

# Introduction to *The Philosopher and Pleasure* by Panagiotis Kondylis

[Translated by C.F., ©, April-May 2018, from Kondylis Panajotis, „Einleitung“ [[= “Introduction (or Preface)”]], in Panajotis Kondylis (Hg.), *Der Philosoph und die Lust. Eine Anthologie* [[= *The Philosopher and Pleasure. An anthology*]], xenomoi Verlag, Berlin, 2016, S. 9-31, first published in Panajotis Kondylis (Hg.), *Der Philosoph und die Lust (Anthologie)*, Frankfurt: Keip, 1991, 259 S. („Einleitung“ S. 11-34), and also from Kondylis’s Greek version: Κονδύλης Παναγιώτης, «Οι Φιλόσοφοι και ἡ ἡδονή» [[= “Philosophers and Pleasure”]] in Παναγιώτης Κονδύλης (ἐπιμ.), *Ἡ ἡδονή, ἡ ἰσχὺς, ἡ οὐτοπία* [[= *Pleasure, power, utopia*]], Ἐκδ. Στιγμὴ, Ἀθήνα, 1992, σσ. 9-48. The German book contains excerpts from the writings of all the philosophers referred to in Kondylis’s “Introduction” – eliminating the need for footnotes – whilst also making for a unique volume, which should be published in English in toto!]

## 1

Since the beginnings of their life and living together in smaller or larger communities, humans have necessarily had the elementary experience and found that they – on the basis exactly of this fact of living together, which proved to be incontrovertible – cannot behave as they see fit and without taking into consideration the actions and reactions of others. The, on each and every respective occasion, wishes of individuals might come from the deepest of existential strata, however, towards the outside such wishes are allowed to unfold and be realised only to the extent to and in the manner in which this conforms with the behavioural norms, which, one way or another, regulate the circulation, communication, intercourse and dealings between the members of the given community. Following their inner logic, these rules are objectivised and pile up and tower over the by definition necessarily weaker individual, as

God-given and Nature-given authorities (i.e. as tiers of jurisdiction established by God and Nature), that is, they claim for themselves – if we want to express ourselves in Freud’s terminology – the power and the eminence (dignity or rank) of the reality principle, which has to keep in check the imponderable, irresponsible or destructive manifestations of the pleasure principle. No human community has hitherto been able to forego such rules, and this in itself implies or passes for the uninterrupted, incessant force and effect of that which is to be stopped, impeded, controlled or suppressed exactly by means of these rules. The demand or the drive (urge, impulse) for satisfaction in pleasure beyond the boundaries or limits which the social norms mark out, and sometimes also beyond the boundaries which are set on finite man as such, at all times lies in wait or lurks behind external, more or less norm-conforming, well-ordered behaviour; from that drive, urge and impulse, secret dreams are bred, fed and nourished; from that drive, urge and impulse all sorts of repulsion and neuroses live; sometimes the said drive (urge, impulse) is sublimated and translated into works of the spirit(-intellect), sometimes it awaits restlessly or impatiently for the moment in which it, with elemental force and fury, will shake off the shackles or throw off its fetters, and is able to openly set aside conventions and institutions.

Every epoch, every culture and every society tries very hard to guard against or prevent, through the expedient regulation or appropriate guidance of human behaviour, such dangers; however, this regulation or guidance absolutely succeeds only at the ideational level of declared principles or of ideal collective self-understanding. At the lower level of everyday reality, which stretches and extends beyond the direct grip or control of the principles mentioned, and (behind) at the rear of the self-understanding mentioned, rages in the meantime a dogged, grim guerrilla war between the need to hear the inner voice of the pleasure principle and to achieve full satisfaction in pleasure, and, the

endeavour to take into account the reality principle as this is articulated and finds expression in socially recognised behavioural norms. This guerrilla warfare comes into being therefore out of the ambivalent wish of individuals to enjoy both the advantages and certainties or security which social life alone can grant, as well as, at the same time, going behind i.e. by-passing the rules of this life to the best of one's ability or in accordance with one's strength as soon as this seems necessary for the satisfaction of one's own needs in, or the drawing, i.e. obtaining of, pleasure. Normified (i.e. normatively standardised) social life is consequently simultaneously defended, safeguarded, and, undermined, circumvented – defended and safeguarded usually, or more likely, with regard to the violation of norms on the part of others and with regard to the uncontrolled satisfaction of others' needs in, or the drawing, i.e. obtaining of, pleasure, and, undermined, usually or more likely, with regard to one's own satisfaction in pleasure. For this reason the following of or compliance with the dominant norms in every society remains approximative, although the offence against these same dominant norms is punished or can be legally punished only in less numerous i.e. fewer cases; social and individual life is acted out largely inside of the broad, for the most part invisible grey zone (made) of the intentions and actions oriented towards one's own needs in pleasure, which lies between the unsullied, immaculate norm or ethical ideal, and, the undisguised crime. The dominant or ruling behavioural norms constitute frameworks of orientation and authorities of invocation, i.e. to which someone can appeal – not criteria on the basis of which social life could be reconstituted in its concreteness. If one takes them at their face value, then they differ from time to time, from culture to culture, and from society to society, far more as between one another than the concrete ways of life or modes of living of individuals in their daily activity – ways of life, which, nevertheless, the dominant behavioural norms essentially and substantially influence for the reason that they constitute ideational constants or points of reference which individuals or groups take as

their starting point or initial motivation, and which they must confront when the inner game or inner struggle of ethical dilemmas and of, in practice, indispensable rationalisations, takes place.

The social hindering and containment or regulation of satisfaction in, or the drawing i.e. obtaining of, pleasure, takes place at two levels and in two ways, which, for the most part, are complementary or act complementarily, but often are also contrary or behave contrarily vis-à-vis each other. At the level of institutions, they seem to succeed, or act in such a way as to bring about propitious outcomes, in general, all the more, the more substitutes for whatever is prohibited or forbidden are created, and indeed either through the channeling of the drive, urge and impulse towards pleasure in a socially useful and desired direction; or, through the shifting or displacement of the centre of gravity and main focus of activity from the endeavour at achieving immediate satisfaction in, or the drawing i.e. obtaining of, pleasure, to the narrower area of the endeavour at attaining goods, which of course give personal satisfaction, and in this respect, pleasure too, but without certain services [[being rendered in return]], cannot be acquired in society.<sup>i</sup> The classic example or template (model) for the first case remains marriage and the family as institution, which guides or steers the sex drive into socially ponderable and controllable paths or trajectories, and makes the orderly or well-ordered biological reproduction of the species possible.<sup>ii</sup> The latter case emerges when individuals devote themselves to activities with direct relevance for the social whole (as are e.g. professional, political, military or intellectual(-spiritual) activities), whereupon they estimate, assess or appreciate “animal, bestial” satisfaction in pleasure (comparatively) less [[i.e. as being of comparatively lesser value]], or even find such “animal” satisfaction obstructive, especially since it can hardly be passed off as a service to fellow man. In both cases, the collaboration or concurrence of the second of the above-mentioned levels [[the first level being the level of

