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"The infinite movement of evanescence:" The Pythagorean puzzle in Deleuze, Whitehead, and Plato

In a difficult but beautiful text of Gilles Deleuze, the concept of the infinite movement of evanescence arises:

The concept [of the Whole] . . . follows and espouses determination in all its metamorphoses, from one end to the other, and represents it as pure difference in delivering it up to a ground in relation to which it no longer matters whether one is before a relative minimum or maximum, a large or a small, nor before a beginning or an end, since the two coincide in this ground which is like a single and unique 'total' moment, simultaneously the moment of evanescence and production of difference, of disappearance and appearance. In this sense... [we attach] importance to the infinite movement of evanescence-that is, to the moment at which difference both vanishes and is produced.'

In what follows, I intend nothing but to unfold this enigmatic statement, since it names the Pythagorean puzzle of philosophy, a statement about "ultimate difference in itself," the "ultimate ground of being" and a certain region of thinking, namely the region of the "infinite movement of evanescence." I shall explore this statement in six parts: first by discussing what I call the "Pythagorean puzzle," found in Deleuze, Whitehead, and Plato; then, in the next two parts, by establishing what I call the "Pythagorean region" of thought in Deleuze and Whitehead; in the fourth part, by locating the "Pythagorean turn" in Plato's late philosophy; in the final two parts, by drawing out the change that the "Pythagorean region" inflicts upon Whitehead's and Deleuze's philosophy. By taking this route, namely away from Deleuze, back to Whitehead and Plato, and again forward to Deleuze, we shall realize that Deleuze's Pythagorean turn is not really a "turn" but a "region" in the center of his whole philosophical project-although somehow hidden. Plato and Whitehead, on the other hand, really turned to the Pythagorean region of thought at the very end of their careers. The role that the Pythagorean puzzle plays in Deleuze's thought somehow gives us a glimpse of what may have happened if Plato and Whitehead had had the time and strength to develop their late discoveries. On the other hand, if Plato's and Whitehead's late move towards the Pythagorean region appears as antecedent to Deleuze's puzzling stances, we may better understand how Deleuze's thoughts could go where they have actually gone.

1. The Pythagorean Puzzle

Deleuze's quotation reminds us of the very center of his philosophy of Difference, in which we find a "region of thought" that cannot be seen and looked at directly, but rather it hides within its presence-like Plato's sun. All differences vanish and arise, all categories generate and die, instantaneously. All principles deluding us to coat the chaotic fabric of the world break down. In a "unique 'total' moment . . . of evanescence and production of difference," reality expresses its true face, its cruelty, even its monstrosity.' I shall name this region the "Pythagorean region" and the movement towards its enigmatic center, a "Pythagorean puzzle." This unique "movement of evanescence" is Pythagorean because it is conditioned by the reaction of two principles: "the Whole" and "the Large and the Small"-the ultimate principles of the Pythagorean philosophy. For the Pythagoreans, "the One" and "the Unlimited" react to create the world.' It becomes a puzzle when the ultimate Pythagorean principles of finitude and infinity clash, collapse within one another, and create an

infinite movement of evanescence. The Pythagorean puzzle first appears in Plato's final, radical, thought. The lecture that Plato gave on this matter, called "On the Good," remained disturbing for its listeners; it even disappeared. It was concerned with the introduction of the Pythagorean last principles into Plato's divine principle, the Good.⁴ Why Plato, Whitehead, and Deleuze? First, it is well known that Whitehead sympathized with Plato's philosophical disposition. The Houghton Library in Harvard owns a little handwritten notice by Guy Emerson which states that Whitehead "likes Plato because he was always proposing, never finishing anything. It is always process' not frozen finality."⁵ Second, Deleuze recognized Whitehead as one of his important "philosophical personae" he used to mediate his own thought. Deleuze even confesses that Whitehead's *Process and Reality* is "one of the greatest books of modern philosophy."⁶ Third, Deleuze's own philosophy is one of the most persistent experiments in taking a straight look into the Pythagorean puzzle that uncovers an original wildness of the becoming world. Philosophy in the Pythagorean region pushes permanently to the edge of a catastrophic abyss of thought. Fourth, all three philosophers reveal a unique truth of the variation of the Pythagorean puzzle.⁷ At different times, with different implications, and at different stages of their work, Plato, Whitehead, and Deleuze have discovered a new land-the Pythagorean region of thought: the infinite movement of evanescence, the appearance and disappearance of Difference.

II. The Pythagorean Region of Deleuze's Thought

In the post-structuralist thought of Gilles Deleuze, the basic question of his philosophy is: 'What is an event?' Discerning the reality of events against that of things and beings, forms or possibilities, he came to believe that events do not refer beyond themselves to any "exterior referent" ("something that is"). Instead, they represent their own reality at the boundary of things and language-namely, the reality of "sense" (as in "non-sense"). The reality of events appears as that of an "encounter," an irritating disclosure of intensities in which reality energizes thinking.⁹ In *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze detects the essence of events as somehow "between" or at the border of things and language. The reality we encounter in events does not "designate" any ontic object, it does not "manifest" any subject (the 'I'), it does not "signify" any concepts. To the contrary, it defines a new, a unique dimension of reality, namely that of expression. The reality of expression discloses the level of sense, or of the pure event. Therefore, the reality of the pure event is not directed toward facts, subjects, or truth conditions. Deleuze does not understand event-- reality as a dimension of the status of things that "is," but rather it expresses a "non-existing entity," or "extra-being," or "?-being".¹⁰ Furthermore, it articulates a dimension of language, which does not indicate anything that "exists," but rather a reality that "subsists" or "insists."

In a manner very similar to Whitehead, Deleuze's events are players in a cosmological space. In the language of Difference and Repetition, *The Logic of Sense*, and especially *The Fold*, Deleuze defines this space as "virtuality," as *spatium*, as formless and open "Ungrund"/"Sans-fond"/groundlessness, where intensities are "enfolding" and can be "out-folded" to extensities in space and time. Implicit *spatium* explicates itself as *extensio*.¹² In reference to Leibniz and Whitehead, Deleuze is in quest of a world without preformation, but of spontaneous "organization."¹³ Perplexing forces arrange experiences without pre-given rules or schemes. Novelty occurs within unforeseeable categories insofar as these forces grow together like nomads, created in qualifying virtuality, but not in pre-forming actuality."

In the language of Bergsonism and Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza, Deleuze defines this state of "initial virtuality" in terms of Bergson's *elan vital* and Spinoza's *causa sui*. In respect to Bergson's *elan vital*, Deleuze writes that virtuality "exists in such a way that it is realized in dissociating itself... Differentiation is the movement of a virtuality that is actualizing itself."¹⁵ Regarding Spinoza's 'infinite substance,'

that is, the self-differentiating substance of God, Deleuze recognized its absolute immanence and total expression within the world and as the world's primordial process of the actualization of virtuality. Precisely this is the process of differentiation, of "making" the difference, of the "Difference in Itself."⁶

"Difference" is the production of a world, the way in which the initial virtuality unfolds itself into an extensive space of events, the unique moment in which difference is produced. This is not, as one could be tempted to think, a movement of negation or dialectic; it is purely affirmative: the creation of folds, enfolding and unfolding. Thereby "every fold originates from a fold, *plica ex plica*," and the world originates as "many-fold." The "fold" moves affirmatively and not negatively "because the Fold is always between two folds, and because the between-two-folds seems to move about everywhere."⁷ This is the affirmation of the "difference in itself": Difference is not "between" something (of a certain genus or species), but of itself. "Difference" is not subordinated to identity or to opposition, negation, or dialectic. It purely is its own ground, the ground of all existence." On the background of the Spinozistic concept of "univocal Being," Difference precedes all distinctions, be it "matter and form, species and parts, and every other element of the constituted individual."⁹ "With univocity, however, it is not the differences which are and must be: it is being which is Difference, in the sense that it is said of difference." *Zo*

It is here, that his whole conception of Difference turns into a Pythagorean puzzle. The purely affirmative Difference happens as a process of affirmative self-differentiation of the Difference. In other words, Difference is determination not "between" things but as such, where "determination takes the form of unilateral distinction" on the background of an "undifferentiated abyss, the black nothingness, the indeterminate animal in which everything is dissolving."¹⁰ Difference, finally, articulates the process of the ultimate Pythagorean categories, the uniting "Whole" and abysmal "Large and Small."²²

III. The Pythagorean Turn of Whitehead's Thought

Highlighting Whitehead's last two articles of 1941, "Mathematics and the Good" and "Immortality," may occur somehow odd to someone who is somewhat familiar with Whitehead's mature works. Although the short, certainly impervious, sometimes even enigmatic texts seem not to count for a real, even dramatic shift in Whitehead's thought, it is here that we can discern Whitehead's own turn towards the Pythagorean region of thought.

(1) Foreshadowings of the Pythagorean Region

In *The Concept of Nature*, Whitehead offers two intimates: "extension" and the "passage of nature."²³ In *Process and Reality*, Whitehead binds "creativity" with "one" and "many" to his "Category of the Ultimate" par excellence.²⁴ As a matter of fact, the *opinio communis* holds that Whitehead stabilized his mature cosmology within the range of four so-called "formative elements" without any further shift: the Plural World, Ideas, Creativity, and God.²⁵ As much as this seems to be the case, it is wrong. Without much preparation, the 1941-articles rendered another domain of notions prominent and even predominant.²⁶ Now, the new list of ontologically indissoluble intimates consists of unboundedness, and beyond that just of (indefinite) modes of limitation.²⁷ Period. End of list. Within Whitehead's earlier work, one may instantly think of his introduction of the "principle of limitation."²⁸ "Limit" appears as an "attribute" of a Spinozistic, infinite "substantial activity"²⁹ and it allows for a process of "limitation," thereby creating "definite entities."³⁰ But, since "there is no perfection which is the infinitude of all perfections,"³¹ infinity is in itself abstract. Paradoxically, it is bound to the finite. It is the finite's infinity.³²

(2) The Appearance of the Pythagorean Turn

In the 1941-articles, one cannot overlook the overwhelming use of Unboundedness and Limitation. If these Pythagorean concepts of the Ultimate may have been on the ground of Whitehead's thought for a long time, now they rush up to the surface. The universe is created by the

interference of "infinity" and "finitude," generating "the active energy of a finite assemblage."³³ Now, even the four ultimate principles-Plural World, Creativity, Form, and God-can be expressed in terms of Unboundedness and Limitation: The World is the "essential relatedness of all things" in which "finite entities require the unbounded universe, and . . . the universe acquires meaning and value by reason of its embodiment of the activity of finitude."³⁴ Creativity creates finite events "by the inflow from the infinitude to the finite."³⁵ Forms allow stable patterns and characters when "the finitude of the actual world embraces the infinitude of possibility."³⁶ Finally, even God appears as a "characterization of the infinite in terms of finitude."³⁷ The Pythagorean region of thought occupies Whitehead's interest because the "notion of 'understanding' requires some grasp of how the finitude of the entity in question requires infinity, and also some notion of how infinity requires finitude. This search for such an understanding is the definition of philosophy."³⁸

(3) The Manifestation of the Pythagorean Puzzle

Unboundedness and Limitation lead to the question, how Patterns and Values, Mathematics and the Good, belong together. This, indeed, expresses the Pythagorean puzzle. For Whitehead, mathematics in the most general sense is understood as the study of patterns of all kinds and appearances. How patterns relate to the actual world of passing facts is the major project of Whitehead's philosophy: "All value is a gift of finitude which is the necessary condition for activity. Also activity means the origination of patterns of assemblage, and mathematics is the study of pattern. Here we find the essential clue which relates mathematics to the study of the good, and the study of the bad."³⁹ The basic problem of philosophy now is the reference of the Pythagorean "mathematical infinities" to the "infinitude of things," and "the relevance of the notion of varieties of multiplicities to the infinitude of things."⁴⁰ This explains Whitehead's restless admonition to intersect infinity with the finitude of events, things, enjoyments and values. "The superstitious awe of infinitude has been the bane of philosophy. The infinite has no properties. All value is a gift of finitude...."⁴¹

IV. The Pythagorean Puzzle in Plato's Lost Lecture The Pythagorean region of Plato's Lost Lecture "On the Good" is concerned with the question, How to relate Infinity and Finitude, Number and Value?⁴² Although the lecture was lost, fortunately, it was of such an extraordinary excitement that the participants and their disciples handed it down to us. What made this lecture so outstanding in the eyes of the listeners was Plato's exciting but dangerous Pythagorean position that destabilized and even destroyed the positions for which Plato became famous. Plato's "Pythagorean turn" signifies nothing less than his intention not to hold his major positions anymore.

