

Apollo and Prometheus on History

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THE MEMORY is a poor vehicle, even for the explication of history, but what follows is, to the best of my recollection, exactly what transpired, as I witnessed it, during a meeting between Apollo and Prometheus.¹ Since each felt that existing in time would prejudice his case and each was able to transcend time, the hour was not noted. There were occasional references to twilights, etc., in their dialogue, but, one must surmise, this was but equivocation.² Nor was the site of interest (this for convenience, since a place outside time was denied by both). There was a third party involved in the dialogue, a cantankerous old gadfly whom I have dubbed "Socrates," though a pale substitute he is for the original. He supplied few answers, but many irritating questions, and since he is a mere mortal, those mortals who read this dialogue will feel that in Socrates they have a spokesman against the gods.

When I arrived, Apollo and Prometheus were arguing furiously over the role of the philosopher in the affairs of men. "You,

Prometheus," said Apollo, "grant the philosopher only meditation, while I go forward to meditation. The philosopher is not king, but kingmaker [God]." "Yes," said Prometheus, "that is so—for me the servant makes the king. There is nothing mutual about it."³ Your system is reactionary and encrusted. The chief difference between us, Apollo, for we have much in common, is that I love man and you do not." "The chief difference between us, Prometheus," said Apollo with great reserve, "is that you are the lover and I the beloved." With this, Prometheus became nearly tongue-tied, for instead of words issuing forth from his mouth, he commenced to making spitting sounds and stammering with every syllable. "Gentlemen, gentlemen, can we not act more civilized?" said a voice to the rear. Both disputants whirled around to see who was approaching. When they saw that it was Socrates, they entreated him to stay and talk with them, for they were in desperate need of a man to mediate the argument. "I will stay only if

that which we seek here is an answer to the questions posed and not a mere exercise in eristicism," said Socrates. Both agreed. "Good," said Socrates, "now may I enquire as to the subject of the dispute?" "History," exclaimed Prometheus, calm now, but ready to flare up again at a moment's notice. "I was just saying to Apollo that I am history's craftsman (history having to do with man), that I made that upon which history acts and, therefore, I make the end."⁴ "And I told him, Socrates," said Apollo, "that once again last evening's bacchanalia has not worn off and that he is intoxicated with his own glory."⁵ I tell you, Prometheus, that you are unfit to judge history, drinking as you do. History would move in hiccups [revolutions]⁶ if it were up to such as you." "Indeed," said Prometheus indignantly, "and how else should it move? Hiccups seem quite reasonable to me, for with each hiccup one feels a little better, but says inwardly 'I hope and think that that will be the last one,' knowing all the while that though remedies abound one is forced to hiccup until they have run their course. Stopping hiccups is not volitional—one waits for the next in full anticipation until the power controlling them finishes with us." "History," said Apollo, "is an unfolding to an end. You cannot recognize the unfolding. How do you intend to recognize the end?" "Recognize! I created it," screamed Prometheus, more and more irritated. Apollo replied coolly: "There is no creation apart from the creator-creature; neither is there a creator-creature apart from creation." "But," sputtered Prometheus, both furious and exasperated, "if what you say were true, everything [real] is everlasting [rational]." "And everlasting is everything," continued Apollo.⁷ "That doesn't bother me as much. At least with that, you are not such a backslider," said Prometheus.

"Gentlemen, gentlemen. Calm yourselves. Let us at least be civil to one another," said Socrates. I am surprised at both of you for going about this exposition in such an unseemly and unsystematic manner. You speak of ends when you should be concerned at this point with the beginnings." "Quite so, Socrates," replied Apollo. "Perhaps you would be so kind as to begin our mutual search for the beginnings." "No, Apollo, for I am unworthy of such a task. I am a mere questioner with a hardy appetite for knowledge. But if it suits you both, may I put to each of you in turn a number of questions which might lead us on our way?" "Please do, Socrates," both disputants exclaimed.

"How then," continued Socrates, "do we note the beginning?" "We note it, Socrates," said Apollo, "in saying 'let us begin.' That is, we note it as action, as a verb." "A very odd way for a German to begin," commented Socrates, "but let us take up your challenge and note the beginning with action. Of what type of action then are you speaking?" "I would denote it as kinetic action, awake and ready to be put to use [consciousness]." "Then, what you mean is potentiality, not actuality, am I correct, Apollo?"⁸ "Yes, I think that would indeed suit the description, Socrates." "This seems to be an odd beginning, for such potential action is neither man nor God. Rather, it is an idea." "Yes, Socrates, exactly," said Apollo. "Now, Apollo, can there be speech without a speaker?" "Surely not, Socrates." "And can there be movement without a thing to move?" "Again, quite impossible." "Again, then, once more with patience, Apollo. Can there be thought without a thinker?" "Absurd though it sounds, I think so, Socrates." "Ah, but is not the end of a thought an idea?" "I believe it could be so designated." "Then, Apollo, how can there be an idea or even *Idea per se* without an ideamaker?" "Poor Socra-