institutions]] is essential, that is, the ideational [[and]] or ideological level, at which those perceptions and views regarding pleasure and enjoyment or satisfaction in, or the drawing i.e. obtaining of, pleasure, are formed, which ethically, metaphysically and or anthropologically justify the socially acceptable channeling of the striving after pleasure, or the partial foregoing of this striving after pleasure. Suchlike perceptions or views stem as a rule from religion or philosophy and can be classified into two large groups, which grosso modo correspond with both just now sketched out institutional kinds or modes of the regulating of the human striving for pleasure [[marriage and the family]]: either religious and philosophical perceptions or views combat the “animal” drives, urges and impulses in general and remind the individual of the fact that he has Reason (read: social duties), or else they differentiate and divide the concept of pleasure in such a way that the “higher” spiritual(-intellectual) and ethical pleasure, that is, pleasure in truth or in virtue, must be supra-ordinated in respect of “animal” pleasure [[or “animal” pleasure must be subordinated to “higher” spiritual(-intellectual) and ethical pleasure]]. In the area of philosophy, which is principally of interest here, a third positioning vis-à-vis pleasure and striving after pleasure, however, appears too, which indeed quantitatively counts or matters little, and more likely has rarity value in the history of ideas, yet possesses enough strike power or punch and danger to be constantly at the epicentre or the focus of attention of polemics. It is a matter of the open confession of faith in pleasure in all its forms and without taking into account social and ethical normifications (i.e. normative standardisations), which are regarded as artificial or unnatural fetters.

If one, therefore, has an overview of the spectrum of the basic philosophical positions regarding pleasure and satisfaction in, or the drawing i.e. obtaining of, pleasure, then one will ascertain that by and large it reflects the way in which the question of pleasure is posed socially. The powerlessness of nihilistic

hedonism within the philosophical tradition indirectly expresses or announces the presence of the drive (urge, impulse) of the self-preservation of society, which clearly enough senses that the total and immediate satisfaction in pleasure of all individuals would have as a consequence the dissolution of the social bond (social association, affiliation), or, the war of all against all; in the rigorous pleading or advocacy in favour of the primacy of Reason vis-à-vis all variations of pleasure, the societal command is expressed straight out that the individual should in and under all circumstances subjugate his personal inclinations to the general good (to impersonal virtue); and in the hierarchisation of the kinds or forms of pleasure with the aim of connecting higher pleasure with the moral(-customary) and ethical or the aesthetic [[ethical or aesthetic activity]], and through that, of reducing the status or downgrading “animal” pleasure, the tactically more flexible endeavour is articulated with the in principle recognition of the anthropological taking root of the drive, urge, impulse in, or drawing i.e. obtaining of, pleasure, as well as bringing to the individual the right to satisfaction in pleasure, and yet, precisely in relation to that recognition, it is asked of society’s members to shape or mould their behaviour in accordance with the supra-individual norms in force, and, in this respect, to constructively take part in social life. The concrete situation in the history of ideas has often led to conflict between both latter perceptions [[of the right to pleasure whilst also conforming with supra-individual norms]]; seen in toto, however, they jointly dominate the broader – theological and philosophical – spectrum in the history of ideas, and constitute both major possible answers of ethics to the central question as to how then can the individual be disciplined socially.<sup>iii</sup> Since this central question is equally critical in every kind of society, hence this constellation of thoughts and ideas arises and appears in all societies and cultures in which this question is posed in religious and philosophical form, i.e. in the language of religion and philosophy. In the permanence and fixedness of the motifs and themes of thought, the constants of social and cultural life are

reflected. And in the varying of these same motifs and themes, again the changes, alterations or about turns of the historical epochs, or the struggles in the womb, belly, bosom, i.e. within, one and the same epoch or society, become manifest. Despite all the varying of the motifs and themes, nonetheless, their logical and intellectual (thought) core remains and persists, because the social disciplining of individuals must be ensured in every case or instance, irrespective of who precisely rules, and also irrespective of whether the current form of social disciplining, in comparison to an earlier or another form of social disciplining, is praised and celebrated as the realisation of “freedom”.

## 2

The same social and cultural necessity, which takes care of the permanence and fixedness of the aforementioned motifs and themes of thought in the history of ideas, also determines their early and almost parallel philosophical working or bringing out and elaboration. In actual fact, all these motifs and themes of thought are found in the ancient philosophers, and indeed in a form which has become, without anything further to be added, immediately understandable, and since then, more or less binding in a conceptual respect. This was not due merely to, or is explained just by, ancient genius, but also and above all due to and explained by the socially and culturally determined unavailability and inevitability of the questions and of the answers: from the moment in which these questions were posed philosophically, only *these* philosophical answers were possible. Certainly, these answers were formulated in accordance with the concrete situation in the history of ideas, and not least of all also in accordance with the concrete situation or position and the particular needs of those who took on these matters of concern. Thus, the pre-Socratic praising or glorification

of virtuous self-control and self-restraint, as we encounter it for instance in Democritus's<sup>1</sup> self-aware, self-assured, full of self-conviction, sayings, has very much to do with, and is very closely related to, the elitist self-understanding of Greek philosophers. Inside of the Greek cultural milieu, which knows not any priesthood in the Oriental sense, the philosopher feels like the appointed or appropriate and unrivaled knower and connoisseur of the Truth and of the Good, whilst at the same time raises or makes the additional claim of being in the position of translating his knowledge into, or sublimating such knowledge in, a firm, stable, viable wisdom with regard to living and life. As a philosopher, he must first of all be a *wise* man or *sage* in the archaic sense of the term; he himself, therefore, should live according to the commands of the wisdom regarding life propagated by him, and through this way of life of his, incarnate, exemplify and demonstrate his philosophical ideal. It is always assumed, and often openly said too, that only the wise man or sage is capable of realising this ideal, by attaining absolute self-control and self-restraint, and showing himself to be superior to every animal, bestial striving after pleasure and to every temptation of the flesh; exactly this distinguishes him from the populace, *hoi polloi* or rabble, which lives blindly and thoughtlessly in its lower, base drives, urges and impulses. It must be emphasised here that the self-discipline of the wise man or sage does not constitute or represent asceticism in the subsequent, later Christian sense, which would be understood as the necessary, compelling practical conclusion or finding taken out of a certain theological metaphysics and anthropology. On the contrary, it is founded on a pragmatistic calculus (i.e. calculation) or weighting of the data that unconditional dedication, devotion or

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<sup>1</sup> See fragments 71, 74, 178, 188, 207, 214, 235, 236 = H. Diels – W. Kranz, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, Zürich-Berlin <sup>11</sup>1964, v. II, pp. 159, 181, 183, 187, 188, 192. [[As in the case of the introduction to “The Philosopher and Power”, in this English version of the introduction to “The Philosopher and Pleasure”, I include the footnotes of Kondylis’s Greek text, whereas, as already mentioned, the German text is available in a book with excerpts from the philosophers referred to – and such a book should be published one day in English too! It would constitute a one-of-a-kind reference work which can be used at post-graduate or post-doctoral level in all serious departments of Philosophy at any University interested much more in scientific knowledge as knowledge of reality, rather than in “therapy” and “feeling good and groovy”, etc. – the translator]].

self-abandon in regard to pleasure in general and as such, must beget pain and inappetency [[Unlust]], and in the end lead to self-destruction. The wise man or sage, however, enters on and follows the path of moderation, mitigation and measure, he strives for enjoyment and pleasures which foster rather than have a negative effect on his bodily, physical and spiritual-mental health. Clever and prudent being moderate, or keeping to moderation, guarantees lasting, permanent happiness: this practical truth can be easily and freely acquired and learnt by every man, regardless of the rest of his world-theoretical or metaphysical preferences.

