine corrective, see Charles H. Khan (1996).

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