tes. You have missed the subtlety of my argument, for you are arguing chronologically [according to the notion], while I am arguing logically [according to consciousness].⁹ Surely you don't propose that everything logical falls within chronology in the same manner as it appears in an argument?" "No indeed, Apollo, and I hope that you do not forget that either, for we may have need of such distinctions later. As for now, I contend that here the logical and chronological converge, for we are talking about both logical and chronological beginnings here." "Indeed, I am not, Socrates," said Apollo, "for to me only the logical is within my sphere of reference." "This limits us sorely," said Socrates, "especially in that we are speaking of history here. But we must bear up under the handicap and try to construct the argument. I assume, therefore, that you begin with the indispensable premise, which in your case centers around this potential action." "You could call it 'awareness,' Socrates," commented Apollo. "Very well, Apollo, we shall. You begin with awareness, without either one who is aware or something to be aware of." "Correct, Socrates." "I admit it frankly, Apollo, that you have placed me in the direct quagmire, for in the logic that I know, one cannot construct the world from a pin, but may deduce only what is already explicit within the argument in the first place. You place such nebulous entities to fill our topic that I am unsure of your direction." "Then let me explain, Socrates, for indeed I see that our trouble is in logic. With my logic one can begin with a small thing and construct from there, getting greater and greater entities within our grasp as time goes on and eventually arrive at absolute knowledge.¹⁰ But, as you correctly implied, your logic cannot verify or discover anything new; mine is a continual verification, a continual discovery, a continual unfold-

ing. Thus, there is no need to begin with ghosts [*Geist*—"mind," "spirit"] or gods, for we will make them soon enough. They are all around us, waiting to be unfolded and put to use, waiting for us to discover them so that they may discover themselves.¹¹ My beginning is like the beginning of a great building. Your logic must lead you to see the building as a whole before it is built." "Not quite true, Apollo, for I begin with the realization that the building conforms to the design of a great architect. I begin with the design, but, as anyone who has ever seen the design of a building, I see it all at once at first and only later notice the details." "With my logic, I design the building and the design is in *my* mind. It can only be read by me and, thus, all others would be forced to see the beginning as a small and humble hole in the ground." "When you begin with such a design in your head, those who construct the building must depend entirely on you. Should something disastrous befall you, they would be lost," said Socrates. "Precisely, Socrates," said Apollo with a smile. "But what has Prometheus to say on this matter? Why have you been keeping so quiet, my friend?" "Oh, all this talk about architects makes me angry. I tell you Apollo doesn't know up from down, roaming in the spatial void as he does. Shirkers of the world, respite! One day I'll have to straighten him out and place him right-side up again, for is it not obvious that in such a construction, one begins with the brick and mortar itself and the mason—in your parlance of the parts of speech, with the direct object?¹² The whole idea of a beginning is to break away and begin, not to talk and talk and think and think.¹³ Beginning with the *idea* of action, the *idea* of work, is pure mysticism.¹⁴ I begin with man and with his tools. All this talk about awareness doesn't come into the picture at the beginning, but only when there is a society.¹⁵ What is awareness

without something to be aware of? Man becomes aware through work. In the beginning there was man; soon afterward there developed a very important characteristic of man—his loneliness [alienation]. In the beginning loneliness took the form of realization that even in sexual relations one could only be one and not the other. Later when the father brutalized his way through life in the family, this was a further manifestation of this loneliness of feeling,¹⁶ in the first case it was between man and woman and in the second between man and family. Later, such loneliness was manifested between man and his product, even the very act of producing, and thus between man and his very specie.¹⁷ But all this is a mere footnote to the general conception that it is not awareness that determines existence, but the other way around.¹⁸ One must begin with the one who is to be aware." "In a way, Prometheus," said Socrates, "your beginning is more logical to my mind than is Apollo's, but I am satisfied with neither. I find it much more sensical to begin with the subject of the sentence rather than the verb as Apollo does or, as with you, Prometheus, with the direct object. I admit that I cannot escape the feeling that, as I said to Apollo earlier, here the chronological and logical meet—here, with this first creation. My main concern here is what is possible as an end, since, despite what Apollo said, one reaps what one sows and if you begin with man, lonely or not, Prometheus, you cannot end with anything but man or something mightily like him; on the other hand, when you begin with an idea, Apollo, I cannot see how you can descend to earth, for though you unfold to different ideas, you cannot change forms in kind merrily as you please." "What do you propose to substitute, Socrates?" asked Apollo. "I believe, as I have said before, that here the logical and chronological converge. Thus,

I begin with creation, or rather *the* creation. The beauty of this beginning is that it leaves us with both creator and created as well as the action of creation itself. Thus, we can move in many different directions at any time we wish and we are not stymied from the beginning with severe limitations on our ends. We will not be held back by having to take into consideration everything within the idea [emanation from the one—pantheism¹⁹], Apollo; nor are we restricted to seeing every occurrence as a manifestation of your 'loneliness,' Prometheus [division of labor—alienation²⁰], for here we can take in the one and the many and ponder these questions within the world and not have to decide on them beforehand." With this, Socrates sat down and waited for one of his companions to speak, but both merely looked at one another, and they were speechless.