The idea of measure [[reasonable bounds or limits; a moderate amount; appropriate restraint; moderation]] dominated, in different variations, the most important schools of thought of ancient ethics. Measure and the closely connected to it perception of philosophy as metaphysically unbound wisdom regarding living and life remained active in the work of both Plato and Aristotle. However, measure and the said perception of philosophy were overshadowed by the inclusion of the ethical formulation of the question in a, richer as to content, and logically primary, metaphysical framework. Virtue or the victory of the virtuous over (lower, base) pleasure is no mere command of wisdom in regard to life any more, but the practical other side or concretisation of the knowledge of the truly being [[des wahrhaft Seienden; τοῦ ὄντως ὄντος]], which has its Seat, or is headquartered in, the transcendent sphere of the intelligible, and can be apprehended only through the means (organs) of the intellect [[Intellekts, νόησης]]. Whoever partook of, or has been blessed with, this knowledge, can no longer feel at home in the epiphatical (i.e. surface or illusory, appearance or pretence) world of lower, base pleasures – and the other way around: only disengagement, detachment and removal from this world clears the path or way to higher, superior knowledge. The contempt of the philosopher for the rabble deepens to the extent that he believes he has

established or consolidated his conviction, that the inclination or propensity towards animal, bestial pleasure must go hand in hand with metaphysical ignorance, that is, spiritual(-intellectual) roughness, coarseness and brutality, or a lack of spiritual and intellectual cultivation. Plato puts the hierarchy of the kinds or forms of pleasure in parallel both with the hierarchy of the types of humans, as well as with that [[hierarchy]] of the strata or tiers of being. The prudent, understanding and insightful philosopher, and the “livestock or cattle herds”, have entirely different notions of pleasure and of [[life]] experiences because the former constantly keeps in mind the intelligible true being [[wahre Sein, ὄντως ὄν]], however the latter ekes out a miserable existence in the material world of becoming.<sup>2</sup> The knowledge of being through Reason, or Reason as the capacity, faculty, assets or strength which attains or conquers this knowledge, cannot, nevertheless, be equated with pleasure, not even in pleasure’s highest and finest or most refined form(s); they (i.e. Reason and the said attendant knowledge) do indeed grant or provide pleasure, but they remain autonomous, independent, and beyond, elevated above every pleasure. Pleasure remains, either way, captive of (the world of) becoming, and if the dialectically called for and offered ontological mixing of being and becoming (must) find(s) a correspondence or analogy with the mixing of Reason and (higher) pleasure, then pleasure is allowed to occupy only the lowest tiers and levels of the ladder or scale of spiritual(-intellectual) goods.<sup>3</sup>

Metaphysical conceptuality likewise has an effect in the background, i.e. it has an indirect effect, when Aristotle sets about proving the opposite, that, namely, Reason or true knowledge, virtue and pleasure belong organically to one another and are interwoven. He translates the opposition or contrariety between being and becoming to that between rest and motion, but thereafter he turns the signs, or reverses the symbolism, in regard to pleasure, around.

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<sup>2</sup> *Πολιτεία* [[= *Republic*]], 585b-586c.

<sup>3</sup> *Φίληβος* [[= *Philebus*]], 63b-66c.

Pleasure is not motion because motion remains mostly unfinished, whereas pleasure points to and shows the completion and consummation of activity, or rather constitutes an activity which is carried out in freedom from, or independent of, any motion whatsoever, as this e.g. is the case in the bliss of the immobile, motionless God. However, the Aristotelian rehabilitation of pleasure is based also on two further metaphysical presuppositions. First, this rehabilitation of pleasure invokes the ascertainment that all creatures or beings strive after pleasure, but the relevance of this ascertainment for the philosophical way of looking at things does not result so much from its empirical, and at the same time, universal character, but rather from the conviction in respect of the participation of all creatures or beings in the Divine or Godly. The striving for pleasure can therefore be the voice of the Divine in the individual creatures or beings, but on condition – and this is the second metaphysical presupposition –, that the creature or being concerned strives for that pleasure which corresponds with its specific ontological texture or composition. Man is the sole creature or being, which of its nature can reach perfection only through Reason and virtue, he therefore achieves true pleasure and blissfulness or happiness by perfecting himself and acting in the sense, and according to the dictates, of Reason. On this roundabout way, side road or detour, we come back to the hierarchisation of the kinds and forms of pleasure, and to the subjugation of the lower, base pleasures to the higher pleasures.<sup>4</sup>

Plato and Aristotle's care and concern about a metaphysical determination, definition and underpinning or founding of "true" pleasure becomes more understandable if we consider that, in the meanwhile, non-metaphysical ethical thought had become detached from the teachings of wisdom regarding living and life, and had flowed into, and ended up in, a downright nihilistic hedonism. This nihilistic hedonism was already hiding or latent in the sophistic treatment

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<sup>4</sup> *Ἠθικὰ Νικομάχεια* [= *Nicomachean Ethics*], mainly H, 13, and K, 1-5 = 1153b 1-1154a 6 and 1172a 16-1176a 29.

of the problem of the relations between *law* and *nature* [[Nomos und Physis, νόμον καὶ φύσεως]], as well as of the problem of power (at least in Plato's eyes, ethically unbound striving for power hardly differed from unbridled striving for pleasure), however, it underwent a consistent working out or elaboration in several representatives of the Cyrenaic School. Such nihilistic hedonism's core thesis or central doctrine is the decoupling of the legitimacy of pleasure from the legitimacy of its cause; even immoral, indecent action can therefore give rise to pleasure. From that results the leveling of the hierarchy of the kinds of pleasure, which, in practice, boils down to the priority of bodily pleasure, as well as the questioning of social assumptions, perceptions and institutions, which usually that hierarchy (of the kinds of pleasure) is based upon: good and evil, the virtuous act or action and crime, vanish into thin air as concepts, i.e. they appear as products of artificial settings or forms of institutionalisation, whereas Nature knows only striving after, and the command of, pleasure; Theodoros, in this respect, paves the way for la Mettrie and [[de]] Sade.<sup>5</sup> Seen from this perspective, Epicurus's philosophical undertaking has an effect at least just as much as a reaction to radical hedonism, as well as to Platonic-Aristotelian ethics and metaphysics. Because he restores the hierarchy of the kinds of pleasure and connects higher pleasure – which above (or not least) of all consists in psychical calmness – closely with insight, prudence and virtue. However, this restoration stands, for its part, in succession to, and follows, traditional teachings of practical wisdom as regards living and life, i.e. it is based on the usual calculus (i.e. calculation) or weighting, according to which striving after pleasure without measure and without differentiation must in the end bring about pain, inappetency and misfortune or unhappiness, and in this respect the said restoration remains metaphysically indifferent. Such indifference was systematically aspired to, by Epicurus outlining namely a

