

None come nearer to us than the Platonists
St. Augustine, *The City of God*

In the Footsteps of Socrates and Plato

by Elisabeth Hellenbroich

TO DISCUSS Plato and Aristotle today is not an abstract, academic issue. As a political movement, we are ourselves in the middle of this epistemological war which has been raging for 2,000 years. It is a war between two diametrically opposed views concerning the human mind and the universe.

Plato, the founder of philosophy and science, laid the basis for Augustine and Christian philosophy, as well as for Nicolaus of Cusa, the founder of the European Renaissance, and for Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz. It was the Platonic method of thinking which inspired all significant discoveries made in science and art. It was Plato's concept of the republic based on natural law which served as a model for all great statesmen in history.

Diametrically opposed to Plato is Aristotle, whose main preoccupation was infiltrating Plato's Academy, and whose writings were an attempt to destroy and obfuscate Platonic thinking. Aristotelianism is a form of mental disease. Among its followers were the scholastics, the empiricists, positivists, existentialists—all having one obsession in common:

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they all deny that man has the faculty for creative reasoning. They all insist that man is some form of a higher animal, whose thinking activity consists of sense perceptions. They all deny that there is a causality which governs the laws of the universe. They all were emotionally incapable of love and passion—which is the only true starting point for creative work.

Except for Lyndon LaRouche and a few excellent and courageous scientists and artists who are our friends and collaborators, we are surrounded today by the worst Aristotelian scholasticism, which would make even a Duns Scotus blush. Mister Karl Popper, the positivist, opens his mouth and says, it is arrogant and dangerous to say that man can know the laws of history and on that basis determine his future actions. Our university

professors, many of them products of the so-called critical theory of the Frankfurt School, teach the same garbage they were taught back in the 'sixties, by misanthropes like Theodor Adorno and Max Horkheimer. They keep regurgitating that man should free himself from the enslavement of rational thought, of reason, of a culture which affirmatively tells him that man is born to perfect himself and to act morally. Adorno once wrote that to be obsessed with positive values, is nothing but a cover for the underlying destructive tendencies in man. A free man, in their opin-



Plato and Aristotle, in Raphael's School of Athens.

ion, is one who can live out his instincts, who returns to pre-Christian mythologies, to animism. No wonder that one of the most celebrated scientists today is Ilya Prigogine, a Nietzschean by philosophical conviction, who believes in the cyclical world view and whose followers all praise Mother Earth—Gaia—and engage in touchy-feely sessions.

Those kinds of scientists are the ones today engaged in a witchhunt, worse than in the Middle Ages, against the scientists who discovered cold fusion, because this anomalous discovery put into question their entire axiomatic belief structure. So they denounce, they persecute. It is no different in politics. Whose word is law today? The Sophists. The ignoramuses like the Jeffrey Sachses and the Friedmanites. They cling obsessively, despite the U.S. economy's collapse, to their own assumption that there will be an upswing in the U.S. and that the Soviet Union will only find a way out by applying radical free-market measures. Yet as is, and always has been the case, the laws of the universe, the laws of history, prove to be scientifically correct; they vindicate us, who, despite being calumniated, have told the truth about the present strategic situation, and have supplied the correct answers for how change must be effected.

The problem we face, is that the majority of people echo the foolish assumptions they hear from the even more foolish so-called authorities. And only to the extent we teach them to think and judge for themselves, only if through culture we change their axioms, will we be able to break their immorality and stupidity.

So that is the portrait of our times. We, however, define ourselves as living in the tradition of Plato's Academy movement. We conceive ourselves as an inner elite. We are concerned with what is essential in politics, and very practically so: to transform our fight for correct scientific ideas into practice, by being engaged in the education of statesmen; by writing constitutions and economic programs for countries in Ibero-America, Africa, the new republics emerging from the former Soviet Union; by educating the scientists and artists in what we call the Socratic method of thinking.

We are doing precisely what Plato undertook when, in 388 B.C., he founded his Academy in Athens. The academy was the attempt to educate statesmen and law-givers as well as scientists in the Platonic method.

Plato's Method

For this battle he led, Plato was hated, and his worst enemies were the Sophists. They were the leading current in philosophy, and all they did was declare that knowledge does not count. What counts is the appear-

ance of knowing, bluffing, and to learn the art of persuasion, rhetoric. They were the ones who had accused Plato's teacher, Socrates, claiming that he was sinning against God, because he would explore the laws of the universe. They brought him to court and sentenced him to death.

In one of his first dialogues—the *Apology*—Plato describes in a moving way what the conflict was all about. The *Apology* consists of Socrates addressing the Athenian court, among whose judges sat the Sophists. Socrates at the time was 70 years old. He says:

I am falsely accused of blaspheming against the gods and destroying our youth. You, the judges, you all know that you are lying. Let me tell you the truth about why I am put in front of the court. I am accused of searching for the truth. I am here because I am hated for doing that. If I have any wisdom, it is that I know that I don't know, and that I can discover this in others as well. I went around and met prominent statesmen and found out that they pretended to be very wise, while in reality they did not know anything. When I tried to show this to them, they began to hate me.