Thus Socrates rose and spoke: "Perhaps our discussion would be better served by moving to ends." "Good," said Prometheus, "for I have a story which I think will aid us in our search. You may or may not know the story of Minerva and her hopping owl. Such a thing may not seem remarkable, but indeed in all the world, there is not a single owl on record as hopping. Thus, Minerva was justly proud of her bird. Dionysus, a follower of Minerva's—up to a point—was sure that with such a bird, hopping would be but the beginning of a brilliant career. He was sure that he could make the owl leap; so he stole the bird and commenced its training. At first the bird's hopping was erratic. This irritated Dionysus, for though he was the only one who could witness the bird's hops, he could not predict them. Thus he put the bird in a cage which was in essence a long rectangle which was very narrow on the sides so that the bird could hop in one direction only. This pleased him, for now he was assured at least of the direction. In

time, the bird's hopping became regular, and active training for the leap resumed. Dionysus felt that the best way to accomplish the leap was to have the bird hop down the long rectangular cage and into Dionysus' open arms (for the end of the cage could be opened, as both Dionysus and the bird, but no one else, knew). Dionysus had experimented with many cage styles—round, square, oval, even spiral (like the one Minerva had)—but felt dismay with them all. "At least with a long rectangle one can be assured of the direction, if not all the bangs and bumps—of the bird striking against the bars of the cage—on the way," thought Dionysus. The bird practiced and practiced. With each training session, the hops became longer, until the hops became jumps. Now the jumps became longer. Finally, Dionysus was sure that the time had come for the great leap and he prepared everything for the momentous event. He placed the bird at one end of the cage and himself, joyously, confidently at the other. On the signal the bird began to hop. Smoothly this time, with barely a ruffled feather against the cage bar. Faster and faster the bird headed for the other end of the cage. Finally, it commenced its jumping. Frantically, wildly, the bird came forward, squawking and screeching, feathers awry and eyes straight ahead, determined. Faster and faster. The end of the cage was approaching. Faster the bird jumped forward. And faster still. *In position, it left its feet. Pushing off with tremendous energy and guile, it sailed smoothly through the air.* But a mishap occurred. Dionysus, in his enthusiasm, had forgotten to open the other end of the cage. The owl crashed against the wall of the cage. Blood, feathers and flesh flew everywhere and the owl, the owl that Dionysus had trained so very long for such a wonderful leap, was dead."

"A strange myth you relate, Prometheus

—one that is filled with interesting points which we must pursue," said Socrates. "I am quite willing to go into any points you wish, Socrates," replied Prometheus. "Although the part of the narrative that leads up to the disastrous end is interesting, I perceive that it is the end that is in question here, am I right, Prometheus?" "Exactly, Socrates. But tell me, why do you call the end disastrous?" "Because the bird was destroyed, and in this bird we all have a stake." "Quite so," said Prometheus, "but perhaps it deserved to be destroyed, perhaps its time had come, perhaps such an end was inevitable."²¹ "I am unsure what 'inevitable' means, except within the confines of the mind or soul of that very bird or its creator—the destruction of the bird itself could hardly be called inevitable for in the very act of destruction inevitability, if such a process exists, is abolished, unless the creator has different ideas, of course. Do you see my point, Prometheus?" "Yes, but you miss the events slightly, Socrates, for 'inevitability' is abolished as the bird is destroyed. Thus, even its destruction can be called 'inevitable.'" "But such a destruction cannot be allowed to stand unredeemed. Is there nothing to replace the bird?" "Surely there must be," said Prometheus, "but my memory fails me when it comes to that part of the story. Sometimes I think man is allowed to sleep quietly without the constant screeching of the owl at night."²² Sometimes it seems that the only logical ending is that the rats, having no predators, take over the earth." "Alas," said Socrates, "with your memory anything can happen. But you have, I am afraid, my friend, become confused on the final result of the narrative precisely because you have abstracted the final answer from the stage that obviously comes before. For instance, a child listening to your story might ask 'what happened to the man waiting for the bird?' or 'what happened to

the cage door that didn't open?' or 'who cleaned up the mess?' I am afraid that in conveniently forgetting the ending you would have us forget the inconsistencies in your story and, perhaps, make us believe at some later time that Dionysus *did* catch the bird, whereas I find the striking symbol very powerful and meaningful." "I meant no such thing, Socrates," protested Prometheus. "Can I help it if I am a bit forgetful?" Socrates continued: "Let us proceed with imagination. The man left with his hands in the air—what can be said of him, for indeed he witnessed a miraculous event? The trouble comes in this—who would believe him? No one but Minerva had knowledge that owls could even hop, and Minerva had no idea that they could leap. Perhaps this very esoteric information is not made for the ears of men. This man might well die in oblivion, unheralded, if others do not continue to relate the story, enlarging it with each retelling, of the great leap or the possibility thereof, for in keeping the owl as his sole possession he has deprived mankind instead of aided it, if indeed that is what he meant to do with the leaping owl. As to the second question asked by our anonymous child—i.e., what happened to the cage door that did not open—one is left to surmise that it was covered with blood and feathers and flesh, but no word is given as to whether or not it was still workable, whether or not it could be opened again and by whom, whether or not it flew open after the disaster. All these questions are honest and must be answered, but I have not the answers since they must come from within the confines of your story [system]; such a cage would never have appeared in any story of mine. As to the last question—who cleaned up the mess—one is left to wonder again, for there are three possibilities: one is that Dionysus himself cleaned it up, but this seems unlikely given his state of mind—he was