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<sup>5</sup> Diogenes Laertius, *Φιλοσόφων βίων καὶ δογμάτων συναγωγή* [= *The lives and opinions of eminent philosophers*], II, 86-99; regarding Theodoros esp. II, 99.

teaching or theory of nature which aimed at putting aside metaphysical magnitudes or authorities (i.e. points of authoritative reference) with related normative functions. The Gods are retired or put on standby, Being becomes normatively still, silent, mute; and man is left to his own strength, powers and his own insight and prudence.<sup>6</sup>

Later and more pious thinkers could have little joy in Epicurus's intention to expel or drive away the Gods as well, along with human angst and fear. According to their conviction, the open, explicit or veiled, concealed atheism in Epicurean hedonism had to evade, shirk or undermine the moral(-customary) component and dimension, and finally push Epicurean hedonism into the arms of striving after vulgar pleasure. That is why the rejection of hedonism in general, and the coupling of pleasure with virtue in particular, appeared to them as the sole ethically feasible, practicable path. This coupling in fact meant in their eyes the actual dependence of virtue on pleasure, since virtue is motivated by striving for pleasure and had to be accompanied by the (enjoyment of) pleasure. To the unsteadiness, instability or inconstancy and unreliability of experiences in, or emotions of, pleasure, they contrasted the unchangeability, immutability, fixedness and absolute autonomy or independence of virtue and Reason; (ethical) Reason proves its superiority vis-à-vis pleasure because it can be activated irrespective of consideration and expectation of pleasure or of pain, and can assess or weigh pleasures against one another and choose in a sovereign fashion between them. Rational (Reason-able) man possesses something Divine, Godly, by virtue of which he fundamentally differs from animals and beasts, and has the capacity to set for himself aims higher than mere satisfaction and enjoyment in pleasure; if pleasure represented and constituted the highest command and utmost, paramount criterion, then animals would possibly be at an advantage vis-à-vis man. The equating of man and animal attributed to

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<sup>6</sup> See the Epistle to Menoeceus and «Κυρίας δόξας» [= “established beliefs or principal opinions”] in Diogenes Laertius, loc. cit., X, 123-133, 139-142, 144-145.

hedonism is supposed to hit hedonism hard and wholesale or demote hedonism in all its manifestations, that is, to relativise the distinction of moderate hedonism between higher and lower pleasures, and eventually completely deny the possibility of a moderate hedonism. In actual fact, the argumentative strategy of Cicero<sup>7</sup> or Plutarch<sup>8</sup> [[in denying the possibility of moderate hedonism]] consists in lessening the distance between Aristippus and Epicurus as much as possible, whereas Seneca, who for his part does not want to doubt Epicure's moral(-customary) intent and mindset, nevertheless opines that refined hedonism could serve as a pretext for the vulgar.<sup>9</sup>

The working, carving, bringing out and underlining of the autonomy of virtue, and the frontal attack against all versions of hedonism, pre-empted or anticipated the Christian leitmotifs, perceptions and views, and were thus understood and used by Christians too. Nonetheless, they did not suffice in themselves to bring about a break with paganism. They took root in the ancient ideal of wisdom in regard to life so deeply, and all too often sprang from an ancient aristocratic pride. The self-discipline of the philosopher in the name of Reason, of virtue or even of a nebulous, blurred divinity or godhead could not, even in its most extreme stoical forms, suddenly or automatically link up or merge with Christian asceticism. In relation to that, a profound change in values and in priorities was required, which for instance was made known and became very clear in the until that time unknown acuteness with which the contrasting and opposition between spirit and flesh was emphasised. The spirit was now for the first time in the history of ideas totally and absolutely de-materialised or disembodied under the influence of oriental ideas, thoughts and perceptions,<sup>10</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> *De finibus bonorum et malorum*, II, 39-41, 44-50, 107-111, 113-115, 118.

<sup>8</sup> Ὅτι οὐδ' ἡδέως ζῆν ἔστιν κατ' Ἐπίκουρον, 1087d-1089e.

<sup>9</sup> *De vita beata*, 9, 11, 12-13.

<sup>10</sup> The most significant works of those which analyse this fundamental development, are referred by P. Kondylis, *Die Aufklärung im Rahmen des neuzeitlichen Rationalismus*, Stuttgart 1981, p. 11, note 7 [[= *The Enlightenment in the framework of new-times rationalism* – yet to be translated into English, and if I ever reach that stage, it would not be finished before about 2035 A.D. (translator)]]].

and accordingly the flesh was ontologically and ethically disparaged and downgraded. In it one saw, namely, the source of evil and sin. As the Epistle of James,<sup>11</sup> next to or together with some passages from Paul's Epistles, attests, this motif early on found entry or its way, i.e. crept into Christian thought, and it is not difficult to recognise its polemical point, spike or spearhead: the world of pleasure and of the flesh, that is, the godless pagan, heathen or idolatrous world must incessantly give rise to quarreling and hate amongst men, who could find peace only in the common aversion to, or joint turning away from, material goods, and in the meek, humble turning towards the divine or heavenly Father. The assertion of the equality of all flesh and of all humans in sin sounds like, or in essence constitutes, a rejection of the aristocratic character of virtue in paganistic antiquity – just like, incidentally, the promise of salvation for every believer irrespective of his social position and descent. This believer lives, as Augustine most vividly and forcefully describes,<sup>12</sup> in constant alertness, watchfulness and vigilance vis-à-vis the various forms, and powers, acts of persuasion and allurements of the drive, urge and impulse of the drawing, i.e. obtaining of pleasure, which at all times lies in wait and knows how to take advantage of and exploit the smallest weakness or negligence. Nevertheless, resistance against the said drive etc. is not any longer achieved or does not come from the cold Reason of the philosopher or of the wise man or sage, but through the intensely alert and believing soul, which finds and has its support in God. Pleasure in general is understood here as the voice of the flesh or of temptation, and is not differentiated further. Thomas Aquinas's analyses, comments and expositions,<sup>13</sup> however, verify that the already old hierarchisation of the kinds of pleasure could be made (good) use of in the Christian thought and intellectual framework too.

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<sup>11</sup> Δ' [[= D']], 1-10.

<sup>12</sup> *Confessiones*, X, 30-31, and passim.

<sup>13</sup> *Summa theologiae*, I/II, qu. 34.