(1) Plato's Standard Position on Ideas

Plato's middle dialogues presented a position he was known for ever since, namely that Ideas are simple, independent, and absolute causes for what happens within the changing world. They are simple, that is, free of contradiction and without composition.⁴³ Ideas are absolute, depending solely on themselves, self-sufficient, self-contained, and self-sustaining.⁴⁴ Ideas cause things to be what they are by participation.⁴⁵ The knowledge of Ideas is immediate. In a process of recollection, the Ideas are spontaneously recognized, but within a procedure of "unmixing" them from sensations or dialectically laying them bare apart from them.⁴⁶ As Aristotle summarizes, Ideas are universal, independent, and separate entities.⁴⁷

(2) Plato's Deconstruction of his Middle Stances

In the Theaetetus and the Sophistes, Plato began to break with his "standard position." In the Parmenides 131a-134e, a first, major break-down happened. Within several arguments, Plato struck his earlier positions to death. Here are four of his arguments: First Argument: He argues against the clear-cut reality of the Ideas. If the Ideas are just what they are without inclusion of their opposites, how should they be

able to cope with the plurality in the world? Second Argument: In the first of the so-called "third man" arguments, Plato strikes his earlier claim that Ideas are singular. Although a singular Idea (Largeness) shall be the expression of all participating things (large things) in their specific character (being large), this is not possible, since Largeness itself would have to be "large." Since Largeness and all large things together would found a new group of "large things," what seems to be simple and "one" the Idea suddenly turns out to be "indefinitely multitudinous".⁴⁸ Third Argument: In the second "third man" argument, Plato demonstrates the insufficiency of the idea of participation. If sensible things are similar, that is, expressing the same character, this is because their character resembles the Idea itself. What follows is an infinite regress, since we must assume a new similarity between the character of similar things and the Idea to which this character is itself similar ($L1+I1=L2+1=L3$). Thus, participation cannot be a matter of likeness. Fourth Argument: Ideas are not absolute. Since what is totally separated from this world, consequently, is not knowable at all.⁴⁹ Clearly, the chain of arguments now really begins to injure the nerve of the Platonic Ideas. Ideas were introduced to ground human knowledge. If a separate, real single existence of Ideas cannot be held anymore, then the whole enterprise has broken down. This was Plato's new situation.

(3) Plato's Construction of a Pythagorean Region

A new departure was needed; and three of Plato's late works stand for his new orientation, namely the *Parmenides*' second part, the *Philebus*, and his lost lecture "On the Good." Especially the *Philebus* represents Plato's only explicit statement towards the general relativity of the Ideas, their togetherness with sensible things, and their reconstruction from more ultimate principles." But what, in that context, was the position of the lecture "On the Good?" And why, for most of the time, was it held to be the center of an unwritten, "second" line of teaching of Plato, a kind of "esoteric opus?" Three points may explain this: (1) The lecture is lost. It is known through Aristotle, his reference to other attendees like Speusippus and Xenophanes, and by stunning commentaries of philosophers like Porphyry or Simplicius (in the sixth century). According to him, even the group of exquisite listeners found the lecture to be of "enigmatic utterances."" (2) The ingredients of this lecture can be reconstructed according to Aristotle's account in *De anima* 404b, *Physics* 187a, 209b, and *Metaphysics* 987a-98 8a, 99 1b, 109 1b; namely: (a) Numbers are composed of two principles: "Unity" and "the Great and the Small." (b) The sensible World is composed of "Ideas" and "the Great and Small." (c) Ideas themselves are composed by "Unity" and "the Great and the Small." (d) Ideas are numbers. (e) Most strangely for the listeners: Unity is the Good. (3) Plato's new position consists in the following stances: (a) Ideas are not simple, but ontologically composed. (b) Ideas are not separated from the sensible World, but composed of the same principles. (c) Ideas do not cause anything, they are numbers or measures. (d) We have knowledge of the becoming, because Ideas and sensible things are generated from the same principles. (e) The ultimate principle of what determines Ideas and sensible things likewise is the Good. The Good is no Idea; the Good is the "Unity," the principle of unification and measurement, of rhythm and determination. The Good founds Limitation.

In the Pythagorean region of thought, nothing remains the same: Old principles and categories suddenly decompose; new principles and categories begin their reign. After all deconstruction, only two principles remain: Unity and the Great and the Small. ⁵²

(4) The Core of the Pythagorean Puzzle

In his meticulous study on Plato's Late Ontology (1983), Kenneth Sayre discovered the strong connections between Plato's lost lecture and his written opus. Following his analysis, I shall draw out the hallmarks of Plato's Pythagorean puzzle. All begins with the second, critical part of the *Parmenides*. In the "third man" arguments, Plato states that the seemingly self-contained unity of the Ideas really vanishes in an infinite regress that Plato named the "indefinitely multitudinous": the "apeiron

pletos." "One prominent meaning assigned to apeiron pletos there is that roughly of 'unlimited manyness,' with 'unlimited' understood in the sense of "without definite limits or boundaries"-hence 'indefinite multitude'.⁵³ Plato's term leads us straight to the very beginning of Greek philosophy, namely Anaximander's apeiron, "the Limitless."⁵⁴ It stands for the indefinite, boundless multitude within an infinite regress. Ideas, Plato wants to say, are not what they were introduced for, namely limits for differentiation. Instead, they are nothing but indefinite factors.

Why, then, is the experienced world in fact structured, having limits and boundaries? Now Plato improves his middle stances with three important positions: (a) Ideas are themselves constructed of more fundamental principles: "Unity" and "the Large and the Small." (b) These principles mean that of "Limit" and "Unlimited," respectively. (c) They relate fruitfully in creating a structured world.⁵⁵

Plato realizes that the Parmenidean "Way of Truth" (fragment 8) does not lead to an understanding of the world "as it is." Plato, instead, prefers a Pythagorean way, namely that "Limit" and "the Unlimited" are the ultimate ontological basis for all possible principles yet to constitute the world.⁵⁶ Hence, the "Limit" and the "Unlimited" originate a chain of eight principles, disposed in opposition to Parmenides's "eight truths," namely shape, place, motion and rest, the same and the other, the similar and the dissimilar, the equal and the unequal, the temporal order." Plato claims: Only when there is a Limit reacting with the Unlimited then there can be shape, which is in turn a necessary condition for things having a place; motion as the change of place; rest as remaining in a certain place-and so on. That is to say: If the first principles, namely the Limiting of the Unlimited, are not intersecting, nothing happens at all.⁵⁸

How does the interplay of the Unlimited and the Limit work? According to Alexander Polyhistor, it works as a creation-process:

From the unit and the indefinite dyade springs numbers; from numbers, points; from points, lines; from lines, plane figures; from plane figures, solid figures; from solid figures, sensible bodies, the elements of which are four: fire, water, earth, and air; these elements interchange and turn into one another completely, and combine to produce a cosmos animate, intelligent, spherical.⁵⁹

This Pythagorean way, hence, contains a three-fold operative order: (a) The basis is the Unlimited, the apeiron, or the apeiron pletos. It is "a numberless multitude," devoid of any "infinite series of positive integers, . . . or any number series whatever." It means an indefinite abyss "in the sense of lacking identity."⁶⁰ (b) The concrete World, on the other hand, is an infinite multitude already transformed into a structured series of numbers.⁶¹ (c) What performs the structuring of the Unlimited is nothing but to hen, the (capitalized) Unity, called the Limit. It operates as the "imposition of a limiting principle within the multitude," thereby creating "a number series by participation of its members in peras or limit."⁶² "One of the roles prominently assigned to to hen (Unity) in that context is to provide a limit enabling "manness" to be differentiated into identifiable parts."⁶³

What, then, are numbers? Numbers name the composition of the Unlimited-the "Indefinite Dyade" or "the Great and the Small" of the Lost Lecture, or "the becoming more or less" of the Philebus 24e-and the Limit.' The interaction of the Limit and the Unlimited creates "unique limits imposed upon continua of progressively larger and smaller constituents. . . .

[T]he Great and the Small is a continuum that admits division into exclusive sets of greater and smaller factors, and a given number is identical with an unique segmentation of the continuum. By virtue of this uniqueness-its participation in Unity, that is to say-a point on the continuum of the Great and the Small takes on the identity of a particular number."⁶⁵ Numbers, therefore, are not just integers, but even magnitudes studied in geometry (lines, plane figures, solids) or temporal durations; they perform the imposition of a limit within a continuum generating

definite multiplicities, structures, sequences, rhythms, and proportions. There is no reason why such a process should not take on even qualitative character (cf. temperature-intervals: colder/hotter). In *Philebus* 25e, Plato points out that everything that comes under a *peras*, a limit, submits to "number" or to *metron*, measure.'

What allows for a world to be generated from the Unlimited? It is the Good, the essence of Unity. Hence, in the *Philebus*, the hallmark of the Good is neither intelligence nor pleasure but measure. This is why the listeners of Plato's lecture "On the Good" were profoundly disturbed when Plato identified the Pythagorean Unity (in generating measures) as the Good and the Good by mathematics.⁶⁷

V. The Decomposing Face of Whitehead's Philosophy of Organism

Whitehead's works of 1941 disclose the Platonic intertwining of infinity and finitude as a triadic movement of unbounded infinity, a limiting principle and an infinite multiplicity of finites.⁶⁸ Here, Heidegger's "ontological Difference" reappears as the difference of unbounded infinity and the whole process of limitation. Whitehead asks: If unbounded infinity has no properties, is mere vacancy, and "cannot be distinguished from nonentity," how may infinity be the ultimate source of any being whatsoever? On the other hand, if "infinity is meaningless" and "value is a gift of finitude," how does limitation create the world of finitude, of value and meaning?⁶⁹ Whitehead answers with his most astonishing move: the reciprocal intersection of infinity and finitude. All infinities are an abstraction from the finite and all finites are an abstraction from "the totality of the Universe" -vice versa. Whitehead takes it this way:

. . . Spinoza emphasized the fundamental infinitude and introduced a subordinate differentiation by finite modes Leibniz emphasized the necessity of finite monads and based them on a substratum of Deistic infinitude. Neither of them adequately emphasized the fact that infinitude is mere vacancy apart from its embodiment of finite values, and . . . finite entities are meaningless apart from their relationship beyond themselves."