hardly one to be able to face such a defeat, but this is only conjecture. The second possibility is that someone else cleaned it up, and here we are on even more shaky grounds, for the world is filled with such world-souls [e.g., Napoleon] ready and eager to pick up the broom and mop and splash around in the blood and grime. The last possibility is that no one cleaned it up. But let us not have to make a choice here; rather, let us posit another possibility regarding the entire story, namely that it never occurred except in your mind, Prometheus, for we have no clue and too many inconsistencies to say that you witnessed such an event. Allow me to give another interpretation than the one you might expect, Prometheus. I believe your myth has been reversed by the symbol of the death in the end. Whereas you would interpret it as possibly leading to quiet pastoral days of bliss, I see it altogether differently—as indeed, in your words, an inevitability, but not an inevitability regarding owls [here the Hegelian symbol for wisdom is transposed into one for history]; rather one regarding cages [nature, with God periodically making Himself felt], for cages are not built in that manner. A cage is meant to contain and confine. The openings are meant as ways in which a power from the outside can place in or take from the cage something as it chooses [the hand of God in the affairs of men], not as an opening from the inside [escaping history]. Such a cage would no longer be a cage, but a hollowed box with a movable wall, movable from the inside. A cage in which the occupants can escape at will is by definition not a cage. That the bird struck against the wall of the cage [wall of Being] proves that what you mistook for this hollowed box (all the time thinking it a cage) was *indeed* a cage."

At this point, Apollo said: "I believe I know what you mean, Prometheus, but resent your speaking in myths, for is it not

oblivious that *you* are this Dionysus? Although no psychologist, I am forced to look harshly upon your motives in relying on the myth when, plainly, discursive language is called for. Alas, such behavior must be excused for one whose head is filled continually with last evening's brew. Unable to face the frivolity of yesterday or the swollen head of today, you live in the future only, whereas *I* am the bearer of the sun, it is *I* who lead it over the horizon, warming the land and giving security and enlightenment to the people. *I* choose when and in which direction it shall travel and *I* lead it to its destination. When the people look up to see the sun, they are unaware of the chariot leading—the sun and I are an undifferentiated whole to them.²³ Nevertheless, they depend on me as much as the sun. For without me the sun would be unknown [not conscious]. It is, thus, in my work [charioteer-philosopher] that I am beyond the realm of time. Indeed, in fulfilling my duty I create the criterion upon which time is judged [pulling the sun-fulfilling philosophy]. And, just as it is within my power to choose to act, it is within my power to choose to refrain from acting." "Tell me, Apollo, are we not here on the edge of a myth?" "*The* myth, Socrates, *the* myth. But what our friend Prometheus does not understand is that truly the sun and I *are* undifferentiated." "Before," said Prometheus, "you said that you and the sun only *appeared* undifferentiated to the people." "Yes, and thus we are." "It seems to me that we have two points worth delving into farther here," said Socrates. "In the first place, Apollo's point about choosing or refraining from choosing to traverse the sky bearing the sun. The second point is this latest one about being an undifferentiated whole with the sun. Both, I feel, are on tenuous grounds at best, and surely both are not true simultaneously, for they are contrary. Let us, then, examine the first point,

namely that Apollo has the freedom to choose or to refrain from choosing to pull the sun across the sky." "Very well," said Apollo. "Would it be sensical, Apollo, for there to be wagons if no horses or oxen or other draught animals existed?" "Surely not," replied Apollo. "For in this case, as in many, one must differentiate between the logically prior occurrences (i.e., the wagon) and the chronologically prior ones (i.e., the horse)." "It galls me to say so, but correct," said Apollo. "And we are speaking of an eminently reasonable world, are we not, Apollo?" continued Socrates. "No other world exists," replied Apollo.²⁴ "Good, then we may continue. In like manner, would an ax be called for without the tree or a plow be needed without the earth to till?" "Indeed not." "Would it be fair to say, then, that in the realm of human affairs, that which is acted upon is logically prior to that which or who acts?" "Yes, I think so," said Apollo. "Indeed, you are correct, though there is an exception to this rule, which we shall come to presently. In the same way, would it also not be fair to say that that which is prior logically is also independent of that which logically follows?" "Indeed." "And that matters of choice naturally reside in the more independent entity, for one would not expect the subordinate to choose for the master?" "I agree," said Apollo, "though in the end it makes no difference at all."²⁵ "Then I say to you that it is not yours to choose to act or refrain from choosing to do so, since you are the logically secondary, not logically primary, entity here." "Are you saying that I am compelled to do this act daily?" said Apollo, astonished. "That will become clear in a moment. As for now, answer a few questions more if you will. Remember I said that there was an exception to the rule that that what is acted upon is logically prior to that which or who acts? It is now time to go into that exception, for you may