The rehabilitation of the flesh and of pleasure in the course of, and in connection with, the rediscovery of pagan antiquity arrived on the scene understandably in the form of a defence of Epicurus. This strategy, which Gassendi even in the 17<sup>th</sup> century practised in his *Vita Epicuri* [= *De vita, moribus et doctrina Epicuri*]], pops up and is applied already in Boccaccio's *Esposizioni Epicuri*<sup>14</sup>, who comes to the defence of Epicurus's morally impeccable person, personality or character, against Dante. The defence of the person etc. without an in detail going into the teaching was supposed to head off the danger of an open conflict with the Church, however, it implied that moral(-customary) behaviour and hedonistic principles did not have to be mutually exclusive, that therefore virtue and belief or faith did not necessarily belong together. Content-related defences of the teaching, and indeed on the basis of purely profane, secular argumentation, came forward or were attempted in humanistic circles, as Raimondi's *Epistola* documents;<sup>15</sup> much more typical of the intellectual(-spiritual) atmosphere and of the inner contradictions of humanism remains, however, Valla's text. In it, the exposition of the Epicurean teaching occupies the largest space, whereas the stoical standpoint is presented briefly and as distant, aloof, cold. Vis-à-vis these pagan philosophies, Valla praises the Christian religion. This seems to him, however, to do justice to human nature exactly because it embraces and takes to heart hedonistic principles by holding out the prospect of blissfulness as payment for faith, belief and virtue. The stoical autonomisation of virtue is supposed to, on the other hand, as is said, disregard both nature and religion equally.<sup>16</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> [[=]] *Esposizioni sulla Divina Commedia*, X, 10-13.

<sup>15</sup> With the title *Defensio Epicuri contra Stoicos, Academicos et Peripateticos*, it was published by E. Garin, *La cultura filosofica del rinascimento italiano*, Firenze 1961, pp. 90-92.

<sup>16</sup> *De vero falsoque bono*, III, 8-10 = Critical edition by M. de Panizza Lorch, Bari 1970, pp. 108-111.

On such and similar roundabout ways, roads or detours, the right to enjoyment and pleasure was vindicated for a long time, that is, until the age or epoch of the Enlightenment. More direct paths were taken, in any case, in the area of literature and of conceptually diffuse freethinking ([[of]] libertins, Freidenker [= freethinkers]]) than at the level of philosophy, which, as often is the case, lags behind the pioneering, trail-blazing aspects and reorientations of the general unfolding and development in the history of ideas. The new-times rationalism rehabilitated the sensorial world both in its dimension as Nature, which now became comprehended or perceived as law-bound order, and through that was ontologically re-evaluated and revalued upwards vis-à-vis the transcendental spirit, and eventually autonomised, i.e. made autonomous, as well as in its human dimension – this of course against Christian asceticism and the with that interrelated concrete claims in regard to domination of the Church. The rationalism of the New Times, nevertheless, gave and won its first great world-theoretical battle in the former sector [[i.e. as regards Nature, rather than [[nature in socially interacting]] humans]] through the formation of modern natural science, whereas the philosophical working out, processing or analysis of the rehabilitation of human sensoriality (the sensorial dimension of man), was left to await the age of the Enlightenment.<sup>17</sup> This delay is explained if we consider that the reshaping or transformation of ethics, and in effect of the social behaviour of humans, in the sense of the turn towards the From Here (i.e. This World or Life), touched much more directly upon, or adversely affected, the sphere of interest(s) of a still always ideologically almost all-powerful, omnipotent Church than for instance the heliocentric system and the laws of gravity.

Yet before the radical anti-ascetic rehabilitation of sensoriality and the sensorial world, which in principle and programmatically took place in the age

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<sup>17</sup> See the detailed analyses of the work referred to above, [[foot]]note 10.

of the Enlightenment, it was nevertheless seen or shown that the concept of pleasure and the conceptual pair “pleasure-pain” had to have a central position (of value) or status in the new profane, secular anthropology. Hobbes attempted a basic clarification of these concepts in an important passage of his contemplations on man, in relation to which as a materialist he endeavoured to keep the distance between bodily and intellectual(-spiritual) pleasure as slight as possible.<sup>18</sup> The Enlightenment now took a further and more decisive step: the ascertainment of the key or critical anthropological function of the senses, sensations, emotions of pleasure and of pain served as the fundamental presupposition in the outlining of ethical systems on a purely immanent basis. The Enlightenment central or basic thesis of the naturalness of man, i.e. man constitutes an integral part of Nature, which was directed against the teaching of man as image and likeness of God, had to make crystal clear its strike power or pre-eminence through proof of human behaviour being able to be led, with purely natural means, down the path of virtue, provided, of course, that virtue would get rid of and cast off its ascetic features or characteristics. The right to earthly happiness and to pleasure appeared to be a self-evident constituent element of human self-determination, and since, on the other hand, virtue could not be foregone without lapsing into the suspicion, i.e. being suspected, of nihilism, and consequently giving up, abandoning or going back on a strategically decisive position against theology and the Church, virtue and pleasure had to, as Voltaire – as the mouthpiece of significant or definitive Enlightenment commonplaces<sup>19</sup> – demanded, forget about their rivalry with each other, and be mutually supplemented in the framework of the new ethics.

Nonetheless, that was easier said than done, as Hume’s undertaking showed, who in the succession, i.e. at the end, of the long and instructive British moral-

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<sup>18</sup> *De homine*, XI = *Opera Latina*, studio et labore G. Molesworth, v. II, pp. 94-103.

<sup>19</sup> See e.g. their early, germinal synopsis in verse in the prologue of *Samson* (1732), *Oeuvres Complètes*, ed. par L. Moland, v. III, Paris 1877, p. 9.

philosophical debate, opined that virtue and vice, spite or malice would have to be put down or reduced to specific feelings of pleasure and pain.<sup>20</sup> In the course of this, he of course delimited the latter specific feelings of pleasure and pain from the corresponding ethically indifferent feelings, though he could not compellingly and convincingly determine where the boundary or border runs and goes between the feeling of pleasure in an act on account of its moral character, and the feeling of pleasure in an act because of one's own personal utility or benefit. The impartiality of each and every respective subject or person concerned, in respect of which Hume expected a clear distinction between both these kinds of pleasure in every particular case, had to spring from an intellectual (source of) authority, which is above pleasure – and this could again be none other than Reason. In reality, such ethics presupposed a thoroughly optimistic anthropology, since only man's unsullied, uns(p)oiled and having an effect at all times natural goodness taking root in unreflected feeling, i.e. feeling formed before every thought or cogitation, could bring off or effect a spontaneous identity and equating of action or an act generally, and, unselfish action or an unselfish act, without any mediation or intervention by Reason. Since this argumentative line, i.e. line of argument, was not able to be held and supported absolutely consistently, through and through, for patently obvious reasons, then pleasure posited of itself alone, i.e. in itself, constituted a rather precarious foundation for ethics. Hence, the moral-philosophical resistance to the philosophy of sentiments and feeling, which made its presence felt already in the British debates for instance with regard to Balguy and Price, and later found in Kant, its most well-known representative in the 18<sup>th</sup> century; such resistance usually started from a sceptical anthropology and sought in the autonomy of Reason that for which pleasure in its automatic mechanism or effect could not vouch, i.e. could not guarantee. Nonetheless, this solution,

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<sup>20</sup> See mainly *A Treatise of Human Nature*, III, 1, 3 = ed. by L. Selby-Bigge, Oxford 1888, p. 574ff.

which seemed to open the road back to asceticism, could not win over the mainstream of the Enlightenment for itself, especially as it directly endangered the normative concept of Nature, this keystone or cornerstone of Enlightenment normativism. This mainstream preferred to self-consciously, with haughty self-conviction, overlook the conceptual difficulties, and remained with an ambivalent schema, which made both the orientation of ethics to the From Here (i.e. This World or Life), as well as the defence or pushing back against the suspicion of nihilism possible. This schema, which Maupertuis<sup>21</sup> as one amongst many sketched, simultaneously rejected asceticism and pure hedonism, it brought the various kinds of pleasure nearer to one another; however, it could for and in all cases leave open the way out, or back door, of their hierarchisation in the putting first of pleasure in truth and virtue.