I did the same with the poets. I looked at their well-made poems, but I found out that rather than knowing the laws of poetry and being able to explain them, they pretended they knew. But they did not. Rather than from knowledge they created out of enthusiasm and arbitrariness. When I showed this to them, they began to hate me. It was a little bit better with the craftsmen. There I did find some people who knew what they were doing. But some thought that knowing their field, they would know everything else, and they turned out to be very stupid, because they had no judgment.

They all hated me for that, for having shown to them, that they pretend to know while not knowing, and I saw that I was wiser than they, because I do not pretend. Now I am accused of destroying the youth. I would like to know from you, Judge Meletos, if you are so concerned about this question, tell me, who makes the youth more perfect?

The laws.

You mean the judges here?

Yes I mean all judges.

And what about the audience?

Also them.

And the city councillors and the people's assembly?

Also they make the youth better.

So you say that essentially all, except me, make the Athenian youth better. Tell me, who makes the horses better, many people or only a few? It seems

‘You are disgusting, Socrates. You twist the argument in such a way that you can do most harm. . . .’

‘Yes, but first I must learn what you mean, Thrasymachus. You say justice is the advantage of the stronger. What do you mean by that?’



Illustrations by Alan Yue

only a few. Meletos, you do not say anything? What a hypocrite you are, you, who never wanted to educate the youth, you now pretend having such interest in this matter.

You want me to plea bargain or let me free if I stop looking for the truth? How could I ever do that? You think I am frightened of death? No, never. Why should I be? I know that if I am dead, it will not be me who is destroyed, but you, with this you will bring destruction upon yourselves. . . .

This reference to the *Apology* gives you the moral setting and the idea that the fight between Plato and the Sophists, upon whom Aristotle's ideas were based, was indeed a life and death political fight.

Now let us look a bit more at Plato's method, which as he said in his famous Seventh Letter, was in part written down by him, but mostly based on the dialogues he had with many statesmen of his time, like Dionysius of Syracuse.

All the dialogues of Plato are a demonstration of the method with which idea-concepts are formed. At its core is the *principle of hypothesis*. Knowledge is not a collection of facts and predicates, it is not opinion and enumeration of definitions, but it is solving a problem, by starting out with a challenge to the assumptions and axioms which

underlie our own judgments. The key is to demonstrate *how* man thinks, and the method by which he learns how to think. In one of his most famous dialogues, *The Republic*, Socrates, Glaucon, Polemarchus, Thrasymachus, and Cephalus are discussing the question, "What is just?"

Thrasymachus, one of the Athenian long-haired machos, wants to give Socrates a quick explanation:

I say that *justice* is nothing other than the advantage of the stronger. Well, why don't you praise me?

First I must learn what you mean. You say the just is the advantage of the stronger. What do you mean by that, Thrasymachus? Surely you don't assert such a thing as this: If Polydamas, the pancratist, is stronger than we are, and beef is advantageous for his body, then this food is also just and advantageous for we who are weaker than he is?

You are disgusting, Socrates. You twist the argument in such a way that you can do the most harm. Don't you know, Socrates, that some cities are ruled tyrannically, some democratically, and some aristocratically. And isn't in each city the ruling group the master? And each ruling group sets down laws for its own advantage: A democracy sets down democratic laws; a tyranny, tyrannical laws; and the others do the

same. And they declare that what they have set down—their own advantage—is just for the ruled, and if a man departs from it, they punish him as a law-breaker and a doer of unjust deeds.

So let us find out whether what you said is true. While I too agree that the just is something of advantage, you add to it and assert that it is the advantage of the stronger, and I don't know whether it is so. Now tell me: Don't you say, though, that it is just also to obey the rulers?

I do.

Are the rulers in their several cities infallible, or are they such as to make mistakes too?

By all means. They certainly are such as to make mistakes too.

When they put their hands to setting down laws, do they set some down correctly and some incorrectly?

I suppose so.

Is that law correct which sets down what is advantageous for themselves, and that one incorrect which sets down what is disadvantageous? Or how do you mean it?

As you say.

But whatever the rulers set down must be obeyed and carried out by those who are ruled, and this is just?

Of course.

Then according to your argument, it is just, to do not only what is advantageous for the stronger, but also the opposite, what is disadvantageous.

Thrasymachus is furious. Socrates says:

Now tell me, what do you mean by a *ruler*? Is a doctor, in the narrow sense, a money-maker, or one who cares for the sick?

One who cares for the sick.

And someone who rules over sailors? Is he not called a pilot because of sailing? And is there any advantage for each of these arts other than to be as perfect as possible? Then is it not the case that the doctor, insofar as he is a doctor, considers or commands not the doctor's advantage, but that of the sick man?

Certainly.

Then also the pilot and ruler will consider or command the benefit not of the pilot, but of the man who is a sailor and is ruled. Therefore, Thrasymachus, there is not ever anyone who holds any position of rule, insofar as he is ruler, who considers or commands his own advantage, rather than that of those who are ruled, and of which he himself is the craftsman. And this is the advantage that he looks for,

what is fitting for those who are ruled; and everything he says and does is to this end.

Thrasymachus does not know what to say. Socrates has demonstrated that the Hobbesian opinion that a state is ruled by egotistic interest, is wrong. If one looks for the true meaning of "ruler," it is the *art* of ruling for the commonweal; and that is therefore the only criterion for justice, which sets the tone for the entire investigation Socrates is conducting. Socrates continues:

The good are not willing to rule for the sake of money and honor, but for the benefit of the others in the strictest sense. And nobody voluntarily wants to rule unless necessity dictates this responsibility to him.