consider it applicable to you. That exception centers around the activity of creation." With this, Apollo's eyes brightened, for he seemed to see a way in which to clear himself. "Indeed," he said, "and this is precisely what I do. I create." "But," said Socrates, "we must understand clearly what type of creation we have here, for what we could call mundane creation is not new at all." "Are you implying," said Apollo indignantly, "that anything I create could be mundane?" "Let us see," said Socrates, "for you must understand what I mean by mundane, which is, I assure you, not meant as a criticism of you in particular, but merely a statement of the truth as I see it. I deem any creation mundane in which the thing acted upon (created) is logically prior to that which or who acts (creator), for we said before that this would be an exception to that rule. Now, Apollo, why does man create?" "To aid him in his work or relaxation." "How, then, does a man know when he has created?" queried Socrates. "He applies the test of facility—he notes whether or not his act has indeed aided him in either his work or relaxation." "Otherwise," said Socrates, "he would be unable to distinguish between creation and accident." "Precisely, Socrates," said Apollo. "Therefore, there is a design to creation in general," said Socrates. "Yes," agreed Apollo. "It is a general design (i.e., aiding us) with specific manifestations (i.e., the various aids themselves)." "Yes." "Then all creation conforms to the general pattern of aiding us, which we can call the Forms?" "Yes, Socrates." "And, thus only that which is logically prior to the Forms is logically prior to creation (which conform to the Forms)?" "Indeed, I think you are correct, Socrates." "Therefore, only he who created the Forms is logically prior to them, and thus only the first creation (namely, that of the Forms) is one in which the actor is log-

ically prior to that acted upon. Or, to say the same thing in different words, only in the first creation (i.e., the creation of the Forms) does the creator come before the created. In all other creations the one who creates is actually conforming to the Forms themselves and is, in effect, merely making a prior creation manifest. Thus, if we want to be absolutely correct, we must say that there is only one creation, namely the Forms, and only one creator, namely God." "How did he get into the conversation?" demanded Prometheus angrily. "I have been following the argument passively up till now, but I object to this mysticism." "Though it would be much more satisfying if we could take up your challenge, Prometheus, and delve into the problem of God directly, I feel such discussion would degenerate into polemics. Thus, I concede that you could be correct, but demand all points up to the inclusion of God be counted." "Indeed, Socrates," said Prometheus, cooling down, "I agree with your arguments put so succinctly up to God, but when I hear 'God' I reach for my tranquilizers." "For your sake, Prometheus, we will forego further talk of God at this time. You will note, however, the point we originally went into has been reasserted here, namely that that acted upon is logically prior to that which or who acts, and that there is no creation in the case of Apollo and the sun. The sun is logically prior to Apollo and, thus, it is not up to him to choose to act or to refrain from choosing to act regarding traversing the earth pulling the sun. Rather, the choice lies with the creator of the manifestation of the Form which is the sun . . ." With this, Prometheus, perspiring, feverishly took out of his pocket a little golden box and from it took two white objects which he promptly popped into his mouth. Seeing this, Socrates continued ". . . or, if you will, with the sun itself. Now, I must address myself

to the second point, namely that Apollo is undifferentiated from the sun in the eyes of the people, and that leads directly to the conclusion that he truly is so undifferentiated. Surely, Apollo, you would not be one to hold that a thing can be both itself and something else at the same time." "Indeed, I would be, Socrates, for I [i.e., self as self-consciousness] am such," replied Apollo. "But, if you can be both yourself and something else, there is no limit to the number of things that you can be," objected Socrates. "No, Socrates, for there is a patterning and even a list [*List der Vernunft*: cunning of reason] here too. This patterning is similar to what you called the Forms, but it is seen in opposites; and here too I begin with the patterning itself [dialectic and consciousness], not with any ghost." "And how precisely does your patterning work?" said Socrates. "That is a long involved process. Sometimes I am unsure of it myself. First there is the indeterminate awareness [consciousness] which becomes attached to someone [self-consciousness] and becomes reason.²⁶ There are other processes, involving nature and that which could be called supernature, you know, ghosts, but the end result is absolute knowledge. Now, this whole system is what we are after [history] and it is all extent in me.²⁷ Thus, when I say that I can be both Apollo and the sun, I mean precisely that." "I see," said Socrates, "that I will have to take a different tact here, for we will be nowhere arguing over the patterning, since I perceive that there is to be no tampering with the divine. Am I correct, Apollo?" "Correct, Socrates," said Apollo. "Let us return to the question at hand, namely whether or not you, Apollo, are undifferentiated from the sun. You will grant me, will you not, what we have arrived at already, namely that you do not have the freedom to choose to act or to refrain from choosing to act regarding traversing the earth pulling the sun