This is really the core of Whitehead's Pythagorean puzzle: Infinity and Limitation "create" concrete reality, but-in the same moment-are derived by their own "creations," which in turn are derived from their interplay, which in turn create their interplay-and so on, infinitely moving. Such "infinite movement of evanescence" has, in turn, major consequences for the principles that have governed Whitehead's Philosophy of Organism so far: It renders them derivative from the interplay of infinity and finitude.

(1) The Limit is the World itself

For Plato, the Limit is the principle of Unity that generates measures, forms, and sensible objects. In Whitehead's universe, there is no highest, abstract, and mysterious Limit beyond the process of becoming. Beyond the "concrete unity of experience" only abstraction reigns. True Unity happens only as the Unification of finitude with infinity. Unity is the Finite; the Limit is a gift of finitude. Since the Limit is the Good, the Good is no Idea ordering all measures, rather it is identical with the whole becoming body of the World itself. Unity originates within the process of the becoming Universe."

(2) Potentiality is created

In the process of unification, persistent character and pure potentiality are produced. They arise in "the awakening of infinitude to finite activity."⁷³ The process of limiting the unbounded infinity generates not only new finite entities, but is "the origination of patterns." ¹⁹⁷⁴ Now, in the final stage of his ontology, Whitehead's thesis: "All value is a gift of finitude" exhibits a totally new flavor: namely, that all actualities (not only God) structure the unbounded infinity, thereby generating patterns, possibilities, and novelties.⁷⁵

(3) Creativity is energized

In his final approach to Creativity of 1941, Whitehead derives it .from the interplay of infinity and finitude.⁷⁶ Hence, a paradoxical situation occurs. The Limit limits the unbounded infinity, thereby generating

"activity," that is Creativity.⁷⁷ Thus, the one element generates the other: "All characteristics peculiar to actualities are modes of emphasis whereby finitude vivifies the infinite. In this way Creativity involves the production of value-experience, by the inflow from the infinitude to the finite, deriving special character from the details and the totality of the finite pattern. This is the abstraction involved in the creation of any actuality, with its union of finitude with infinity." Again: "finitude vivifies infinity" (f i), "Creativity involves... the inflow from the infinitude to the finite" (i => f), and this all happens for the sake of "actuality, with its union of finitude and infinity" (i +J).

(4) Immanence is God

We are left with a final duality, that between infinity and finitude, and God appears to stand for their final integration. Since the integration of all differences has to be actual, and all actuality is the "union of finitude and infinity,"⁷⁹ Whitehead understands God as actual integration of infinity and finitude. 'A God who could not integrate the finite would remain external to the World process. Such a God would not attain relevance in the World, because sheer infinity is without energetic activity. Instead, infinity must be energized by actuality.'

Buddhism emphasized the sheer infinity of the divine principle, and thereby its practical influence has been robbed of energetic activity Christianity has been concerned with the characterization of the infinite in terms of finitude. It was impossible to conceive energy in other terms. The very notion of goodness was conceived in terms of ... the limitation of deity.⁸²

Whitehead solves the integration of infinity and finitude in terms of Plato's most disturbing equation: the Limit = The Good. When we conceive Unity essentially as imposition of a Limit—precisely when would a Limit not be "imposed" on the unbounded infinity?⁸³ This could be the case, when we allow for a Unity/Limit of finitude and infinity that is not their integration, but ultimately their generation. God would be visioned as the primordial decision in favor of the "existence" of both infinity and finitude. In God, then, infinity and finitude do not re-act, as in every other actuality, but they originate. This origination is precisely God's act, in which God is the originating Limit. This is God's self-limitation, which is God's goodness.⁸⁴ In God, the ontological difference is an abstraction. In God, the existence of the difference between infinity and finitude is God's decision. In God, it is not the unification of infinity and finitude, but rather the origination of the Difference.

VI. The Orgiastic Ground of Deleuze's Philosophy of Difference

If there is a difference between Deleuze, on the one hand, and Plato and Whitehead, on the other, it is this: While Plato and Whitehead came to think the Pythagorean Puzzle at an extreme point in the corpus of their thought, Deleuze really dwells within the dangerous Pythagorean region, namely the moment of appearance and disappearance of the naked Difference itself. Nothing else "makes" a difference anymore, if not Difference itself.⁸⁵ And "Difference in Itself" appears from Indifference, that is, the mystery of "the undifferentiated abyss, the black nothingness, the indeterminate animal in which everything is dissolved—but also the white nothingness, the once more calm surface upon which float unconnected determinations like scattered members. . . ."⁸⁶

Difference does not negate the dark abyss and it is, for that matter, not just a state of determination. Difference affirms the Infinite with a "single voice," the univocity of being, precisely in differentiating itself." Determination does not measure precise unities (Forms, as in Plato and Whitehead). Determination is Difference as such. Now, unity is Difference, and that makes "difference ... monstrous."⁸⁸ "This difference ... as such is cruelty.... In truth, all form ... ceases.... When the ground rises to the surface, the human face decomposes in this mirror in which both determinations and the indeterminate combine in a single determination which 'makes' the difference."⁸⁹

Here, Deleuze's "infinite movement of evanescence" becomes orgiastic. In Pythagorean terms: The dark abyss of the Infinite Dyade ("the Large and

the Small") not only dissolves all Forms (as in Plato); in the light of the Difference as such, "the Large" and "the Small" themselves dissolve. They represent only "extreme forms" of the maximum and the minimum. The difference of the ground pushes the extreme forms of the small and the large to collapse into the infinite. Deleuze writes:

It seems that the extreme can be defined by the infinite. The infinite, in this sense, even signifies the identity of the small and the large, the identity of the extremes. When representation discovers the infinite within itself, it no longer appears as organic representation but as orgiastic representation: it discovers within itself the limits of the organized; tumult, restlessness and passion underneath apparent calm. It rediscovers monstrosity. [Now, Difference is the] ground in relation to which it no longer matters whether one is before a relative minimum or maximum, a large or a small, nor before a beginning or an end, since the two coincide in this ground which is a unique 'total' moment, simultaneously the moment of evanescence and production of difference, of disappearance and appearance.'

We have again come back to Deleuze's introductory quotation stating the Pythagorean puzzle. Its power of relentless "infinite movement of evanescence" at which difference both vanishes and arises, now, somehow begins to explain many of Deleuze's moves. Thus, finishing the investigation, I shall name three of them.

(1) Where Ground is Difference, Impossibility is no Stranger
In *The Fold*, Deleuze appreciates Whitehead's "chaotic world [of] divergent series [that] are endlessly tracing bifurcating paths."⁹ Such a world has orgiastic structures; it "is a 'chaosmos',"⁹² created of pre-individual singularities.⁹³ In *Difference and Repetition*, the measuring of the infinite—that what Deleuze calls the imposition of nomo-genuinely happens by nomadic distribution of singularities on a plane. "Here, there is no longer a division of that which is distributed but rather a division among those who distribute themselves in an open space—a space which is unlimited, or at least without precise limits." Singularities distribute no stability, but they measure the world of a "meta-stable" plane, where they live virtually as pure events.⁹⁵

(2) The Duality of Time

In a certain sense we may say that time is nothing but the process by which Infinity and Finitude, the Whole and the Infinite Dyade energize world. In *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze articulates two modes of time: Chronos, the time of the present without past and future, only of more or less extension. Chronos is the time of the things, of the actual world. It extends to the notion of the Whole in the sense of a God as infinite extension, uniting the whole world as present. Aion, on the other hand, is the time of the past and the future. Like the Infinite Dyade, it indefinitely divides every present into a past and a future. Aion, the time of the pure event, is never present.⁹⁶ "Briefly, there are two times, one of which is composed only of interlocking presents; the other is constantly decomposed into elongated pasts and futures.... One ... measures the movement of bodies .. , the other is pure straight line at the surface, incorporeal, unlimited, an empty form of time, independent of all matter."⁹⁷ Here, Deleuze restates the Pythagorean puzzle as the conflict of "Aion versus Chronos,"⁹⁸ that is, of things and events, monads and nomads, depth and surface.

(3) Ground is Surface

When the ground rises, the Pythagorean terminology breaks down: the Infinite Dyade has no maximum and minimum any more; the Whole represents no essence beyond the process of nomadic limitation. Limit/nomos expresses nothing other than the process of limitation, that is, of nomadic distribution. Thus, the world appears as "surface." Surface, that is the world that has no essence, no depth, which is pure event. Surface is the "between," the birth of Difference. That explains Deleuze's stark formulation that when the "ground rises to the surface, the human face decomposes."⁹⁹ When the dangerous ground rises, the presumption that the ground was essentially human disappears and the true depth appears—that of

the pure surface. The world has no depth; depth is only a projection of the human nomos into the Whole. The world is seen right when we look at it as a mirror in which depth is only a reflection of the pure surface. This world is empty. If we would try to penetrate the surface, thereby misinterpreting the reflections in the mirror as depth, we would find-nothing. This is Deleuze's solution to the Pythagorean puzzle: "Everything now returns to the surface." '00 The surface is the interaction of the Whole and the Infinite Abyss. It has no existence; it is not Being. It insists only as "non-existing entity"; it expresses really extra-Being.¹⁰¹

Finally, Returning to the Pythagorean Puzzle

At different times, with different implications, and at different stages of their work, Plato, Whitehead, and Deleuze have discovered a new land-the Pythagorean region of thought. Its heart is the infinite movement of evanescence, of the appearance and disappearance of Difference. Nevertheless, maybe the most stunning moment of this Puzzle is this: All three thinkers never credited Pythagoras for their discovery. Although the listeners to Plato's lecture stated such a connection and we may find the same undercurrent in Whitehead and Deleuze, I may admit that the Pythagorean Puzzle is all the more puzzling, since it seems to be included in its own movement of evanescence. I may even admit this: Maybe the surface of Plato's, Whitehead's and Deleuze's thought mirror only what one finds to be reflected by them. But, then, at least this would be the Pythagorean Puzzle. Then we remain within this infinite movement of evanescence.

1 Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 42; cited hereafter as DR.

2 Deleuze, DR, 42. "When this ground rises to the surface, the human face decomposes," reality really "'makes' the difference" (ibid., 28).

3 Ibid., 34, 42. Cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 986a17-21, 987a13-19; cf R.

D. McKirahan, Jr., *Philosophy Before Socrates: An Introduction with Texts and Commentary* (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1994), 96; cited hereafter as PBS.

4 Whitehead, who noticed Plato's Pythagorean turn, notes that about "two thousand three hundred years ago a famous lecture was delivered. The audience was distinguished: among others it included Aristotle and Xenophanes. The topic of the lecture was The Notion of The Good. The lecturer was competent: he was Plato. The lecture was a failure, so far as concerned the elucidation of its professed topic; for the lecturer mainly devoted himself to Mathematics" (A. N. Whitehead, "Mathematics and the Good," in *Essays in Science and Philosophy* [New York: Greenwood Press, 1968], 97; hereafter cited as MG).