The rehabilitation of sensoriality and the sensorial world in the age of the Enlightenment developed, nevertheless, its own dynamic and logic, which outflanked or rode roughshod over the goals, objectives or settings of an aim of the moderate-bourgeois mainstream of the Enlightenment movement and ended up in nihilistic hedonism without consideration of, or being interested in, the tactical requirements of the struggle against theology. The two chief exponents of this hedonism are La Mettrie and de Sade. The former wants to rediscover pleasure in its original, primeval innocence, beyond good and evil, beyond questions and problems of conscience and of inhibitions, which the hard school of asceticism artificially created, in regard to which, however, over time, this school granted and conferred upon such questions and problems of conscience and of inhibitions, the appearance, semblance or pretence of the natural or naturalness. La Mettrie indeed distinguishes between merely sensorial enjoyment or delight, and, pleasure. But he does that only in order to imply that pleasure in the wider sense can captivate and put the whole of man under its

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<sup>21</sup> *Essai de philosophie morale*, III = *Oeuvres*, v. I, Lyon 1768, pp. 206-213.

spell, and, in the course of this, is capable of making the whole of man happy. The pleasures of the soul and of the spirit(-intellect), incidentally, remain connected to the bodily forms of enjoyment and delights; they basically constitute the latter's widening, broadening and completion, perfection.<sup>22</sup> De Sade goes down another path, by not going past, whilst laughing, traditional hierarchies, but by, with dogged determination, seeking to overturn the same traditional hierarchies or stand them on their head. Pleasure, therefore, does not have the slightest thing to do with virtue, and its full savouring must in fact accompany the energetic pushing, thrusting aside of the virtuous act or virtuous action. Virtue is artificial, pleasure is natural; that is why striving after pleasure, in conscious contrast to virtue, means just as much as, i.e. is equivalent to the defence of, or laying claim to, one's very own, primal natural rights (i.e. personal rights vested in nature). If virtue or humanity cannot grant, allow or spare pleasure, then one's own pleasure of necessity culminates where it runs into or meets the pain of another, who bows, bends and breaks to and before the stronger; pleasure therefore just as much means the unfolding of power, and not least of all, or precisely for this reason, man constantly thirsts for it, power.<sup>23</sup> Regarding the insight into the kinship or inner relationship between pleasure and power, de Sade anticipates Nietzsche, who certainly subordinates pleasure to power and proclaims pleasure to be the concomitant of the feeling of power.<sup>24</sup> The nearness of the standpoints is not in the least here based on chance or coincidence. Because Nietzsche's analyses of the psychological mechanisms, in whose epicentre the motives of self-preservation and of self-love stand, can be extensively reconstructed on the basis of Enlightenment materials and ideas.

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<sup>22</sup> See the text *La Volupté*, in *Oeuvres philosophiques*, v. II, Berlin 1774, esp. pp. 231-233, 239-243.

<sup>23</sup> From the very many excerpts in which Sade expounds these views, I choose the following: *La Philosophie dans le Boudoir*, Troisième & Cinquième Dialogue (ed. 10/18, Préface de G. Lely, Paris 1972, p. 68 ff., 276 ff.), and *Histoire de Juliette ou les prospérités du vice*, Première Partie (ed. 10/18, Préface de G. Lely, Paris 1976, p. 121 ff.).

<sup>24</sup> See in particular the annotations in the notebooks of the 1880s, *Werke*, hg. v. K. Schlechta, v. III, München 1966, pp. 683, 712-713, 765, 778-779.

That can disconcert only someone who exclusively has the usual, one-sided normativistic concept, or image and picture of the Enlightenment, in mind.

In the age of the Enlightenment that triptych, whose social and cultural necessity and conditionality was explicated at the beginning [[of this treatise]], appears therefore anew in all its breadth: [[1]] the request or demand for the autonomy of Reason and the corresponding bridling of pleasure; [[2]] hierarchisation of the kinds of pleasure and the putting first or precedence of the highest pleasure for the sake of the safeguarding of morals and ethics; and finally, [[3]] nihilistic hedonism and the levelling of the kinds of pleasure under the aegis of sensorial pleasure. The bourgeois Enlightenment rejected outright the third possibility and remained floating or hovering between the first two – but with different preferences on each and every respective occasion, depending on the local constellation or conjuncture. In Germany, at any rate, the radical anti-ascetic rehabilitation of the sensoriality or sensorial world for various reasons did not flourish or even properly get going, above all in the sector of philosophy. Nihilistic hedonism did not find even a single advocate here, and moreover the second of the three basic position(ing)s mentioned above was as a rule represented merely in its moderate variations and without any particular originality. It is symptomatic that Kant, who in aesthetic taste sees the highest kind or form of pleasure, does not cede to pleasure any right of mixing, interference or intervention in the matters of concern of Reason, and wants to accept the supposition or concept of a *propensio intellectualis* [[= propensity of the intellect or understanding; non-sensitive inclination]] only as a concession to at that time current language usage,<sup>25</sup> whereas Hegel downgrades striving after pleasure and enjoyment, and makes out of such striving after pleasure and enjoyment an entirely brief and not particularly fertile phase inside the ascending unfolding and development of self-consciousness.<sup>26</sup> But irrespective

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<sup>25</sup> *Metaphysik der Sitten*, Introduction, Akademie-Ausgabe, v. VI, pp. 211-13.