with your chariot?" "Granted, according to your argument." "*What!* Do you want to dispute me again on this point?" "No, Socrates, though I find it difficult to admit the cogency of your argument, I grant it." "Lacking the power to choose in the present, i.e., in your daily duty, you hardly have the power to choose regarding ends, nor can you effect such ends." "According to the argument, I grant it, Socrates," said Apollo, "but tell me, what does this have to do with being undifferentiated from the sun?" "I shall come to that soon," said Socrates. "For the moment, grant me this one request and answer forthrightly a question—is there a purpose which has no end?" "Indeed, it seems unlikely, Socrates." "For the very idea of purpose is to have an end, is it not? Can a carpenter construct a table without wood? Indeed, can he make a table without doing all the various and numerous steps along the way, such as measuring for the size of the table and cutting the wood and shaping the table and putting it together?" "No," said Apollo. "Then," continued Socrates, "may we say that only through various intermediate stages can an end be effected?" "Yes." "Furthermore, only by knowing at which end he is aiming can a carpenter know whether he is making a table or chairs or a bench?" "Of course, Socrates." "And only actions in the intermediate stages allow one to know to what end the stages lead?" "Indeed, it seems so," said Apollo. "If one is to be free toward the end, he must also be free in the intermediate stages?" "Yes." "And did we not say previously that you were not free to choose or to refrain from choosing to act in the present?" "Yes, we did." "Then is it not obvious that you are not free to choose an end?" "The argument would make it appear so." "Without freedom to choose the end, can one be sure of the intermediate stages?" "That I doubt very much." "Good. Then let us say that you are

unsure of the consequences of your present actions as well as the end toward which those actions lead. If that be admitted, the undifferentiation between yourself and the sun may be mere illusory phenomena." With those words, Apollo winced. "Indeed." Socrates continued, ignoring Apollo's pained expression, "the lack of differentiation between yourself and the sun, if indeed it ensues could very well result from the brilliance of the sun blinding the people to your relative obscurity. Otherwise, it would be Apollo, not the sun, who would brighten our days. Your occupation [philosophy] may lead to enlightenment, but one wonders what your role in the process is. Instead of controlling the sun, you are controlled by something else and forced to fulfill your mission daily." With this, Socrates paused and looked at Apollo, who appeared dejected and distraught.

Socrates then continued, speaking to both Apollo and Prometheus: "I am forced, in conclusion, by the sway of events to make a comment about one aspect of your views concerning ends which shocks me somewhat—that being the very similarity between them. In one case we have what was called an unfolding to an end and in the other we have what was derogatorily referred to as hiccupping through history. Yet in both cases the end is the same. In both cases the mountain is scaled and, with it, an absolute end has come. Given the fact that with one it is a new man [Marx]²⁸ and with the other a fulfilled one [Hegel], the result is immobility—a new history without movement. It is cold, lifeless, non-human-like, indeed unnatural. At least you, Apollo, speak of a new beginning, a bit higher,²⁹ yet this too confuses us. Are we working toward an end, which I see as a purpose, or a beginning, which I see as being? It appears only he who makes the machine go—my apologies, Apollo for the symbol—can tell us. We have only his word for it that

there is further movement, for none is called forth. I fail to see how we can go past absolute knowledge (*super-absolute knowledge, Apollo?*)."³⁰ Apollo winced. "With both," Socrates continued, "the movement of history grinds to a halt and we have to take it on faith that something can get it moving again. This idea of faith is important to our study, as we shall see a little later. But let us pass now from beginnings and ends and speak of that which is beyond or, if you will, that which issues forth the movement."

Socrates cleared his throat and continued: "It would appear to me that history must have a mover and you have both given due notice to this presumption of mine. Yet for both of you the mover is within the world. For you, Prometheus, it is the act of production coupled with the loneliness implicit therein,³¹ and for you, Apollo, it is the movement of what you call reason and later prop up with ghosts. With both of you, history is self-actuating, not manipulated from outside. With nothing above history to limit it, history itself (or at least the process of history) becomes divine. With such a deity and with such ends as you two posit, God is reached. It is for this reason that I said before that I cannot fathom going beyond the end you state, despite any wishes to the contrary—and you both state that you possess such wishes—you explicitly, Apollo, and you implicitly, Prometheus. The attempt to cut out God entirely from history in your case, Prometheus, and the attempt to supplant him in your case, Apollo, has led to the creation of a new god. Instead of a God *in* history, or one *of* history, God *is* history, and it is this faithless handmaiden we revere.³² This, I suspect, binds you two together despite your differences. There is no room for providence in your system."³³ "And why should there be?" blurted Prometheus. "History is of man, of man as a producer. It is not criticism, but revolution,