5 Guy Emerson, Houghton Library, Harvard, MS Am 1850 (14-15).

6 Deleuze, DR 284 f.

7 This is Deleuze's relativistic view of perspective: Different perspectives can be situated in different discourses. However, every perspective on the same "plane of immanence" may be transformed in the other; cf. G. Deleuze, F. Guattari, *What is Philosophy?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 35 ff; hereafter cited as WPh. The participants of a common plane do not have to share the same time or space. They may not be contemporaries; still, they may be "sojourners across time." In *The Fold*, he says: Relativism "is not a variation of truth according to the subject, but the condition in which the truth of a variation appears to the subject" (G. Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque* [Minneapolis University Press, 1993],

20; hereafter cited as F. I take Deleuze here to break with the idea of linear development, with any preoccupation with timelines and singular traditions forming philosophical identity and exclusive differences. Instead, the variety of perspectives break through history, space, and time, and gather on a certain "plane of immanence," a certain "universe." Now, perspectives reveal themselves as the unique truth of a variation, namely of the "Pythagorean puzzle." "Philosophy [Deleuze says], is becoming, not history; it is the coexistence of planes, not the suggestion

of systems" (G. Deleuze and F. Guattari, WPh, 59).

8 Gilles Deleuze is a distinguished French philosopher, well-known for his poststructuralism. Besides his intensive work on other philosophers such as Hume, Kant, Bergson, Nietzsche, Spinoza, Leibniz, and Foucault, he wrote a series of works, preeminently on his own behalf: *Difference and Repetition* (1968), *The Logic of Sense* (1969), *The Fold* (1988), and *What is Philosophy?* (1991).

9 Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990), 7, 66 ff; hereafter cited as LS. Cf. D. W. Smith, "Deleuze's Theory of Sensation. Overcoming the Kantian Duality," in *Deleuze: A Critical Reader*, ed. P. Patton (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996), 30 f. Intensities energize thinking, yet they conceal themselves from our observation/perception/understanding/thinking. They do not form an ontological, but rather, an aesthetic reality.

10 Deleuze, LS, 7, 12 ff, 66 ff for the "between;" 19 for "expression;" 28 ff for

"sense;" 12 ff, 19-22, 151 for "pure event," 7, 35, 110, 180 for "extra being."

11 Ibid., 34. Cf. E. Weber, "Fragment fiber die Wissenschaft reiner Ereignisse," in *Gilles Deleuze-Fluchtlinien der Philosophie*, F. Balke and J. Vogl, eds., (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1996), 198. Cf. Smith, "Deleuze's Theory," 30. Cf. R. Bogue, *Deleuze and Guattari* (London: Routledge, 1996), 70, 72 (with reference to Meinong).

12 Deleuze, LS, 106. Cf. Bogue, *Deleuze and Guattari*, 62. This *Ungrund* signifies a non-existing horizon of pure events or their "wherein." Cf. Deleuze, F, 20; DR, 310. Cf. Bogue, *Deleuze and Guattari*, 62 ff. Cf. A. Badiou, "Gilles Deleuze, The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque," in *Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy*, C. V. Boundas and D. Olkowski, eds., (New York: Routledge, 1994), 65-61.

13 Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism* (New York: Zone Books, 1988), 38; hereafter cited as B. For Leibniz, this may have been "the best possible world." Cf. Hardt, *Gilles Deleuze*, 18-19, 119-121. The virtual field of forces, powers and events, the "receptacle" of intensities and characters, hence, which force us to think but perplex recognition at the same time, can be grasped neither by any categories of thought nor by any a priori at all. They are included within a transcendental field of total immanence, a field of forces that affects thinking. Cf. Deleuze, LS, 102; cf. Weber, "Fragment," 202.

14 Cf. Deleuze, DR, 36; LS 4 ff, 52 ff. Deleuze calls this concrete novelty, which

cannot be predetermined by any rules or categories, "the event' of actuality". Cf. B. Baugh, "Deleuze and der Empirismus," in *Gilles Deleuze-Fluchtlinien der Philosophie*, F. Balke and J. Vogl, eds., (München: Wilhelm Fink, 1996), 47. Deleuze's virtuality, actualizing itself within the immanent field of forces, realizes the self-differentiation of the absolute positive, infinite, and ultimate reality very similar to Whitehead's 'substantial activity' in Whitehead, *SMW*, 70, 107; cf. M. Hardt, *Gilles Deleuze: An Apprenticeship in Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1995), 16-17 for Deleuze's differentiation of virtuality-actuality from possibility-reality. In a certain sense, Deleuze's 'virtuality' resembles Whitehead's 'real potentiality' (past actuality) in difference from the realization of 'possibilities' (eternal objects).

15 Gilles Deleuze, "La conception de la difference chez Bergson," in *Les etudes bergsoniennes* 4 (1956); 93.

16 Deleuze, DR, 28 ff. Cf. Hardt, *Gilles Deleuze*, 14, 64.

17 Deleuze, F, 13; cf. 10.

18 Deleuze, DR, 34. With Bergson and against Hegel, Deleuze states in his "La conception de la difference chez Bergson": "In Bergson ... the thing differs with itself first, immediately. According to Hegel, the thing differs with itself because it differs first with all it is not" (Deleuze, "La conception", 96; translated by, and quoted according to, Hardt, Gilles

Deleuze, 7). Cf. Deleuze, DR, 28, 50-51.

19 Deleuze, DR, 38; cf. *ibid.*, 35 for "univocal being"; cf. G. Deleuze, *Expressionism in Philosophy: Spinoza* (New York: Zone Books, 1990), 53.

20 Deleuze, DR, 39.

21 *Ibid.*, 28.

22 *Ibid.*, 29.

23 A. N. Whitehead, *Concept of Nature* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), 54, 58, 73.

24 A. N. Whitehead, *Process and Reality: An Essay in Cosmology*, Corrected Edition, eds. D. R. Griffin and D. W. Sherburne (New York: Free Press 1978), 21 f; hereafter cited as PR. Other terms, however, remain ultimate, too, like "extensive continuum" (PR, 61-68), "togetherness" (*ibid.*, 22), or "primordial envisagement" (*ibid.*, 32), and in *Adventures of Ideas* (1933), Whitehead adds "immanence" (A. N. Whitehead, *Adventures of Ideas* [New York: Free Press, 1967], 130, 168; hereafter cited as AI).

25 A. N. Whitehead, *Religion in the Making* (New York: Meridian Books, 1960), 88; hereafter cited as RM.

26 The notions are "unboundedness" (Whitehead, MG, 103) and "limit" (*ibid.*, 105), "infinity" and "finitude" (*ibid.*, 106; A. N. Whitehead, "Immortality," *Essays in Science and Philosophy* (New York: Greenwood Press, 1968), 77; hereafter cited as Imm.), "indefiniteness" and "definition" (Whitehead, Imm., 92). Even regarding *termini technici* from earlier writings we may realize interesting simplifications and even slight shifts of meaning when Whitehead now substitutes "actual occasion/entity" with "minute happening" (Whitehead, MG, 105), "natural occurrences" (*ibid.*, 109), "particulars" (*ibid.*, 111), or "facts" (Whitehead, Imm., 81); "eternal objects" with "pattern" (Whitehead, MG, 102), "types of modes of emphasis" (*ibid.*, 105), or "values" (Whitehead, Imm., 80); and "creativity" with "energetic activity" (Whitehead, MG, 106), "active energy" (*ibid.*, 105), or "active creativity" (Whitehead, Imm., 90).

27 "Infinity and finitude"-one may identify them to be one of the oldest themes in

Greek thought. Cf., e.g., Anaximander who could arguably be seen as first philosopher of the highest rank. Other than Thales' "Water," Anaximenes' "Air," or even (although cautiously said) Heraclitus's "Fire,"

Anaximander's principle, namely the "apeiron," was neither a "material" nor a "form," but rather something beyond all that, namely the unbounded infinity itself. Greek philosophy began with infinity, understood as the ground of the world.

28 Whitehead, SMW, 178.

29 *Ibid.*, 70, 177. In Whitehead, Spinoza's "one infinite substance" expresses three

"attributes": the "multiplicity of modes" of actualities, "the realm of eternal possibility," the "principle of limitation" (*ibid.*, 177-178). The first attribute is the actual limitation of infinity as a "differentiation into individual multiplicity." The second attribute is the limitation of the unbounded realm of possibility as "synthesized in these modes" (*ibid.*, 177). The third attribute names the process of limiting infinity as needing "to conform to a standard" regarding all kinds of limitations among "values, introducing contraries, grades, and oppositions." God, accordingly, "is the ultimate limitation" (*ibid.*, 178).

30 Whitehead, RM, 146. In the 1926-lectures published as *Religion in the Making*, two developments happen. First, the modes of infinity are abstract; infinity cannot gain actuality; it cannot act at all. The concrete, on the other hand, is the "definitely limited." God is enthroned to the limiting agent *par excellence*, if not the only one. Further, this has the consequence that God "in Godself" is now understood to be "infinite" and "finite." God is limited by God's goodness. This does not mean that God is only finite. God is just "not . . . in all respects infinite. . . . [God] is something decided and is thereby limited" (*ibid.*, 147). Both infinity and finitude are an ontological and conceptual basis of these metaphysical constructions; in God, infinity and finitude even

embrace all of the metaphysical constructions at once.

31 Whitehead, AI, 257.

32 "Importance," says Whitehead in *The Modes of Thought*, "arises from this fusion of the finite and the infinite" (A.N. Whitehead, *Modes of Thought* [New York: Free Press, 1966], 79).

33 Whitehead, MG, 105.

34 Ibid., 106.

35 Ibid., 112 f.

36 Whitehead, Imm., 87; cf. MG, 109.

37 Whitehead, MG, 107.

38 Ibid., 106.

39 Whitehead, MG. 105-106; cf. 109; cf. Whitehead, Imm., 79 f.

40 Ibid., 103.

41 Ibid., 105.

42 For Whitehead, this relation remains "a basic truth of philosophy" (ibid., 97).

43 Plato, *Phaedo*, 80b; *Protagoras*, 330e; *Phaedo*, 78c.

44 Plato, *Euthyphro*, 6d; *Phaedo*, 78c-SOb.

45 Plato, *Meno*, 81e; *Theaetetus*, 147b; 148d; *Euthyphro*, 6d; *Meno*, 72c; *Phaedo*, 100b-101c.

46 Plato, *Meno*, 85d; *Phaedo*, 66; *Republic*, 532a.

47 Aristotle, *Metaphysics*, 1078b 30-32.

48 Ibid., 132b.

49 First argument: Plato, *Parmenides*, 131 a-e ; second argument: ibid., 132b-c; third argument: ibid., 132d-133a; fourth argument: ibid., 133a-c.

50 Now we find Plato even talking of a knowledge of becoming, cf. Plato, *Philebus*, 61 d-e.

51 H. Diels, ed., *Commentaria in Aristotelem Graeca IX* (Berlin 1882), 453:30.

52 Cf. McKirahan, PBS, 102.

53 K. M. Sayre, *Plato's Late Ontology: A Riddle Resolved* (Princeton University Press, 1983), 29; hereafter cited as PLO. Cf Plato, *Parmenides*, 133a; cf. 132b.