Now Glaucon speaks up and says:

Let me tell you what the general opinion says about justice and injustice. They say that doing injustice is naturally good, and suffering injustice is bad. Justice historically was made possible on the basis of social convention. It is a mean between what is best—doing injustice without being caught and paying a penalty—and what is worst—suffering injustice without being able to avenge oneself. Let's be clear: if people could, they would all like to be unjust. They all would like to go hog wild, commit adultery, corruption, stealing. That is the reality of today.

Socrates, already earlier in his discussion with Thrasymachus, had indicated that the ruler must necessarily follow what is best for the others, and not act for egotistical purposes. He now develops pedagogically the model of a republic, trying to show that in a just state there must necessarily be a reciprocal relationship between the individual citizen, between his soul, and the state. The true nature of the state must correspond to the true nature of the individual, Socrates says.

So then, he continues, let us ask ourselves, what is the human soul? It has, as an old story tells, three levels of consciousness. On the lowest level—the bronze level—man is nothing but a prisoner of his own infantile emotions and sense perceptions. (This level was best illustrated by Dante's *Commedia*, by the Inferno in which he puts such people.)

But a man who sees himself as an actor upon the stage, reflecting on his state of mind, begins to act based on *simple self-consciousness*. He reflects upon his own emotions, which is a fundamental precondition for whoever wishes to engage in creative work. This leads to the second level of thinking, the silver souls, who are nonetheless still caught up in deductive thinking. All their assumptions and postulates are bound to one fixed set of premises, as Thrasymachus has shown.

Challenging this fixed set of beliefs unhinges these

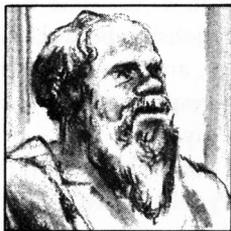
Kantians and Aristotelians. For them there is no change, no process of thought; there is only enumeration of pre-existing thoughts. Their irrational emotions are chained, as if in a prison where they rant and rave.

On a third level of thinking—the level of reason—to which the metaphor of golden soul is attached, man makes his own thinking process the object of self-conscious thought. He makes the object of his thought, the process by which, through the course of history, a series of scientific hypotheses were successively generated, leading to true scientific discoveries. He thereby grasps the causal principle which underlies all hypothesis—the *Idea of the Good* and the *One*. A just soul, as Socrates demonstrates, looks for a harmony between reason, emotions, and his will, his virtue. In such a soul, reason should be the ruler.

Plato comes to a fundamental point in his dialogue. Socrates says:

Accordingly, we can assert that in a state presided over by reason, the concern is not for particular interests, but the well-being of each and every individual, to provide the best for the common good.

Now if that is so, who should be the ruler that embodies the idea of justice? Unless the philosophers rule as kings, or those now called kings and chiefs genuinely and adequately philosophize, and political power and philosophy coincide in the same place, the cities will have no rest from their ills, nor do I think that for mankind the regime we have now described in speech will ever come forth from nature and see the light of the sun.



Idea of the Good

NOW the discussion takes another turn. What does it mean to educate a philosopher king? And what is this connection of philosophy

and power? The philosopher kings must be educated, Socrates says. They cannot be petty-minded people, but must have the will to search for truth. They cannot have existential fears, nor be selfish nor superficial people who look for recognition. The first thing they must understand is the difference between knowledge and opinion. We have to teach them music, geometry, astronomy. But the most important concept they must grasp is, what is the causality which underlies our universe, namely, what is the cause of change and becoming? It is not something one can learn and regurgitate, but it is a state of mind, on the level of reason, which must come to grips with that fundamental question: the *Idea of the Good*. Socrates says:

What might help, is the following analogy. Let us think about the visible world. We perceive this world by means of our eyes, our capacity to think, and this is rendered possible because of light, whose cause is the sun in the visible world. Now, I would call the sun an offspring of the Idea of the Good, the latter being far more important, given that it is the one fundamental causality which generates the visible as well as the intelligible world. What we see, we see with the help of our eyes and our sight, and what is the cause of sight other than the sun? Say the sun is an offspring of the Good—as the Good is in the intelligible region with respect to intelligence and what is understood, so the sun is in the visible region with respect to sight and what is seen.

Now think about the soul. When it fixes itself on that which is illuminated by truth and that which *is*, it understands, it knows. But when it fixes itself on that which is mixed with darkness, on coming into being and passing away, it opines and is dimmed, changing opinions back and forth, and does not possess intelligence.

Therefore, we should say, that what provides truth to the things known and gives power to one who knows, is the Idea of the Good. And as the cause of knowledge and truth, it can be understood as something known. So we say, the sun not only provides what is seen with the power of being seen, but also with generation, growth, and nourishment, although it itself is not generation. . . .

Therefore we say not only that *being known* is given in things known as a consequence of the Good, but also that besides, existence and being are given in them as a result of it, although the Good is not being, but is still beyond being, exceeding it in dignity and power.