<sup>26</sup> *Phänomenologie des Geistes*, hg. v. J. Hoffmeister, Hamburg 1952, pp. 262-266.

of the German peculiarities, it must be stressed that bourgeois angst or fear before ethical relativism or nihilism, which hedonism seemed to entail, was from the beginning large-scale, intense and widespread and also did not diminish even in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, especially in the face of the growing strength of agnostic and materialistic currents. Against this background we can best understand the course of the debate over utilitarianism. The daring, with which Bentham radicalised Hume's approach and thought, by putting in the first place of the preferences of pleasure, usefulness or utility instead of morals and virtue,<sup>27</sup> had already frightened Mill, who in the defence against that extreme utilitarianism, fell back on or resorted to tried and tested means, and asserted anew the qualitative differences between the various kinds of pleasure, and finally in relation to that, came to see in the noble ethical mindset the best guarantee for the benevolent social effects of the utilitarian positioning.<sup>28</sup> and iv

The contrast between selfish and ethical pleasure, which Hume saw and had at the same time ignored, was consequently solved in a way which touches upon and adversely affects the foundations of the principle of utility or usefulness, which now seemed to be dependent on the unselfish behaviour of individuals, that is, on a non-utilitarian stance, so that it might be socially applicable, practicable and acceptable. Another attempt at evading or escaping from Hume's implied antinomy, is Sidgwick's emphatic distinction between egoistical and utilitarian hedonism, in relation to which the (ethical) decision in favour of the latter can rest or be based only on intuition. Because Sidgwick holds now the thesis – that pleasure is the aim of all human acts – as psychologically unprovable, and in fact assumes or accepts an independent (internal) impulse towards virtue.<sup>29</sup> Moore makes the about-turn perfect, or

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<sup>27</sup> *An Introduction to the Principles of Morals and Legislation*, chap. I and V = *A Fragment of Government and an Introduction...*, ed. by W. Harrison, Oxford 1967, pp. 125ff., 155ff..

<sup>28</sup> *Utilitarianism, II = Essays on Ethics, Religion and Society*, ed. by J. Robson, in *Collected Works*, v. X, Toronto-London 1969, p. 209 ff..

<sup>29</sup> *The Methods of Ethics*, I, 4, §§ 2 ff., London 1907, p. 42 ff..

completes the about-face, by indeed joining in on or adopting Sidgwick's critique of hedonism, however at the same time, against Sidgwick, lets go of, or unfetters, intuition from services to hedonism and to utilitarianism in general, which consequently loses its ultimate refuge as regards the theory of knowledge.<sup>30</sup> and v

With that, the career [[or general course]] in the history of ideas of bourgeois hedonism was at its end or closed. This end came, not by chance, at a time when the bourgeoisie itself was losing, – as a result of the gradual transformation of industrial society into modern mass democracy –, its ruling position and its self-consciousness. The emancipatory banner of hedonism was now put into the hands of the anti-bourgeois cultural revolution, which freed the pleasure principle not only from the fetters of bourgeois convention(s) and (kinds of) moderation, but it also, in agreement with the ideal of self-realisation, turned this pleasure principle into the foundation of social organisation and wanted to put it in the place of, i.e. replace, the performance (or achievement) principle [[Leistungsprinzips]]. The cultural-revolutionary dream, as it for instance was articulated in Marcuse's writings,<sup>31</sup> was of course not realised, yet it could significantly and substantially influence the manners, customs, mores, morals, ethe and modes of behaviour in mass democracy, although this happened in a paradoxical way and strengthened, stabilised and consolidated rather than endangered or shook the "system". Because mass democracy requires in parallel with technical rationality, which secures the functioning of mass democracy's highly technicised basis, hedonistic stances and positionings too, which promote, foster and favour the economically just as indispensable increasing consumption of material and spiritual(-intellectual) goods. Value pluralism, whose reverse or other side is the value neutrality of the state and of instrumental science, belongs, however, to mass democracy's mode of

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<sup>30</sup> *Principia Ethica*, Cambridge 1903, p. 59 ff..

<sup>31</sup> *Eros und Kultur. Ein philosophischer Beitrag zu Sigmund Freud*, Stuttgart 1957, esp. pp. 206-211, 217-219.

functioning as one of its elements. Metaethics of the so-called analytical school or tendency became the representative of this value neutrality in the sector of philosophy, which to the classical ambition of philosophy (that is, of offering to man a teaching of virtues and or duties as well as giving him various kinds or pieces of advice for living and life), contrasts its descriptive method or methodical procedure, and restricts this again mostly to the relevant language phenomena on each and every respective occasion. In Moore this method was still found to be in its beginnings. Ryle shows us what its programmatic application looked like, or how its programmatic application turned out, in regard to the question of pleasure.<sup>32</sup> The question of whether and to what extent talk about pleasure is actually saying something about pleasure, of course remains open and unexamined here.<sup>vi</sup>

#### 4

The retrospective survey or review of the history of ideas, in connection with the social and cultural aspects of the problem of pleasure discussed from the beginning [[of this treatise]], gives us now a main (connecting) thread or some guidance, in order to hazard, or dare to share, a few basic thoughts. As said, in the philosophical and also practical powerlessness of nihilistic hedonism, the hard, unalterable, irresistible and inevitable necessity of the social disciplining of individuals is reflected. Both normativistic – of course diverging from each other and also in themselves split or manifold – perceptions of the ethical (position of) value of pleasure [[see [[1]] and [[2]] of the “trptych”, p. 22 above]] find themselves in the right in the sense that they contribute to the coping and coming to terms with an indispensable and unavoidable collective

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<sup>32</sup> *The Concept of Mind*, London 1949, p. 107 ff..

task and duty of theirs. That however does not mean eo ipso that they must be taken at their face value, or that their self-understanding is correct and holds up to [[scientific-conceptual]] scrutiny – although, on the other hand, they can fulfil their objective function only when they subjectively understand themselves in the way they do it (i.e. subjectively understand themselves). In their permanent and complementary effect on the winding paths of ideological consciousness, two fundamental given facts of social, societal living together or co-existence come to light. The fundamental principle or axiom that collective self-preservation has absolute priority and precedence over the individual’s self-preservation, is translated into the language of the ethical principle that pleasure should always submit to or conform with Reason, whose commands, by the way, are just as supra-individual as the command of collective self-preservation, whereas in the demand for pleasure, an individual desire and craving are always there, latent. The philosophical differentiation and hierarchisation of pleasures, for its part, has an objective kind of backing and support in the fact that culture transforms man into a “spiritual(-intellectual)” being or creature, by transferring biological or biopsychical properties, qualities, origins, aptitudes, tendencies, (pre)dispositions or constants to the sphere of the ideational; and culture, through that, nuances, refines, and makes the aforesaid properties etc. or constants endlessly complex; that is why under the conditions or in circumstances of culture, the biological or biopsychical element cannot be lived through, experienced and cannot unfold without the mediation or intervention of ethical or other, remaining reflection, cerebration and contemplation. To the extent that society and culture transform biological and biopsychical magnitudes into ideational magnitudes, pleasure in the form of the elementary “animal and bestial” satisfaction of drives, urges, impulses is less and less in a position of constituting the axis of a coherent way of living or mode of life, although existential outbreaks, eruptions and explosions, which aim at such elemental satisfaction, must take place time and again.