54 Cf. McKirahan, PBS, 37. Cf. F. M. Cornford, *From Religion to Philosophy: A Study in the Origins of Western Speculation* (Princeton University Press, 1991), 145.

55 Cf. Plato, *Parmenides* 137c; cf. Sayre, PLO, 184. For Sayre, the meaning of the Unlimited and its Limit reveals itself, when we identify "the Unlimited" of Plato's

Lecture," namely "the Great and the Small," with the "the Great and the Small" as "the Indefinite Dyade." Although, what Aristotle referred to as "the Great and Small" (cf. Aristotle, *Metaphysics* 987b) or, occasionally, as the "Indefinite Dyade" (cf. ibid., 1082a), cannot be found in Plato's written opus, these concepts contain intimate connections to Plato's *Philebus*. The apeiron pletos of the *Parmenides* is the apeiron of the *Philebus*. The relation of the One (Unity) and the many (multitude) of the *Parmenides* (164c) reappears in the *Philebus* (23e) as that of the Limit and the Unlimited (Sayre, PLO, 125, 133). "The Unlimited" of the *Philebus* is what Aristotle, comparing Plato to the Pythagoreans (ibid., 149), referred to as "the

Great and the Small," or the "Indefinite Dyade" (ibid., 133-155).

56 Cf. Plato, *Parmenides*, 13 7e-14 1d; cf. McKirahan, PBS, 101.

57 Cf. Plato, *Parmenides*, 137d; 138a-b; 138b-139b; 139b-e; 139e-140b; 140b-d; 140d-141 d.

58 Cf. Sayre, PLO, 50-54. The four principles remaining in the *Philebus* are Limit, the Unlimited, Mixture, and Cause (23e). Limit and the Unlimited name the first principles, Mixture (as Forms and sensible objects likewise) and Cause name "something" proceeding this mixture-like the Demiurg of the *Timaeus* 29e-47e.

59 McKirahan, PBS, 101.

60 Sayre, PLO, 55.

61 McKirahan, PBS, 103.

62 Sayre, PLO, 55.

63 Ibid., 29.

64 "Dyade" stands for the methods Eudoxus used to form ratios of integers to perform an approximation to a certain number on the continuum from both sides of a fraction, the greater and the smaller. See, for instance, the approximation of the magnitude of the square root of 2 (= 1.41421...): We can construct proportions between this magnitude, called C and, say, another magnitude, called R, representing a numeral unit, so that the 1st C is falling between the 1st and the 2nd R, the 10th C between the 14th and the 15th R, the 100th C between the 141st and 142nd R, the 1000th C between the 1414th and the 1415th R, and so forth, increasing the accuracy of the sought value infinitely and continuously (Sayre, PLO, 105). Cf. Diels, *Commentaria*, 248.1. In other words: The interaction has a mathematical basis, namely within the emerging concept of irrational numbers as unlocked in Euclid's and Eudoxus's work; cf. Sayre, PLO, 103-108.

65 Ibid., 113.

66 Ibid., 114.

67 Cf. Plato, *Philebus* 66a. Cf. Diels, *Commentaria*, 122.13-14.

68 As is well known, much of Whitehead's knowledge of Plato came from the work of the influential and important Plato-exegesis of A. E. Taylor, especially in his

Plato: *The Man and His Work* (1926) (cf., e.g., Whitehead, PR, 42). As Sayre proposes in the context of interpretation of "the Great and Small," it was exactly Taylor's account, which will come next to his own findings (Sayre, PLO, 100). Taylor's interpretation of "the Great and Small" precisely underlines the fact that it is an infinite series of fractions appropriating a limit (in this case the square root of 2) that defines the concept of "the Great and Small" (ibid., 101). First, the mathematical approach to the problem and, secondly, particularly the view that the "Indefinite Dyade" generates "numbers" by imposition of a "Unity" (ibid.). The three-fold scheme that we have extracted in Sayre's analysis is exactly that which Whitehead could have known through Taylor. For the triadic movement cf.

Whitehead, *Imm.* 77. Whitehead's texts follow Plato's lost lecture: (a) Patterns are complexities composed by infinity and finitude (Whitehead, MG 101, 105 f). (b) The sensible world is constructed by unbound infinity and patterns (ibid.; Whitehead, *Imm.*, 82). (c) Forms or patterns are numbers or measures, dependent on infinity and finitude (Whitehead, MG, 103, 111). (d) The Good is Unity (ibid., 109; Whitehead, *Imm.*, 88 f).

69 Cf. Whitehead, MG, 103, 105-106; *Imm.*, 82.

70 Cf. Whitehead, *Imm.*, 77, 82; MG, 104, 106.

71 Ibid., 106.

72 Cf. Whitehead, *Imm.*, 90; MG, 112 Thus, although Whitehead thinks that God's "existence is founded in Value" and, therefore, is "the essential unification of the Universe" (Whitehead, *Imm.*, 90), God would not be the Limit but only an abstraction if God was not infinite and finite; cf. ibid., 106 f.

73 Ibid., III.

74 Ibid., 105 f. Cf. R. Rorty, "Matter and Event," in *Explorations in Whitehead's Philosophy*, L. S. Ford and G. L. Kline, eds., (New York: Fordham University Press, 1983), 91: The "total multiplicity of Platonic form is not 'given'" (Whitehead, PR, 43). This insight emerged not later than with Science and the Modern World, when the relations between eternal objects were desystematized toward a process of actual decision (at least of the limiting principle, that is, God) (Whitehead, SMW, 157-179). There are no pre-established patterns but only decisions of actualities. Since "unrelated" eternal objects are "indistinguishable from nonentity" (Whitehead, PR, 257) and "[n]onentity is nothingness" (ibid., 46), there is no "prior multiplicity of simple eternal objects, in any sense of 'prior,' whether temporal, generic or logical"; cf. L. S. Ford, "Neville on the One and the

Many," *Southern Journal of Philosophy* 10 (1972): 80.

75 Whitehead, MG, 105 f.; cf. 112 f; Whitehead, *Imm.*, 82.

76 Creativity is an abstraction (ibid., 80, 90); it is without character (Whitehead, MG, 105 f) and it is activity (ibid., 105 f, 112 f; Whitehead, Imm., 90). In the first place, however, it is unbound infinity (ibid.; Whitehead, MG 105, 106, 112 f). However, Whitehead's infinity is not only an indefinite continuum, but pure activity and pure spontaneity (Whitehead, PR, 31; AI, 258). In a certain sense, Creativity is an abstraction-nothing despite and besides its embodiment in actualities (Whitehead, PR, 7). Despite having no characteristics on its own at all, thereby resembling Aristotle's "prime matter" (ibid., 31), it is the activity of novelty (ibid., 21), whereby actualities are conditioned as actualities (ibid., 20).

77 The "vagueness of the praxis" is energized by patterns (Whitehead, MG, 104); "flux" is raised above the "futility of infinity" by patterns which generate the active energy of finite assemblages (ibid., 105); finite value (that is, finite actuality) appears as the "necessary condition" of activity (ibid., 105 f); the "unbounded universe" is embodied by the activity of finitude (ibid., 106); emphasizing "sheer infinity" without limitation means robbing it of energetic activity (ibid., 106 f); "the characterization of the infinite in terms of finitude" allow us to conceive energy (ibid.); patterns help in the "awakening of infinitude to finite activity" (ibid., III); patterns of actualities are modes of emphasis, "whereby finitude vivifies itself into finite activity" (ibid., 112 f).

78 Ibid., 112-113; italics added.

79 Ibid., 112 f.

80 Ibid., 106 f. Since Science and the Modern World Whitehead already introduced God as the supreme Limit. Not later than in Religion in the Making, he has realized that this Limit has to be an actual synthesis itself.

81 Cf. Whitehead, AI, 236; MG, 106 f., 109. Whenever this balance was brought into peril, the notion of God had to fail, as it did in Spinoza's "fundamental infinitude" (ibid., 106), Leibniz's "substratum of Deistic infinitude" (ibid., 106 f), or the Buddhist emphasis on "sheer infinity of the divine principle" (ibid., 109).

82 Ibid., 106-107.

83 Ibid., 103. In his Adventures of Ideas, Whitehead developed his doctrine of Immanence as a cure against imposed duality (Whitehead, AI, 129). The pivotal point is that when there is no "outside," there is no independent external imposition either, that is no "external creator" (ibid., 236). Within this profound theological background, Whitehead evaluated his doctrine of Immanence as the important improvement of Christian theology over against Plato (ibid., 167). Instead of an internal "second-rated God of the World, who is a mere Icon" of an external Creator, the Alexandrian theology integrated all aspects into a "mutual immanence" of God and the World. The Doctrine of the Trinity, of the two Natures of Christ, and the immanence of the Spirit in the world interpreted this important improvement (ibid., 168). Imposition of a limit would disturb this immanence.

84 Whitehead, MG, 109. The "primordial envisagement" of God indicates the primordial activity of God as God's self-limitation, self-creation as actuality, and the Limit as that in which God "creates" possibilities. This "primordial envisagement is a creation ex nihilo in the sense that there is no one thing or many things from which it emerges"; cf. Ford, "Neville on the One," 81. Only retrospectively can we distinguish a primordial differentiation between infinity and finitude, which is the basis for all other actual unity of infinity and finitude-the World (ibid., 112 f; Whitehead, Imm., 80). When Whitehead says that God's "existence is founded in Value" (Imm. 90), the deepest interpretation may be that God is the Supreme Limit of Godself, the self-limitation that grounds the "essential unification of the Universe" (ibid., 90), the goodness of the universe, its process and totality, from which there "is no escape"

(ibid., 80). Then (and in this sense), God is the creator of the world ex nihilo by God's primordial self-limitation. Cf. R. Faber,

Prozesstheologie: Zu Ihrer Würdigung und kritischen Erneuerung (Mainz: Matthias Gruenewald, 2000), 524-549.

85 In their philosophical development, both Plato and Whitehead reached a point

where their major stances seem to disappear. Plato's Ideas, his ultimate distinct, independent, and unmoved entities vanish. Whitehead's organic universe, founded on Creativity, God, Forms, and Plurality, moves (again) into an infinite (conceptual) process (of principles). All distinct principles collapse, leaving us back with nothing than what Deleuze names so well "a single and unique 'total' moment, simultaneously the moment of evanescence and production of difference" (Deleuze, DR, 42). But in the same moment, a new movement of infinity and finitude appears: the Platonic process of the Good, Whitehead's organic/chaotic process of Beauty and Evil (Whitehead, AI, 259), the movement of Imperfection (ibid., 257). Cf. Deleuze, DR, 28.

86 Deleuze, DR, 28.

87 Ibid., 35; Cf. T. May, "Difference and Unity in Gilles Deleuze," in Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy, eds., C. V. Boundas and D. Olkowski, (New York: Routledge, 1994), 38 f.

88 Deleuze, DR, 29. "Difference in Itself" is "the Whole," either in extending its benediction to its parts or in reflecting back the misery of the differences of its parts (ibid., 42). When "determination makes itself one, by virtue of maintaining a unilateral ... relation to the indeterminate," Difference arises-and this "difference is monstrous" (ibid., 29), cruel, of uncensored power.