Socrates takes another example to illustrate the point, which he considers the key of his entire method:

Now take a line cut in two unequal segments—one for the class that is seen, the other for the intelligible things—and cut each segment in the same proportion. Now in terms of relative clarity and obscurity, you will have one segment in the visible part for images. I mean by that first shadows, then appearance produced in water and all close-grained, smooth, bright things, and everything of the sort.

In the other segment, put that of which this first is the likeness—the animals around us, everything that grows, and the whole class of artifacts. With respect to truth or lack of truth, as the opinable is distinguished from the knowable, so the likeness is distinguished from that of which it is the likeness. Now in turn let us consider how the intelligible section should be cut.

In one part of it a soul using as images the things

that were previously imitated, is compelled to investigate on the basis of *hypotheses* and makes its way not to a beginning, but to an end. While in the other part it makes its way to a beginning, that is free from hypotheses: Starting out from hypothesis and without the images used in the other part, by means of ideas themselves, it makes its inquiry through them.

Glaucon does not grasp what he means. So Socrates explains again:

I suppose you know that those who work in geometry treat as known the odd and the even, the figures, three forms of angles. They hypothesize these things, and do not think it worthwhile to give any further account of them to themselves as though they were clear to all. Beginning from them, they go ahead with their exposition of what remains and end consistently at the object towards which their investigation was directed. . . .

Now understand the other segment of the intelligible, I mean that which argument itself grasps with the power of dialectic. It makes the *hypothesis* not beginnings but really hypotheses, i.e., it is generating a series of hypotheses as stepping stones and springboards, in order to reach what is the unhypothesized beginning of the whole. Once he has grasped that, which is the Idea of the Good, he goes back and forth.

Here the entire thesis on which the method of Plato hangs has been metaphorically described: It is the *principle of hypothesis* which is the basis of true thinking, in opposition to opinion, which is enslaved in the world of sense perceptions. Lyndon LaRouche comments on this passage in his *Science of Christian Economy*:

The hypothesis of the higher hypothesis is the *Becoming*. It is the notion of a transfinite ordering of changes moving toward increasing perfection or decreasing imperfection. It efficiently is the changeless idea of perfection which governs the process of change in the direction of increasing perfection. The *Good* is the ontological quality of *Being*, as distinct from the quality of *Becoming*.

So the power of generating hypothesis and hypothesizing this hypothesis is a true transfinite in the way successive scientific revolutions have demonstrated this. In this regard, Plato made a very fundamental hypothesis in his *Timaeus*, when he declared that elements like fire and water, air and earth, i.e., matter, can be best described geometrically as the visible universe by the five regular polyhedra: the tetrahedron, octahedron, cube, icosahedron, and the dodecahedron (which is the basis out of which the other four can be constructed geometrically).

This hypothesis became the basis for another scientific revolution, Nicolaus of Cusa's invention of the isoperimetric theorem, whereby nothing can be topologically constructed in space, but through circular action, since rotation is a topological quality of our universe. It served as the basis for Leonardo da Vinci's discovery that all living morphology is organized according to Golden Section harmonics, a springboard which led to a new hypothesis made by Kepler on the harmonic ordering of the universe as a whole, proving that its character is developing and negentropic. It led to further discoveries made by Leibniz, to Riemann's notion of the continuum and the discrete manifold, to Georg Cantor and his work on transfinite functions which subsumed all hypotheses and discoveries made before.

These discoveries on the basis of generating new sets of hypotheses, meant breaking apart a given set of axioms. They demonstrated a transformation of knowledge in a very practical way—through technological progress—from a less perfect to a more perfect conception. This cannot be described by deductive methods, but only in the way implicitly referenced by Plato in the *Parmenides* dialogue and which LaRouche develops further.

For LaRouche, the generation of a new idea, as a unified, indivisible conception in the mind of the individual, follows from the fact, that many ideas enter the mind and are transformed from a many into a new, valid, combined, but single non-divisible conception. There is nothing of the new idea in any part of those many ideas which appears to have stimulated its generation. They are the Many. The new conception is the indivisible One. The transformation of the Many into this new One, is the work of the creative processes of the individual human mind. Thus, in valid scientific discovery, the primary relationship to knowledge of the individual's creative mental processes, is to the Mind of the Creator and only by derivations to objects in the universe.

So the *Idea of the Good* is the *One*, which subsumes the *Many*, the *Becoming*, we can say. And any creative individual, by being creative, acts in a direct unmediated relationship to the Creator, the One. The key is *change*, which was referenced in the *Parmenides*, where Socrates asks how the Many become One, and speaks of the "blink of an eye," this wonderful moment in which motion goes over into motionlessness and motionlessness into motion. This is similar to that moment where a society moves from one technological level to a higher one.

Those who understand this concept, says Plato, should go into the caves—a metaphor Plato uses in order to describe the hell in which people who only know sense perception live, whose entire lives are spent shadow

boxing—should go down into the caves and forcefully get the prisoners there to turn their eyes outward so that they see and grasp what causality, what *Being* it is, that generates *Becoming*.

It will be a very difficult task to do that, and people might kill you for trying, Plato says, but that is the precondition for a true republic. There is no statecraft possible unless we challenge the axioms held by the citizens. And finally, with this concept of the *Idea of the Good* grasped, the idea of an eternal natural law, our philosophers then should give laws and found the state.