that moves history.”³⁴ “It is strange to see,” said Socrates, “how pure action and pure thought (or nearly pure in both cases) can converge so closely. For you, Prometheus, history is but the successive movement of these revolts until the last one—indeed it is hiccupping; but here when the hiccupping ends, the patient dies. Whereas for you, Apollo, history can better be characterized as a flower unfolding its beauty and glory, but this, too, is like the lilies of the field and in the end the unpicked blossom³⁵ succumbs to the cold north winds. One wonders why you continued on your journey thus, for you say that in knowing yourself, you know God (otherwise, I suppose, He’d be hidden) and that conscience allows you to know yourself, implying a logical priority of conscience *vis-à-vis* God.³⁶ You insist on going past this statement of ghosts, glib and impious, to absolute knowledge, implying that such knowledge logically follows. And here I must touch on something that I have cautiously avoided so far for fear of angering you, but despite your protestation, there is no escaping that for you logical and chronological converge at every moment,³⁷ not, as with myself, only in the first creation. Otherwise there would be no chill at the end, merely a question mark. The flower has frozen and wilted and there is no assurance except your will that the flower is a perennial. If it is not, I contend that the new planting will not be done beginning with awareness or, for that matter with the lonely man, but with creation. Your beginning, Apollo, is no ontology, but a happenstance, a supposed eternity coinciding with yourself, a state of being unconnected with a ground, not the opening of the soul but the stirring of the crust of sleep off one’s eyes [awakening]. Moreover, it coincides with the end, which is the moment, a neat circumlocution, but hardly philosophy. Eventually, the crust wears off the eyes, for no action exists

in perpetuity. The beginning you posit [(self-) consciousness] can only end in decay or God. But if God is growth-in-decay-in-growth, is there really a process at all? Or is it merely a deception that allows us to see the frozen dead world filled with hummingbirds? You present more questions than answers, for in explaining the beginning and the end, you cannot answer ‘why begin?’ ‘why end?’ And as for you, Prometheus, there is no reason for smugness, for you have sought to bypass the answers rather than confront them. Instead of prohibiting answers, you have failed to let the questions in. With you it is not ‘why begin?’ ‘why end?’ but ‘what, begin!’ ‘what, end!’ Your contrived answer for a beginning is laughable and your answer for an end is damnable. You live in the moment to come; thus anything is permitted. Yes, you posit an end, but unconnected to anything existent—a history out of history, an end without a beginning or middle, a purpose without a standard, for, though you give us a paradigm, it too is unconnected with your end³⁸—a great chasm separates them, they are unlike in kind. The analysis is there only to lend credence to a system composed solely of will;³⁹ it is there as an afterthought, for what matters most in your system is not the peaks and not the climbs, but the chasm. All acts of will must be taken on faith and this criticism can be made of both of you, for though you strike out God, Prometheus, and you use him as an extant being on the way to something greater, Apollo, in the end what you say comes down to faith, for what could be the difference between your immanent pantheism⁴⁰ or neo-Platonic derivation from the one,⁴¹ Apollo, and your violent antitheism, Prometheus, except as objects of your devotion?” Socrates sat down and waited for the conversation to ensue. But both disputants remained seated and while Prometheus appeared eager to

say something, he could not open his mouth. Apollo looked dismayed and dejected. Socrates waited for a time before rising to his feet. With a brief bow, he bade his companions good morrow and went on his way. Apollo and Prometheus looked at

each other, but did not speak or move. Even as night came and the chill of dusk became grey and cold, they did not move or speak. Finally, when there was nothing more to do and nothing more to say, I too left.

¹The dialogue format has been employed in this exposition of the views of history of Apollo (Hegel) and Prometheus (Marx) for two reasons: it allows one to ignore the problem of definition implicit in Hegel and it allows one to see the entire structure concerning history without cries from the rear demanding adequate (read: very minute) treatment of each point in epistemology. It is the whole that we wish to see here, not every part, for indeed with these two men the whole is considerably larger than the sum of the parts. Yet something must be provided for the reader unfamiliar with the texts; thus, a few footnotes have been provided. These footnotes do not exhaust the possibilities and are given merely as confirmatory material. Hegel especially has lacked an interpreter who deigned to go beyond the explication and possible criticism of the particular into a total critique of the general. Marx' critique of Hegel, despite what he says about turning Hegel back on his feet (from a handstand), started by concretizing the concrete—i.e., bringing a radical immanentist back to earth—an accomplishment worthy of a child. In the handstand symbol, Marx did not turn Hegel upright at all; he merely knocked him over. This dialogue is an attempt to go past the minutiae of these men and to understand the decisive break they made between an ordered history and an ordering one.

²Cf. Hegel's remark regarding the Idea as God's eternal life before the creation in G. W. F. Hegel, *Reason in History: A General Introduction to the Philosophy of History*, trans. and intro. Robert S. Hartman (New York: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, Inc., The Library of Liberal Arts, 1953), p. 32 (hereafter designated *Reason*).

³Reference is made here to G. W. F. Hegel, *The Phenomenology of Mind*, trans. and intro. and notes J. B. Baillie, intro. George Lichtheim (New York: Harper and Row, Publishers, Harper Torchbooks: The Academy Library, 1967), pp. 228-240 (hereafter designated *Phenomenology*).

⁴Cf. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *The German Ideology* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1964), pp. 31 and 39 (hereafter designated *Ideology*).

⁵Reference is made to *Phenomenology*, p. 105, where the truth is said to be a bacchanalia.

⁶Cf. Karl Marx and Frederick Engels, *Selected Works: In Three Volumes*, Vol. I (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1969) pp. 503-504—this, in Marx' "Preface to *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*" (hereafter designated "Preface").