The normativistic way of looking at things, which ethically is concretised in both sketched perceptions of the possibilities of taming or subduing “animal” pleasure [[see [[1]] and [[2]], p. 22 above]], wants now from these facts to conclude that Reason and virtue (even in the form of preference for “higher” pleasures) have already been victorious or been imposed on “animal” pleasure, or, at least Reason and virtue would be capable of such victory over “animal” pleasure, on the basis of existing anthropological and social presuppositions. In this respect, philosophical normativism is certainly in agreement or coincides with the self-understanding of society, which in its endeavour to depict itself and appear as an ethical institution or as a form of ethical organisation, and thereby rationally found its claim to and for obedience, demands of its members the (in part) renunciation of, or abstention from, pleasure(s) and drives, urges, impulses in the name of norms, and interprets or wants even the legal exercising of violence to be understood as the ultimate means of the pushing through and imposition of norms (and not for instance the other way around). The question, nevertheless, remains whether the ensuing taming and subduing of “animal” striving after pleasure inside of society on a large scale is in actual fact a consequence of the effect of ethical Reason, irrespective of whether such taming etc. must understand and (re)present itself thus (i.e. as taming etc.), for the reasons mentioned just now. Were social life in reality the creation of ethical Reason, and were “animal” striving after pleasure truly the ultimate source of vice (evil) and of restlessness in social life, then this social life would have to calm down and be normalised precisely to the extent that the “animal” striving after pleasure is bridled, curbed, restrained, controlled by ethical Reason. But that by no means has been the case in history until today. “Animal, bestial” striving after pleasure could be and is indeed tamed or diverted, redirected, channeled in so far as social living together or co-existence was or became possible, or such that social living together was and is made possible; through that, however, competition, rivalry and conflict between humans have not in the

least stopped. This elementary ascertainment suggests or gives birth to the thought that forces and energies, which were freed or even only came into being through the taming and or subduing of “animal” striving after pleasure, were channeled into conflicts of another kind, and that, as a result, that taming happened with regard to aims, goals or ends which cannot be, or cannot coincide with, the (nominal) aims, goals or ends of ethical Reason. In clearer words and terms: the law of power proved to be stronger than the law of “animal” striving after pleasure. Under the conditions or in the circumstances of culture and the, effected and brought about through culture, transfer of biological or biopsychical magnitudes to the sphere of the ideational, someone who cares or gives a damn [[or fuck]] exclusively about “animal and bestial” satisfaction in pleasure, enjoyment and delight, is and remains a social zero or an, on the periphery, marginal, disturbing factor, which is put aside or easily eliminated. Self-preservation – not in the static-biological, but in the dynamic-social sense – can under the conditions of culture mean only preservation and widening, extension, expansion of the power of each and every respective subject, which in fact must accept (in part) the renunciation of, or abstention from, “animal” satisfaction in pleasure, willingly or unwillingly.

Whilst ethics tames and or subdues the “animal” striving after pleasure, it therefore sets forces for the social power struggle (struggle for power) free, and it does that not by chance: because ethics itself is in its essence or of its nature power, since it raises or makes the claim of bindingly determining and defining how humans have to behave. Moralists, ethicists and normativists are right when they assert that “intellectual(-spiritual)” pleasure is higher, superior and stronger, more intense than sensorial pleasure – but that is only because the “spirit(-intellect)” in its deepest depths, or innermost realm, is power and striving after power. Ethics must of course doubt, dispute and contest this if it is supposed to be taken at (its) face value and fulfil its social function, and that is

why it is accustomed to, or in the habit of, tarring striving for power and striving for pleasure with the same brush. And yet the paths or roads of power and (“animal”) pleasure separate very early in life, as the aspiring youth, who tries to go up, climb the social ladder, gets to already [[very quickly]] sense, feel, perceive, notice or experience. Of course, *inside* the area of sensorial pleasure, a satisfaction or satisfying of the striving for power takes place in so far as the possession and dominating of the object of pleasure increases and augments pleasure. De Sade saw this correctly; however, the, thus viewed or comprehended, relationship between pleasure and power concerns only the narrower level of personal relations and can be transferred to life in culture just as little as nihilistic hedonism can become the way of life or mode of living of an organised society. The social boundaries of hedonism constitute at the same time the boundaries of its (abilities in regard to the) understanding of social reality, since one, from the point of view of, or starting from, the hedonistic identification of pleasure and power, can hardly bring oneself to the knowledge or become conscious that one must (want to) renounce or abstain from (sensorial) pleasure exactly for the sake of power. Nietzsche, for his part, apprehended the relationship between pleasure and power far more adequately. However, he got to that on the basis of a rather abstract, i.e. simply or merely ontologically conceived absolutisation of the factor of power (power factor), without revealing the concrete social mechanisms through which the relationship assumed and described by him himself comes about or is formed. Apart from the strengths and weaknesses of philosophical thought, it must nevertheless be observed and remarked that insight and knowledge into these mechanisms must remain a sweet or bitter – depending on the taste of the researcher – fruit of knowledge, which must be [[*verboden*, i.e.]] forbidden to the many [[the vast majority of people]]. Because only ignorance of such mechanisms secures their effect and functioning, and consequently also social living together, social co-existence.

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<sup>i</sup> “but are not gained or won without the provision or offering of certain social services” is the translation of Kondylis’s Greek text [translator’s endnote].

<sup>ii</sup> Since this article was first published in 1991, the West has seen the advent of “gay (same sex) marriage” and the promotion of “different kinds of families”, along with the widespread availability of artificial insemination etc.. Whilst indigenous historically relatively white populations have generally been (comparatively) decreasing, overall populations in Western countries have not, owing largely to mass “Third World” immigration based largely on more traditional understandings of marriage, the family and reproduction. Kondylis’s basic point is in no way substantively altered by the sociological-factual changes in the West. Simply, the texture of marriage, family and reproduction has been somewhat modified, without affecting the basic premise of the general need for marriage and or committed relationships or single motherhood and or mass immigration (with the immigrants mostly having been born from more traditional marriages), as long as there is an infusion of youth into society [translator’s endnote].

<sup>iii</sup> It would be safe to say that Western mass democracies of the last two or three decades, compared to oligarchic liberalism, and in part to early forms of Cold War Western mass democracy, for instance, generally allow for greater “individual pleasure” whilst achieving social conformity through a combination of mass consumption (shopping, etc.) and mass “brainwashing” (political correctness, etc.), as well as, inter alia, an increasingly more heavy-handed police-like “spying, ostracising and punishing” state/mass media (in the attempt) to keep the “extremes on all sides” under control [translator’s endnote].

<sup>iv</sup> Kondylis’s Greek version reads: “or the best guarantee so that the utilitarian positioning turns out benevolent for the social whole” [translator’s endnote].

<sup>v</sup> Kondylis’s Greek text reads: “unfettering intuition from the obligation to accept the ethical superiority of utilitarian hedonism and depriving this here of its ultimate epistemological refuge.” [translator’s endnote].

<sup>vi</sup> Is Kondylis implying the later vulgarisation of Gilbert Ryle, who, inter alia, planted the intellectual seeds, so to speak, in “The Academy” through “post-modern”, “deconstructionistic” and other language and text-based fashions of perceiving reality, which basically amount to Nonsense becoming academically normalised in order to promote certain normative programmes? Or were developments in philosophy concluding in this treatise with Ryle and Marcuse roughly parallel to, albeit in precedence of about 10-20 years, but separate from, the aforesaid intellectual fashions, which “drew inspiration” from (mostly) Frenchmen? (A: “Yes” to the second question?) [translator’s endnote].