Aristotle on the Human Mind

ALL THAT I HAVE developed so far about Plato's method, is completely denied by his opponent Aristotle, who willfully destroyed that on which thinking is based, the principle of hypothesis. Aristotle did not write any dialogues; he was not interested in *how* man thinks but only *what* he thinks. What does Aristotle say about the human mind in his *De Anima [On the Soul]*?

The mind is in a sense potentially whatever is thinkable, though it is nothing until it has thought. What it thinks must be in it as characters may be said to be on a writing tablet on which as yet nothing actually stands written. This is exactly what happens with the mind.

Thinking occurs by way of *sense perception*:

Since, according to common agreement, there is nothing outside and separate in existence from sensible spatial magnitudes, the objects of thought are all in sensible forms, both abstract objects and all the states and affections of sensible things. Hence, no one can learn or understand anything in the absence of senses, and when the mind is actively aware of anything, it is necessarily aware of it along with an image, for images are like sensuous contents. . . .

While in respect of all the other senses we fall below many species of animals, in respect to touch we far excel all other species in exactness of discrimination. That is why man is the most intelligent of all animals.

In his *Posterior Analytics*, Aristotle says that scientific knowledge is knowledge of the immediate premises. We attain it by definitions:

We have already said, that scientific knowledge through demonstration is impossible unless a man know the primary immediate premises. How does man know? . . . We must possess a capacity of some sort which is at least an obvious characteristic of all animals, for they possess a congenital discriminative capacity, which is called sense perception. . . .

So our sense perception comes to be what we call memory and out of frequently repeated memories of the same things develops experience; for a number of memories constitute a single experience. From experience again . . . originates the skill of the craftsman and the knowledge of the man of science. . . .

Ergo, for Aristotle, the human mind is no different than the animal mind, except in matters of degree.

Politically, Aristotle was an oligarch through and through. He has been praised often by the Club of Rome for his concept of the state, since he made an important point of having an *autarchical* state, whose resources are limited, and which therefore must do everything to limit its population either through abortion or by introducing homosexuality, as he says in his *Politics*. Here he gives a long explanation of why slavery is natural:

The slave is a living possession and property . . . an instrument. The master is only the master of the slave: He does not belong to him, whereas the slave is not only the slave of his master, but wholly belongs to him. . . . For that some should rule and others be ruled, is a thing not only necessary, but expedient. From the hour of their birth, some are marked out for subjugation, others for rule.

Refuting Plato's concept of the philosopher king, Aristotle says:

Then ought the good to rule and have supreme power? Should the best man rule? No. . . . [The] principle to be maintained is that the multitude ought to be supreme rather than the few best. . . . For the many [plurality] of whom each individual is but an ordinary person, when they meet together may very likely be better than the few good, if regarded not individually, but collectively. For some understand one part, and some another, and among them they understand the whole.

Once you have that frame of mind, which qualifies man as above all tied to the senses, then it follows that thinking is nothing but formalistic deductive manipulation of things which are already known, and not the creation of new ideas! Therefore, Aristotle created logic. This includes, that any process of thinking start with definitions, then use the categories as reference points to

judge things, substance, quality, quantity, where, when, effect, etc. So we make judgments by connecting a subject and a predicate, in a way which says something about the subject, either affirmatively, negatively, universally, or particularly.

The example of how Aristotle comes to ideas which already exist in the given premise, is demonstrated by the introduction of the method of the *sylogism*. Since knowledge is axiomatically given, the mind only pro-

cesses it. In his *Posterior Analytics*, Aristotle starts out by saying:

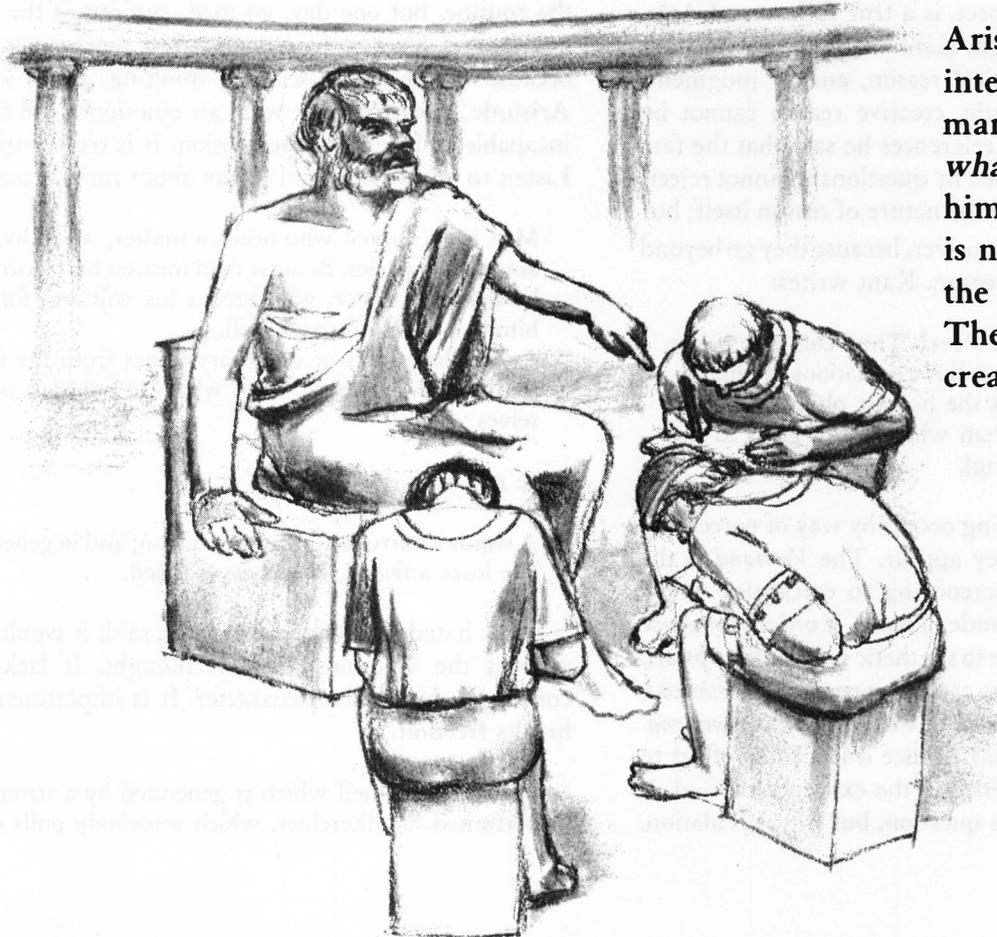
All instruction given or received by way of argument proceeds from *pre-existing knowledge*. . . . The mathematical sciences and all other speculative disciplines are acquired in this way, and so are the two forms of dialectical reasoning, syllogistic and inductive; for each of these latter makes use of old knowledge to impart new. The syllogism, by assuming an audience that accepts its premises; induction, by exhibiting the universal as implicit in the clearly known particular. Again, the persuasion exerted by rhetorical arguments is in principle the same, since they use either example, a kind of induction, or enthymeme, a form of syllogism.