89 Ibid., 28.

90 Ibid., 42.

91 Deleuze, F, 81.

92 Ibid. Deleuze even recognizes Whitehead's integration of God into the "chaosmic" process, when he says: "Even God desists from being a Being who compares worlds and chooses the richest compossible. He becomes Process, a Process that at once affirms impossibilities and passes through them" (ibid.). Deleuze, LS, 103.

94 Deleuze, DR, 36; cf. LS, 102.

vs Deleuze, LS, 103. Cf. C. V. Boundas, "Deleuze: Serialization and Subject-- Formation," in Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy, C. V. Boundas and D. Olkowski, eds., (New York: Routledge, 1994), 104.

96 Cf. P. Canning, "The Crack of Time and the Ideal Game," in Gilles Deleuze and the Theater of Philosophy, C. V. Boundas and D. Olkowski, eds., (New York: Routledge, 1994), 74, 90-93. Cf. Deleuze, LS, 88, 107, 162-164, 164-168.

97 Ibid., 62; italics in the text.

98 Ibid., 163.

99 Deleuze, LS, 37; DR, 28.

100 Deleuze, LS, 7; cf. LS, 10; DR, 28. Deleuze calls this surface both a "pre-- individual transcendental field" (Deleuze, LS, 102) in his early *The Logic of Sense* or "the plane of immanence" (Deleuze, WPh, 35 ff) in his late *What is Philosophy?* This plane/surface really does not underlie the "illusion of transcendence," cf. May, "Difference and Unity," 40. Difference in Deleuze is not transcendence at all, but Immanence as such.

101 Cf. Deleuze, LS, 7, 180.

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Monuments we have built to our search for meaning.(Review)
(Review) (book reviews)

It is at the same time our blessing and curse not to know what's around the next corner, never mind beyond the grave.

In a novel by Siberia's Valentin Rasputin one of the characters says, "It would be amusing, suppose you're alive and well, and there in your passport next to your birthdate is your date of death." It would get less amusing, however, as the years passed and then the days and hours. Ignorance isn't always bad; sometimes it's bliss.

Ignorance has another advantage. It forces us to search for answers, and our search makes the world go round: figuring will the next pitch be a curve ball; or will our president be impeached; or will intelligent life be found in a nearby galaxy; or where will we go when we die.

Our histories have traditionally leaned toward wars and warriors. A review of the search for answers, while lacking that pungent appeal to the bloodthirsty, ought to provide a deeper probe of who we are.

Daniel J. Boorstin's *The Seekers: The Story of Man's Continuing Quest to Understand His World* (Random House, 298 pages, \$25.95) is the last of an ambitious trilogy exploring the human predicament. While this one volume can provide no more than a run -- nay, a gallop -- through history, it serves as reminder of the tenacity and astonishing diversity of our search since the world began.

It begins with Moses, who was at best a ghost writer for that first great publishing venture, the two-volume, stone-bound 10 Commandments. Boorstin goes on to explain how seers, who specialized in the future, gave way to prophets such as Moses who settled for elaborating the will of God in the more day-to-day present.

With quick historical sketches, the author elaborates the shifting ethos of successive eras. Job gets three pages. A glance at Isaiah allows Boorstin an interesting comment on the place of priesthood. The prophets, he writes, "could be described as amateurs. For most were not priests. While their utterances had no authentic seal of a sacred profession, each had been called in his own way, and so had his own 'vocation,' a personal invitation to speak for God."

Boorstin has been criticized for confining his ruminations, in these days of multiculturalism, to the experience of the West. He does, though, devote a token chapter to the place of Muslims, Hindus and Buddhists. And on to Greece. When it comes to searching for meaning, it's hard to top Socrates: "Socrates left no writing and no dogma. His radically human approach to philosophy was expressed in his life. His historic influence would be not in his answers but in his questions." While his earlier neighbors such as Thales and Pythagoras flirted with fire, water and other generalizations, Socrates was more likely to drag you in for a beer and ask, "What do you know?" (Though, in fairness, Socrates' pal Alcibiades recalled that "Socrates was never seen drunk.")

We know all this from Plato's dialogues. In "The Apology," Socrates tells of his interview with a politician: "When I began to talk to him, I could not help thinking that he was not really wise, although he was thought wise by many, and still wiser by himself; and thereupon I tried to explain to him that he thought himself wise, but was not really wise; and the consequence was that he hated me, and his enmity was shared by several...."

So Socrates turned to the poets. And found "there is hardly a person present who would not have talked better about their poetry than they did themselves." A sharp tongue like that could get a Greek in trouble.

The towering figures of Plato and Aristotle loom above most other seekers in *The Seekers*. This creates its own difficulties. Of Aristotle he writes: "To attempt to summarize his work would be no more useful than to summarize an encyclopedia" -- words that could be applied to Boorstin's own book.

"Western history would be dominated by the birth and life of a Galilean Jew," the narrative moves on. Jesus, however, is not counted among the seekers -- he didn't come to search for meaning but to impart it. His followers, of course, have been searching ever since, including searching for the real Jesus. But Boorstin has room only for occasional highlights, notably Augustine of Hippo; and some eccentric low-lights that somehow tickled his fancy, notably the so-called "Donation of Constantine."

The Donation was a supposed grant by Emperor Constantine to Pope Sylvester I (314-335) of spiritual sovereignty over all the other great patriarchs and over all matters of faith and worship, as well as temporal sovereignty over Rome and the entire Western empire. This was allegedly Constantine's gift to Sylvester for miraculously healing his leprosy and converting him to Christianity.

Then along came Lorenzo Valla in 1440 to demonstrate "that the `donation' was only a forgery designed to empower the papacy."

This is not news, though neither is it the kind of thing you'll find in the catechism. It does bolster Boorstin's contention that "battles between church and state would punctuate all Western history and leave fertile ambiguities even in the new world."

The author has a lofty regard for the self-abnegating seekers who went off alone to the desert or together into monasteries to find a slant on the meaning of life that was drowned out by the world and even by the church. But the desert is the world, too, and can still play havoc. Not for the only time Boorstin picks the oddity to make the point: Simeon Stylites, a hermit who worked miracles and thus became famous for holiness, a quality that has never failed to attract even the worldly. To escape his admirers and suppliants Simeon retreated up a pole and lived there, day and night, for about 40 years until he died.

Such drawbacks of the hermetic life gradually attracted seekers back to community in monasteries and such -- Boorstin calls them "islands of faith." Even these had their ups and downs, decadence alternating with reform, spiritual triumph with ordinary sin. Precisely because they seem so in line with Christ's crucial admonition, "Go and sell what thou hast and give to the poor and come follow me," these erratic religious communities point up the will-o'-the-wisp quality of the search which, since the first human scratched her or his head in wonder, has been all over the lot.

There's a chapter on the medieval universities, one on the varieties of Protestantism. Then just when the reader thinks we are headed in a straight line home, the book leaps back to Homer and the heroic past. Perhaps this should be no surprise -- meaning does not travel down the straight road, or even the crooked one; it cavorts and doubles back and fools around.

So we are right back in Greece, with Herodotus and Thucydides, fathers of history. Then on to Thomas More's *Utopia*, Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis*, Niccolo Machiavelli's *Prince*. All seekers. We have been a very diverse race. Dancing around the subject, whatever it is, coming at life from every angle, colliding with one another in constant battles of egos, philosophies, theologies and other bones of contention.

"The travail of the seeker is nowhere better revealed than in the life of the father of modern philosophy," writes Boorstin. He means Rene Descartes. Many of us grew up being warned by the church against the wiles and fallacies of the long-dead Descartes. We need not have feared: The world is surviving him. Besides, according to *The Seekers*, "He acquired a Catholic faith that he never lost." For those who don't want to know all about Descartes -- and certainly don't want, heaven help us, to read his original works -- these few pages are not a bad place to start. The same could be said of most seekers in this book.

It's Boorstin's book, so he's entitled to write about whoever he chooses. Critics, in such cases, tend to complain more about worthies left out than about imposters allowed in. And, in any case, it would be small-minded of us to rule anybody out, including you and me: What is intriguing, finally, about the topic is that we're all seekers with a stake in the subject and gesturing yea or nay from the bleachers.

Whether the search is getting us anywhere is a matter of opinion, because we all have our angle. Good cases in point are Voltaire and Jean Jacques Rousseau. Voltaire is famous for his tragic view of things: "that history in general is a collection of crimes, follies and misfortunes, among which we now and then meet with a few virtues and some happy times." But that's not the half of it: This same Voltaire is the prophet and purveyor Of that new concept, civilization, which the French Enlightenment begat. Writes Boorstin, "In the idea of civilization Voltaire encourages us with hope for the common possibilities of the human spirit everywhere."

And Voltaire himself elaborated in his Philosophical Dictionary: "The great faults of the past are also very useful in many ways; the crimes and misfortunes of history cannot be too frequently pondered on, for whatever people say, it is possible to prevent both."

But then there is Jean-Jacques Rousseau (who died the same year as Voltaire, 1778), who despised civilization, its manifestations in the arts, sciences and such, and hankered for a return to nature in the savage but innocent way the creator allegedly gave it to us. Needless to say, there was more to Rousseau than this, just as there was more to them all. But now they are at the mercy of scribblers. It's their own fault for not seeking in silence, like the millions and billions who did their own quiet seeking and striving and, had Providence tilted a bit, might have left us monuments to their musings as great as the giants of our intellectual and spiritual history. It's sad to stop and think what may have been lost or unrecorded.

Those whose seeking represents their age most eloquently usually survive best. As the optimism with which our century started turned sour, a disillusion set in, and searchers of a pessimistic bent resonated. There is a chapter titled "The Literature of Bewilderment," for example.

Portuguese poet Fernando Pessoa's *The Book of Disquietude* is typical of the concerns, which include the alleged death of God. Pessoa begins: "I was born in a time when the majority of young people had lost faith in God, for the same reason their elders had it -- without knowing why." Among the better-known "bewildered" are such literary types as Harold Ionesco, Eugene Ionesco and Albert Camus, who writes in *The Myth of Sisyphus*, "A world that can be explained even with bad reasons is a familiar world. But, on the other hand, in a universe suddenly divested of illusions and light, man feels an alien, a stranger. His exile is without remedy since he is deprived of the memory of a lost home or the hope of a promised land."

This disorientation was even more eloquently expressed in the absurdist drama of Samuel Beckett, especially his play, *Waiting for Godot*, in which, as one character puts it, "Nothing happens, nobody comes, nobody goes, it's awful."

England's Lord Acton, who died in 1902, and whose family was famous for being Catholic and getting away with it for centuries, was, according to Boorstin, "the perfect embodiment of the seeker -- too Catholic to renounce the wisdom of the past and too searching not to follow the inquiring spirit of his age." He spent his life preparing to write a history of liberty but never got it together, indeed never really got it started. He referred to the non-work in progress as "The Madonna of the Future," the title of a Henry James short story about an artist who devoted his life to a single painting, but when the artist died the canvas on the easel was found to be blank.

Boorstin devotes the last chapter to Albert Einstein and his yen for unity, a chimera that has always beckoned to seekers. But the penultimate chapter, on Henri Bergson (1859-1941), seems a more cheerful note to end on.