⁷Cf. *Phenomenology*, pp. 115 and 760, among others.

⁸Opposed to this, see *Phenomenology*, p. 614, in which Absolute Being is seen as pure actuality.

⁹Cf. *ibid.*, p. 800.

¹⁰Cf. *ibid.*, p. 803.

¹¹Cf. *ibid.*, p. 664.

¹²Cf. *Ideology*, p. 31.

¹³*Ibid.*, p. 50, in which the authors say that revolution, not criticism, is the driving force in history. Also see Karl Marx, *Capital: A Critical Analysis of Capitalist Production*, Vol. I, trans. Samuel Moore and Edward Aveling, ed. Frederick Engels (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1965), p. 75.

¹⁴Cf. *Ideology*, p. 39.

¹⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 41-42.

¹⁶*Ibid.*, pp. 42-43.

¹⁷Cf. Karl Marx, *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* (Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1959), pp. 71-74 (hereafter designated *Manuscripts*).

¹⁸"Preface," p. 503.

¹⁹Cf. *Phenomenology*, pp. 670 and 754 respectively.

²⁰*Ideology*, pp. 42-43.

²¹Cf. "Preface," pp. 503-504.

²²Cf. *Ideology*, pp. 44-45.

²³In this context, "sun" should be seen, in addition, as a play on words (with "Son").

²⁴Cf. *Phenomenology*, p. 115.

²⁵*Ibid.*, pp. 228-240.

²⁶As Apollo would say: "Through the prodigious use of minus signs [the negative in Hegel's philosophy is all important—cf. *Phenomenology*, p. 117 as well as p. 82 in which he gives the reader an example of his negativity regarding history], by negating and negating again, I can oppose, preserve and overcome" [*Aufhebung*—alienation, seen as the negative element in the logic as well as in history, should be noted as a central concern of Hegel's as well as of Marx', where it has long been recognized by scholars—

the alienation of spirit from itself in Hegel is the descent—dare I say “Fall”?—of Hegel from his illusive ontological presuppositions regarding consciousness. In this context, see *Phenomenology*, p. 92 and, especially, p. 511, in which Hegel says that equilibrium depends on estrangement; on the previous page—i.e., p. 510—he puts this in history by having the present’s opposite in the beyond. See also, *Reason*, pp. 27-28, in which action itself is seen as bringing about the end of history. Furthermore, in *Phenomenology*, p. 517, Hegel says that “the self is conscious of being actual only as transcended, as cancelled.” Lastly, see *Phenomenology*, p. 807, in which history is seen as ending by this same negation of the negation in fulfillment.]

²⁷Examples of Hegel’s view that history culminates in himself are numerous. Cf., for example, the following pages in the *Phenomenology*: 91, 761 and 762; also p. 12 in *Reason* and Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel, *The Philosophy of History*, pref. Charles Hegel, trans. and pref. J. Sibree, intro. C. J. Friedrich (New York: Dover Publications, Inc., 1956), p. 10. This is possible given the death of God—cf. *Phenomenology*, pp. 781-782.

²⁸Cf. *Ideology*, p. 84.

²⁹*Phenomenology*, pp. 807-808. Note that Hegel also gives the circle as a paradigm for his view of history—cf. *ibid.*, pp. 415 and 801. Action itself is seen as embracing a circular movement on p. 415 above.

³⁰Cf. *ibid.*, p. 805.

³¹Cf. *Manuscripts*, pp. 71-74 as well as the following pages from *Ideology*: 46, 59, 85-86, 87-88,

and 91, all of which—especially the last two named—yield, either implicitly or explicitly, propositions showing the movement of history as deriving from contradictions (Marx’ equivalent to Hegel’s negation).

³²Cf. *Phenomenology*, pp. 512 and 513, in which religion is viewed as all right as long as it is without faith and in which Hegel talks of the kingdom of faith being overthrown, bringing about absolute freedom. Man is truly free only when free from God (cf. *Reason*, p. 34). Though he pays lip service to divine providence, Hegel’s conception of it excludes the divine and the providential—see *Reason*, pp. 15-16.

³³Cf. *Phenomenology*, p. 514, in which Hegel makes implicit statements regarding self-consciousness creating the world and grace as an action from below. Furthermore, see *ibid.*, p. 516, in which he states that one is oneself in creating the world, and *ibid.*, p. 664, where the author says that in knowing myself I know God.

³⁴*Ideology*, p. 50.

³⁵Cf. Marx’ use of the symbol of picking the blossom in T. B. Bottomore (trans. and ed.), “Critique of Hegel’s Philosophy of Right (Introduction),” *Karl Marx: Early Writings* (London: C. A. Watts & Co., Ltd., 1963), p. 44.

³⁶*Phenomenology*, p. 664.

³⁷*Ibid.*, p. 803. Thus, on the same page, when the logical reaches its culmination, so the chronological does too and history ends.

³⁸Cf. *Ideology*, p. 87, in which Marx says that he is creating reality.

³⁹In this regard, note *Phenomenology*, p. 646.

⁴⁰*Ibid.*, p. 754.

⁴¹*Ibid.*, p. 670.