So there is no way of attaining new knowledge, only pre-existing knowledge. Aristotle has no notion of causality. All his questions do is inquire about connection, i.e., how to connect an attribute with a thing. So *causality* is the middle term of a deductive syllogism. Take the example: If A is predicated of all B, and B of all C, it is necessary for A to be predicated of all C, or:

Major premise: All B is A.

Minor premise: All C is B.

Conclusion: All C is A.



Aristotle was not interested in *how* man thinks but only *what* he thinks. For him, the human mind is no different than the animal mind. Therefore, Aristotle created logic!

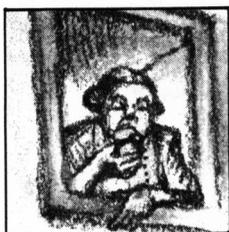
B, the middle term, is the cause that accounts for all C's being A. Real life example:

All Greeks are mortal.
Socrates is Greek.
Socrates is mortal.

Or,

Major premise: All birds fly.
Minor premise: Hawks are birds.
Conclusion: Hawks fly.

What causes the hawks to fly? The middle term. The fact that cows are cows, is because they produce milk. The fact that engines are engines, causes them to run. They all do things because they are classified as belonging to the species and genera to which they belong. That is the depth of Aristotle's logic.



Immanuel Kant, Modern Aristotelian

WITH THE BACKGROUND just outlined, it is not difficult to jump into the eighteenth century and judge the evil Immanuel

Kant, who, in every respect, is a true follower of Aristotle. Interestingly enough, Kant wrote three critiques: of pure reason, of practical reason, and of judgment. For Kant, as for Aristotle, creative reason cannot be explained. In numerous references he says that the fate of reason is to be tormented by questions it cannot reject, because they are given by the nature of reason itself; but which it cannot however answer, because they go beyond the capacity of human reason. Kant writes:

Is that all that reason does? Thus common sense could do as well, without the speculations of philosophy. And we find that the highest philosophy does not find more truth than what nature gives to the *Verstand* [Understanding].

In other words, thinking occurs by way of perception of things in the way they appear. The *Verstand* is the agency which judges, according to categories which Kant borrows from Aristotle. That is, it orders the sense perceptions, so as to come to synthetic judgments *a priori*. We can only know things as they appear, as *phenomena*, not as what they are in and of themselves, as *noumena*. We cannot grasp the ideas. Hence it is a futile effort to ontologically try to understand the existence of God. It may be useful to ask this question, but it is speculation.

Therefore, Kant asserts, Leibniz did not achieve understanding *a priori* of the existence of God, and therefore a lot of work and effort was done by him in vain. Man can become as rich by way of these pure ideas, as a businessman who, in order to better his bank accounts, imagines that by adding a few more zeros, he will have 100,000 dollars rather than 100. He can imagine it, but in practice this means nothing, says Kant in his *Critique of Pure Reason*. So, between the dry *Verstand* and reality, there is an unbridgable gap. Reason can only *regulate*, not *create hypotheses*.

From this it follows that since *being* is not intelligible and knowable, thinking gets into constant paradoxes, antinomies. For example, the questions: Does the universe have a beginning and is it bounded, or does it have no beginning and is it infinite? Is there only substance consisting of parts, or simple substance without parts? Was the universe created by sufficient reason or is it arbitrary, i.e., is there or is there not causality?

These questions Kant could not and did not want to answer, since reason was for him limited. All he did was to make a rigorous setting for man—the *categorical imperative*—which leaves no room for creativity, but can look at actions only from the standpoint of negation, not positive affirmation.