Western science had been in the ascendancy for some time, using reason and experience as solutions to the problems posed by nature and life. The conversation, presided over by the likes of Francis Bacon, Isaac Newton and Charles Darwin, had become increasingly mechanistic and materialistic. Along came Bergson who said wait a minute, the science card and the rational card do not explain human consciousness and most people's lived experience. Round every corner is that je-ne-sais-quoi, a secret not yet unlocked. His *Creative Evolution*, published in 1907, had at its heart the famous *elan vital*, a vital impulse that is hard to fit into a formula but is recognizable as a something beyond nuts and bolts that makes us tick and makes us human. Writes Boorstin: "Bergson's role in an age of rising faith in science was thus to liberate seekers from the search for system and dogma, and to justify their joy in the search"

Bergson added a poetic dimension to the scientific search, appealing to intuition to leap from fact to fact and imagine a more coherent meaning for the whole. Evolution, he wrote, is God's "undertaking to create creators" -- an insight that might spur seekers into action.

We seem to be going through difficult times, in America and everywhere: more adrift than usual; more stressed and impatient and driven by negative impulses from road rage to loathing for government. Reading an old book by Carlyle or Emerson won't solve what are clearly deep personal and communal problems, but it might give perspective and ease the anxiety.

Our problem is that we're between stories, Diarmuid O'Murchu explained in *Quantum Theology* (Crossroad, 1997). The old answers are not working. On the brink of a brand new century and millennium we ought to be upbeat and excited, but as a species we're depressed instead, stalked by ennui and discouragement.

This could be the ideal climate for new seekers.

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Skovoroda's and Socrates' concepts of self-cognition: A comparative view

Since the middle of the last century, Hryhorii Savych Skovoroda, the eighteenth-century Ukrainian polyhistor, has been hailed by Russian and Ukrainian scholars as, correspondingly, the Russian or the Ukrainian Socrates. To those Russians who perceived the history of Russian intellectual thought from the perspective of imperial historiography, Skovoroda, the first secular philosopher in the Russian Empire, had to be made equal with the pre-eminent thinker in the occidental world. Their imperial ideology was in need of a luminary of such dimension.¹ In their quest to underscore the Skovoroda-Socrates affinity, they claimed the "discovery" of a lost work by Skovoroda in which he expressed his desire to be a Russian Socrates. In it, it was alleged, he wrote: "Hallowed be Thy name in the thought and intentions of Thy servant who has intended with his mind and desired with his will to be a Socrates in Russia."² But a linguistic analysis of this work, and its comparison with Skovoroda's authentic works, proves it to be a crude forgery, reminiscent of forgeries such as that of James Macpherson in Ireland or of the *Krakovohrad* manuscript in Bohemia.

The Ukrainian references to Skovoroda as the Ukrainian Socrates have been motivated by a different set of reasons. His itinerant and mendicant existence, his preoccupation with teaching and preaching ethical norms of behaviour, and his dialogical mode of writing evoke similarities with Socrates. This was well summed up by Dmytro Chyzhevsky: "The ethical pathos of Skovoroda reminds us of Socrates but not only of Socrates, since he himself [Skovoroda] refers with equal reverence to Epicurus and Protagoras. His pathos resembles the ethical mood of moral philosophers of antiquity in general. "His life," Chyzhevsky continues, "is somewhat reminiscent of Socrates' life, but his ethical views ... have little in common with Socrates' ethical intellectualism. Skovoroda's ethics follows the path of Plotinus and the Church Fathers."³

Although Chyzhevsky's conclusion is sound, the epistemological and ethical views of these two thinkers must be confronted more closely in order to find out whether indeed they do resemble each other in any way. By such a confrontation I am not implying, as did some Russian writers, the epistemic equivalence between the two in the history of philosophy. The disparity between them is too obvious even to suggest that. Socrates, justifiably so, has had a supranational significance, while Skovoroda has remained a circumscribed figure. More to the point, while Socrates' concept of self-knowledge, *sofrosyne*, has become a *topos* in Western philosophy, that of Skovoroda has remained, even in modest East European philosophy, mostly unheeded.

At the very centre of the philosophical concerns of both Skovoroda and Socrates is the issue of self-knowledge or self-cognition, an issue that, beginning with the Cartesian school, has continuously attracted the attention of philosophers, psychologists, pedagogues, and lately even neurologists.

Skovoroda's concept of self-cognition has been commented upon, albeit often superficially and tendentiously. Indeed, many of Socrates' thoughts reverberate in Skovoroda's dialogues, even though, as Chyzhevsky concluded, they are not the sole source of his philosophy. I do not share Chyzhevsky's claim, however, that Skovoroda is more pre-Socratic than Socratic, simply because in his language, unlike Socrates, he relies heavily upon tropes and symbols rather than upon direct denotation. I believe that Skovoroda's interest, like that of Socrates, in the basic matter out of which everything is generated was limited, and that he, too, should be termed a moral philosopher. In his *Apology*, Socrates stated:

"The simple truth is, O Athenians, that I have nothing to do with physical speculation," namely, whether the basic matter of all elements is water, fire, air, or what have you. Socrates shifted the immovable foundation from the facts of the world to the facts of the human psyche. On this score Skovoroda's and Socrates' attentions indeed converge. Socrates' concept of *sofrosyne*, as much as can be known since Plato wrote the Socratic dialogues, have been thoroughly scrutinized. Commentaries on practically every utterance in these dialogues continue to grow as if they still contain some latent meaning. To me, a lay philosopher, the "Socratic problem" therefore seems to be less the authenticity of Socrates' voice than the enormity and diversity of these commentaries. As is well known, aside from Plato's *Laws* there is no written work in which Socrates is absent. Hence which voice is Socrates' and which is Plato's has often been a matter of contention.⁴ I therefore accept Socrates as Socrates wherever he appears as he appears, except where he postulates the theory of Forms or Ideas. In these cases, it seems to me, the voice is explicitly Plato's.

My summation of Socrates' *sofrosyne* is based on the *Alcibiades Maior*, *Charmides*, *Gorgias*, *Republic*, *Meno*, and *Parmenides*. It is generally agreed that in these dialogues the term *sofrosyne* is polysemous, with multiple denotative and connotative meanings functioning as the antidote to hubris, and that to Socrates it was the most important of all virtues. Some of these meanings are: selfknowledge, self-control, caring for oneself, inner discipline, the health of the soul, knowing what one knows and what one does not know, the science of all other sciences, that within us by virtue of which we are wise or foolish, and soundness of mind. Often Socrates combines *sofrosyne* with *av*pea* (valour), *aca* (ingrained beauty of character), *evrar\$zg* (good order of the soul), and *qpoveco* (sagacity). All of these interrelated functions distinguish us as humans and, as such, act as predicates of our mind, soul, and self-our *eidos*. In the *Euthydemus*, *sofrosyne* is attested by the Oracle of Delphi as "know thyself" (*yvwOi al)rov*).

How can the soul know itself and thus discover itself? To Socrates the soul is "that which is self-moving" and endowed with an organ to learn the truth. This organ, or "eye of the soul," originally buried in the mud, is gradually drawn and led upward by the dialectical method to the highest level of intelligibility. We read in the *Alcibiades Maior* that "knowledge of thought is the most divine part of the soul." As one eye sees itself reflected in another, so the soul sees itself reflected in another soul, especially in that region where its noblest and divine powers dwell-the region of knowledge.

To reach the highest level of intelligibility, self-knowledge, like the empirical knowledge of external reality, must be systematic, focussed, and sequential; that is, it must be "in the order of succession." *Sofrosyne* thus leads from darkness to light, from unawareness to self-revelation. From a narrow epistemological perspective, *sofrosyne* is the only absolute knowledge that one can have. Empirical knowledge of the world, its origin, its nature, and its end, fascinating as it might be, does not yield an apodictic and necessary truth. For this reason it cannot be the quest of philosophical inquiry. Epistemology or understanding (*eorzar/pu*), therefore, is inevitably grounded in self-cognition, in the discovery of the soul as the seat of moral ideas or virtues. It is bound with ethics rather than with psychology or anthropology. Hence *sofrosyne* is not mere introspection of one's inner experiences, but rather a systematic and dialectical inquiry into the *eidos* of one's soul and thereby into the ethical and metaphysical dimensions of our existence.

How does Skovoroda's "philosophy of the heart" relate to Socrates' "philosophy of the soul"? If we substitute the term "heart" with the term "soul," as Skovoroda himself often does, the surface affinity between their systems becomes striking.⁵ But the conceptual relation between them is much more complex than that. Socrates and Skovoroda postulated the existence of the endogenous structure that makes epistemology rely upon man's keen awareness of a priori existing knowledge. In Skovoroda,

however, this structure is considerably different from that in Socrates.

How does this structure operate in both philosophers, specifically in their theories of knowledge, ethics, and metaphysics?

Sofrosyne, as the soundness of mind or temperance, as *sōphrosynē*, is central to Socrates' theory of knowledge. It differs from all other modes of knowledge in that it does not have an object that is different from itself. Sofrosyne therefore is the simultaneity of subject, predicate, and object. In his *Narkiss*, Skovoroda, like Socrates in the *Euthydemus*, urges his interlocutor to care only about one thing: "Know thyself, listen to thyself, look into thyself."⁶ Self-knowledge is the basis of all other knowledge. To this extent Skovoroda emulates Socrates. But, unlike Socrates, along with the cognition of one's soul Skovoroda derides the body, perceiving the soul and the body antithetically and presenting them correspondingly as truth and illusion, as beauty and dirt. Such derision of the body was inconceivable not only to Socrates, but also to most Ionic Greeks. In the *Gorgias* and *Charmides*, Socrates defends the importance of both. Sofrosyne of the soul, he maintains, helps to keep the body in good health. To use the modern term, Socrates upholds the psychosomatic compatibility of the body and the soul. He insists that Eros, as a great demon (*Oaz*oviov*), manifests itself as the desire of both the body and the soul. The soul and the body cannot be conceived separately. Skovoroda, on the other hand, conceives of the body as a temporary prison of the eternal soul, which has but one quest—to part with the body and reunite with God. Another essential component of Skovoroda's epistemology that sets him apart from Socrates is his insistence upon faith as a principal source and guarantor of genuine knowledge. In the first conversation of Skovoroda's *Narkiss*, the protagonist Luka is told by Druh ("Friend," namely, Skovoroda) that "faith despises appearances and relies upon what, in the emptiness, is the head, power, and foundation and never dies." Luka asks Druh: "why did you speak about faith and now speak about an eye?" Druh replies: "A genuine eye and faith are one and the same.... because a genuine person has a genuine eye that, by bypassing appearance, sees under it [something] new and rests upon it. That is why it is called faith. To believe and to rely upon something, as on a firm foundation, all that is one and the same thing." Translating this dialogical exchange into a formal definition, Skovoroda asserts that the validity of anything as true is independent of observation and the adequation between perceptual evidence and inductive judgment. Hence, as a basically idealistic theory of knowledge it is much closer to the Neoplatonist philosophy of Plotinus than to Socrates' rationalistic philosophy.