We have many Kantians among us, especially in the German finance ministry. These are the people who love the routine, but one day, go mad, run out of the room naked, and have to be brought to a psychiatrist. It is because the deductive kind of thinking, as we saw in Aristotle, goes together with an emotional life that is incapable of love and true passion. It is truly impotent. Listen to what Kant had to say about human nature:

Man is an animal who needs a master, while living among his species. Because man misuses his freedom, he needs a master, who breaks his will and forces him to obey a universal will. . . .

The happiness of our heart comes from the fact that we have nothing about which to reproach ourselves.

Pure negation. Or:

A woman narrows the heart of a man; and in general, one loses a friend, if he gets married. . . .

Kant hated music, because, as he said, it would only address the emotions without thought. It lacks, according to him, urban character. It is impertinent and breaks freedom:

Just like the smell which is generated by a strongly perfumed handkerchief, which somebody pulls out

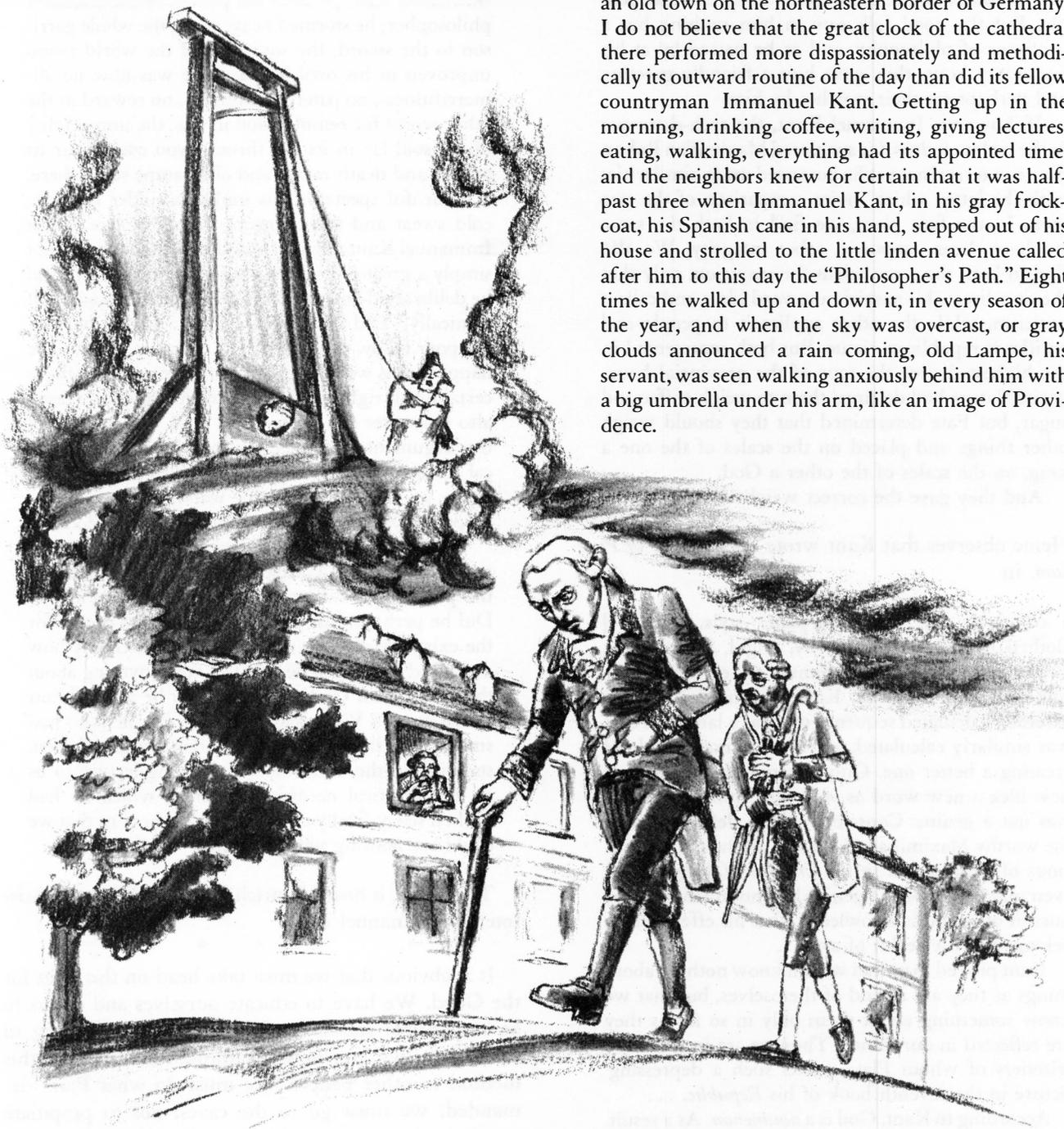
of his pocket, and which gets on people's nerves, so is music for people who cannot stand it.

Nothing could be more truthful than that about Kant.

Now there is one man who had the right psychological insight into this dried-out Aristotelian. In the third book of his work entitled *Concerning the History of Religion*

and *Philosophy in Germany*, Heinrich Heine wrote the following:

The history of Immanuel Kant's life is difficult to portray, for he had neither life nor history. He led a mechanically ordered, almost abstract bachelor existence in a quiet, remote little street in Königsberg, an old town on the northeastern border of Germany. I do not believe that the great clock of the cathedral there performed more dispassionately and methodically its outward routine of the day than did its fellow countryman Immanuel Kant. Getting up in the morning, drinking coffee, writing, giving lectures, eating, walking, everything had its appointed time, and the neighbors knew for certain that it was half-past three when Immanuel Kant, in his gray frock-coat, his Spanish cane in his hand, stepped out of his house and strolled to the little linden avenue called after him to this day the "Philosopher's Path." Eight times he walked up and down it, in every season of the year, and when the sky was overcast, or gray clouds announced a rain coming, old Lampe, his servant, was seen walking anxiously behind him with a big umbrella under his arm, like an image of Providence.



What a strange contrast between Kant's outward life and his destructive, world-crushing thoughts! For this arch-destroyer in the realm of ideas far surpassed Maximilian Robespierre in terrorism.

What a strange contrast between the outward life of the man and his destructive, world-crushing thoughts! Truly, if the citizens of Königsberg had had any premonition of the full significance of his ideas, they would have felt a far more terrifying dread at the presence of this man than at the sight of an executioner, an executioner who merely executes people. But the good folk saw in him nothing but a professor of philosophy, and as he passed by at his customary hour, they gave him a friendly greeting and perhaps set their watches by him.

If, however, Immanuel Kant, the arch-destroyer in the realm of ideas, far surpassed Maximilian Robespierre in terrorism, yet he possessed many similarities with the latter which invite comparison of the two men. In the first place, we find in both the same stubborn, keen, unpoetic, sober integrity. We also find in both the same talent for suspicion, only that the one directs his suspicion toward ideas and calls it criticism, while the other applies it to people and entitles it republican virtue. But both represented in the highest degree the type of the provincial bourgeois. Nature had destined them to weigh coffee and sugar, but Fate determined that they should weigh other things and placed on the scales of the one a king, on the scales of the other a God.

And they gave the correct weight!*

Heine observes that Kant wrote his *Critique of Pure Reason*, in

a colorless, dry, wrapping-paper style. . . . [He] clothed his ideas in a courtly, frigid, bureaucratic language. In this he shows himself to be a true philistine. Possibly, however, Kant also needed for his carefully calculated sequence of ideas a language that was similarly calculated, and he was not capable of creating a better one. Only a genius possesses for a new idea a new word as well. But Immanuel Kant was not a genius. Conscious of this deficiency, like the worthy Maximilian, Kant was all the more suspicious of genius, and in his *Critique of Judgment* he even maintained that a genius had no function in the pursuit of scientific knowledge, that his effectiveness belonged to the realm of art. . . .

Kant proved to us that we can know nothing about things as they are in and of themselves, but that we know something about them only in so far as they are reflected in our minds. Thus we are just like the prisoners of whom Plato paints such a depressing picture in the seventh book of his *Republic*. . . .

According to Kant, God is a *noumenon*. As a result

*Excerpts from *Heinrich Heine, Selected Works*, translated by Helen M. Mustard © 1973 by Random House, Inc. Reprinted by permission of Random House, Inc.

of his argument, this transcendental ideal being which we have hitherto called God is nothing but a fiction. . . .

You think we can go home now? Not on your life! There is another piece still to be performed. After the tragedy comes the farce. Up to this point Immanuel Kant presents the picture of the relentless philosopher; he stormed heaven, put the whole garrison to the sword, the sovereign of the world swam unproven in his own blood, there was now no all-mercifulness, no paternal kindness, no reward in the other world for renunciation in this, the immortality of the soul lay in its last throes—you could hear its groans and death rattle; and old Lampe stood there, a mournful spectator, his umbrella under his arm, cold sweat and tears pouring from his face. Then Immanuel Kant relented and showed that he was not simply a great philosopher but also a good man, and he deliberated and said, half good-naturedly and half ironically, "Old Lampe must have a God, otherwise the poor fellow can't be happy. But man ought to be happy in this world—practical reason says so—that's certainly all right with me—then let practical reason also guarantee the existence of God." As a result of this argument Kant distinguished between theoretical reason and practical reason, and by means of the latter, as with a magician's wand, he revived the corpse of Deism, which theoretical reason had killed.

But did Kant perhaps undertake this resurrection, not simply for old Lampe's sake, but also because of the police? Or did he really act out of conviction? Did he perhaps, just by destroying all the proofs for the existence of God, intend to show us clearly how awkward it is not to be able to know anything about the existence of God? In this matter he acted almost as wisely as a Westphalian friend of mine who had smashed all the lamps in Grohnder Street and then, standing in the dark, delivered a long lecture to us on the practical necessity of lamps, which he had broken scientifically only in order to show us that we could see nothing without them.

This, then, is how Heinrich Heine portrays the Aristotelian, Immanuel Kant.

* * *

It is obvious that we must take head-on this fight for the Good. We have to educate ourselves and others to be responsible statesmen, but that means learning to know who we are, how we think, and teaching this method to other people. We must do what Plato demanded, we must go to the caves, not to propitiate peoples' opinions, but to free them from the enslavement of stupidity. Doing that, as we know from our own work in the LaRouche movement—looking for the truth—is a life and death question.