By stating this, I do not want to reject any and all affinity between Skovoroda's and Socrates' epistemologies. Like Socrates, Skovoroda believed in self-knowledge as anterior to all knowledge. "One who is unable to look first into one's flesh," he writes, "cannot discover the design in the materials of earth and heaven"; "[t]he seeds of all sciences are hidden within man"; "he is their secret source"; and "[a]ll knowledge, in its essence and its base, is selfknowledge." Similar assertions recur in his dialogues, sermons, and treatises. Despite a different mode of linguistic rendition, Skovoroda's dialogues, like those of Plato, are aporetic in that they proceed from intentional ignorance to demonstrated illumination. Here I again disagree with Chyzhevsky, this time concerning Skovoroda's and Socrates' use of language. It is true that Plato's dialogues are not as rich in imagery and symbolism as Skovoroda's, and hence do not evoke as varied a reality as those of Skovoroda, but this does not mean that Plato was less interested in the referent function of his language. Being also a poet, Skovoroda deliberately chose a highly figurative style, which was prevalent during the baroque period. In the first conversation of *Narkiss*, Druh (i.e., Skovoroda) instructs Luka this way: "Don't be empty-headed. Examine every word warily. At the same time secure a spot for it in your heart. I myself love this thought ineffably. And I wish it would be yours forever so that our hearts and thoughts would be one. Nothing could be sweeter than this. But, please, first ponder it well.... Be simple. But at the same time be cautious."⁸ Hence semiotic

contact and semantic oneness with his audience was also Skovoroda's express goal.

Skovoroda's epistemology, like that of Socrates, is subservient to ethics and metaphysics. Ultimately, he insists, knowledge must apprehend the most divine components of the heart, that is, God and thought (Teo Kai ppovea) in their complementary relationship. The reflexive activity of our heart, he postulates, is deeply grounded in our ethical and metaphysical exigencies. In the third conversation of Narkiss, Druh (i.e., Skovoroda) tells his interlocutor, Kleopa, that to measure and to know what measurement is without knowing the plan behind it is a futile undertaking: "Even if you were to measure all of the Copernican worlds, without discovering their plan, which supports all of the exteriors, nothing would come of it."⁹ Knowledge (measurement) divorced from its plan, its telos, is sterile sophistry. To conceive of this plan, however, one has to have it in one's heart. "Who can know the plan in the earthly and heavenly extended materials that are attached to their eternal symmetry if one can not see it first in one's insignificant body?"¹⁰

How is the genesis of this anterior knowledge explained by Socrates and Skovoroda? In Meno Socrates tries to prove that all knowledge is but a recollection (avauveca) of what the soul has already known in a previous existence. Thus a person who is ignorant, like the boy Meno, may have a true opinion on a subject that he does not know consciously. From this example Socrates infers that if Meno had arrived at the knowledge of the Pythagorean theorem, of which he initially was not aware, he must have known it before he was born; ergo, his soul must have always existed. Skovoroda also speaks about the anterior knowledge in the human heart, but he ascribes it to a divine plan that "is extended throughout the entire cosmos nonsensibly and contains and performs everything." Hence "man and God are the same."¹¹ To know, therefore, is "to refrain from hindering the wisdom that lives within us."

The difference between Skovoroda's and Socrates' metaphysics is equally profound. Skovoroda's is manifestly theocentric, while Socrates' is anthropocentric. Nowhere does Socrates equate man and God, while Skovoroda frequently does. The sofion, the wise and just man, Socrates says, is dear to God, and by his virtues he might even resemble Him, but he is not and never will be God. His knowledge therefore is and always will remain incomplete, while that of God is and always will be perfect.

In view of these differences, are Skovoroda's dialogues truly Socratic, and would Socrates, as George Kline believes, have recognized the questions that they deal with as his own?¹² I doubt it very much. Unlike Socrates, Skovoroda conceived of the cosmos in terms of three concentric circles-the macrocosm, microcosm, and symbolic cosmos. "The first world," he writes, "is universal, and the inhabited world is where all born things dwell. It consists of innumerable world-worlds and is a large world. The two other worlds are partial and small. One is a microcosm, that is, a small world, or man. The other world is symbolic, that is, the Bible."¹³ The macrocosm and microcosm have two antagonistic natures-one material, which is visible, the other spiritual, which is invisible. The second penetrates and sustains the first. What is interesting here is that Skovoroda's "Dialoh. Imia emu-Potop zmiin" (A Dialogue Called the Serpent's Flood), in which he summarizes his cosmological theory, is based on Plato's concept of forms.

Skovoroda's quasi-panteistic theory is nowhere to be found in Socrates. The "things above" (ra uereopa) Socrates claimed not to know. Conceiving everything from the perspective of man, Socrates thus projected anthropology into cosmology rather than vice versa. In the Gorgias, for example, the cosmos is seen as an analogue of man's well-ordered life. The ordered movement of the universe reflects the perfect human soul. But when Skovoroda argues that man, a small cosmos, functions within the large cosmos and is imbued with one and the same living soul, this is a Pythagorean idea rather than a Socratic one.¹⁴

Whence does Skovoroda's terminology of macrocosms and microcosms derive? It is most probably borrowed from the Stoics, who made no distinction

between God and the world. What God is to the world, they claimed, the soul is to man. Hence the world is the macrocosm and man is a microcosm. The soul is the ruling part of man and is possessed of reason. But Skovoroda took only this from the Stoics, to whom physical and spiritual realities were synonymous with corporeality. Otherwise, they believed, the reciprocity between the body and the soul would be inconceivable. To Skovoroda the spiritualist, such a view would have been tantamount to a denial of God.

What should we conclude in regard to the alleged affinity between Skovoroda and Socrates? First and foremost that the claims, both Russian and Ukrainian, that Skovoroda's philosophy emulates that of Socrates is more a compensatory wish than a textual fact. An attentive reading of Skovoroda's dialogues leads us to conclude that his philosophy is highly eclectic, drawing upon a great many ancient philosophers (among them Pythagoras, Socrates, Plato, Aristotle, Epicurus, Plutarch, Plotinus, and Seneca) and, judging by his frequent references to the Church Fathers, upon their writings as well. Yet, despite such an assortment of often mutually exclusive sources, his philosophy is remarkably coherent. How then did he achieve this coherence? To obviate conflicts, Skovoroda skilfully extrapolated from these sources only those statements or often only expressions that validated his suppositions. Thus, from the Stoics he took the concept of macrocosms and microcosms, but refrained from their materialistic monism. From Socrates he took the concept of *soufrosyne*, but ignored its polysemy and its broad applicability.

If we were to correlate Skovoroda with a single Greek philosopher, in matters of nature and the structure of all reality it would have to be Plotinus. Like Skovoroda, albeit in more dramatic terms, Plotinus conceived of Being as made up of One and of the Soul emanating from it. To Skovoroda self-cognition was not, as Socrates thought, one of the multiple predicates of our mind, but the soul's contemplation of One. To know One, Skovoroda believed, meant to become one with it. In the moment of such a cognitive union the soul becomes God. It reascends to its original source, surrendering to One. Matter to Skovoroda, as to Plotinus, was non-being, the darkness into which the One shines. It is the evil principle, a formless quantity that receives its illusory form from the soul.

Interestingly, the language of Plotinus's *Enneads*, very much like that of Skovoroda's dialogues, is excessively metaphorical.

Nowadays the question of whether Skovoroda was or was not a philosopher, which some writers posed in the past,⁵ appears to be paralogical, simply because there is no one apodictic definition of philosophy. If, however, we accept its etymology as its defining criterion, then Skovoroda must be recognized as a true philosopher.

1. See Grigorii P. Danilevsky, "Grigorii Savvich Skovoroda," in his *Sochineniia*, vol. 8 (St. Petersburg, 1902), 326. Gustav Shpet saw in this laudation of Skovoroda as a Socrates or a Plato "a very big desire to have in the eighteenth century the first serious Russian philosopher" (*Ocherki razvitiia russkoi filosofii* [Petrograd: Kolos, 1922], 69). Vasilii V. Zenkovsky, while avoiding the "Russian Socrates" cliché and recognizing Skovoroda's connection "with the ecclesiastical life of Ukraine," nevertheless regards him "universally Russian in importance" and hence "occupying a legitimate place in the history of Russian philosophy" (*A History of Russia Philosophy*, vol. 1 [New York: Columbia University Press, 1952], 54).

2. George L. Kline, introduction to *Russian Philosophy: An Historical Anthology*, vol. 1, *The Beginnings of Russian Philosophy: The Slavophiles, the Westerners*, ed. James M. Edie et al. (Chicago: Quadrangle Books, 1965), 17.

3. Dmytro Chyzhvsky, *Narysy z istorii filosofii na Ukraini* (Prague: Ukrainidsychnyi fond, 1931), 39.

4. "The line between Socrates and Plato is hard, if not impossible, to find" (Plato, *Meno: Text and Criticism*, ed. Alexander Sesonske and Noel Fleming [Belmont: Wadsworth, 1965], 1).

5. Belief that the heart is the seat of the soul goes back to the

pre-Socratic period. Hippocrates wrote: "Some people say that the heart is the organ with which we think and that it feels pain and anxiety. But it is not so. Man ought to know that from the brain and from the brain only arise pleasures, joys, laughter and tears. Through it, in particular, we think, see, hear and distinguish the ugly from the beautiful, the bad from the good, the pleasant from the unpleasant.... To consciousness the brain is the messenger" (as quoted in Wilder Penfield, *The Mystery of the Mind: A Critical Study of Consciousness and the Human Brain* [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1975], 7). Skovoroda's symbolic use of the term "heart" is grounded in the Bible. He writes: "As [St.] Jerome has taught us, and we do believe him,... the true person is the heart in the person" ("Narkiss. Razhlahol o tom: uznai sebe," in Hryhorii Skovoroda, *Tvory v dvokh tomakh*, vol. 1, ed. O. I. Biletsky et al. [Kyiv: Vydavnytstvo Akademii nauk Ukrainiskoi RSR, 1961], 49).

: . Skoda, "Nki-," 27. 7 Ibid. 36-7. ':00000-00V'

8. Ibid., 34-5. 9. Ibid., 41. 10. Ibid., 42.

11. "Dialoh. Imia emu-Potop zmiin," in Skovoroda, *Tvory*, 1: 536. 12. Kline, 17.

13. Skovoroda, "Dialoh," 536.

14. The similarity between Skovoroda's and Pythagoras's views is not accidental. Skovoroda made frequent references to Pythagoras. For example: "They [Pythagoras and his disciples] always believed that the mysterious person of our heart is of the same essence and nature as the most blessed spirit that well governs the universe's machines" ("[Tsitseron. O starosti]," in Skovoroda, *Tvory*, 2: 186). 15. The first refutation of Skovoroda as a philosopher was made by Illarion Chestovich:

"The goal and boundaries [of philosophy] are well established, and therefore it is difficult to escape being out of touch with time by introducing into it such a would-be philosopher as Skovoroda" (*Istoriia Sankt-Peterburgskoi dukhovnoi akademii* [St. Petersburg, 1857]), 296). In 1922 Shpet expressed a similar view: "Those few thoughts in Skovoroda that remind me of philosophy, and around which his fantasy and instructions ferment, hardly rise above the level of generalities and truisms concerning philosophy" (Shpet, 69).

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